

Introduction to Sociology
Southwest Minnesota State University
SMSU College Now Program
Nikolas Proehl, Supervising Professor

Class Hour:
Location:
Instructor Office:
Phone:
Email:
Office Hours:

I. Course Objectives

This course is designed to provide you with a sociological perspective, and to help you develop a critical framework from which to view, understand, and interpret society. The promise of sociology is to ignite our imaginations, developing what C. Wright Mill's termed a "sociological imagination", enabling us to see society in a different way. Using our sociological imagination, we will be better able to understand the connection between the individual and society. The value of sociology lies in linking the micro and macro perspective; showing how the most private elements of our lives are affected by larger social forces such as cultures, groups, organizations, and social institutions.

Sociologists have played an important role in contributing to our understanding of social reality. In this course, we will explore the kinds of issues, problems and questions that have traditionally caught the attention of sociologists. We will explore the methods that sociologists use to answer important questions about society. Sociologists do not agree on the answers or solutions to the puzzles that we find in the social world. However, sociologists can provide us with plausible explanations of issues and problems. This sociological dialogue is essential in public debate. Finally, we will explore our role in making, maintaining and changing society. We will examine how we collectively create society, and how individuals play a role in shaping and changing society.

II. Text

Schaefer, Richard. 2008. Sociology: A Brief Introduction. 7th edition. New York, McGraw-Hill

III. Course Requirements

1. There will be three in-class exams. These exams will consist of multiple choice and essay questions, and will cover all of the materials presented prior to the listed date of the exams. The materials included in the exams will be drawn from the text, supplemental readings, lectures, and videos. The exams are designed to allow you to demonstrate your knowledge of sociological terms, concepts, and perspectives, and your ability to critically apply them to real world situations. Study guides with key concepts will be made available prior to the exam upon request. Each of the exams will be worth 100 points and will be graded on a 90%-A, 80%-B, 70%-C, 60%-D scale.

2. Regular class attendance and active participation in discussion groups is required. Excessive absences will adversely affect your final course grade. Attendance in class and participation in discussion groups will be monitored throughout the semester.
3. Discussion groups will be held at various points throughout the semester; the topic for the discussion will be given to you. You are to research and prepare of these discussions. Thoughtful, meaningful participation is expected, demonstrating a critical understanding of the material covered. In addition, a short write-up of the discussion group will be expected as well.
4. Assignments will be given addressing the material covered over the preceding week, or to further explore ideas and activities done in-class. These assignments may take a variety of forms. All assignments are expected to be completed on time, and late assignments will not be awarded points unless prior arrangements have been made.
5. A blog to explore sociology has been set up at: <http://collegenowsociology.tumblr.com/> All students are expected to contribute to the blog no less than five (5) times per semester. Materials contributed can be wide ranging in nature, and are meant to help you think about and explore what sociology means on an individual level. Images, writings, video clips, links to other sites are all examples of what to contribute. Feel free to comment on what others have posted. The blog is moderated, and any material or comments submitted that are inappropriate will not be posted, and will be referred to the instructor and/or school administration for further action. You are all becoming adults, and are expected to present yourself accordingly. Please note that if you want credit for your submissions, you must include your name.
6. Students will be expected to complete a final project. This project may take several forms, including a written essay, oral report, electronic presentation, or other form approved by the instructor prior to the start of the project. A choice of topic may be provided by the instructor at the beginning of the semester. Students will be expected to submit their choice of topic and form of the project in written form to the instructor no later than the midterm date for approval. Further details regarding the nature of this project will be available in class.

IV. Grading Summary

Summary of Course Requirements:

1. Exam 1	(100 pts.)
2. Exam 2	(100 pts.)
3. Exam 3	(100 pts.)
4. Discussion Groups	(60 pts.)
5. Assignments/Attendance/Blog	(140 pts.)
5. Project	(50 pts.)

There are a total of 550 possible points for this class. Letter grades will be determined on the following scale:

<u>Grading Scale</u>		<u>Final Grading Scale</u>	
90-100	A	495-550	A
80-89	B	445-494	B
70-79	C	400-444	C
60-69	D	360-399	D
Below 59	F	Below 359	F

V. Attendance Policy and Academic Honesty Policy

There will be no make up of exams, discussion groups, or assignments. Exceptions to this will only be granted for students who have provided *prior notification* of absence as well as *written evidence* of illness or family crisis.

Any form of academic dishonesty (such as cheating on exams and plagiarism of someone else’s writing) is considered a serious offense. Those who are caught engaging in such activities will receive no points/grade for the assignment/exam in question. Additionally, that student may also be referred to the Dean’s office for possible further sanctions, per the SMSU policy.

VI. Class Schedule and Assignments and Time Management Issues:

This course will require a steady, but not overwhelming time commitment. You will be responsible for managing your time in order to meet the class reading and assignment schedule. If you can pace your reading and assignment schedule, this course will be relatively stress free. For example, depending on your course load, think of appropriating 125 hours to a three credit course. You will spend 30 hours during the semester in class, 35 hours reading, 20 hours studying for exams, 20 hours completing assignments and preparing for discussion, and 20 hours crafting your final project.

All of the materials listed below are to be read prior to the pertinent class section.

DATE

FOCUS

Week 1

Orientation and Introduction: The Sociological Imagination.

Sociological Perspectives
Text: Chapter 1

Week 2

Sociological Research
Text: Chapter 2

Week 3

Culture
Text: Chapter 3

Week 4

Socialization
Text: Chapter 4

The Family and Intimate Relationships
Text: Chapter 12

Week 5

EXAM #1

DISCUSSION GROUP #1

Week 6

Social Interaction, Groups and Social Structure.
Text: Chapter 5

Week 7

The Mass Media
Text: Chapter 6

Week 8

Deviance and Social Control
Text: Chapter 7

Week 9

Education and Religion
Text: Chapter 13

Week 10

EXAM #2

DISCUSSION GROUP #2

Week 11

Stratification and Social Mobility
Text: Chapter 8

Week 12

Government and the Economy
Text: Chapter 14

Week 13

Global Inequality
Text: Chapter 9

Globalization
Text: Chapter 16

Week 14

Racial and Ethnic Inequality
Text: Chapter 10

Stratification by Gender and Age
Text: Chapter 11

Week 15

DISCUSSION GROUP #3

FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

Week 16

EXAM #3

Wrap-up