Contact Information

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Course Description

When sitting at a restaurant, have you ever wondered why chefs tend to be men, but mom always prepares dinner at home? Ever consider why we tip waiters but not doctors? If you’ve ever found yourself puzzled and perplexed by human behavior, then this class is for you. Sociologists seek to explain patterns of belief and action through peoples’ participation in, and interaction with, groups and institutions. The course addresses how groups interact, represent, categorize, stratify, reproduce social reality, engage in social control, create moral systems, build trust and solidarity, encourage rationality, and ultimately shape how social change happens. We’ll discuss topics as wide ranging as the class, gender, race, sexuality, family, school, workplace, media and popular culture, religion, politics and social movements, crime and law, and more. In class you’ll learn how to think like a sociologist through readings, discussion, small group activities, and the analysis of documentary films.

Method of Evaluation and Written Assignments

Participation/Attendance: 10%
Exercises: 10%
Midterm Exam: 40%
Final Exam: 40%

Concourse in Sakai

Class Syllabus, Assignments, Discussion Board, etc are available on Sakai:

http://sakai.nd.edu/
Class Materials

Required Books Available at the University Bookstore:

Additional required readings are available as PDFs via Library Reserve. https://reserves.library.nd.edu/courses/201620_26529/reserves

Due Dates

Survey Assignment - January 26
Budget Assignment - February 9/14
Identity Exercise Assignment - February 21/23
Midterm Exam - March 7
Breaching Experiment Assignment - March 21
Branding Assignment - April 13/18
Final Exam - Monday May 8, 10:30-12:30 AM

Class Schedule

PART ONE: SOCIAL STRUCTURE & AGENCY

Analyzing Social Structure

Tuesday January 15

First Day Business

Thursday January 17


Interaction and Socialization

Tuesday January 24


**Thursday January 26**


**SURVEY ASSIGNMENT DUE**

Stratification and Education

**Tuesday January 31**


Film: *A Class Divided*

**Thursday February 2**


Film: *Children In America’s Schools*, Bill Moyers and Jonathan Kozol

Reproduction of Inequality

**Tuesday February 7**

**Thursday February 9**


**BUDGET EXERCISE DUE**

**Work and (Im)mobility**

**Tuesday February 14**


**BUDGET EXERCISE DISCUSSION**

**Thursday February 16**


**PART TWO: HOW SOCIETIES MAKE THEMSELVES**

**Categorization**

**Tuesday February 21**


Exercise: Social Construction

IDENTITY EXERCISE DUE

Thursday February 23


Film: A Girl Like Me

IDENTITY EXERCISE DISCUSSION

Morality, Trust, and Solidarity

Tuesday February 28


Film: Hell House

Thursday March 2


Tuesday March 7

MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS

Deviance and Social Control
Thursday March 9

SPRING BREAK

Tuesday March 21
Film: Stanley Milgram’s Obedience

BREACHING EXPERIMENT EXERCISE DUE

Rationality

Thursday March 23

Tuesday March 28
Film: Office Space

Diffusion and Globalization

Thursday March 30

Debate: Globalization

Tuesday April 4


Exercise: Concurrence and Serial Monogamy

PART THREE: SOCIAL PRACTICES

Love and Marriage

Thursday April 6


Tuesday April 11


Exercise: Peer Marriage Exercise

Markets, Consumption, and Exchange

Thursday April 13

Exercise: Bitter Bridesmaid Exercise

BRANDING ASSIGNMENT DUE

EASTER BREAK

Tuesday April 18


Exercise: Branding

BRANDING DISCUSSION

Communication

Thursday April 20


Tuesday April 25


Film: The Persuaders

Social Change and Mobilization

Thursday April 27


Film: *Eyes on the Prize*

**Tuesday May 2**


**FINAL EXAM - Monday May 8, 10:30-12:30 AM**
Participation and Attendance Policy

It's your responsibility to come to class prepared, by which I mean 1) you've read the readings, 2) you have ideas to share in class, and 3) you've completed any assignments.

