

SYLLABUS
SOCL 1133X20
Introductory Sociology
Spring 2026
Online

Sociology is the “systematic study of human societies (Newman 2022).” According to the American Sociological Association (n.d.), “sociology is the study of social life, social change, and the social causes and consequences of human behavior. Sociologists investigate the structure of groups, organizations, and societies and how people interact within these contexts (para 1).”

Professor: Amy Clark, Ph.D.

OFFICE: O’Donohoe 131

Mon. 9:55am-10:55am; 12:25pm-2:25pm

Tues. 10:55 am-11:55 am

Wed. 9:55am-10:55am

The best way to meet with me is on campus during my office hours, which are listed above. You can email me to set up an appointment or drop by to see me. Otherwise, I can meet with you during my office hours electronically via Zoom. If you need to schedule a Zoom appointment, then please give me *as much advanced notice as possible*, and we can set up a time. You can also reach me via email or by the D2L message inbox. I answer emails **Monday through Friday within 48 hours**; this excludes weekends. *So, I don’t answer emails or D2L inbox messages over the weekend.* However, electronic communication is time stamped, and I will honor the date and time that you contact me.

EMAIL: amy.clark@msutexas.edu

REQUIRED TEXT: Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life (14 Edition)
by David M. Newman (2022). ISBN-13 978-1071849552

*The book is available on 2-hour reserve at the Moffett Library. Students may check it out on a first-come, first-serve basis. The book cannot be removed from the Library.

OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- Microsoft Office 365 (free subscription through MSU) or other word processing software, which can be converted to a PDF.
- The *Respondus Lockdown Browser* download to a compatible device and a webcam for the *Monitor*; webcams can be checked out from the Moffett Library

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Define and explain sociological concepts and theories
- Articulate the social, historical, political, and economic factors that influence events from a sociological perspective
- Describe the importance of sociological research
- Investigate social structures and influences and how people interact in small groups, organizations, and societies

- Utilize your sociological imagination to explore social forces, which have shaped your own social experiences, identity, and group memberships

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A general survey course introducing students to the field of sociology. Emphasis is on people as products of groups, social interaction, and social forces. Topics covered include marriage and family, deviance, social class, minority relations, and collective behavior with an effort toward helping students understand the social world and their roles in it.

Submission of Assignments:

All quizzes, tests, reflection papers, discussion boards, and projects **MUST be submitted in D2L** by 11:59pm CST on their respective due dates in the syllabus. **I DO NOT accept late work emailed to me for any reason.** If you send emailed work after the due date, then I will refuse to accept it. If you have an approved excuse (*see Extenuating Circumstances, Emergencies, Illness, and Academic Activities*), then you will be allowed to make up a quiz or a test through a due date extension in D2L. If you have an excused reason for missing written work, then you will be given a due date extension in D2L. If you do not have an excused reason for not submitting your work on time, then **you must submit** discussions, projects, and papers **no later than 48 hours after they are** due in D2L for the late penalties described in this document. **No** unexcused quizzes or tests are accepted for any reason. If you have technical difficulties with D2L during a quiz or test, then you must immediately notify D2L Help, take screenshots of the issue verifying the problem, and provide the response from D2L Help once you notify me. All “technical difficulties” will be independently verified with MSU staff working in D2L Help before I allow a quiz or test to be made up for that reason; *repeated requests for exams or quizzes to be reset due to technical difficulties will be denied* if a pattern emerges.

ASSESSMENTS AND GRADING:

Exams: Worth 150 points each; 600 total

Exams are completed in D2L by 11:59pm CST on their respective due dates. Students will be required to use the **Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitor** for each exam, and exams are **not** open book/open notes. Students will be given TWO attempts to complete each exam, and the grades for each attempt will be AVERAGED together to calculate their final test grade. *If students are satisfied with the grade for their first attempt, then they do not need to take it again.*

Students will be given 50 minutes for each attempt. Tests are 50 multiple choice/true false questions. Test grades will not be curved, and no test grades will be dropped.

Special Notes on Accommodations for Tests:

- Students should notify me as soon as possible if they have accommodations for exams through DSS, and I must receive the DSS notification letter **before** the accommodation will be provided.
- Based on approved accommodations and testing needs, students can arrange to take a test on campus with an approved proctor in an alternate setting.

