Course Description

This course is designed to be an introduction to the discipline that will acquaint the student with sociological concepts, terminology, and methodology. Emphasis will be placed on understanding society and its component parts in a sociological manner. Readings and discussion will examine how social institutions affect everyday life. Traditional sociological thought, as well as more contemporary sociological thinking, are included. Important issues to be addressed include the relationship between economy and social institutions, social stratification, and gender divisions. Current sociological literature will be used to both introduce concepts and help students interpret scholarly writing. Emphasis will be placed on understanding social inequality and the link between the individual and social structure.

Required Texts


Course Requirements

*Attendance is REQUIRED, except in cases of illness, emergency or religious reasons. Students are responsible for all material, regardless of absence. Attendance will be taken daily! Students may miss 3 classes before a grade deduction penalty will be assessed.*

- Socialization paper (due by 3.4) 20%
- Mapping Exercise (due 4.29) 20%
- Mid Term and Final Exams (3.20, 5.15) 30% each (60%)
Course Objectives

1: Development of a Sociological Imagination: The course introduces you to Mills’ “sociological imagination” framework. This framework emphasizes the linkage between personal biography and history, as well as connecting micro and macro level social behavior.

2: Increase Information Literacy: Important to understanding social phenomena is the ability to access, manage and understand scholarly information. This will involve exploring library and technological resources critical to the exploration of the sociological literature.

3: Development of Critical Analytical Skills: In this course you will be challenged to think about “commonplace” activities from an analytical perspective. Through the development of critical analytical skills you will “make sense” of social phenomena.

4: Development of Empirical Data Interpretation Skills: Observational records of social behaviors and phenomena will be explored from both idiographic and nomothetic perspectives and used to help understand and generate social theory.

5: Increase ability to observe and understand social inequalities: Unequal distributions of material and nonmaterial social resources have persisted throughout history. Attention will be paid to identifying such inequalities and developing understandings regarding their continued existence.

Instructor policies

- Your consistent, on-time attendance and participation are required. Please do not attend to other activities during class (cellphones, knitting, etc.). Come prepared to actively discuss the readings assigned for that day.
- After two absences, additional absences will generally lower your final grade in the course. In case of illness or personal emergency, your absence will be excused. This policy is governed by the honor code; to report an excused absence, please contact me.
- Assignments are due IN CLASS the day they are due. An extension will be automatically applied to all assignments until 4:00 the day they are due. After this grace period, 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g. an A would be reduced to an A-) will be deducted for each day of lateness, unless you previously have made arrangements with the instructor because of illness or emergency. Assignments are to be handed in on paper (double sided is fine)-please retain a copy of this work for yourself. Please use the Times New Roman 12pt font or an equivalent, double spaced (unless specifically instructed to use another format) and NUMBERED pages. Staple your papers before turning them in.
- You must fulfill all course obligations and complete all assignments in order to potentially receive credit for the course.
- Office Hours are listed at the top of this syllabus. Upon special request, I will meet with students at times outside of my office hours. Please see me IN PERSON to set up such an appointment.
- I receive up to 30 or more e-mails per day. Please do not expect me to reply immediately to an e-mail question or request. If something is urgent, please CALL ME in my office or signify in the e-mail header that it is urgent.
• 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” 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.

• Students with Disabilities: 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) for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs.

• The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus during the semester, if needed.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Attendance: Students may miss 3 classes before penalty is assigned. Attendance will not be counted during the first week of classes.

Socialization paper: You will choose a status that you have been socialized into (i.e. college student, athlete, musician, worker, etc.). Using information from your texts and class discussions, talk about the socialization process, the role requirements of the status, your feelings and experiences concerning the roles and any role strain or conflict you may have experienced. The paper must be word-processed, double-spaced and approximately 4-5 pages in length. Please place page numbers on your paper and turn in a stapled copy. Retain a copy for your records.

Exams: These exams will cover all material between the dates of the exams (readings, lectures, discussion, videos, etc.). The midterm exam will be given in class and the final during Finals Week. They will be closed book, closed notes. The format of the exam will be short answer and short essay.

