

Course Syllabus: Introductory Sociology

SOCL 1133, Section 102

Fall 2025

Instructor: Dr. Wesley Cohoon

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Course Modality: Face-to-Face and classroom excursions

Meeting Times: 11:00 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.

Class Location: Bollin Hall, 316

Office: Prothro-Yeager, 0-134

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:55 a.m. to 1:55 p.m. and Fridays

11:55 a.m. to 12:55 p.m.

Course Introduction

Course Quote

"100% of customers are people. 100% of employees are people. If you don't understand people, you don't understand business." – Simon Sinek

Course Description

This course is designed to provide students new to sociology with the foundations of the discipline. Students will be introduced to the scientific study of human groups, organizations, and societies and will examine the major sociological questions and approaches to studying them. Subjects discussed will include culture, social stratification, race/ethnicity, gender, marriage and family, education, religion, social organizations, and social theories.

Instruction will be provided through multiple methodologies to provide a more comprehensive learning environment and an introduction to the various ways of learning and the use of sociological data and collection.

Please note that sociology is the study of collectives, and as such, personal experience is sometimes contrary to research studies. This does not invalidate your experience or the research. Please proceed through this course with an open mind and a willingness to see society objectively as an "outsider."

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Book: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life, 14th Edition

Author: Newman

ISBN: 9781071849552

Publisher: Sage Publications

Who is the instructor?

My career has included a wide range of professional experiences, from teaching at universities to working in businesses, nonprofits, hospitals, and governmental agencies. My work has united my diverse professional journey with my love of and curiosity for people. Although I have changed careers many times, sociology has been at the core of all my careers because I have dealt with people.

I am married with five children. My youngest three are 17, 15, and 13. My two oldest kids are adults who are both married and have children. We have three dogs at my house—Cupcake, Oreo, and Waffles. I love spending time with my family and hanging out.

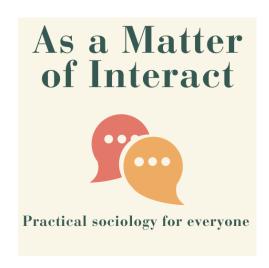
I have earned two doctorates, two master's, and a bachelor's degree. Part of my research focus is on applying sociology in the real world. I have a sociology podcast called "As a Matter of Interact: Practical Sociology for Everyone." I am a Certified Clinical Sociologist through the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology and serve as an Associate Editor of the Journal of Applied Social Sciences.

Teaching Philosophy

I want to come alongside students and help them discover themselves and their social world. In addition to providing information, I want to listen and learn from others and their experiences. While I care about students, I also want them to grow and experience some level of discomfort. While many people do not like tension and conflict, we can experience growth through conflict. People need to feel some stress and have their existing knowledge challenged to gain new understanding. I encourage students to engage in an action-reflection model where they can learn, apply their knowledge, reflect on their experience, and repeat the process. Lastly, learning is difficult, but it is also fun. I welcome playfulness, humor, and student interaction throughout class time.

Additional Sociological Resource

To learn more about sociology and its practical applications, check out my biweekly podcast, <u>As a Matter of Interact: Practical Sociology for Everyone</u>. The podcast helps people understand and evaluate social interactions, relationships, human behaviors, and systems. Check out the podcast to better navigate your life and make informed decisions as you practically apply sociology.



Instructor Policies

Assignment Submission

Submit all your assignments via D2L, and they need to be in Word or PDF. Students are responsible for ensuring assignments are submitted on time and in an accessible format.

Assignment Feedback

I will provide assignment feedback within seven days of the due date. My feedback will be provided in the form of comments on the assignment in D2L. You are welcome to come and talk to me about any of the assignments and feedback that I offer. Your grades will be posted in D2L.

Email Communication with the Instructor

Please follow the template below when sending me an email. Failure to follow this format will result in a response from me stating, "Please read the syllabus and follow the email formatting instructions." Students are welcome to ask questions, but I want them to first check the syllabus for the answer before asking or clarifying a question.

Dr. Cohoon

My name is (Xyz), and I am a student in your SOCL 1133, 101: Introductory Sociology class this fall semester. I am emailing to ask you about (blank). I looked in the syllabus, and it states (blank) about my question.