Success in this class is based on your active participation and discussion of course ideas. These activities are the cornerstone of a good college experience. Reading and thinking will make you a student, but debating ideas in a public forum will make you an intellectual. Therefore, in this class YOU NEED TO TALK. Expressing your ideas with the others in the class is the ideal way to learn (and it is an integral part of your grade).

Being able to think on your feet and feel comfortable speaking in front of your peers are skills important to both academic and professional careers. I recognize that people come into class with different levels of personal comfort regarding public speaking, and naturally some will speak more than others. This is fine, but absolute silence is not. If you do not speak, expect that I eventually will call on you.

YOU CANNOT PARTICIPATE WITHOUT ATTENDING CLASS. Missing class or persistent tardiness will result in the dramatic reduction of your grade. Sleeping in class is tantamount to skipping class. If you want an absence excused, I need a letter from the Office of Student Affairs indicating you’ve experienced a personal illness, suffered a death in the immediate family or performed duties for the University. It is your responsibility to seek out and secure these letters, not my responsibility to remind you.

You also have a role as a listener. Everyone should listen attentively and respectfully when others are talking. Chatting with your classmates (verbally) or with friends outside of class (digitally), or browsing the internet during class time is inappropriate in a university classroom. Please silence cell phones and stow your laptops in advance of class and take notes with pen and paper.

Exercises

In addition to everyday participation in class discussions, this course requires that you participate in a series of exercises designed to promote learning and class discussion. In total, these exercises account for 10% of your grade. While these exercises are ungraded, failing to complete these assignments on time or to put sufficient effort into them, your “exercise” grade will suffer. Each exercise is worth 20% of your exercise grade. Because we need your answers for class discussion, exercises turned in late lose half credit (10% off the total exercise grade).
Exam Review

I don’t hold review sessions in advance of exams. Instead, I create a discussion board on Sakai for you to pose and answer questions in advance of the exam. Students who answer their peers questions (accurately) will receive some additional extra credit points on their exam grade.

Exams

My exams are notoriously difficult and worth a great deal of your grade. Not only do I expect you to know class concepts and apply them to examples, but I also expect you to be able to synthesize and speak across concepts, and link smaller ideas into major sociological theories, approaches, and schools of thought.

Both the midterm and the final are some combination of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short (one-to-two sentence) answer questions.

Any student unable to take the test at the university-scheduled exam period must clear changes with their appropriate Dean at least ONE WEEK before the START of final exam week.

Academic Honesty

Entering Notre Dame you were required to study the on-line edition of the Academic Code of Honor, to pass a quiz on it, and to sign a pledge to abide by it. The full Code and a Student Guide to the Academic code of Honor are available at: http://honorcode.nd.edu.

Perhaps the most fundamental sentence is the beginning of section IV-B:

“The pledge to uphold the Academic Code of Honor includes an understanding that a student’s submitted work, graded or ungraded — examinations, draft copies, papers, homework assignments, extra credit work, etc. — must be his or her own.”

Notre Dame students are expected to abide by Academic Code of Honor Pledge. “As a member of the Notre Dame community, I will not participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty.”

Per the University of Notre Dame Code of Honor (and common good sense) all work handed in must be the student’s own work and must use proper citation when referring to the ideas of others. All exams essays should be written in the student’s own words, except when explicitly referring to the definition of a concept from class.

I treat plagiarism, cheating, and other acts of academic dishonesty very seriously. If you turn in plagiarized material, cheat on a test, or participate in any other dishonorable act, your activities will be brought to the attention of the Honor Committee.
Ignorance is no defense or excuse. If you are unsure how to provide proper academic attribution, or what the university considers punishable offenses, please see me in advance of turning in an assignment...better to turn in honest work late than dishonest work on time. Please, contact me if you have any doubts on this issue. For further information about the university’s honor code, please refer to Undergraduate Student Academic Code of Honor Handbook:

[http://www.nd.edu/~hnrcode/docs/handbook.htm](http://www.nd.edu/~hnrcode/docs/handbook.htm)

**Disability Services**

If you have a disability that will affect your performance in this class or that needs special accommodations, please inform me early in the semester with the appropriate documentation from Disability Services at the Opportunity Development Center. I can’t accommodate you unless I have this documentation early in the semester before exams and assignments are due.
Understanding Society Exercises

1. Survey Assignment (Due January 26 at 5:00pm)

The survey is a compilation of questions from the General Social Survey, a nationally representative sociological survey of Americans, and should give you a sense of how sociological survey data is collected. Answer all the questions and we’ll compile the results to get a snapshot of our class.