Census Data Thematic Mapping Exercise: In this exercise you will be using American FactFinder to identify demographic and socioeconomic indicators of particular places in the United States to generate thematic maps. Brief discussions of these maps are required in this exercise. Please place page numbers on your paper and turn in a staples copy. Retain a copy for your records.
COURSE OUTLINE

2.4 Introduction

What is Sociology? Theory and Methods

Ferguson:

2.6
1. Mills: The Promise
2. Gaines: Teenage Wasteland
3. Romero: Intersections of Biography and History

2.11
4. Hunter and McClelland: Theoretical Perspectives in Sociology
6. Rosenhan: On Being Sane in Insane Places
44. Weber: The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

2.13
5. Marx and Engels: Manifesto of the Communist Party
8. Haney, Banks and Zimbardo: Interpersonal Dynamics in a Simulated Prison

Culture

Ferguson:

2.18
10. Becker: Culture: A Sociological View
11. Glassner: The Culture of Fear: Why Americans are Afraid of the Wrong Things
12. Trask: Lovely Hula Hands

Socialization

Ferguson:

2.20
13. Kane, “No Way My Boys Are Going to be Like That” Parents’ Response to Children’s Gender Nonconformity

2.25
15. Granfield: Making it By Faking It: Working Class Students in an Elite Academic Environment
16. Dyer: Anybody’s Son Will Do

Groups and Social Structure

Ferguson:

2.27
17. Conley: The Birth of The Intravidual
18. Adler and Adler: Peer Power: Clique Dynamics Among School Children
19. Williams: Shopping as Symbolic Interaction

3.4 45. Dandaneau: Religion and Society: Of Gods and Demons
46. Read: Muslims in America
47. Quadagno: Institutions, Interests Groups and Ideology: An Agenda for the Sociology of Health Care Reform

Deviance and Social Control

Ferguson:

3.6 20. McLorg and Taub: Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia: The Development of Deviant Identities
22. Colvin: Descent into Madness: The New Mexico State Prison Riot
40. Lindner: Controlling the Media in Iraq

3.11-3.18 Pascoe, *Dude, You’re a Fag*, entire text
   3.11 Preface, Chapters 1-2
   3.13 Chapters 3-4
   3.18 Chapters 5-6 and Appendix

3.20 *Midterm Exam in Class*

Social Inequalities (Class, Gender, Sexuality, Race and Ethnicity)

Ferguson:

4.1 23: Davis, Moore and Tumin: Some Principles of Stratification
24. Domhoff: Who Rules America?
25. Shapiro: Race, Home Ownership and Wealth
26: Ehrenreich: Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America
49. Wailoo: A Slow, Toxic Decline: Dialysis Patients, Technological Failure, and the Unfulfilled Promise of Health Care in the United States

Ferguson:

4.3 27. Risman: Gender as Structure
28. Lucal: What it Means to be Gendered Me: Life on the Boundaries of a Dichotomous Gender System
30. Bales: Because She Looks Like a Child

Ferguson:

4.8 31. Desmond and Emirbayer: What is Racial Domination?
32. LeDuff: At a Slaughterhouse, Some Things Never Die
33. Kim: Out of Sorts: Adoption and (Un)Desirable Children
34. Glenn: Yearning for Lightness: Transnational Circuits in the Marketing and Consumption of Skin Lighteners

**Power and Economy**

Ferguson:

4.10 35. Mills: The Power Elite
36. Zweigenhaft and Domhoff: The Ironies of Diversity
37. Freeland: The Rise of the New Global Elite

4.15 41. Leidner: Over the Counter: McDonald’s
42. Wingfield: Racializing the Glass Elevator: Reconsidering Men’s Experiences with Women’s Work

4.17 America Factfinder Data Mapping Discussion In Class

4.22 Venkatesh, *Off the Books: The Underground Economy of the Urban Poor* Prologue-Chapter 1-3

4.24 Venkatesh, *Off the Books: The Underground Economy of the Urban Poor* Chapter 4- Chapter 5

4.29 Venkatesh, *Off the Books: The Underground Economy of the Urban Poor* Chapter 6-Chapter 8

**Education**

5.1 Ferguson:

50. Crow Dog and Erdoes: Civilize Them With a Stick
51. Stevens: A School in a Garden
52. Ferguson: Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity

**Family**

Ferguson:

5.6 43. Hochschild: The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work
53. Cherlin: The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage
54. Edin and Kefalas: Unmarried With Children
55. Lareau: Invisible Inequality
Social Change

5.8 Ferguson:

56. Eitzen: The Atrophy of Social Life
57. Anderson: The Cosmopolitan Canopy
58. Alwin: Generations X, Y and Z: Are They Changing America?

5.15 FINAL EXAM, 2-4pm