

SOCI 101:005
Dey Hall 305
TuTh 12:30 - 1:45

Sociological Perspectives

UNC-CH

FALL 2016

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Office Hours: by Appointment

For simple questions, email is the fastest way to reach me. I will also be in the classroom 5 minutes before class starts, and so you can talk to me then. After class, you can also walk back to my office with me. For questions or problems with course material or assignments please make an appointment to meet.

Important Dates at a Glance:

- ◇ ***9/22 Midterm 1***
- ◇ ***10/18 Midterm 2***
- ◇ ***10/20 Fall Break—No Class***
- ◇ ***11/8 Election Day—No Class***
- ◇ ***11/24 Thanksgiving—No Class***
- ◇ ***12/6 Last Day of Class***
- ◇ ***12/9 FRIDAY Final Exam 12pm***

Seeing the world as a Sociologist

- Did you know the average household income of the top 1 percent is \$1,264,065 and is \$30,997 for the bottom 90 percent?
 - Did you know blacks lag behind whites in home-ownership, household wealth and median income, even when controlling for levels of education?
 - Did you know that women earn 80 cents for every dollar that men earn?
- Why study sociology? Because what you think and do as an individual is affected by what is happening in groups, organizations, cultures, societies, and the world. It offers you a new way to understand the connections between individuals and society, along with perspectives on the impact of social forces on individual behavior. This course is intended to help you use a sociological perspective to enriching your personal, academic, civic, and professional life. This course serves as an introduction to “thinking sociologically” and offers you an opportunity to develop a way of thinking about social phenomena that you may find useful and informative long after this course has ended.

BY THE END OF THIS COURSE YOU WILL:

1. Understand the prevailing sociological concepts and perspectives
2. Be able to articulate sociological concepts from a variety of angles, drawing on contrasting ideas/viewpoints
3. Apply concepts and theories, and critically evaluate the issues that we read/hear about daily in the news and media

How to succeed in this course:

Come to class (and participate): Success in this course requires regular attendance. There will be questions in the test from class, as well as periodic in class assignments

Come to class prepared: This means having read and synthesized course materials before class.

Don't wait until it's too late: If a problem arises, make an appointment to see me in my office ASAP. If you wait until the end of the semester, there will be very little I can do to help you (and your grade).

Class Rules and Policies:

Class participation: I expect you will attend every class prepared to participate in class discussions and group activities; this is not a lecture course. Failure to attend class or arriving late may impact your ability to achieve course objectives, which could affect your course grade. An absence, excused or unexcused, does not relieve you of any course requirement.

Use of electronic devices: Technology can be a wonderful learning tool, but also a huge distraction. I strongly encourage you to power down during class and take notes by hand. If you prefer, you may use a laptop or tablet to take notes. However, I require that if you do so that you will agree to turn off your wireless connection at the beginning of each class. I will advise you in advance if you need to bring your laptop for a class activity. Texting and the general use of cellphones are disruptive to me and to your fellow classmates and are therefore prohibited during class.

Assignments: Submit all assignments in-person printed at the beginning of class **AND** on Sakai via the Assignments tab. Assignments should be in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) format. All assignments are due at the start of the class period (unless otherwise noted). If at any time during this course you have a personal emergency that impacts your ability to submit your work, let me know as soon as possible.

Academic integrity: UNC has had a student-led honor system for over 100 years. Academic integrity is at the heart of Carolina and we all are responsible for upholding the ideals of honor and integrity. The student-led Honor System is responsible for adjudicating any suspected violations of the Honor Code. I will report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the honor court. Information, including your responsibilities as a student is outlined in the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance. Your full participation and observance of the Honor Code is expected.

Disability services: Students in this course seeking accommodations to disabilities must first consult with the Office of Disability Services and follow the instructions of that office for obtaining accommodations.

Language: We will be discussing issues related to race, class, gender, sexuality, and nationality in this class. Please choose words that respect the diversity of your classmates, this university, and the community in which we live. If you are unsure what may be appropriate, please ask me.

Required Texts

1. Ritzer, George. 2016. *Essentials of Sociology*. 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications ISBN: 9781506340173 or ISBN: 9781483380896
2. All other readings will be posted on SAKAI

ALL READINGS ARE REQUIRED

Reminder: Required ≠ Recommended

Required — Officially compulsory, or otherwise considered essential; indispensable.

Recommended — To advise; suggest (a choice, course of action, etc.) as appropriate, beneficial, or the like.