Thanks,

(Your Name)

Late Work

All assignments are due in D2L before 11:59 p.m. on their listed due date in Word or PDF. If the assignment does not upload, I do not have it. The student is responsible for ensuring that their assignments are uploaded. Corrupted documents do not count, and you need to ensure that the assignment is uploaded in the proper format. I will deduct ten percent per day for late assignments. There are no exceptions, and all late work will be deducted 10% for every day it is late. This late policy is generous, and students can still earn a good grade on an assignment when it is late.

The three tests and one final essay exam are the exception to this late work policy. The tests and exam will open at 12:01 a.m. on their due date and close at 11:59 p.m. Students, therefore, have a 24-hour window to complete these assignments. On rare occasions, I will let a student retake the test. However, the 10% deduction per day will still apply. The final essay exam can only be two days late because I will submit final grades on the third day.

Attendance

Presence is important. There is a high correlation between attendance and class grades. In-class attendance is required. If a student is going to miss class, they need to email the instructor. Students who miss more than 20% of the classes may receive a reduction of a full letter grade. Students who miss more than 30% of the classes can either be dropped or receive an F in the course. Students with excessive absences, or those who fail to notify the instructor of class absences, can be dropped at the instructor's discretion.

Plagiarism

This course prioritizes original student thinking, reflection, and engagement with sociological concepts. Plagiarism is the appropriation, theft, purchase, or obtaining by any means of another's work, and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of that work as one's own, offered for credit. Appropriation includes the quoting or paraphrasing of another's work without giving credit. Using AI technology (like ChatGPT) to write assignments is considered plagiarism, and it undermines the purpose of the assignment. Students who plagiarize can receive a zero on the assignment and face additional academic consequences. However, students are welcome and encouraged to use

proofreading applications like Grammarly to make minor grammatical changes. Do not rely on Grammarly or any other software to rewrite or rephrase your paper.

All written assignments will be evaluated through the Turnitin software program. This program identifies similarities between assignments that could indicate plagiarism. Another feature of Turnitin is that it detects if a student used AI to help write their paper. Turnitin will give me a percentage indicating how much of the paper was written using AI.

My policy on AI usage is to deduct the AI Turnitin percentage from the overall paper. You will receive a zero if Turnitin indicates that your paper was written using 100% AI. You will receive a zero. If Turnitin indicates that your paper was written using 32% AI, I will deduct 32% from your score, which means the best grade you could receive on that assignment is a 68.

Do not use AI to write your paper, and I do not recommend that you consult AI when writing your papers. The purpose of the writing assignments is for you to demonstrate your knowledge of the subject and how you integrate the sociological concepts with the "real world."

Evaluation and Grading

Cultural Assignments - 21%

Students will have three assignments this semester that test their intercultural knowledge, ability to think critically, and utilize their sociological imaginations. Each of these assignments is worth 7 points, for a total of 21 points towards the final grade. The assignment details are listed below.

Cultural Assignment #1: World Bank Assignment

Students will get hands-on with real global data, practice basic social research skills, and explain what the numbers might mean sociologically—without getting lost in the weeds.

By the end you should be able to:

- Find and correctly select key World Bank indicators.
- Organize cross-national data in a small, clear comparison table.
- Make a short, evidence-based sociological explanation using the data.
- Recognize limits of the measures (validity, comparability, and context).

Compare four countries: Students will select four countries

- United States (anchor, High income)
- One High-income peer (your choice)
- One Upper-middle-income country (your choice)
- One Low-income country (your choice)

Indicators (use these exact names in the World Bank Data site):

- School enrollment, primary (% net)
- Life expectancy at birth, total (years)
- GNI per capita, PPP (current international \$) ← PPP adjusts for price level differences and is better for comparing living standards across countries. The Atlas method exists, but you do not need to collect it. Use the latest available year for each indicator in each country (the year can differ). Always record the year next to the value.

Steps to Complete the Assignment

- Go to the World Bank Countries & Economies
- Browse by Income Level in the right sidebar to find your countries.
- For each country:
 - Search for each of the three indicators above.
 - Click Details to confirm you selected the correct series and check for definitions/notes.
 - Hover over the latest year to find the value and record of both value and year.
- Enter the data into your table (see template below).
- Answer the analysis questions in numbered order.

