SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIETY

(Sociology 125)

Fall 2016
Meets: MWF 9-9:50 AM
Room: King 341

INSTRUCTOR: Prof. Clovis L. White (He, Him, His)           PHONE: 775-8374
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OFFICE HRS:  M & F 1:30-3PM or                           cwhite@oberlin.edu
by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is a survey course designed to introduce you to the sociological way of thinking about our social world. This course will review many of the concepts, theories and research findings related to the study of social life. In particular, a number of areas of sociological inquiry to be included are: (1) sociological perspectives and research; (2) notions of culture and social inequality; (3) social institutions such as the family and education; (4) socialization; (5) class, gender, race and ethnic inequalities; and (6) deviance and social control. Intermixed with these topics will be discussions or references to social change processes.

COURSE GOALS:

Goal 1: Developing a Sociological Imagination or Sociological Perspective: The course seeks to broaden your understanding of the dynamics associated with social behavior. In doing so, you will be challenged to develop a “sociological perspective” to explain and analyze social behavior.

Goal 2: Developing Information Literacy: Important to developing the sociological imagination is to develop knowledge of the available resources important to the examination of social phenomenon. This will involve exploring library and technological resources critical to the exploration of sociological literature.

Goal 3: Developing Skills to Write and Evaluate Critically: In this course you will be challenged to develop techniques to think and write critically about social phenomenon.

Goal 4: Reviewing and Interpreting Sociological Literature: Just as you will engage in perspectives on societies and social behavior, you will be exposed to the research process by reviewing and interpreting sociological literature on a topic of your choosing.

Goal 5: Developing Community Awareness: To gain a greater appreciation and understanding of society and social behavior and its impact on social lives in the local community.
COURSE FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS:

CLASS FORMAT/PRACTICES: At least once a week, class sessions will be devoted to lectures on topics for the given week. In general, we shall begin a new unit or topic area each week (e.g., socialization). You will benefit most from the lectures if you do the readings early in the week as they are assigned.

CLASS PARTICIPATION/GROUP DISCUSSIONS: As part of this requirement your attendance to class is necessary. Attendance will be taken every class. You are allowed two unexcused absences. More absences will lower your participation grade. Many times during the semester we will be discussing issues or topics related to the unit or readings under study. Students are expected to participate in the discussion to meet this requirement as well. On the given day of discussion, students will usually be divided up into several discussion groups often to contemplate several questions. Although the professor will determine specific points of discussion, some discussions will be based on some of the following:

- Readings assigned (e.g., on Blackboard or from Susan Ferguson’s book, Mapping the Social Landscape) or may include some social issue which has emerged recently in the public arena.
- A film/video/DVD viewed and related to the issues at hand.
- Discussion on each of the books, The New Jim Crow, and Just One of the Guys

READING ASSIGNMENTS: Readings are assigned for each week from the books listed below and readings placed on Blackboard (BB). Assigned readings are listed in the lecture/topic section of the syllabus (see pp. 6-9). Each member of the class is expected to read the material and be prepared to discuss it in class.

List of required books to be used during the semester:


EXAMS: There will be TWO IN-CLASS EXAMS. Each exam will consist of short answer questions and essay questions requiring the integration of materials covered in the readings, lectures, discussion and film/video/DVD presentations. These exams are NOT OPEN BOOK. Each exam is worth 25% of your final grade. Exam 2 is NOT
CUMULATIVE and will be held during the exam period. The TENTATIVE exam dates are as follows:

FIRST EXAM: MONDAY, OCTOBER 10TH: IN-CLASS
SECOND EXAM: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16TH, 2-4 PM LOCATION: TBA

In preparation for the exam, you will be given a review guide on the materials to be covered in the exam and the structure of the exam.

EXERCISES: Each student will be responsible for completing FOUR EXERCISES during the semester. Each of these exercises will involve the application of experiential activities and/or library research within the sociological realm. These exercises are importantly geared toward meeting some of the goals of the course. Students will be asked to write a 1-5 page paper as it relates to the specific exercise. All the exercises must be completed. This is 40% of your final grade. Below is a brief description of the exercises and their relationship to the goals of the course. Note that a more detailed description of the exercise will be made available later:

Exercise 1: REFLECTION EXERCISE ON SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION:
In this exercise you will explore the concept of “sociological imagination”. Sociological imagination is a term coined by the sociologist C Wright Mills about the perspective we must have whenever we conduct research or observe our social world. This examination will be done in relationship to an article written by C. Wright Mills (“The Promise”) and a study on unmarried women with children. This exercise is specifically related to Goal 1 (Developing a Sociological Imagination or Sociological Perspective).

