

Introduction to Sociology
Meets: 11:00—11:50 in Blair 1103

Professor:	Shane Soboroff
Office Hours:	Monday 3-4:30, Wed. 3-4:30, Friday 3-4:30
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Students in this course will:

1. Discuss sociological perspectives,
2. Explain the role of theory in the conduct of inquiry,
3. Identify strengths and weaknesses of major research strategies,
4. Summarize their understanding of society through the scientific description of the regularities and recurring patterns that characterize social life,
5. Report on our nation's place in the larger global environment paying particular attention to the interdependence and interrelationships among societies,
6. Challenge common assumptions, determine and weigh appropriate evidence, and develop reasoned conclusions,
7. Explore sociological explanations of the social forces that shape and control individuals' lives,
8. Describe how societies are established and change,
9. Explain the social diversity of the United States and incorporate the variables of sex, race, ethnicity, social class, and age in developing an understanding of our social world,
10. Discuss the influences of social relationships on individual's attitudes and behavior.

Required texts:

Chambliss, William J. and Daina S. Eglitis. *Discover Sociology*. Los Angeles: Sage.

McGann, Kimberly. *Sage Readings for Introductory Sociology*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Readings available online.

Description: Scientific description of the regularities and patterns of behavior that characterize our society and the larger global environment. Sociological analyses of the social forces that affect our daily lives. An overview of the field. The course provides training in a sociological perspective that demonstrates the importance of social structures (e.g., organizations and institutions) as determinants of human behavior. By systematic empirical investigation of social structures, students gain knowledge that can lead to greater control of such structures and of their lives. By learning to see the relationships between people and among groups of people, you will enhance your impact on society.

Grading: A midterm, a final exam, periodic quizzes, and weekly reflection papers assess progress. Students have the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned in a variety of ways. You will write a short paper from two different points of view. A group project gives students a chance to apply the sociological perspective. The final makes up 30% of the grade, the midterm 20%, participation, quizzes and in-class assignments total 25% and the group project 25%. Most classes will include discussion. Come prepared to ask and answer questions from the lecture and assigned readings. The final covers the entire course. **Those who feel at a disadvantage taking objective tests may elect to substitute an 8 - 10 page, research proposal for the final. However, you must meet with me in the week immediately following the midterm to take this option!!!** Exams emphasize text and lecture material about equally. Quizzes emphasize material presented in class that may not be covered in the text. Optional final research proposals must be turned in by the time of the final. Work submitted after the day and time of the final requires that a grade of Incomplete be given for the course.

Makeup procedure for in-class assignments: Even good students must occasionally miss a lecture and do so for good reason. No excuse is needed. An extra credit assignment given in lecture allows all students to make up one missed in-class assignment. In effect, everyone gets to miss one class free.

It is also possible to make up a missed in-class assignment. At the beginning of the lecture following the one you missed, turn in **two** one-page essays (about 250 words each, preferably typed).

For the first essay, use the sociological perspective to interpret the significance of the events that took place on the day you missed. What did it all mean? Look at the events of that day using one of the following perspectives: the conflict perspective, the structural functional perspective, or the symbolic interactionist perspective. This must be a sociological analysis showing you understand how to use the sociological perspective you have chosen to understand your experience and that of people around you. In the unlikely event that you miss a third lecture assignment, do not use the same perspective twice.

For the second essay, get the lecture notes for the lecture you missed from another class member. Write a one-page essay (about 250 words, preferably typed) describing the important points made in the lecture you missed. Turn in both essays together at the beginning of the lecture following the one you missed. Two essays are required for each missed assignment. Absences of more than two consecutive classes may be made up only by arrangement with Professor Soboroff prior to the third missed class. It is easier to attend class than to make it up.

Missing an exam is more serious. A grade of zero will be assigned unless arrangements have been made with Professor Soboroff. Getting a zero on an exam makes passing the class unlikely. Contact Professor Soboroff as soon as possible if you think you might miss an exam, the day after the exam at the latest.

Please contact Professor Soboroff if you have a disability that may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements may be made.

Students concerned about any aspect of the course are welcome to contact Professor Soboroff at any time. Please email, call or stop by the office.