First Part of the Assignment: Data Table

- Create a simple grid using the template below. Include values and years.
- The table must include:
 - Country
 - School enrollment, primary (% net)
 - Life expectancy at birth, total (years)
 - o GNI per capita, PPP (current international \$)

Table 1: Four Country Comparisons

Country	School enrollment, primary (% net)	Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	GNI per capita, PPP (current international \$)
United States			
High-income			
country peer			
Upper middle			
country peer			
Low-income			
country			

Second Part of the Assignment: Data Analysis

Answer the following questions. Make sure to bullet or number your answers, so I can assess them properly:

- 1. What stands out about enrollment, life expectancy, and PPP GNI per-capita?
- 2. One plausible sociological factor (e.g., demographic structure, policy, inequality, conflict, disease burden, migration, education systems).
- 3. Any data caveat (missing years, definition notes from "Details," etc.).
- 4. Notice the patterns across income levels. What do you notice about primary enrollment and life expectancy across High vs. Upper-middle vs. Low income?
- 5. Notice the living standards. How does GNI per capita, PPP align with the health and education indicators? Any mismatches? Why might those occur (inequality, state capacity, recent shocks, age structure, urban/rural variation)?
- 6. Take note of the U.S. in context. Relative to your High-income peer and the High-income group trend line, what is typical vs. unusual about the United States?
- 7. Remember that measurement matters. Briefly note a limitation of these indicators (e.g., net vs. gross enrollment, PPP vs. Atlas method, data lags) and why that matters for interpretation.

Grading Criteria for World Bank

Well-written— 10%

 Students numbered their answers and answered the questions in order. – 10%

Formatted Correctly— 20%

- The assignment was submitted in Word or PDF document with oneinch margins. – 5%
- The font was 12-point, Times New Roman. 5%
- The student created a table and used appropriate data. 10%

Demonstrated Sociological Understanding – 70%

- The student critically engaged question one. 10%
- The student critically engaged question two. 10%
- The student critically engaged question three. 10%
- The student critically engaged question four. 10%
- The student critically engaged question five. 10%
- The student critically engaged question six. 10%
- The student critically engaged question seven. 10%

Cultural Assignment #2: Intercultural Knowledge Paper

The second assignment is the Intercultural Knowledge Paper: Life Doesn't End with Death. For this assignment students will watch the Kelli Swazey "Life That Doesn't End with Death" TED Talk video. The video is around 14 minutes, and it can be found at the following link: TED Talk Life That Doesn't End with Death

After you watch the video, answer the following four questions. Each answer should be at least one paragraph. This paper is due by October 27th.

- 1. Discuss deaths and funerals in Tana Toraja. Be sure to discuss this as a gradual transition, social process.
- 2. How are their experiences of death different from our own (cultural vs biological etc.)? You will need to watch all of this to the end to fully understand.
- 3. What does Kelli Swazey say we can gain from seeing physical death from not only a biological process, but as part of the greater human story? Do you agree? Why?
- 4. How do you feel about their way of expressing enduring relationships as they do, and that we do not do?
- 5. Do you think that if you spent time in this culture that you would be able to understand it as Kelli Swazey does? Explain.

Grading Criteria for Intercultural Knowledge Paper:

Well-written— 20%

- Student used sentences to answer the questions 5%
- Students answered the questions using at least one paragraph 5%
- Grammar and mistake-free 10%

Formatted Correctly— 30%

- Word or PDF document with one-inch margins 10%
- The font is 12-point, Times New Roman 10%
- Paragraphs are double-spaced with 0 points before and 0 points after 10%

Demonstrated an Ability to Think Sociologically – 50%

 Each question is worth 10 percent for a total of 50. I am looking that the student incorporated a knowledge of cultural self-awareness, cultural worldview frameworks, empathy, and ability to suspend personal values and judgements.

Cultural Assignment #3: Current Event Analysis

The third assignment is the Current Event Analysis. For this assignment students will choose a current event from a reputable news source to analyze. The event cannot be older than six months. Part of this assignment includes the student's ability to select an event. This paper needs to be 750 to 1,250 words (2.5 to 4.5 pages). This paper is due by November 16th.

