



SYLLABUS: Introductory Sociology Spring 2025
SOCL 1133 Section 205, CRN = 23178,
T and R Moffett Library 113F 9:30-10:50

Contact Information

Instructor information: Isaac Christiansen, PhD, Associate Professor of Sociology
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Course Description

This course provides an overview of the study of human interaction, groups and society. Topics covered include culture, socialization, organizations, deviance, inequality, institutions, health, population, social change and research methods.

Course Overview and Objectives:

Sociology is the scientific study of society. Sociologists utilize the scientific method to observe, learn and make inferences on various levels of analysis, individual, group, organization, community, city, state, country, international, and global. Society is greater than the sum of its individuals. Socio-economic structures of the world exercise power over us whether or not we are aware of it. Inside this general framework, sociologists focus on different aspects of society to answer fundamental questions about the world that surrounds us.

This course will help you familiarize yourself with basic sociological concerns, concepts, theories and methods. We will explore the contributions of some classical sociological theorists, and the contributions of contemporary sociologists to our understanding of society. You will be introduced to structural-functionalism, conflict theory and symbolic interactionism. We will examine the epistemological advantages of the scientific method as compared with ‘common sense’ assumptions about the world that surrounds us. We will also examine population, social stratification, organizations, race and gender issues, and how history, economy and the political order affect society.

Instructional Objectives

1. Develop a sociological imagination- be able to see how social, economic, political structures affect our lives
2. Identify and describe major sociological theories; understand how these theories shape sociological analyses of social institutions, inequalities, and potential remedies to social, economic, political and environmental problems. Understand how inequality is structural and leads to unequal life chances.
3. Identify and describe sociological research methods and related ethical issues
4. Describe the nature of the individual, culture, and society
5. Be able to describe and explain social stratification and the various axes which social inequality may manifest itself: class, race and gender
6. Develop a sociological understanding of deviance and crime

Required Books:

Newman, David M. 2023. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life*. 14e. Sage College Publishing

Required Articles on D2L:

Hickel, Jason. 2017. "Where Did Poverty Come From? A Creation Story." Pp 63-98 in *The Divide: Global Inequality from Conquest to Free Markets*. W. W. Norton & Company. New York

Russell, James W. 1996. "Classical Sociological Theory" Pp. 94-125 in *Introduction to Macrosociology Second Edition*. Prentice Hall. Upper Saddle River, NJ.

Further Reading and Resources

Berry, Albert and John Serieux. 2006. "Riding the Elephants: The Evolution of World Economic Growth and Income Distribution at the End of the Twentieth Century." DESA Working Paper 27, United Nations.

Blauner, Robert. 1969. "Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt." *Social Problems* 16(4):393-408.

Blum, William. 2004. "Iraq 1990-1991: Desert Holocaust" Pp. 320 to 338 in *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*. Common Courage Press. Monroe, Maine

Blum, William. 2004. "Cuba 1959 to 1980s: The Unforgivable Revolution" Pp 184 to 193 in *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*. Common Courage Press. Monroe, Maine

Bonacich, Edna. 1972. "A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market." *American Sociological Review* 37(5):547-559.

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 1997. "Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation." *American Sociological Review* 62(3):465-480.

- Chomsky, Noam. 2006. *Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy*. Metropolitan Books
- Coburn, David. 2004. "Beyond the Income Inequality Hypothesis: Class Neo-Liberalism and Health Inequalities." *Social Science and Medicine* 58:41-56.
- Desmond, Mathew, Andrew V. Papachristos and David S. Kirk. 2016. "Police Violence and Citizen Reporting in the Black Community" *American Sociological Review* 18(5) 857-876
- Farmer, Paul. 2005. "Listening for Prophetic Voices: A Critique of Market Based Medicine". Pp. 160–178 in *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights and the New War on the Poor*. University of California Press. Berkley.
- Foster, John Bellamy and Robert W. McChesney. 2012. *The Endless Crisis: How Monopoly Finance Capitalism Produces Stagnation and Upheaval from the USA to China* Monthly Review Press. New York, NY
- Hagan, John, Joshua Kaiser, and Anna Hanson. 2016. "The Theory of Legal Cynicism and Sunni Insurgent Violence in Post-Invasion Iraq." *American Sociological Review* 81(2):316-346.
- Joab-Peterside, Sofri and Anna Zalik. 2008. "The Commodification of Violence in the Niger Delta". Pp 199-219 in *The Socialist Register 2009: Violence Today: Actually Existing Barbarism*. Edited by Leo Panitch and Colin Leys. London: Merlin Press and Monthly Review Press
- Kim, Changwan. 2015. "New Color Lines: Racial/Ethnic Inequality in Earnings among College-Educated Men" *The Sociological Quarterly* 56(1) 152-184
- Mandel, Hadas and Moshe Semyonov. 2016. "Going Back in Time? Gender Differences in Trends and Sources of the Racial Pay Gap" *American Sociological Review*. 81(5) 1039-1068.
- Marx, Karl [1847] 1978. "Wage Labour and Capital." Pp. 203-217 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert Tucker.
- Oxfam. 2021. "The Inequality Virus" *Oxfam Briefing Paper*. Oxford. U.K.
- Parenti, Michael. 2011. *The Face of Imperialism*. Paradigm Publishers. Boulder.
- Reiman, Jeffrey and Paul Leighton 2010. *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison: Ideology, Class, and Criminal Justice*. Ninth Edition ed. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Wilkinson, Richard G. and Kate Pickett. 2006. "Income Inequality and Population Health: A Review and Explanation of the Evidence." *Social Science and Medicine* 62:1768-1784.
- Williams, David R. and Chiquita Collins 2013. "Racial Residential Segregation: A Fundamental Cause of Racial Disparities in Health." Pp. 331-353 in *Race, Ethnicity and Health: A Public Health Reader*, edited by Thomas A. Laveist and Lydia A. Isaac. San Fransisco , CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Wolff, Richard. 2012. *Democracy at Work: A Cure for Capitalism* Haymarket Books
- Yates, Michael. 2012. "The Great Inequality." *Monthly Review* 63(10).

