Sociology 110

Introduction to Sociology: Social Structure, Inequality, and Behavior

Spring 2015
MWF 9:00 – 9:50
King 341

Dr. Christie Parris
Email: christie.parris@oberlin.edu
Office: King 305A
Office Hours: Mondays 10:00 – 12:00, or by appointment

SYLLABUS

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course will provide students with an overview of the sociological approach. Major theoretical concepts and methodologies will be examined and illustrated with a wide variety of classic as well as recent empirical studies. Some of the topics we'll look at include causes and consequences of social inequality (e.g., race and ethnicity, gender, and sexuality) and social definitions of deviant behavior.

COURSE GOALS

Through class discussions each week, students will learn how to express thoughts on complex problems in an articulate, respectful manner with fellow classmates. Students will also be able to analyze various topics through a sociological lens, and consider how sociological theory can be translated into everyday life. Throughout several writing projects, students will have the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained throughout the semester.

GENERAL INFORMATION

I expect regular class attendance. If you have more than three absences at the end of the semester, I reserve the right to lower your grade. Latecomers disrupt the class. Be on time. 3 late arrivals = 1 absence. Please talk to me beforehand if you anticipate missing a class. It is your responsibility to obtain notes from your classmates if you miss a class.

It is disruptive and unprofessional for a cell phone/pager to go off in class. Turn them off (not on vibrate) before class starts. If your cell phone goes off in class, I reserve the right to lower your grade.
Please ask permission if you prefer to take notes on your laptop. If I notice you navigating away from course material, I will ask that you put it away. I will also request that you send your notes to me via email so that I can verify that you are staying on task.

I expect frequent, active participation from students. We will have class discussions about the readings every week, and therefore I expect you to have completed the readings before we meet each class period. Regular attendance and participation will work to your advantage and will be taken into account when determining final grades.

The readings we cover will certainly be cause for lively discussion regarding several sociological topics. I do not expect all of you to agree on these topics, and I will encourage you to talk through your varying viewpoints during our discussions. However, I will not tolerate discourteous behavior or language during class discussions. If at any point in the semester you become uncomfortable because of a comment made in class, please contact me as soon as possible.

REQUIREMENTS

Written Assignments
You will have three writing assignments throughout the semester. These assignments will involve either reflections about your own behavior or gathering some kind of information/data (e.g. brief survey), and writing about the data you gather. I will hand out instructions for these assignments during the semester.

All written assignments are due at the beginning of class. You may submit them to me either via email (in a Word document) or a paper copy given to me. I do not accept late assignments.

Exams: You will have a midterm and a final exam. They are not cumulative. In order to perform well on the final exam, however, you must understand the concepts from the first half of the course. The exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

Oberlin Honor Code: This course will follow the policies described in the Oberlin College Honor Code and Honor System. Please include the statement “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment” and your signature in all written work. Please contact me if you have any questions about citation/referencing, 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.
**Grading**

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<th>Item</th>
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<th>Due Date</th>
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<td>Attendance/Class Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>February 27 (F)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>March 18 (W)</td>
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<td>Assignment 2</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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**Grading Scale**

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**Readings**

The required text is available at the Oberlin Bookstore. In addition to the full text, you will be reading numerous articles and individual book chapters. These articles are available through the class’s Blackboard site under the Readings tab. These readings are denoted by an asterisk (*) below.

**Required Text**


(Referred to as “Ferguson” throughout the course schedule)
**Accommodating Disabilities:** If you have or acquire any sort of condition that may require special accommodation(s), please inform me AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (i.e., not the day an assignment is due) so that we may make the appropriate arrangements. If you need disability-related accommodations for your work in this course, please let me know. Support is available through Student Academic Services. Please contact Jane Boomer, Coordinator Office of Disability Services, (Room G27/28 Peters Hall, ext. 55588, [http://www.oberlin.edu/disability](http://www.oberlin.edu/disability)) for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs.

**Email Policy:** Email is the best way to reach me, although please allow 24 hours for responses. For substantial discussions, please see me during office hours.

**Other Issues:** If you are encountering difficulties, academic or otherwise, that are negatively impacting your performance in this class, please speak with me as soon as possible. I can only help you if I know there is a problem, and the earlier I know this, the better.
CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1  What is Sociology?
Feb 2 (M):  Introductions
            *Sharon Begley. “When DNA is Not Destiny.” Newsweek.
            *Joel Charon. Should We Generalize about People?
Feb 6 (F):  C. Wright Mills. The Promise. (Ferguson Ch 1)
            Donna Gaines. Teenage Wasteland. (Ferguson Ch 2)
            Mary Romero. Intersections of Biography and History. (Ferguson Ch 3)

WEEK 2  Theories and Research Methods in Sociology
            (Ferguson Ch 4)
            (Ferguson Ch 5)
Feb 11 (W):  END OF ADD/DROP
            Michael Schwalbe. Finding Out How the Social World Works. (Ferguson Ch 7)
            *Howard Schumann. Sense and Nonsense about Surveys.
            *Philip Meyer. If Hitler Asked You to Electrocute a Stranger, Would You? Probably.
Feb 13 (F):  *Patricia A. Adler and Peter Adler. The Promise and Pitfalls of Going into the Field.
WEEK 3  Social Structure

Feb 16 (M):  Dalton Conley. *The Birth of the Intravidual*. (Ferguson Ch 17)

Patricia A. Adler and Peter Adler. *Peer Power: Clique Dynamics among School Children*. (Ferguson Ch 18)

Jill Quadagno. *Institutions, Interest Groups, and Ideology*. (Ferguson Ch 47)

Feb 18 (W):  Craig Haney, W. Curtis Banks, and Philip G. Zimbardo. *Interpersonal Dynamics in a Simulated Prison*. (Ferguson Ch 8)

In-Class Film: *Quiet Rage: The Stanford Prison Study*.