Grading Criteria for Current Event Analysis:

Well-written— 40%

- Paper is 750 to 1,250 words (2.5 to 4.5 pages) 10%
- Grammar and mistake-free 10%
- Student summarized the article in one, introductory paragraph 10%
- Logical and consistent argument 5%
- Paragraphs are appropriate length 5%

Formatted Correctly— 20%

- Word or PDF document with one-inch margins 2.5%
- The font is 12-point, Times New Roman 2.5%
- Paragraphs are double-spaced with 0 points before and 0 points after 10%
- Paragraphs are indented 5%
- Student listed the document source (author, date, page#, title, news source) 5%

Demonstrated an Ability to Think Sociologically – 40%

- The current event was from a reputable news source and less than six months old – 10%
- Student use, apply, and bolded at least 10 sociological concepts in their analysis – 20%
- Students provided their own conclusions to the argument 10%

Socialization Paper - 15 %

The assignment is to watch the documentary "The Mask You Live In." It is an excellent documentary, and it illustrates the socialization process along with concepts related to Mead, Cooley, and the Looking-Glass Self. You will watch the documentary outside of class. You can usually find the documentary on YouTube for free, but you can also stream it/watch it on Kanopy, which you access through the MSU Library. Here are step-by-step instructions:

- 1. Go to Kanopy
- 2. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the "Get Started" button under the words, "Sign up today for free through your public library or university."
- 3. Click the "Find Your University" button on the page.
- 4. Type "Midwestern State University" under the Find Your University search bar.
- 5. Click the "Log in to MSU" button.
- 6. Enter your MSU Username and MSU Password
- 7. I believe the next page will give you an option to sign up, and you can skip that step if you want.
- 8. Now you should be on the Kanopy main page. Type in "The Mask You Live In" in the search bar.

- 9. The "Mask You Live In" movie should be listed along with several other films. Click "The Mask You Live In," then hit the "Play" button.
- 10. The movie is a little over one hour and thirty minutes.

After you watch the movie, answer the following four questions. Each answer should be at least one paragraph. This paper is due by October 19th.

- 1. What were your thoughts and feelings about "The Mask You Live In?" Did the documentary resonate with any of your experiences of socialization? If so, how?
- 2. Even if you did not hear the same phrases as the people in the documentary, what messages of socialization and identity did you receive as a child?
- 3. How does "The Mask You Live In" reflect socialization, Mead, Cooley, or the Looking Glass Self?
- 4. Which agent of socialization has the most impact on your life at the moment? Why and how so?

Please do not wait until the last minute to watch this movie. Usually, I respond to emails quicker, but my policy is that I will respond within two business days. If you wait until or right before it is due, I may not get back to you in time. Also, while I love sociology and people, I am deficient in most technical matters. You are responsible for finding and watching the movie and submitting questions on or before the due date.

Grading Criteria for Socialization Paper:

Well-written— 30%

- Student used sentences to answer the questions 5%
- Students answered the questions using at least one paragraph 5%
- Grammar and mistake-free 10%
- Logical and consistent argument 10%

Formatted Correctly— 30%

- Word or PDF document with one-inch margins 10%
- The font is 12-point, Times New Roman 10%
- Paragraphs are double-spaced with 0 points before and 0 points after 10%

Demonstrated an Ability to Think Sociologically – 40%

• Each question is worth 10% for a total of 40. I am looking for how the students incorporate the sociological theories with their lived experiences.

Tests - 39%

Students will take three tests this semester. The tests come directly from the textbook and represent basic sociological knowledge. Each test will be 25 multiple-choice questions. Test 1 is over Chapters 1-5, Test 2 focuses on Chapters 6-10, and Test 3 is from Chapters 11-13. The questions are randomly selected from several hundred options, so the tests should all be different. Students will take and submit the tests through D2L and will use LockDown Browser and Respondus Monitor. Each test is worth 13 points, for a total of 39 points.

Test 1 is due on October 12th, Test 2 is on November 9th, and Test 3 is scheduled for November 30th. The test opens at 12:01 a.m. on the due date, and students have until 11:59 p.m. to submit it. The tests close and cannot be taken at a later time. In rare cases, I can reschedule the tests after the due date. However, students will still receive the 10% deduction for each day it is late. Students are responsible for communicating with and contacting me.

