

## SOC 1838: Intro to Sociology Spring 2013

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**Office hours:** TBA

I am also happy to meet with you, by appointment, outside of these scheduled hours.

The central goal of this course is to introduce students to “the sociological imagination.” We will seek to understand the connections between our everyday lives and the (mostly) invisible social processes, institutions, and structures of the social world. We will learn to identify these connections and then use them to explain why things are the way they are and why we do the things we do.

We will explore the discipline of sociology in three ways. First, we will examine *how* sociologists study the social world by learning the main theoretical and methodological approaches in the discipline. Second, we will examine how the social world is even *possible* by learning about social interaction and the structure of society. Third, we will examine the incredible influence of social stratification. In our global society, knowing something about the way American society is set up allows us to better understand other societies and their structures. In particular, we will discuss the role of the economy in shaping our society and our life chances.

### Course objectives

The actual content of this course is better expressed in terms of what you will be able to do after you complete it. Students who fulfill all course requirements, attend all class sessions, and engage in a good faith effort to comprehend the material, will:

1. Develop a sociological imagination and be able to
  - Understand how different sociological approaches explain society
  - Apply the sociological imagination to current issues in work
2. Learn the key theoretical approaches to social structure, social change, and to social interaction
3. Identify the structural forces shaping our life chances and be able to
  - Summarize approaches to stratification
  - Describe what makes the economy an influential social institution
  - Explain how capitalism works to a naïve audience

### Textbook

**Macionis, John. 2012. *Sociology*. 14<sup>th</sup> Edition.** You must bring this text to class! You will need it to participate fully in class. It is also available from online booksellers and I encourage you to buy your own copy—even an older edition will serve you well.

## Course Expectations

Each of you is expected to come prepared for in-depth discussion of the course material. At minimum this means having read the assigned material.

### *Beyond the Minimum*

I expect that “minimum” won’t satisfy most of you. As aspiring college students, your aims are both professional and personal; you wish to be well-educated in this topic that is central to the discipline and you wish to capably exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

### *Deep Preparation*

A deeper preparation can be attained by completing comprehensive notes on the reading, comparing what you’ve learned to what you already know, and identifying where your life experience matches (or does not match) what the readings offer. A reasonable outcome from this level of preparation would be that you can assess how much you’ve learned and identify what you didn’t realize (until now) that you don’t know yet. Your aim in this process is to:

- Learn the terms, concepts, facts, and theories relevant to the topic
- Discover what new ideas fascinate you

### *Informed Perspective*

You might aim higher and assess your capacity to use the course material to draw reasonable inferences about issues that concern you now. By this I mean making an effort to develop the capacity to offer an informed perspective on the material. I don’t mean an opinion, at least not in the colloquial meaning of “everyone has an opinion.”

### *Payoff*

An informed perspective gives you the ability to converse knowledgably about issues with people who may have never taken a sociology course, let alone this course. I want you to be the smart one in that conversation, the one who can offer evidence to back up claims, the one who can persuasively explain even to an untrained audience, the one who can be that responsible citizen we depend on for reasoned debate and wise decision-making.

Assignments	My Points	Points
<b>Exam 1</b> Multiple choice 75 questions Chapter Essay 10 points, 2 pages		85
<b>Exam 2</b> Multiple choice 75 questions Chapter Essay 10 points, 2 pages		85
<b>Exam 3</b> Multiple choice 75 questions Chapter Essay 10 points, 2 pages		85
<b>Final Exam Essay</b> Summary of Wright, 5 pages		45
<b>Final Exam</b> Multiple choice 100 questions		100
<b>Total</b>		<b>400</b>

Please track your points; come see me over the term to be sure there are no discrepancies! It is up to you to maintain your own documentation that you were in class and completed the assigned work. **Date** your notes and your writing assignments, and **keep** your scantrons!

## Exams

The exams cover both the **reading** and **lecture** material. You will be tested on the chapters covered up to the date of the exam, plus all lecture and in class material.

Your final exam will cover Chapters 5 and 20, plus the excerpts from Wright. The exam is somewhat cumulative because you will be reviewing the Wright reading. You will be tested on your full comprehension of this material so the questions will be both new and drawn from those on Exam 3. Lecture material will also be on the final exam.

All exam make-ups will take place on the last Friday of the semester. Anyone who misses an exam, for any reason, will have the opportunity to take the make-up exam on that date. If you are ill, please don't come to class! Get better, stay caught up on the reading, and let me know, as soon as you can, that you are missing the exam.

## Exam Essays

Each exam includes a chapter essay that you will do on your own time, with your book and notes available to you. My aim is to get you immersed in the material, right before the test, so that you are very well-prepared! In this essay, you choose a topic, idea or theory from one of the chapters on the test and explore its significance from your point of view. Please don't be misled by the short page requirement! It is worth ¼ of your test grade and I will hold your essay to very high standards.

- Typos, grammatical and spelling errors, etc. must be absolutely rare as llamas in Illinois. Get help on this—at least the first time, so that you don't lose points for easily remedied defects.
- Organization of ideas must be clear to me, as the reader. I won't know ahead of time what you are writing about—you choose the focus of this essay. So, introduce me to your main point right away, then define, illustrate, and contextualize that point in the body of the paper.
- In this essay, it is ok to just end. Do you ever feel like that? Like you just want to write “the end” because you've said everything you want to say? That will be ok here. End when you're done; include a conclusion only if you feel it's helpful to your thought process.
- (You might also consider going back and deleting your introduction. Chances are it lacks meaningful content—intros are often just fillers we use to get our brains working. I don't need to hear some general comment about sociology or the textbook or the class. I will be eager to find out what you found worth writing about!)
- Your punch line, what makes the essay worth reading, will be a clear articulation of what is fascinating, significant, useful, dismaying and/or challenging about the material you've chosen to write about. Feel free to use first person—I hate dry and unemotional writing as much as anybody—and show me what you're getting out of the reading.