Follow this link to get to the survey:
https://nd.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_5oQL3G7LVVPNuUR

2. Budget Exercise (Online survey due February 9 at 5pm, memo due in class February 14)

Your Hypothetical Situation
You are a single parent of two children; a three year-old and a nine year-old. The other parent is not in the picture for a host of reasons. The other parent also does not pay child support and you do not have the financial resources to hire a lawyer to compel her or him to pay.

You work at a large retail store as a cashier and make minimum wage. Luckily you are able to work 40 hours a week. At $7.25 an hour you make approximately $1,160 a month, which after 15% tax rate is roughly $986 a month for you and your two kids. For your reference, the poverty line for a family of 3 is $18,123 per year, which after taxes is $1284 per month.

For the sake of this exercise you are not receiving assistance from the government (food stamps, welfare, etc)—we can talk about how that changes the dynamic after you first try to survive without government support.

Now Create a Real Budget
For this activity you’ll need to create a monthly budget for your hypothetical family of three. Below are the directions for each of the budget line items. Answer using this link:

https://nd.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_7VsXBg7LrvA3eJdH

A couple quick notes before you begin
The idea here is to try to work within the constraints I’ve given you, despite how difficult that may be. Be creative, just within the constraints.

Also, I realize that getting quotes from insurance companies can be a pain, with a lot of forms to fill out. I don’t expect you to do that. Do what you can to try to find a legitimate estimate online without going so far as calling Flo at Progressive or making up children and calling daycares. Alternatively, if you want you to assume this person works and Notre Dame, you can use the standard benefits package from Notre Dame as your model for
healthcare ([http://hr.nd.edu/assets/121251/exemptstaffbensum2017_121251.pdf](http://hr.nd.edu/assets/121251/exemptstaffbensum2017_121251.pdf)) and enroll your kids in the ECDC childcare ([http://ecdc.nd.edu/registration/tuition/ecdc-smc-tuition-schedule](http://ecdc.nd.edu/registration/tuition/ecdc-smc-tuition-schedule)).

1. Housing Costs
Search online for a rental property in South Bend (not the greater Michiana area) that has at least 2 bedrooms. Once you find a listing, copy the URL (i.e. web address), the street address, and the monthly rent.

In past years I've found students putting in apartments that are WAY below market rate, and when you look at the website and realize the one bedroom is priced way higher than the two bedroom, you realize there is a misprint on the website. Please be realistic--if it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

In addition, there is a difference between a rental market and a for sale market. Many websites will estimate your "monthly" rate, but this is based on home purchase. You can't find 20% down payment for the mortgage so this is not a realistic option. Find an option FOR RENT, not for sale.

2. Utilities
For simplicity, we will just assume your utilities costs are $150 (gas, electricity, water, garbage, home phone). If you find a rental that includes utilities, subtract 150 from the rent.

3. Groceries
This is up to you to determine, but keep in mind that you need to feed three people.

4. Child Care
Your nine-year old goes to school, but you need to find care for your three year old. Find a day care that is affordable. Keep in mind this is full time daycare, not after school care at the YMCA. Include the URL for the site and monthly tuition costs. Many daycares list weekly prices. BE SURE TO QUADRUPLE weekly rates to calculate the monthly costs.

5. Health Insurance/Medical costs
a) Monthly insurance premium (include a citation for your source)
b) two doctor visits this month, $15 copay each = $30
c) two prescriptions: $5 each (with insurance) = $10

6. Transportation
You are fortunate to own a car (a 2000 Toyota Corolla), but unfortunately cars are expensive to maintain. Sadly, your job is not close enough to use public transportation or ride a bike.
a) Oil Change: $13
b) One tank of gas per week: 10 gallon tank x Today's local gas price x 4 weeks
c) Car insurance: find a monthly estimate
6. Clothing  
This is up to you to determine, but you need to buy some clothes this month.