Feb 20 (F):  Discussion of Feb 18 reading and documentary

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WEEK 4  Culture

Feb 23 (M):  Howard S. Becker. *Culture: A Sociological View*. (Ferguson Ch 10)

Feb 25 (W):  Barry Glassner. *The Culture of Fear*. (Ferguson Ch 11)

*Jen'nan Ghazal Read. *Muslims in America*.

*Brent Staples. *Just Walk on By: Black Men and Public Space*.

*Tressie McMillan Cottom. *When You Forget to Whistle Vivaldi*.

Feb 27 (F):  PAPER ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE

Haunani-Kay Trask. *Lovely Hula Hands*. (Ferguson Ch 12)


*Tressie McMillan Cottom. *When Your (Brown) Body is a (White) Wonderland*.

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WEEK 5  Socialization

Mar 2 (M):  *Kingsley Davis. Extreme Isolation*.

Robert Granfield. *Making It by Faking It*. (Ferguson Ch 15)

Mar 4 (W): Emily W. Kane. *No Way my Boys are Going to be Like That!* (Ferguson Ch 13)

*Peggy Orenstein. What’s Wrong With Cinderella?*

*Sharon Begley. “Math is Hard, Barbie Said.” Newsweek.*

In-Class Film: *Killing Us Softly*


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**WEEK 6  Deviance and Social Control**


Penelope A. McLorg and Diane E. Taub. *Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia*. (Ferguson Ch 20)

Mar 11 (W): A. Ayres Boswell and Joan Z. Spade. *Fraternities and College Rape Culture*. (Ferguson Ch 21)

Mark Colvin. *Descent into Madness*. (Ferguson Ch 22)


*Devah Pager. The Mark of a Criminal Record.*

*Ann Arnett Ferguson. Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*. (Ferguson Ch 52)

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**WEEK 7  Midterm Exam**

Mar 16 (M): Exam Review

Mar 18 (W): Midterm Exam

Mar 20 (F): No Class – Happy Spring Break!
WEEK 8  
MARCH 23—27  NO CLASSES—SPRING BREAK!!!

WEEK 9  
Social Class: Power, Privilege, and Poverty

Mar 30 (M):  PAPER ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE

Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore with a Response by Melvin Tumin. Some Principles of Stratification. (Ferguson Ch 23)

G. William Domhoff. Who Rules America? (Ferguson Ch 24)

C. Wright Mills. The Power Elite. (Ferguson Ch 35)


Barbara Ehrenreich. Nickel and Dimed. (Ferguson Ch 26)

*Sharon Hays. Flat Broke with Children.

Apr 3 (F):  *Douglas Massey. Remaking the Political Economy.

WEEK 10  
Race and Ethnicity

Apr 6 (M):  Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer. What is Racial Domination? (Ferguson Ch 31)


Apr 10 (F):  *Dalton Conley. Wealth Matters.

Charlie LeDuff. At Slaughterhouse, Some Things Never Die. (Ferguson Ch 32)
WEEK 11  Race and Ethnicity

Apr 13 (M): Thomas M. Shapiro. *Race, Homeownership, and Wealth.* (Ferguson Ch 25)


Apr 15 (W): Katherin M. Flower Kim. *Out of Sorts.* (Ferguson Ch 33)

Evelyn Nakano Glenn. *Yearning for Lightness.* (Ferguson Ch 34)

Apr 17 (F): *Tim Wise. Born to Belong.*

*Tim Wise. *On White Pride and Other Delusions.*

*Peggy McIntosh. *White Privilege and Male Privilege*


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WEEK 12  Gender

Apr 20 (M): Barbara Risman. *Gender as Structure.* (Ferguson Ch 27)

Betsy Lucal. *What it Means to be Gendered Like Me* (Ferguson Ch 28)

Apr 22 (W): Meika Loe. *Working at Bazooms.* (Ferguson Ch 9)


Adia Wingfiled. *Racializing the Glass Escalator.* (Ferguson Ch 42)

Apr 24 (F): PAPER ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE


Kevin Bales. *Because She Looked Like a Child.* (Ferguson Ch 30)

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WEEK 13  Sexuality and Intersectionality

Apr 27 (M): C. J. Pascoe. *Dude, You’re A Fag?* (Ferguson Ch 29)

*Judith Stacey. *Gay and Lesbian Families are Here.*

May 1 (F):  
*Patricia Hill Collins. *Distinguishing Features of Black Feminist Thought.*  
*Woods. The Black Male Privilege Checklist.*  
*Combahee Women’s Collective. The Combahee River Collective Statement.*

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**WEEK 14  Social Change**

May 4 (M):  
D. Stanley Eitzen. *The Atrophy of Social Life.* (Ferguson Ch 56)  
Duane F. Alwin. *Generations X, Y, and Z: Are They Changing America?* (Ferguson Ch 58)

May 6 (W):  

May 8 (F):  
Review for Final Exam

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May 14 (Th): 9 – 11 a.m. FINAL EXAM