Concerning Office Hours

Teaching and research are a lot of fun for me, and you are all great sources of data. Come let me get to know you and help you, especially early in the semester when things are likely to be the toughest but the problems the least severe. Often serious problems start out as little ones. I promise to do my best to help you with any issues you face that are getting in the way of you learning class material. I'm sure my style of classroom teaching will appeal to some, turn off others, and for others be pretty close to what they expected. However, in office hours I can try to find ways to help you learn in the ways you learn best. Also, come by my office, even outside of office hours, to talk about Sociology. I'll let you know how long I can chat. I became a sociologist because I am interested in people and wish to understand them better. Come help me to do that, and I'll help you in whatever ways I can.

Course Administrative Policies

Academic integrity- Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct. <http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards. Please turn in class assignments that represent your own work. Properly give credit where credit is due. Everyone gets stressed in college. If you find you are facing difficulties during the semester, come see me and we will talk about how to achieve your goals without resorting to academic dishonesty. We seek to avoid impropriety *and* the appearance of impropriety, both in class and during exams. That's enough about that.

Students with disabilities- If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

The Student Success Center- Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/~success) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

Discussions in Class

Each one of us brings a lot of life experience to this classroom. Everybody deserves to feel the classroom is a safe environment in which to voice their opinions. However, this does not mean

you are entitled to voice statements of fact without facing challenges. If you present an argument that good research speaks against, others are free (and encouraged) to confront that argument with *good evidence*. However, in confronting arguments, we must not go after the people involved. This statement should focus discussion: Be nice, be precise, be understandable and be understanding. Remember that no intolerant language that denigrates people's race, culture, religion, sex, sexuality, gender identity, or social class should or will be tolerated. It damages the classroom environment and cheapens our discussions. And worse, it hurts people's feelings.

Why Group Work?

The Roman aqueducts, the Great Wall of China, the Apollo program, discovery of the Higgs boson, modern medicine. The greatest accomplishments of human beings have been achieved by **working in groups**. No individual, no matter how competent, suffers from working with others to achieve a greater goal. Further, the working world after college demands you be able to put the needs of others above your own if you want to reach your potential. Leaders (and you are all training to *be leaders*) must be willing to help others achieve their goals and fulfill their needs. That being said, group work is also frustrating and may demand more of some than others. Again, that is normal. No effective group has ever been completely egalitarian. However, it is a worthy goal to listen to every viewpoint in your groups to achieve your full potential and to treat even the smallest contribution by another group member as a gift.

Concerning Fridays

SATURDAY ASSIGNMENTS (Due SATURDAY by 11:59 PM): On designated weeks you will need to go online and submit a **reflection paper over ALL of the readings for the week we just finished**. Reflections papers count in your **in-class assignment grade**. This reflection paper must be **2 pages** (minimum!), and do two things. **First (1):** You must come up with two questions per reading that came to mind after you read the material. These **cannot** be questions that are answerable with a simple yes or no. They must be designed to **prompt discussion**. **Second (2):** You must use **one** of the sociological perspectives I will describe in **weeks 1-2** to discuss a possible answer to this question, using as much class material as you can. Obviously, since we cannot know all of the perspectives before the end of week 1, there will be no reflection paper due week 1. More complete reflection papers = better grades.

FRIDAY EXPECTATIONS: You will be working with groups to prepare for a community involvement paper this semester. These groups will be expected to do a lot of research outside of class to prepare for the debates. **Do NOT put this off. I will be very hard on your groups during the paper presentation evaluations.** A serious lack of preparation, even by a single group member, will result in a grade you are unhappy with, and this grade will be shared by all group members. I will provide assignments for your groups that should be completed on designated Fridays and on weekends. Since you all have Friday classtime open, that is a good time to complete these assignments as a group. Some of these assignments will be structured and require a written paper; others will not. Even when there is no written assignment, you **MUST PREPARE FOR THE PRESENTATION**. Fridays are as good a time as any.

Introduction to Sociology
Spring 2017

Week 1

Introduction to Intro Sociology

For every class bring in two discussion questions from the reading that you found interesting.

The Attraction and Uses of Sociology

Chapter 1 in *Discover Sociology* and “From Summer Camps to Glass Ceilings” Reading (Online)

Syllabus Quiz Due January 14 at 11:59 PM

Week 2

Teamwork and Leadership

Chapters 5 in *Discover Sociology*

What is a Theory?—Cohen, *Developing Sociological Knowledge* (Online)

Week 3

Social Theory and Research Methods

Chapters 2 in *Discover Sociology* and Chapter 5, “Damned Lies and Statistics” in *Sage Reader*.