7. Cell/Phone  
If you can afford to have a home or cell phone, go online and find a website advertising  
the monthly cost plan you will purchase. Copy the URL (i.e. website address) and paste it  
into your family budget excel spreadsheet.

**Final Note:** You may find it’s very difficult to afford all of the things your family needs  
within the budget. You may even find it’s impossible. However, you must make every  
effort to come in under budget. If you blow the budget by hundreds of dollars or appear  
to not have made a good faith effort to come in under budget you will not receive points  
for the activity.

**Review Your Budget**  
Write a 1-2 page reflection memo that answers these questions (bring in hard copy to  
class):
1. What was missing from this budget?
2. Were you able to come in under budget? Describe your experiences putting the budget  
together; where did you struggle? Where will your family struggle to stay within the  
budget you set?
3. Now imagine that you were in an accident and can’t work for 3 months. What would  
happen to your family?

**3. Identity Exercise (Due online on February 21 at 5:00pm, Hardcopy in class February  
23)**

For this exercise your task is to answer some questions about your identity. Answer these  
questions though this survey link:

https://nd.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_1RFCeee33SpZmgB

Please bring hardcopies of your answers to Section 1 to class.

Section 1: How do you identify yourself? Different situations may bring different aspects of  
our identity to the fore, but which ones are the most central to you? In this section you will  
rank order the five identities that you most identify with:

1. __________________________

2. __________________________

3. __________________________
4. ______________________________

5. ______________________________

Remember to bring a hardcopy of these five to class to use in class discussion on Wednesday February 20.

Section 2: In this section you’ll answer a series of yes or no questions that are linked with identity. I’ll use your answers to make a table for the class to discuss.

4. Breaching Experiment (Hardcopy due in class March 21)

Sociologist Harold Garfinkel is credited with the idea that we can understand how our social worlds are constructed by tearing down some of the social norms that shape our lives. According to Garfinkel, when norms are broken down, we attempt to reconstruct a sense of order in our lives. We often act as if the norms are still present. He called these norm violations “breaching experiments.”

The experiment involves someone disrupting the sense of order by violating social norms or expectations and then observing how others try to reconstruct a sense of order in their social world. This may cause discomfort on the part of the person doing the breaching, as well as on the part of the person attempting to restore order.

The breaching experiment is a classic activity in both sociology and social psychology. It provides an opportunity to act upon harmless impulses that social norms and expectations might have discouraged you from doing. For this exercise, I want you to go out and do two of the breaches below. Be sure to pay close attention to what they say and DO. Watch their body language. Also, please explain to them afterward what this was all about. If they are willing, quickly interview them about what they were thinking. Then write a two-page memo describing 1) the interaction, 2) how they reacted, and 3) how you felt as it was happening.

1. Sustain a 5 minute long interactions while holding your hand and arm in the air. If people ask why you are doing it, ignore them.

2. Buy something at a store and offer to pay more for an item than the item is priced (give a real number: I’ll give you 5 bucks for this snickers bar). When asked why, you say it is because “I want to.”

3. Ask a stranger for to give you a birthday present for your friend/mom/sibling, etc. If they ask you why they should, you say “because its their birthday.” Be insistent.

4. Approaching strangers to tell you their deepest, darkest secret. If they say no, then say “why not?” Then insist that isn’t a good enough reason.
5. Branding Assignment (Online due April 13 at 5:00pm, Hardcopy in class April 18)

Fill out an online survey and come to class with a print out with a list of brands you most identify with. Look at your stuff, think about what you own, or what you hope to own one day in informing you answers. Make sure you have one of each of the following. Then, for each, write down three adjectives that you associate with that brand.

One note on adjectives. Please use adjectives that make that brand distinct from other brands. Put simply, don't write "Levi's" and include "jeans" "clothing" and "denim" as your adjectives (also note that jeans and clothing are not adjectives, they are nouns). If you need a reminder of what an adjective is I encourage you to google it.

1. Clothing
2. Car/Truck
3. Consumer electronics (computer/cell phone/tv/speaker system/video game)
4. Beverage
5. Household goods store

Here's the link:

https://nd.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_ehNChjsjUa3XsqN