Expectations and Evaluation: Assignments and Grading

Weekly Reading Notes (25%) and Discussion Questions (10%): 35%

Reading notes and discussion questions are key to your success in this course. Reading notes and answers to discussion questions will be due on Tuesdays at the beginning of class. Please follow the format of the sample I gave in the beginning of class. You are required to bring a printed copy of the reading notes AND submit the notes in Sakai in the Assignment tab. You are not required to bring printed copies of discussion questions to class but will be required to submit the answers in Sakai in the Assignments Tab. Reading notes will be worth 25 points and Discussion questions will be worth 10 points. Please note: If you don't turn in a printed copy of the reading notes at the beginning of class (only submit in Sakai) the max you can earn for that week is 15 points. Do not ask others to turn in your printed notes. In the event that I catch somebody turning notes other than their own, both will receive 0 points for that week.

In-Class Assignment/Quizzes: 10%

Throughout the term, we will have brief in-class writing assignments and quizzes based on the readings and our discussions. These assignments are intended to encourage you to think deeply about the material and to come to class prepared.

Mid-term exams: 30% (15% each)

The mid-term exams will consist of approximately 50 multiple-choice questions. All class discussions, lectures, films and activities are fair game, as well as all assigned readings.

Final exam: 25%

The final exam will cover the concepts and debates covered in class discussions, films, and assigned readings and will be multiple-choice. The final will be cumulative and closed-book. It is a UNC rule to have a final in this course.

GRADING SCALE:

A	94-100	C	73-76.99
A-	90-93.99	C-	70-72.99
B+	87-89.99	D+	67-69.99
B	83-86.99	D	60-66
B-	80-82.99	F	Below 60
C+	77-79.99		

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What can you expect from me?

- 1) I will make an effort to help you learn the class material. In other words, I will be prepared for class.
- 2) I will be available to you outside of class should you desire help, clarification, etc.
- 3) When you are speaking, you will have my undivided attention.

Do you have more details on your grading policy?

Yes! I am glad you asked. I do not grade on a curve, I do not negotiate grades and I do not grade on the basis of need. If you need to earn a certain grade in this course (e.g. to maintain a scholarship, to graduate, or to maintain your athletic status), then it is your responsibility to earn that grade. Do not ask me to change your final grade unless a mathematical error has been made.

Do you allow the use of laptops?

Yes, but I reserve the right to change my mind if they become a distraction.

How about cell phones?

Do you really need to ask? No.

How do I get an "A" in your class?

For starters, attend class, and take careful notes. Read assigned readings before class. Be an active learner. Ask questions during lectures; everyone will benefit from your questions. Find another student or several students in class to study with for the exams. Start preparing for exams several days in advance. While these suggestions don't guarantee an "A", students who follow these suggestions tend to succeed in my courses.

***"Man's mind, once stretched by a new idea,
never regains its original dimensions."***

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Course Calendar and Reading List

ANY CHANGES IN CALENDAR WILL BE ANNOUNCED ON THE SAKAI COURSE WEBSITE

Week 1

Reading—Ritzer: Chapter 1—Introduction to Sociology In the Global Age

Discussion Question:

1. C. Wright Mills made the connection and distinction between “public issues” and “private troubles.” How is divorce an example of a “private trouble?” How is divorce an example of a “public issue?”

August 23rd—What is Sociology and Why is it Important?

August 25th—Sociological Imagination, Micro-Macro Relationships, and Social Construction of Reality

Week 2

Reading—Ritzer: Chapter 2—Thinking About and Researching the Social World

Discussion Questions:

1-Compare and contrast the way theft would be explained by a structural-functionalist, a conflict theorist, and a symbolic interactionist. What would each say about why someone steals? What would each say about how the crime is punished? What would each say about the impact on the community when theft happens?

August 30th—Theorist and Theories

September 1—Researching in the Social World

Week 3

Reading—Ritzer: Chapter 3—Culture

Discussion Questions:

1-How have the culture wars between conservatives and liberals affected popular culture? What role is this war playing in the current presidential election?

2-How might ethnocentrism in America affect our attitudes toward unrest in the Middle East? How do these ethnocentric American views affect how we are perceived by Arab and Muslim countries?

September 6—Culture, Values and Norms

September 8—Emerging Issues in Culture

Week 4

Reading—Ritzer: Chapter 5—Organizations, Societies, and the Global Domain

Discussion Questions:

1-Some argue that WikiLeaks, by revealing the secrets of nation-states, strengthens democracy? Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

2-Beck talks about industrial and risk societies. How have these differing views of society played out in the current presidential election?