Final Essay Exam - 25%

Students will take a final exam to assess their knowledge of the course materials. The final exam consists of 5 essay questions that are randomly selected from 40 questions, so each test should be unique. The final essay exam requires LockDown Browser and Respondus Monitor.

The exam is scheduled for Wednesday, December 8th. I will open the test first thing on December 10th, and it must be completed before 11:59 p.m. In rare cases, I can reschedule the Final Exam up to two days after the due date. Students are responsible for communicating with and contacting me. Two days after the exam, students who have not taken it will receive a zero on the assignment.

Grading

Table 1: Total Points for Assignments

Assignments	
Cultural Assignment #1	7
Cultural Assignment #2	7
Cultural Assignment #3	7
Test 1: Chapters 1-5	13
Test 2: Chapters 6-10	13
Test 3: Chapters 11-14	13
Socialization Paper	15
Final Essay Exam	25
Total Points	

Table 2: Total Points for Final Grade

Grade	Points
Α	90% and above
В	80%-89%
С	70%-79%
D	60%-69%
F	Below 60%

Course Schedule

This calendar represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunities. Any changes will be communicated clearly and as soon as possible.

Table 3: Class Assignments and Due Dates

Date 25 th 27 th
27 th
20th
29 th
31 st
t 1 st
t 3 rd
t 5 th
t 7 th
t 8 th
t 10 th
t 12 th
t 14 th
t 14 th
t 15 th
t 17 th
t 19 th
t 21 st
t 22 nd
t 24 th
t 26 th
t 28 th
t 28 th
t 29 th
1 st
3 rd
5 th
6 th
8 th

7	Fri Class Participation	Oct 10 th
7	Read Ch. 7: Building Social Relationships	Oct 12 th
7	Test 1: Chapters 1-5	Oct 12 th
8	Mon Class Participation	Oct 13 th
8	No Class on Wednesday: watch "The Mask You Live In"	Oct 15 th
8	No Class on Friday: watch "The Mask You Live In"	Oct 17 th
8	Read Ch. 8: Constructing Difference	Oct 19 th
8	Socialization Paper: The Mask You Live In	Oct 19 th
9	Mon Class Participation	Oct 20 th
9	Wed Class Participation	Oct 22 nd
9	Fri Class Participation	Oct 24 th
9	Read Ch. 9: Structure of Society	Oct 26 th
10	Mon Class Participation	Oct 27 th
10	Wed Class Participation	Oct 29 th
10	Fri Class Participation	Oct 31st
10	Read Ch. 10: The Architecture of Stratification	Nov 2 nd
11	Mon Class Participation	Nov 3 rd
11	Wed Class Participation	Nov 5 th
11	Fri Class Participation	Nov 7 th
11	Read Ch. 11: Race and Ethnicity	Nov 9 th
11	Test 2: Chapters 6-10	Nov 9 th
12	Mon Class Participation	Nov 10 th
12	Wed Class Participation	Nov 12 th
12	Fri Class Participation	Nov 14 th
12	Read Ch. 12: Sex and Gender	Nov 16 th
12	Cultural Assignment #3	Nov 16 th
13	Mon Class Participation	Nov 17 th
13	Wed Class Participation	Nov 19 th
13	Fri Class Participation	Nov 21 st
13	Read Ch. 13: Demographic Dynamics	Nov 23 rd
14	Mon Class Participation	Nov 24 th
14	Wed Class Participation	Nov 26 th
14	No Class on Friday: Thanksgiving Break	Nov 28 th
14	Test 3: Ch. 14: Architecture of Change	Nov 30 th
15	Mon Class Participation	Dec 1 st
15	Wed Class Participation	Dec 3 rd
15	Fri Class Participation	Dec 5 th
15	Final Exam	Dec 8 th

University and Class Policies

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of

communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into <u>D2L</u> through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Student Handbook

Refer to: Student Handbook

Change to Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees, and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. However, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Service for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to Disability Support Services.

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: Campus Carry Rules and Policies

Smoking and Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit Campus Carry.

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit MSUReady – Active Shooter. Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled "Run. Hide. Fight." which may be electronically accessed via the University police department's webpage: "Run. Hide. Fight."

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University MSU Catalog

Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

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 individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

Office of Student Conduct