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Discussion Boards: 100 points total; 4 at 25 points each

There are four discussion boards worth 25 points each, which require both an original post AND two posts to the responses of peers. Each original discussion post should address the prompt provided in **at least 350 words**. Each peer post should be **at least 100 words**. Peer responses should continue the original discussion by offering additional insight, raising valid points, asking relevant questions, or suggesting additional resources for review. Trite responses such as “good job,” and “I enjoyed reading your post” do not count as substantive. Each original post is worth a maximum of 20 out of 25 points. Each substantive peer response is worth 2.5 out of 25 points for

a maximum of 5 points. Discussion board assignments will be graded via a detailed rubric provided in the D2L course shell. Original posts are due by the due date listed in the syllabus; peer responses are due by the due date listed in the syllabus.

Discussion Board #1 is an introductory post and does not require a citation. Discussion Boards 2-4 require APA 7th edition citations for the textbook as well as any other sources used to create the posts.

Reflection Paper: 100 points

Students are required to submit a 6-page, double spaced reflection paper at the end of the semester. The paper will be turned in through D2L. Students will be given detailed instructions and a rubric to follow. Part of the paper will require the students to reflect on key sociological concepts located in specific chapters of their Newman (2022) book. Part of the paper will be a reflection on how these key concepts apply to their own lives or the lives of those around them. Reflections will be checked for possible plagiarism and unauthorized AI usage via Turnitin. Though these are informal papers, students should check them for grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. Also, students are required to provide a reference list and in-text citations for their textbook and/or any other sources they use to complete their papers. Reflection papers will be accepted up to 48 hours late per the late penalty in the syllabus.

Projects: 2@25 points; 1@ 50 points: Worth 100 points total

There will also be 3 projects over the semester, which equal 100 points (total). Each assignment will be graded with a detailed rubric, and students will have access to the assignment directions ahead of time in the D2L course shell. Projects will be submitted through an assignment link in the D2L course shell on their respective due dates. Project 1 is on Culture, and it is worth 25 points. Project 2 is on the World Bank, and it is worth 25 points. Project 3 is a current event analysis, and it is worth 50 points.

If students need help completing their projects, they may utilize TASP support services in the Moffett Library. Students are required to cite sources in APA 7th edition format. Students should follow all assignment directions, and students should check them for grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. Projects are usually between one to three pages in length and double spaced. Projects will be checked for possible plagiarism and unauthorized use of AI via Turnitin. Projects will be accepted up to 48 hours late per the late penalties listed in this document.

Quizzes (4 @ 25 points; 100 points total)

There are 4 quizzes worth 25 points each. Quizzes will be **completed in D2L using the Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitor**. Quizzes are **25 multiple choice or true false questions**. Students will be given **25 minutes** to complete each assessment. Students are allowed ONE attempt to take the quiz, and quizzes are not open book/open notes.

Graded Assessments

Graded Assessments	POINTS	Weighted Percentage of Final Grade by Category
Exams 1-4 (4 @150points each)	600	60%
Projects 1-3 (2@25 points; 1 @50 points)	100	10%
Reflection Paper (1@100 points)	100	10%
Quizzes (4@ 25 points each)	100	10%
Discussion Boards (4@25 points each)	100	10%
Total Number of Points Available in the Course	1000	100%

Extra Credit

- The instructor will provide detailed information on the extra credit opportunity, and it worth a maximum of 20 points. Students are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity because it will boost their final grade by up to 2%.
- Because extra credit is offered in this class, grades **will not be rounded for any reason**. No exceptions.

