

## **Sociology 204 - Introduction to Sociology**

Fall 2009 (CRN 15286)

Professor Michael Dreiling

Meets: 10-11:50 on Tuesday and 10:00-10:50 on Thursday in **COL 150**

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Office Hours 611 PLC: M 1-2; TUES. 3:30-4:30; & THUR. 11-12:30

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### **Course Framework**

In the next ten weeks, you have the opportunity to learn something new about human beings. The map to this discovery is Sociology – the study of human social life. In some respects, the material presented in this course is like studying the periodic table of elements in chemistry (and wait till you see the test!). It is a foundation. The basic concepts can be used to understand the complex mixtures of people and groups. Because this course presents an overview of Sociology, it may be tempting to study this material like you would an entry from an encyclopedia, Wikipedia, (or trying to memorize the table of elements). I encourage another way.

I hope you discover that the subject matter in this course is about you; the thoughts and beliefs that outline the contours of your mind; the technology you use; the tastes you've acquired; the food you ingest; your fears; your dreams; the strategies you find familiar as you move about the surface of this planet finding meaning and staying alive. In fact, you, like the frog dissected in high school biology class, are part of the object of inquiry. You are to be dissected. But, here is the new thing; you are to do the dissecting.

As you begin to explore the social forces that shape you, that shape all of us, I believe you will begin the discovery of human and ecological interconnectedness – that our lives, our identities, and our beliefs bind us together in groups. These groups give shape to our choices, opportunities, our knowledge, our tastes, and our sense of purpose. Group life even shapes the way people talk to themselves; yes, I mean your inner dialogues. Sociology raises important questions about consciousness itself.

Our study of human group life begins with an overview of the tools of sociological inquiry, including theory and methodological reasoning, followed by an overview of human socialization and its role in shaping self-identity. Four additional themes are covered: Group Affiliation and Social Control; Social Inequalities Worldwide and by Class, Race, and Gender within the U.S.A.; Dynamics of Social Institutions; and finally, the process of Social Change in a Global Society.

I encourage you to learn about human society and U.S. society in particular, but also to develop an awareness of your own self within the stream of human history and social life. I stress this last point to remind myself and encourage you to consider how

awareness of the social world might enrich your sense of self: where you come from and what choices are likely to shape where you are going. Sociology in this regard is rather complicated but also quite practical and fun. Studying the ‘facts’ is certainly an important part of this discipline, yet sociology offers something beyond statistics and stories. It is in the mystery of being human and the unique approach that sociology brings to that mystery that I hope will lead you to something more lasting than the ‘facts’.

The course will meet in the lecture hall two times per week and in a group discussion section once per week. Participation at all levels will contribute to your learning. Attendance in discussion sections is required. Should you miss more than four discussion section meetings, you will not obtain any grade above a C.

**Note:** I encourage persons with disabilities that may require additional accommodations to meet the expectations of this course to communicate this to me ASAP.

### **Required Readings**

Available at the U of O Bookstore.

- James Henslin. *Essentials of Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach*.
- *Haiku for Sociologists*, Ed. Kristin Barker and Gary Teidman
- Online resources and readings accessible via Blackboard.

Using Blackboard, go here for an introduction:

<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/cet/blackboard/usingbb/>

### **Course Evaluation**

This is not a test. Show up and show us (me and your GTF) that you are engaging the material and you will receive a passing grade. My intention is to use grades as a message that I - with assistance by the course GTFs - send to you, telling you how clear it was to us that you were engaged in learning this material. You are not your grade. You are not what I think of you. The grade is a message. It is a form of communication. You communicate your part and I will tell you what I “heard.” If you want to be sure that I hear “I engaged this course” from you then do your part to convey that clearly.

I will try to do this in a way that (a) supports your growth and (b) reflects how clear it is to me that you engaged the course material. I intend to honor my part in this agreement, an agreement that we make the instant you decide to enroll in the class. Our part in this agreement as instructors includes doing our best to create opportunities for you to learn *and* develop avenues for you to show us what you have learned. By the end of the term, your grade will reflect how clear it is to us that you engaged the course material.

Below you will find my proposal for evaluating how each of you engage the course material.