Socialization and Social Interaction

Read Chapter 4 *Discover Sociology* and Chapter 8, “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life” in *Sage Reader*.

Reflection Paper 1 Due Saturday, January 28 at 11:59 PM

Week 4

Sept. 4 **Diagnostic Quiz**

Sociology of Work

Read Chapter 15 in *Discover Sociology*

Week 5

Social Class, Social Stratification, Globalization and Inequality

Read Chapter 7 in *Discover Sociology* and Leicht, “Borrowing on the Brink” (Online)

Race and Ethnicity
Read Chapter 9 in *Discover Sociology*

Week 6

Lovaglia Chapter 1 (Online)
Families (Read Chapter 11 in *Discover Sociology*)
Chapter 15, “Marked: Women in the Workplace” in *Sage Reader*

Reflection Paper 2 Due Saturday, Feb. 18 at 11:59 PM

Week 7

Sex, Gender and the Body
Read Chapter 10 in *Discover Sociology*

EXAM 1 February 22

Week 8

Read Chapter 8 in *Discover Sociology*

Power and Politics
Read Chapter 14 in *Discover Sociology*

Week 9

Deviance
Read Chapter 9 in *Discover Sociology*

Lovaglia Reading TBA

Reflection Paper 3 Due Saturday, March 11 at 11:59 PM

Week 10

Religion
Read Chapter 13 in *Discover Sociology*

Lovaglia Chapter 7: “Your Place in the Workplace” (Online)

Reflection Paper 4 Due March 18

Week 11

Education

Read Chapter 12 in *Discover Sociology* and Chapter 21, “Unequal Childhoods” in *Sage Reader*

Week 12

Social Movements

Read Chapter 18 in *Discover Sociology*

Week 13

Social Change

Read Chapter 17 in *Discover Sociology*

Week 14

TBA

Week 15

Final classes, review for Final Exam!

FINALS WEEK 16 MAY 1—5

Community Involvement Project

Soboroff, Intro

1. **Explain the social problem the volunteer organization deals with and why it is important (300 words before editing).** Define the problem faced by your organization. Based on what you have learned about your organization, what solutions to the problem are favored by people within the organization?
 - a. Use the media assignment to explain why the social problem matters and who it matters to.
 - b. Describe the organization you are volunteering with and what they do. Who do they serve, and how do they provide the service? What role did each of you play within the organization this semester?
2. **Descriptions of Library Research (1200 words before editing):** Use the high-quality research sources you have gathered to explain how the problem the organization approaches is understood by scientists. Choose six of your best sources that speak directly to the social problem. Use only scholarly books and social science journal articles. In a clear, well-developed paragraph of at least **200 words for each source**, summarize its research question, methods, results, and how it relates to the social problem your organization deals with.
3. Describe in a **400 word paragraph** sociological perspectives that might be useful for understanding the problem (Structural Functionalism, Symbolic Interactionism, Conflict...).
4. **Identify 6 more sources and Evaluate your Organizaiton (1400 words before editing):** Use the reference lists in the best research sources you have to identify at least 6 additional high quality research sources. Summarize the important details of **each** of your sources in a paragraph of about **200 of your own words**. These will form the body of your paper, about 80% of the total text when you have tied them together and edited them into an organized, logical progression that leads to a useful conclusion. That is, a conclusion (**200 words**) that suggests a new social program that can help solve the problem and would improve on the organization with which you volunteered.
5. **Think about Solutions (800 words before editing):** As you read through your sources think about what the research suggests would be a good way to solve the problem. Explain at least 2 possible solutions in paragraphs of 200 words each (**400 words total**). Then, in around **400 words**, evaluate how effective you think the organization you worked with can be, given what you know about the problem and the likely solutions that will work. **This will require interviewing members of your organization and reflecting on your own experiences with the organization.** You must give the people you interview pseudonyms (false names) to protect their identities. Provide quotes from interviews to back up your evaluations.

The Final Paper should (1) introduce your social problem, the organization you worked with, and why the problem is important, (2) describe the research you have located that addresses your social problem, (3) develop a solution based on the research, and (4) use your solution and the sources available to evaluate the organization.

Paper due May 1 to the Sociology Main Office.