Policy on Academic Dishonesty

- Students are NOT allowed to use ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, or any other unauthorized AI in this class. Similarly, students are NOT allowed to use any AI functions in Microsoft Word or Grammarly or any AI tools in any other form of word processing software. Thus, students are advised to use basic spelling and grammar check in Microsoft Word. Students should not use AI along with any word spinners.
- Turnitin **will be utilized** to check for possible plagiarism on written assignments.
- Students suspected of cheating on exams, quizzes, or written assignments will be given a zero on the assessment and referred to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.
- Students should never submit another person's work; this is cheating and will result in a zero and referral to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.
- Any unauthorized use of AI in the course, such as **Chat GPT, Claude, or Gemini** will result in a zero on any written assignments. All written assignments submitted in D2L are checked for plagiarism and use of AI via Turnitin. Students should not use ANY AI features in **Microsoft Office or Grammarly** to submit their written assignments. Students are advised to use *basic* features of Microsoft Word and Grammarly only. These basic features should not have *any components of AI*. **If students are unsure about whether or not their word processing software is using AI or will flag Turnitin for the use of AI, then they can contact D2LHelp or the Helpdesk on campus to double check.**

Policy on Missed Exams and Quizzes

- Exams and quizzes CANNOT BE completed after they are due unless students have an approved EXCUSE.
- No exams can be made up for reasons associated with unexcused absences, and no tests or quizzes can be taken late for a reduction in points. Unexcused quizzes or tests will be scored as a zero.

Technical Difficulties

- If students experience a technical issue in D2L, students should reach out through the D2L help feature to "[report a problem](#)."

Late work:

- *Written work including projects, the reflection paper, and discussion boards* will be accepted UP TO 48 HOURS LATE in D2L according to the late work policy listed below. Therefore, students MUST PAY ATTENTION to the difference between **the due date and the last date that an assessment/discussion is available**. If students have any questions about this, then please ask me as soon as possible.
 - **Unexcused projects and reflection papers may be submitted in D2L up to 48 hours late, but they will be penalized at the following rates:**
 - **< or equal to 24 hours late, 50 % reduction in the total point value of the assignment.** The deduction will be manually calculated by the instructor and applied in D2L once the assignment has been graded. The number of points deducted will depend on the point value of the assignment.

- > 24 hours late but < or equal to 48 hours late, will receive a 75 % reduction in the total point value of the assignment.
- >48 hours late **WILL NOT** be accepted and will be marked as a ZERO in D2L.

COURSE POINT TOTALS AND CORRESPONDING GRADING SCALE

Grades will be determined by the following scale:

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	900 or higher
B	800 to 899
C	700 to 799
D	600 to 699
F	Less than 600

Course Policies

Student Handbook

Refer to: Student Handbook-2021-22

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

- Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individuals to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. *In this class, any use of ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini or other unauthorized AI is considered cheating and academic dishonesty.*

The Americans With Disabilities Act

- The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Office of Disability Accommodation. The telephone number is 397-4618.

Expectations about classroom etiquette and netiquette

- Students should engage in civil dialogue with others and keep a positive attitude and a growth mindset. Students should be willing to listen to others when they “speak” on their discussion posts and not engage in any form of hostile communication or excessively disruptive behavior (see policies on course etiquette and netiquette).
- Respect, empathy, kindness, and compassion for others will be a cornerstone in this course. Sociologists discuss things that are inherently controversial. Some of our class discussions may be energized at times, and it may become apparent that not everyone agrees. Regardless, we are all part of a larger community at MSU Texas, and I expect that each of you will do your very best to respect one another. We are all here to learn and listen and grow. Please know that if you feel triggered, there are campus support services available.

- When interacting with me and each other, please keep MSU Texas' core value of respect in mind at all times. Rude, abusive behavior will not be tolerated either in person or online. Online communications should display principles of netiquette and be civil in tone.

Extenuating Circumstances, Emergencies, Illness, and Academic Activities:

As your instructor, I reserve the right to approve or deny any excuse that you provide for missing work in this class. With that said, emergencies and other extenuating circumstances happen. The following count as emergencies and/or extenuating circumstances and should be evidenced by appropriate documentation:

- Written evidence of attending a mandatory university-sponsored activity (band, athletics, etc.)-documentation must come from college dean, Athletic Director, and/or Provost
- Official documentation of mandatory military service (i.e., deployment, etc.)
- Religious observance or Holy Day(s)
- Medical appointments related to pregnancy, pregnancy related complications, delivering early, or being restricted from activity for a certain amount of time due to pregnancy
- An acute or chronic illness, which prevents you from coming to campus or coming to class on time
- A written note from a medical clinic
- A written note from the MSU Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities
- A written note from a physician for a family member/loved one's illness
- You experience issues related to Title IX including but not limited to assault, stalking, or domestic violence
- Official documentation of required jury or court appearance
- Death of a family member/loved one/close relative
- Documentation of a motor vehicle accident, domestic disturbance, theft of your property, etc., which prevented you from coming to class
- Unexpected homelessness, food insecurity, job displacement, or a loss of otherwise reliable transportation-*please let me know about this as soon as possible*
- If you suddenly became an unexpected caregiver of someone critically ill
- If you are a law enforcement, corrections officer, or first responder and are faced with a verifiable/documented work emergency, which prevented you from coming to class (i.e. a transport, accident, fire, or major trauma etc.)

Though the aforementioned list is thorough, if you have reasons that you could not complete work related to other extreme/extenuating circumstances beyond your control that are not listed above, then please let me know as soon as possible. I want you to be successful in this class, and I will make EVERY EFFORT to help you do so. **Please communicate with me as soon as something has gone wrong, which will prevent you from turning in assignments.** MSU Texas has a team of dedicated people ready to help you stay in school, and my desire is to support your continued education. The MSU Texas Student Handbook has additional information on certain types of absences and what you should do next. Some of these are listed below.

Pregnant and Parenting Students

To support the academic success of pregnant and parenting students and students with pregnancy related conditions, the University offers reasonable modifications based on the student's particular needs. Any student who is pregnant or parenting a child up to age 18 or has conditions related to pregnancy, may contact MSU's designated Pregnancy and Parenting Liaison to discuss support available through the University. The Liaison can be reached by emailing ruby.garrett@msutexas.edu or calling 940-397-4500. Should a student communicate with me that they are pregnant or have a pregnancy related condition or may need additional resources related to pregnancy or parenting, I will communicate that student's information to the Title IX Coordinator, who will work with the student and others, as needed, to ensure equal access to the University's education program or activity.

A pregnant student, a parenting student, or a student with pregnancy related conditions may be provided with supportive measures, based on the student's individualized needs, analogous to those provided to a student with a temporary medical condition, and provided such supportive measures do not fundamentally alter the nature of an education program or activity. Such supportive measures may include, but are not limited to:

For pregnant students:

- (1) Providing breaks during class to express breast milk, breastfeed, or attend to health needs associated with pregnancy or related conditions, including eating, drinking, or using the restroom;
- (2) Excusing intermittent absences to attend medical appointments;
- (3) Providing access to online or homebound education, including the providing of access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures (to the extent such materials, recordings are made available to any student with an excused absence);
- (4) Facilitating changes in schedule or course sequence, including extensions of time for coursework and rescheduling of tests and examinations and/or providing opportunity to make up missed assignments/assessments (such time extensions shall be applied in the same manner as the University grants and provides ADA/504 accommodations for additional time);
- (5) Allowing a student to sit or stand, or carry or keep water nearby;
- (6) Offering counseling;
- (7) Facilitating changes in physical space or supplies (for example, access to a larger desk or a footrest);
- (8) Allowing the student to maintain a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals or unborn children;
- (9) Providing elevator access;
- (10) Facilitating a voluntary leave of absence from the University if the student is in good academic standing at the time the student takes a leave of absence, and facilitating a return to the student's degree or certificate program without being required to reapply for admission if the student remains in good academic standing; or
- (11) Making other necessary changes to policies, practices, or procedures.

For Parenting Students:

- (1) Facilitating priority registration to the extent the University provides early registration for any other group of students; or
- (2) Facilitating a voluntary leave of absence from the University if the student is in good academic standing at the time the student takes a leave of absence, and facilitating a return to the student's degree or certificate program without being required to reapply for admission.