### **GRADING PROPOSAL:**

- |  |                    |     |
|--|--------------------|-----|
| • Two in-class exams (no make-ups)                   | 15% each, totaling | 30% |
| • One written essay (see below for more details)     |                    | 15% |
| • Participation and attendance in discussion section |                    | 20% |
| • Journals   |                    | 10% |
| • Online discussion board                            |                    | 5%  |
| • One final exam - 8am Tuesday, Dec. 8 (no make-ups) |                    | 20% |

**Participation and Attendance 20%:** Up to 20% of your total course grade: up to 10% for attending discussion sections (if you miss more than four discussion section meetings, you will not obtain a course grade above a C); 10% for participation in discussions, which will include thoughtful contributions to the discussions in class and 3 quizzes.

**Reflection Journals and Blackboard Participation 15%:** You are expected to write four journal reflections on prompts provided by me on Blackboard and in lecture. You will receive between 0 – 10 % points for all four of these, each worth about 2.5%. These must be turned in to your GTF on the dates they are due.

Also, you will receive up to 5% of your total course grade for a minimum of 5 thoughtful comments on the online discussion board. See Blackboard for these prompts. Additional contributions to the discussion board may serve as extra credit for your overall participation and attendance grade.

**Attendance in lectures:** highly recommended – I want to see you there *if* you are willing to use the opportunity to learn as well respect other student's desire to learn. Anyone who would rather use lecture time to talk with friends, text incessantly, or sleep, then expect to be asked to leave. Lecture content and films are considered part of the overall course material.

**The two midterm exams** will cover all course material up to the date they are given. The first exam will be given on Thursday **October 22<sup>nd</sup>** and the second exam will be given on Thursday **November 19<sup>th</sup>**.

**Essay** assignment will be given in class. Worth up to 15% of your total grade, this assignment will incorporate two phases of writing. The first phase involves identifying a common thread between the three journal entries discussed above. (Be prepared to discuss these journal experiences and entries in your discussion section). The second phase of the essay assignment will involve writing an essay that incorporates elements of your journal entries into a 5-6 page paper on the *sociological imagination*. The details of this part of the assignment will be passed out Thursday November 19<sup>th</sup> in class and is **due in your last discussion meeting of the term**.

### Course Outline

#### ***Sociology and Human Life – Week 1***

- Henslin      Read all of Ch. 1 by the end of week 1

#### ***Symbols, Culture and Consciousness – Weeks 2-3***

- Henslin      Read Ch. 2-3

#### ***Interaction, Conflict and Power in the Human Matrix – Week 3***

- Henslin      Ch. 4-5

#### ***Social Control, Crime and Deviance: What is 'Normality' – Week 4***

- Henslin      Ch. 6
- Exam #1 – October 22, Thursday

***Where on the Ladder of Inequality? Nation, Class, Race, Gender Inequalities – Weeks 5-7***

- Henslin Ch. 7-10

***Institutions: Holding us Together, Tearing Us Apart – Weeks 7-8***

Political Economy

- Henslin Ch. 11
- Exam #2 - November 19<sup>th</sup>, Thursday
- Essay Assignment Passed out during exam in class

***Institutions: Contd. Week 9***

Marriage, Family, and Intimacy

- Henslin Ch. 12

Mass Media

- Henslin Ch. 13

Education and Religion

- Henslin Ch. 13

***Ecology, Crisis and Social Change – Week 10***

- Henslin Ch. 15

- **Final Exam – Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:15am**

**Reading Table**

You may use this table as a daily reminder of the readings that correspond (roughly) to the lectures. You may also pay attention to the sub-headings in the course outline (above). These will help locate the readings and lectures in a larger sequence of themes and topics.

	<b><u>Tuesday</u></b>	<b><u>Thursday</u></b>
Week 1:	READ: Ch. 1.	READ: Complete Ch. 1
Week 2:	READ: Ch. 2	READ: Ch. 3
Week 3:	READ: Ch. 4	READ: Ch. 5
Week 4:	READ: Ch. 6	READ: <b>EXAM #1</b>
Week 5:	READ: Chapter 7	READ: Chapter 8
Week 6:	READ: Chapter 8, begin Chap 9	READ: Chapter 9
Week 7:	READ: Chapter 10	READ: Ch. 11
Week 8:	READ: Complete Ch. 11	READ: <b>EXAM #2</b> Paper Assignment Passed out
Week 9:	READ: Ch. 12	READ: Ch. 13
Week 10:	READ: Ch. 13	READ: Ch. 15 Paper Due in Discussion Section