Basic skills necessary for the assimilation of sociological knowledge and success in this course:

Self-discipline:

You will need to be sufficiently dedicated and take the time necessary to not only read through all of the assigned material, but to truly learn and absorb it. You will need to ask yourself questions as you read to ensure that you can identify and recall the main points. After reading you should be able to answer questions related to the material and see its personal and/or social/economic/political implications.

**You are responsible for knowing the material in the text and other readings according to the syllabus schedule as well as the material covered in class lecture.* Chapters should be read by the time the material is covered in class. In this way you will gain more from the lecture, be prepared for quizzes, and reduce the need to cram for exams. Longer readings are generally scheduled over weekends to allow you to have more time to read through them. To test your own knowledge, you should be able to answer the questions at the end of each chapter correctly.

Attend every class.

Come prepared and pay attention in class, take appropriate notes according to your best learning style and method. No cell phone or computer use is allowed during class.

A willingness to challenge dominant beliefs and perceptions.

The sociologist must not fear information, data, and iconoclastic perspectives, which may clash with their preconceptions. The sociologist must not shy away from information, data or truths that may be distasteful to powers that be- or to their own preconceptions.

Course Schedule:

Date	Topics	Readings	Due dates
Week 1 1/21	Introduction	Syllabus	
1/23	Introduction and Sociological Theory	Newman 1	
Week 2 1/28	Sociological Theory	Russell	
1/30	Sociological Theory	Newman Pages 43-50	

Date	Topics	Readings	Due dates
Week 3 2/4	Research Methods	Newman 3	
2/6	Research Methods	Catch up on reading	Methods Assignment Due
Week 4 2/11	Social Interaction	Newman 6	
2/13	First Exam	First Exam	First Exam
Week 5 2/18	Groups and Organizations	Newman Pp 21-38	
2/20	Groups and Organizations	Newman Pp 272-297	
Week 6 2/25	Culture	Newman 39-42, Chapter 4	
2/27	Culture	Catch up on reading	Culture Assignment Due
Week 7 3/4	Family	Newman 7	
3/6	Family	Catch up on reading	

Date	Topics	Readings	Due dates
3/10-3/14	Spring Break	Spring Break	
Week 8 3/18	Exam II	Exam II	Exam II
3/20	Deviance	Newman 8	
Week 9 3/25	Deviance	Catch up on reading	
3/27	Deviance	Catch up on reading	
Week 10 4/1	Class Inequality	Newman 10	
4/3	Class Inequality	Catch up on reading	
Week 11 4/8	Finish class inequality begin - Global Stratification	Newman 346-352; Hickel	
4/10	Global Inequality	Catch up on reading	
Week 12 4/15	Global Inequality	Catch up on reading	
4/17	Holiday Break		
Week 13 4/22	EXAM III	EXAM III	

Date	Topics	Readings	Due dates
4/24	Race and ethnic inequality	Newman 11	
Week 14 4/29	Race and ethnic inequality	Catch up on reading	Current Event Assignment Due
5/1	Gender Inequality	Newman 12	
Week 15 5/6	Social Change	Newman 14	
5/8	Social Change		
5/13 at 8:00 a.m.	Fourth Exam	Fourth Exam	Fourth Exam

Grading Criteria:

Assignment weights:

Assignment	Points
Attendance	30
Quizzes (3*10 pts)	30
Methods Assignment	50
Culture Assignment	50
Current Event Assignment	50
Exams (4*50 pts)	200
Total	410

Grading Scale:

- A - 90% to 100%
- B - 80% to 89%
- C - 70%-79%
- D - 60%-69%
- F - 59% or below

Methods, Cultural and Current Event Assignments

Details for these assignments will be provided shortly after class begins.