Exercise 2: DEVELOPING A RESEARCH TOPIC QUESTION AND BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Based on information gained through information literacy session, you will be asked to develop a research question, conduct library research, and construct a bibliography based on a sociological topic and question of your choosing. This activity is specifically geared toward addressing Goals 2 (Developing Information Literacy) and 3 (Developing Skills to Write and Evaluate Critically)
Exercise 3: CONSTRUCTING AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SUMMARY REVIEW.

This exercise is an extension of the work that you have done on the previous exercise on annotated bibliography. The purpose of this exercise is to create an annotated bibliography based on the bibliography in your previous exercise and summarize in your own words findings from this bibliographic review as it relates to your research question. Further instructions and examples will be given later. This exercise is directed toward meeting Goals 3 (Developing Skills to Write and Evaluate Critically) and 4 (Reviewing and Interpreting Sociological Literature).

Exercise 4: REFLECTION ON AN ARTICLE ASSOCIATED WITH A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

Here you will be asked to reflect on your reading of one of five articles in Sue’s Ferguson’s book associated with a social institution. This will require you to summarize the article as well as critically analyze the article's value in understanding the social phenomenon under study. This activity contributes to goal 5 (Developing Community Awareness) as well as analytic skills development.

GRADING: Final grades will be assessed as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>2 Exams (2 @ 25%)</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercises (4 @ 10%)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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HONOR CODE: On all exams and exercises, you are expected to follow the guidelines as established by the Oberlin College Honor System.

http://new.oberlin.edu/office/dean-of-students/honor/students.dot

As such, you are required to follow code to the letter and write and sign at the end of each academic papers, exercises, exams, quizzes, etc, submitted for credit the following: "I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment/exam." The default of this statement is that you are required to do your own work without the help from others not explicitly authorized by me (You may, however, use campus resources, such as the library, composition instructors, or writing tutors).
CLASS POLICIES

• **Ground rules: Be respectful.** Let it be known that not everyone is going to agree with every author’s comments, perspectives or my comments for that matter. It may at times become tense in class over certain topics that may appear to be of a personal nature. And I encourage you to openly express your thoughts, ideas, and experiences in written assignments or discussions. At the same time it is important that you carefully support your assertions with literature/research on the topic. Ultimately, be respectful of the rights of others to their thoughts and opinions. Be cognizant that we are engaging in intellectual learning and by no means assume that everything will be resolved in our discussion.

• **Open door policy:** You can see me during my office hours or by appointment, especially as it relates to assignments and any questions or comments you may have about course content or related issues. Do not hesitate to ask for help!

• **SPECIAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES:** If you require special accommodations due to defined disabilities, please see me at your earliest convenience so that we can address these needs in a timely manner. You will need to present a letter from the Office of Disability Services (Peters Hall G27) documenting the accommodations needed. Please contact Ms. Jane Boomer at x5588 or visit [http://new.oberlin.edu/office/disability-services/](http://new.oberlin.edu/office/disability-services/)

• **Other concerns:**
  1. **TURN YOUR CELL PHONES OFF OR SILENCE THEM DURING CLASS PLEASE!**
  2. **PLEASE DO NOT EAT IN CLASS.** It is very distracting (besides some of us may be hungry as well!). Drinking a beverage is fine.
  3. Do not talk or whisper conversations with your neighbors during class. This is distracting to the rest of the class and to me!
  4. **AVOID BEING LATE TO CLASS.** This is also disturbing to the class and me. If you are consistently late for class, this could impact your letter grade.
  5. You may **NOT** have your laptops open unless to address specific special needs.
  6. I will **NOT** answer emails after 8 pm.
TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS
("BB" = indicates reading is on Blackboard)*

SOCIOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES


Readings:
1. David M. Newman, Sociology, Chapters 1 and 2 (also on BB)
2. Sue Ferguson’s, Mapping the Social Landscape, Chapter 1 (“The Promise”) (BB)
3. James Henslin, “Sociology and the Social Sciences” (BB)

WEEK 2:  SEPTEMBER 5:  NO CLASS: LABOR DAY HOLIDAY OBSERVED

SEPTEMBER 7, 9:  THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES: How do sociologists view the nature of our social existence? What we do know: The social organization of society or social structure

Readings:
1. David M. Newman, Chapter 3, “Building Reality”(also on BB)
2. Sue Ferguson’s, Chapter 4 (“Theoretical Perspectives in Sociology) (7th ed or BB)
3. Social structures: For details refer to David Newman, Sociology, Chapter 9

EXERCISE 1 DUE FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH

WEEK 3:  SEPTEMBER 12, 14, 16: RESEARCH PROCESS: How do we know what we know?