Obligation to Report Sex Discrimination under State and Federal Law

Midwestern State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. State and federal law require University employees to report sex discrimination and sexual misconduct to the University's Office of Title IX. As a faculty member, I am required to report to the Title IX Coordinator any allegations, personally observed behavior, or other direct or indirect knowledge of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, or stalking, involving a student or employee. After a report is made, the office of Title IX will reach out to the affected student or employee in an effort to connect such person(s) with resources and options in addressing the allegations made in the report. You are also encouraged to report any incidents to the office of Title IX. You may do so by contacting:

Laura Hetrick

Title IX Coordinator
 Sunwatcher Village Clubhouse
 940-397-4213
laura.hetrick@msutexas.edu

You may also file an online report 24/7 at https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MSUTexas&layout_id=6

Should you wish to visit with someone about your experience in confidence, you may contact the MSU Counseling Center at 940-397-4618. For more information on the University's policy on Title IX or sexual misconduct, please visit <https://msutexas.edu/titleix/>

Resources

- Helpdesk hours: 8 AM-10 PM, 7 days a week
- Online Problem Reporting System <https://msutexas.edu/distance/oprs.php>
- Helpdesk direct phone: 940-397-3000
- Log-In instructions <https://msutexas.edu/distance/login-instructions.php>
- D2L access link: <https://d2l.msutexas.edu/>
- Advice to new online students <https://msutexas.edu/distance/new-online-students.php>
- Student Resources <https://msutexas.edu/distance/student-resources.php>

COURSE CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND REQUIRED ACTIVITIES

All assignments are due by 11:59pm CST on their respective due dates listed below. There is NO final exam in this class.

WEEK NUMBER	ITEMS TO READ/VIEW/DISCUSS	ITEMS DUE/ SUBMISSION FORMAT
Week 1: January 19-25	Syllabus, course calendar, and course policies Chapter 1 in Newman (2022) Videos: <i>Sociology Preview</i> ; <i>What is sociology</i> ; <i>Sociology & the Scientific Method</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board #1-Original Post due January 23 • DB #1 Peer Posts due January 25
Week 2: January 26-February 1st	Chapter 2 in Newman (2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz #1 due January 30 (Chapters 1-2 & videos)
Week 3: February 2-February 8	Chapter 3 in Newman (2022) Gun violence lecture notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board #2-Original Post due February 6 • DB#2 Peer posts due February 8 • Quiz #2 (Chapter 3 & Gun violence)
Week 4: February 9-15	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam #1 (Chapters 1-3, gun violence lecture, videos) due February 13

Week 5: February 16-22	Video-TEDTalk: <i>Life That Doesn't End With Death</i> (Kelli Swayze) Chapter 4 in Newman (2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project 1 (Culture) due February 20th
Week 6: February 23-March 1st	Chapter 5 in Newman (2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board #3-Original post due February 27 • DB #3 Peer posts due March 1st
Week 7: March 2-8	Chapter 6 in Newman (2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project #2 (World Bank) due March 6 • Quiz #3 (Chapters 4-6)
Week 8: March 9-15 (<i>Spring Break</i>)	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Week 9: March 16-22	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam #2 (Chapters 4-6) due March 20
Week 10: March 23-29	Chapter 7 in Newman (2022) Videos: <i>Theories of Marriage and Family</i> (Crash Course Sociology); <i>Stages of Family Life</i> (Crash Course Sociology); <i>The History of Marriage</i> (TEDed-Alex Gendler)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board #4- Original post due March 27 • DB #4 Peer posts due March 29
Week 11: March 30-April 5 (<i>Holiday Break April 2-4</i>)	Chapter 8 in Newman (2022) Video: <i>The Mark of a Criminal Record</i> (Pager)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Week 12: April 6-12	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam #3 (Chapters 7-8 & video) due April 10
Week 13: April 13-19	Chapter 10 in Newman (2022) Videos: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tammy's Story</i> • <i>Tammy's Story Update</i> (People Like Us) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz #4 (Chapters 10 & videos) due April 17
Week 14: April 20-26	Chapter 11 in Newman (2022) Social stratification notes (D2L)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project #3 due April 24
Week 15: April 27-May 3	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam #4 (Chapters 10-11, videos, & social stratification lecture) due May 1 • Optional extra credit due May 1

Week 16: May 4-May 10	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Paper Due May 8
Week 17: May 11-May 17	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

*Not all portions of each required chapter in the Newman (2022) textbook or required YouTube videos will be presented in class per the State of Texas. Students are allowed to skip certain content; they will not have any part of their grade attributed to this material.