This course is designed to introduce students to the discipline of sociology. The course will review and discuss sociological concepts, theories, and research. First, the course will look at the role of sociology as a tool for examining the social world. Secondly, the course will introduce major theorists, perspectives, and research problems in sociology. Popular media direct much of our attention to social problems such as crime, social inequality, and political corruption. Yet rarely are such reports accompanied by analysis of the institutional bases of these phenomena. The focus of this course is to employ sociological methods to critically analyze social problems. We will attempt to answer such questions as: "what is involved in defining an issue as a social problem?" and "how are public resources mobilized to remedy a social problem?"

**Required Readings:**

Conley, Dalton: *You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist*

Klinenberg, Eric: *Alone Together: The Extraordinary Rise and Surprising Appeal of Living Alone*

Edin K. & Shaefer L.: *$2.00 A Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*

**Course Requirements:**

1. Come prepared to discuss the assigned readings and offer constructive/critical comments on the course materials.
2. There will be two required essays (9-10 pages). The topics will be assigned by the instructor. These two papers will make up 80 percent of your final grade.
3. Students will write a weekly response essay from a designated reading from *Contexts Magazine* and will be available on blackboard (The assigned *Contexts* readings are denoted with an *). Your response should assess the strengths and/or weaknesses of the author’s argument. These will be due at the beginning of class each Friday (unless otherwise noted) and we will discuss your reactions during class time. The response essays should be between 250-300 words. These assignments will make up 20 percent of your final grade. Attendance is mandatory. Having more than 2 unexcused absences will count against your final grade.

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**Week 1) Introduction**

Feb 1: Introductory Concepts

* Y. Besen-Cassino, “Cool Stores, Bad Jobs” (blackboard)

**Week 2) The Sociological Tradition**

Feb 8: D. Conley, *You May Ask Yourself*, chapters 1 & 2

*W. Beaver, “A Matter of Degrees” (blackboard)
### Week 3) Socialization and Social Networks
Feb 15: D. Conley, *You May Ask Yourself*, chapters 4 & 5
*G. Alan Fine & N. Difonzo “Uncertain Knowledge” (blackboard)

### Week 4) Culture and Media
Feb 22: D. Conley, *You May Ask Yourself*, chapter 3
*D. Cook, “The Cultural Life of the Living Dead” (blackboard)

### Week 5) Mapping Social Change
Feb 29: E. Klinenberg, *Going Solo*, ps. 1-130
*F. Furstenberg et al., “Growing Up Is Harder To Do” (blackboard)

### Week 6) Institutions and Cultural Authority
March 7: E. Klinenberg, *Going Solo*, 131-233
*M. Light, “Legal Inequalities Newest Face” (blackboard)

### Week 7) Social Control and Deviance
March 14: D. Conley, chapter 6
*R. Contreras, “Becoming a Stickup Kid” (blackboard)

### Paper #1 Due Date: TBA

### March 21: Spring Break

### Week 8) Race and Society
March 28: D. Conley, *You May Ask Yourself*, chapter 9
*A. Steinbugler, “Loving Across Racial Divides” (blackboard)

### Week 9) Gender and Society
April 4: D. Conley, *You May Ask Yourself*, chapter 8 & 12
*E. Armstrong “Is Hooking Up Bad for Young Women?” (blackboard)

### Week 10) Class, Status and Power
April 11: D. Conley, *You May Ask Yourself*, chapters 7 & 14
*J. Silva, “Working Class Growing Pains” (blackboard)

### Week 11) How Class is Lived
April 18: K. Edin and L. Shaefer, $2.00 A Day, chapters 1-3
*J. Streib, “Marrying Across Class Lines” (blackboard)

### Week 12) Institutions and Politics
April 25: Edin and Shaefer, $2.00 A Day, chapters 4-5 & conclusion
*R. Ocejo, “Bar Fights in the Bowery” (blackboard)

### Week 13) Collective Action and Social Change
May 2: Conley, *You May Ask Yourself*, chapter 18

### Paper # 2: DUE DATE TBA

*The instructor reserves the right to amend/revise the syllabus at his discretion.

**Honor Code:** This course will follow the policies described in the Oberlin College Honor Code and
Honor System. Please contact me if you have any questions about citation, or the relationship of the Honor Code to your work in this course. For more information on the Honor Code, see http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html.

Use of Technology in the Classroom:

Access to the Internet can be a valuable aid to the classroom learning environment. Students may use laptops and other devices in order to explore concepts related to course discussions and topics. **Students are discouraged from using technology in ways that distract from the learning community (e.g. Facebook, texting, Tumblr, 4chan etc.) and if found doing so, will be asked to leave the classroom for the day and will not get credit for attendance that class session.** Students are expected to respect the educational environment. In class, all cell phones should be on silent. Unless specifically directed by the instructor, students shall refrain from sending email and instant messages, or from engaging in other activities (internet, engaging in private conversations and so on) that undermine the classroom environment for others.