September 13—Organizations and Bureaucracies

September 15—States, Nations, and Nation-States

Week 5

September 20—Catch Up

September 22—Midterm #1

Week 6

Reading—Ritzer: Chapter 6—Deviance and Crime

Discussion Questions:

1-Deviance is defined as “any action, belief, or human characteristic that members of a society or social group consider a violation of group norms for which the violator is likely to be censured or punished.” In what ways is obesity punished or censured in our society? Give three examples.

2-How might African Americans being assumed by many in American culture to be criminals affect the interactions between a police officer and a young black man being stopped for a traffic violation?

September 27—Theories of Deviance

September 29—The Criminal Justice System

Week 7

Reading—Ritzer: Chapter 7—Social Stratification in the United States and Globally

Discussion Questions:

1-Explain why and in what ways wealth and poverty are caused by laws, policies, and social structure, rather than simply individual traits, such as hard work?

2-Why is upward social mobility so much more difficult today than in past decades? Explain what social structures, policies, and laws might affect your future potential for upward mobility.

October 4—Social Stratification

October 6—Social Stratification

Week 8

Reading—Ritzer: Chapter 8—Race and Ethnicity

Discussion Questions:

1-It is projected that by the year 2042, whites will be less than 50% of the population. They will still be the largest racial group in the U.S., but they will no longer be a statistical majority. What impact (if any) do you think this will have on race relations? Why?

2-Discuss the relationships among the concepts of racism, stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. What specifically makes them distinct from one another?

October 11—Concepts of Race and Ethnicity

October 13—Racism

Week 9

October 18—Midterm #2

October 20 – No Class Fall Break

Week 10

Reading—Ritzer: Chapter 9—Gender and Sexuality

Discussion Questions

1– According to US Census Bureau, women earn 80 cents to every dollar earned by white men. Give three possible sociological explanations as to why?

2-How might image portrayals of women in the media lead to gender stereotyping? Give examples.

October 25—Gender and Work

October 27—Gender Issues Globally

Week 11

Reading—Ritzer: Chapter 12—Politics and the Economy

Discussion Questions:

1-Discuss what impact you think the Tea Party, Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter, “Bernie Bros” and other social movements have on the “race to the center” we generally see in the Republican and Democratic parties?

2-Given the amount of money in politics, do you think we are still a democratic country that is ruled by the people? Why or why not?

3-What impact do you think the Electoral College has on people’s participation in presidential elections? What is the difference between living in a “swing state” compared to a state that historically always votes for the Democratic or Republican candidate?

November 1—Power and Politics

November 3—Race, Gender and Politics

Week 12

Discussion Questions:

1-What distinguishes the concern sociologists would have in studying the Great Recession from the concerns economists would have?

2-Imagine you were a cobbler (shoe maker) during the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. How might the changes that are taking place in manufacturing affect your life and livelihood?

November 8

Election Day—No Class

November 10—Work in the United States

Week 13

Migration and Immigration

Readings in Sakai under Resources tab in Week 13 Readings Folder

Discussion Question

1—Does immigration hurt American workers? 1) Summarize David Card's argument as to why immigrants do not hurt native wages. 2) Summarize George Borjas's argument as to why immigrants do hurt native wages. 3) Whose argument do you think is more persuasive? Why?

November 15—Immigration in the United States

November 17—Immigration and Work

Week 14

Reading—Ritzer: Chapter 10—Family

Discussion Questions:

1-With the recent Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage in all 50 states, how do you see those who are against same-sex marriage resisting this change? Give three examples.

2-According to structural-functionalists, why are families so important? Give at least four reasons and explain. What are some of the criticisms of the structural-functional theory of marriage and the family?

November 22 – Marriage and Family

November 24 – No Class, Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15

Reading—Ritzer: Chapter 11—Education and Religion

Discussion Questions:

1-From a sociological perspective, What do you think is the difference between earning your degree at a traditional school compared to an online school?

2-Some religious leaders suggest that science is the enemy of religion. Do you think this is true? Why or why not? (Hint: Consider what science tries to explain versus what religion tries to explain.)

November 29 – Education, Inequality and Employment

December 1 – Religion and Its Role in Society

Week 16

Reading—TBD

December 6—Special Topic: Technology, Globalization and Work

FINAL EXAM – FRIDAY - December 9th 12:00pm