Readings:
2. James Henslin, “How Sociologists Do Research” (BB)
WEEK 4: SEPTEMBER 19, 23: CULTURE

SEPTEMBER 21: INFORMATION LITERACY SESSION: IN CLASS

Readings:
2. Sue Ferguson, Chapter 10 (“Culture: A Sociological View”) in 7th ed or BB

WEEK 5: SEPTEMBER 26, 28, 30: CULTURE CONT’D/SOCIALIZATION AND THE SELF: How do we become who we are and who are you?

Readings:
1. “The Tattoo Subculture” on BB
2. Kingsley Davis, “Extreme Isolation” (BB)

EXERCISE 2 DUE FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30TH

WEEK 6: OCTOBER 3, 5, 7: SOCIALIZATION AND THE SELF CONT’D

Readings:
1. D. Newman, Sociology, chapters 5 (“Building Identity: Socialization”) and 6 (“Supporting Identity: The Presentation of Self”) (also on BB)

WEEK 7: OCTOBER 10: MIDTERM EXAM

OCTOBER 12: NO CLASS: YOM KIPPUR

OCTOBER 14: VIDEO ON SOCIAL DEVIANCE

MIDTERM IN-CLASS EXAM: MONDAY, OCTOBER 10TH

WEEK 8: OCTOBER 15-23: FALL BREAK
WEEK 9: OCTOBER 24, 26, 28: DEVIANCE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Readings
1. D. Newman, Sociology, chapter 8, “Constructing Difference: Social Deviance” (also on BB)
2. William J. Chambliss, “The Saints and the Roughnecks” (BB)

SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

WEEK 10: OCTOBER 31, NOVEMBER 2, 4: SOCIAL INEQUALITY: SOCIAL STRATIFICATION & SOCIAL CLASS: Who gets what in our society and why? How is class reproduced?

Readings:
1. D. Newman, Sociology, review chapter 9, read chapter 10 (“The Architecture of Stratification: Social Class and Inequality”) (also on BB)
2. Sue Ferguson, Chaps. 23 (“Some Principles of Stratification”), and 25 (“Race, Homeownership and Wealth”)

WEEK 11: NOVEMBER 7, 9, 11: RACIAL & ETHNIC INEQUALITIES: How and why does one’s racial and/or ethnic characteristics impact one’s place in society?

Readings:
2. Sue Ferguson, Chapter 31, “What is Racial Domination?”.

EXERCISE 3 DUE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11TH

WEEK 12: NOVEMBER 14, 16, 18: RACIAL & ETHNIC INEQUALITIES CONT’D:
Institutional racism in our criminal justice system and prisons: Is it real? / GENDER INEQUALITIES: How does one’s gender and sex play a role in our behavior and access to social rewards?

Readings:
1. Michelle Alexander, The New Jim Crow, ALL
2. D. Newman, Sociology, chapter 12 (“The Architecture of Inequality: Sex and Gender”) (also on BB)
WEEK 13:  NOVEMBER 21, 23: GENDER INEQUALITIES CONT’D: Are transgender individuals treated differently in our society?

NOVEMBER 25:  NO CLASSES THANKSGIVING RECESS

Readings:

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

WEEK 14:  NOVEMBER 28, 30, DECEMBER 2: INSTITUTIONS: FAMILY, RELIGION, EDUCATION, & POLITICS & THE ECONOMY: Do we know what is a family is today? How is power distributed in the political and economic arenas? What is the role of education in our society?

Readings:
1. D. Newman, Sociology, Chapter 7 (“Building Social Relationship: Intimacy and Families”) (also on BB)
2. Read one of the following in Sue Ferguson’s book Mapping the Social Landscape, Chapter 53 (Deinstitutionalization of Marriage), 35 (The Power Elite), 37” (Rise of the New Global Elite), 43 (The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work”; 45 (Religion and Society: Of Gods and Demons”); “A School in A Garden: How College Admissions at Elite Schools Reinforce Social Class”.

WEEK 15:  DECEMBER 5, 7, 9: INSTITUTIONS CONT’D/WRAP-UP: Will your generation change America?

Reading
1. Sue Ferguson, Chapter 58 (“Generation X, Y, and Z: Are they changing America?”

WEEK 16:  DECEMBER 10-13: READING PERIOD

EXERCISE 4 DUE: MONDAY, DECEMBER 12TH

FINAL EXAMINATION: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16TH 2-4 PM, LOCATION TBA