## Reading notes

I will provide “reading notes” for the assigned reading. These are questions, keyed to the text, that allow you to assess your reading comprehension. When you can answer the question, you know that you have understood the material. I encourage you to complete these for each chapter. You are welcome to bring your reading notes to me so that you can be sure that you fully understand the material.

There are no points assigned for completing the reading notes. I rely on your personal intentions to become educated as the motivation for doing them. Your intention to gain new knowledge, build on what you already know, and expand your horizons will be supported by taking notes on the reading and then reflecting on what this information means to you.

You will probably recognize that completing the reading notes constitutes “studying” and is a kind of “homework.” This will be different from me assigning homework in this class; rather, you are expected to engage the reading and the lecture material independently.

### Classroom Courtesy

All electronic devices must be turned off or to “silent” mode when you enter the classroom. That is the rule—you are asked to take 75 minutes out of your day to attend class and let your voice mail take a message. For the sake of your own impression management, please detach from your electronic devices. You want to present your best self; that is, your attentive, intelligent, and engaged self.

If you have some special circumstance where you **MUST** see who has called you or you **MUST** take a particular call, let me know.

### Attendance

We all need to be here because the quality of each student’s engagement matters to the learning of the entire class. I do realize that emergencies occur, we all get sick, and life happens. To accommodate, you are given the opportunity to make up any missed exams on the last day of the semester.

### Late work

Work turned in within 24 hours of the due date will be docked 10%. Anything turned in within 48 hours will be docked 20%. If something really holds you up and you cannot turn in your work until several days have passed (you need the weekend, for example) that work can only earn up to 50% of the points possible.

### Grade appeals

I am always willing to talk with you about how your work is evaluated. If you would like me to re-evaluate an exam or writing assignment, I ask that you provide a write-up of the reason for your grade appeal. I must receive this write-up within one week of returning the graded assignment.

### Communications Policy

I encourage you all to contact me at anytime if you have questions, need assistance, or simply want to chat more about the content of the course or sociology more broadly. I hold office hours three times a week. My office hours are especially for my students and I welcome and strongly recommend that you all come to see me regularly during office hours.

Without question, email is the best way to reach me; however, my email gets very full very quickly. Therefore, I have four guidelines I ask you to follow when communicating to me via email.

- Always include the **class name** (SOC 1838) in the subject line
- Tell me what **class** you are enrolled in so that I know who I am responding to
- Always begin the email in a professional manner (“Dear Professor Deerman” is good) and end it professionally (“Thank you” is good).
- ALWAYS... I repeat ALWAYS, sign your email with your first and last name!

Any email that follows these four guidelines will get my full attention and I will respond as soon as I am able.

Finally, please keep in mind that our relationship is a professional one between a professor and a student and therefore do not email as if we were still back sending telegrams and each word cost the sender (you) \$5.

### Academic Dishonesty

It is dishonest to copy someone's exam, to use notes or texts during an exam when prohibited from doing so, to have someone complete assignments for you, or to claim another person's written work as your own. It is also an act of academic dishonesty to misrepresent your class attendance.

The definition of academic dishonesty and its consequences are in the Student Code of Conduct. In the past, I have failed students who plagiarized and I have failed students who misrepresented their class attendance. **I will report every incident** to Student Standards regardless of the severity of the offense.

I take seriously the fact that there are people who dream of going to college and have no chance of ever attending; thus, I hold college students to a very high standard of conduct and expect unimpeachable behavior from each of you.

*Note: All material in this course syllabus, including exam dates, may be subject to change, especially when student learning will benefit from instructor flexibility responsiveness.*

### **DISABILITIES STATEMENT**

Students with documented disabilities are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) if they wish to discuss any necessary academic accommodations.

### **MEDICAL EMERGENCY STATEMENT**

For medical emergencies, go to the nearest phone and call 911. All faculty offices have telephones and during normal business hours (8-12 and 1-4:30), the Sociology Office (Blair 3170) is open. Be sure to state the floor and room number of the emergency to the 911 operator. If possible, someone should go to the central entrance of Blair Hall to direct EMS personnel to the medical emergency scene. If the medical emergency is on the second or third floor, someone else should hold the elevator on the first floor for EMS use.

### **TORNADO STATEMENT**

In case of a tornado warning, proceed to the center of the hallway on the first floor, near the posted severe weather signs. Under no circumstances should you attempt to leave the building.

### **BUILDING FIRE STATEMENT**

In case of fire, activate the fire alarm and exit the building. When a fire alarm sounds, everyone must exit the building and cannot re-enter the building until allowed by the building coordinator or fire department official. Fire alarms are located at the north and south ends of the corridors just inside the fire doors. The closest exits for all classrooms in Blair are on the north and south ends of the building. Under no circumstance should the elevator be used. Group assembly areas for all classes in Blair are either on the patio area between Blair and Old Main or on the southeast corner of the North Quad. As you exit the building, continue moving well away from the exits so that you do not impede the egress of other students or the work of fire officials. Move a safe distance away from the building.