Quizzes

There will be six quizzes given during the semester with the lowest score dropped.

Exams

There will be four exams. Exams will be multiple choice and fill in the blank.

Course Policies

Class Participation and attendance:

The attendance and participation of students is vital for a positive and rewarding learning experience for everyone. Your presence is expected and students will be evaluated on their sharing of thoughts and class contribution. You will miss vital information if you are not present and alert in class. In the end, it is your grade and your responsibility to know the information in the exams and to incorporate the information from class in your assignments. Individuals that miss class and/or are not engaged during class, tend to hand in poorer work, and do more poorly in exams.

No one who is truly ill should come to class. If you are sick, please send me an email and do not come to class. Attendance has a value of 30 points. After this day, six points will be deducted from this “bank” of 30 attendance points for each absence. You are allotted two absences (for which no explanation is necessary). Only under illness, extreme circumstances or university activities that conflict with class will this penalty be waved.

Show up on time and do not leave early. Excessive tardiness or leaving early may be counted as an absence at the professor’s discretion.

Cell phones and electronic devices: Generally not permitted during class time. Turn off or silence your cellular telephones before coming to class. Sending text messages is distracting and is strictly prohibited. Laptop use is generally prohibited during class time, although exceptions are given if used exclusively for note taking. No use of iPods or other listening devices will be tolerated. Please focus on the task. If you are on the phone during class, for example, watching a movie on your phone with earphones during the screening of a documentary, I may count you absent, because while you are physically in class, you are not mentally in class.

Late Assignments:

Late assignments will have up to 5 points deducted per day late. The penalty may be lower or waived for health concerns. However, with the exception of severe illness, after a week has gone by or more than half of the points have been eroded due to tardiness, grading begins at half credit. This often results in a virtual zero, once discounts for errors, grammar and other criteria are taken into account. Again, you will need to communicate with me via email:

isaac.christiansen@msutexas.edu

****No assignments may be handed in during finals week, except under the most extreme of circumstances. Do not sabotage your grade by handing in late work!***

Missed exam policy:

No missed exams will be allowed to be retaken without instructor approval based on *evidence* (doctor's note, university letter) that indicates the person missed the test due to a legitimate emergency, illness and/or school function. ***All missed exams must be made up within two weeks-with exceptions of a case of serious illness evaluated on a case by case basis.** The exam *may* also be different than the exam given to the rest of the class, and no bonus question will appear on the make-up exam. No exam may be made up after the week prior to final exams.

Syllabus modifications:

The professor reserves the right to make adjustments or improvements to the syllabus during the semester. You will be notified of all changes.

Cheating, Plagiarism, and Academic Dishonesty:

At no time will any form of cheating or plagiarism of any kind be allowed. Students are attending the university to learn and cannot do so if they do not complete their own work. Academic dishonesty is a serious ethical violation and will not be tolerated. I expect that these standards will be met, and I will hold students to them.

Plagiarism is according to the New Oxford Dictionary is "the practice of taking someone else's work and passing it off as your own". This means in academic practice copying someone else's work and ideas, without quoting and citing as appropriate.

Using AI to write your paper is obviously not allowed.

It will be treated the same as if you paid someone else to write your paper and you will most likely **receive a zero** if AI is detected. In the case of AI being detected on your paper, I will contact you and try to determine if the AI detection is a false positive. If the AI determination has been accurately assigned (and the detection system has a very low false positive rate) and indeed your paper has been determined not to have been written or researched by you, but that AI has done the work and you have not, you will receive a zero and it will be treated as academic dishonest. See your student handbook with further questions.

Potential consequences of plagiarism or academic dishonesty include failing the article review, assignment, exam and/or quiz at a minimum. Other consequences include failing or being dropped from the entire course and the filing of the Academic Misconduct Form that will remain on your college records.

Americans with Disabilities Act:

If a student has an established disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADAAA) and would like to request accommodation, that student should please contact me as soon as possible. Any student requesting accommodations should first contact Disability Support Services at 940-397-4140 in room 168 Clark Student Center to document and coordinate reasonable accommodations if they have not already done so.

Campus Concealed Carry

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the [University's Campus Carry Webpage](#).

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/>