sociology 101: introduction to sociology

dr. g. scott
depaul university
winter 2016

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology is the science and art of studying how people do things, or don’t do things, together. Moving beyond a “common sense” understanding of the social world is the primary goal of this course. By cultivating a sociological imagination students will learn to think critically about society. Critical sociological thinking involves identifying and analyzing taken for granted assumptions about how the world operates, how we interact with others, how society develops and persists, and how we operate within the structures, institutions, and systems into which we were born. Using core sociological concepts and theoretical perspectives we will examine modern societies from various angles and levels. Our sociological inquiry will focus primarily, though not exclusively, on American society and more specifically the social world of Chicago. The course will survey a broad range of topics, with many touching on controversial debates surrounding current social issues. By the end of the course students should possess the conceptual and theoretical tools to apply sociological perspectives to their everyday lives and to current events. As a comprehensive introduction to the discipline, I intend for this course to stimulate your fascination (perhaps even obsession) with sociology and help you realize its practical value in everyday life.

COURSE AND INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Class day/time: M/W 1:00-2:30
Room: McGowan South Room 103

Instructor: Dr. Greg Scott
Department of Sociology
Social Science Research Center (SSRC)
990 W. Fullerton Ave., Ste. 3100
(773) 325-4893
gscott@depaul.edu

Office hours: M/W 3:30-4:30 p.m. and by appointment
Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites for this course.

E-mail is the best way to reach me outside classroom and office hours.
Notes on Readings

- I reserve the right to assign additional readings; I fully intend to exercise this right!
- Both required books are available in the DePaul University bookstore. Any additional readings I assign will be available through D2L.

LEARNING GOALS

- Develop an understanding of the interrelationship between social forces and your daily life and the related capacity to locate yourself in the context of the broader social, cultural, economic, political, and historical phenomena in our society. In other words, you will hone your “sociological imagination” to the point where the familiar seems “strange,” and you can articulate why and how it’s strange and why and how most people don’t appreciate the strangeness of life.
- Refine your ability to systematically examine people doing things, and/or not doing things, together. In other words, you will become a lay sociologist.
- Describe the most common sociological research methods—designs, methodologies, activities, and techniques—and how they are used to examine the social world.
- Comprehend the discipline of sociology and the various ways sociologists draw upon and deviate from the “scientific method” as they investigate systematically the world of humans.
- Analyze social phenomena by accurately applying key sociological theories (micro-, macro-, and meso-level), namely structural functionalism, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism, and various bodies of theory grouped under the mantle of “post-structuralism.”
- Synthesize sociological insights gleaned in this course and apply them to real world occurrences, events, issues, and phenomena.
- Understand the meaning, development, and perpetuation of “culture” within various societies.
- Hone the capacity to identify and explain core sociological processes and concepts, such as socialization, social control, urbanization, deviance, stratification, social change, etc.
Develop a deep comprehension of the interplay among race, class, and gender in the construction and perpetuation of institutions, relationships, and identities.

Acquire the skills necessary to define and dissect normative institutions (e.g., marriage, education, religion, incarceration/prison, etc.) and “bastard institutions” (e.g., prostitution, street gangs, arms trafficking, street violence, etc.)

Understand the various perspectives on how social change occurs through collective action such as protests and social movements.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION**

Students will be held responsible for all information covered in texts, handouts, lectures, videos, and guest presentations. Your final grade will be comprised of performance scores on two interim tests (weeks four and seven), a final examination, a weekly “everyday sociology” journal, two formal analytical writing assignments, attendance, and the quality of your classroom participation.

**Attendance, Classroom Participation, and the “Everyday Sociology” Journal**

In this class attendance is REQUIRED. You will be penalized for every tardy, early departure, and/or absence. I require you to attend every minute of every class session. Perfect attendance is expected and consequently does not yield “extra” points, as this would be a case of “kissing the conductor for bringing the train in on time.”

In addition, I expect each student to participate actively in classroom discussions. During every class session I will ask you to engage in some sort of exercise—either speaking or writing—to serve as your participation input for that particular day. You will contribute to every class—I will ensure it.

Not everyone feels comfortable speaking in front of others. If you’re one of these people, then you should prepare yourself for discomfort. Everyone will speak in nearly every one of the quarter’s 20 sessions. To make sure that you have something to say, I require you to keep and submit a typed “Everyday Sociology Journal” (ESJ). You should come to each Monday’s session prepared to talk about your ESJ entry.

Before each Monday’s class, I require you to upload your ESJ for the week to the appropriate Dropbox on the course’s D2L site. Each entry must be no longer than ½ page (double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins). Your ESJ should be a reflection on some event, however mundane or extraordinary, that you might have overlooked or not thought twice about if you hadn’t taken this class. Ideally, each entry will pertain in some way to the class material (readings, lectures, discussion, videos, etc.) for the week’s material. So be sure you’ve done it. If not, your participation grade will decline.

The ESJ is your opportunity to exercise your emerging sociological imagination. If, for example, you find it curious that your fellow shoppers at the grocery store are made really uncomfortable by one shopper who insists upon talking in detail about his sex life with other customers in line, then write about the various social rules, customs, norms, mores, etc. that shape the event and/or your observations of it. Remember, the art of sociology lies in part in making the familiar strange and the strange familiar, so be creative in writing your journal.
Alternatively, you may submit a photograph that you have taken and that illustrates one of the sociological ideas discussed in class or the readings. If you choose to submit a photograph, you must provide with it a three-sentence caption that explains how the image can be interpreted using a sociological concept or idea. The photograph plus the explanatory caption will count as a single ESJ entry.

Please note that I intend to minimize the amount of time I spend lecturing at the class and maximize the time I spend attempting to facilitate discussion among class members. My approach to instruction may be characterized fairly as “guided discovery.” Rather than teaching didactically, I plan to engage students in a highly interactive Socratic exploration of concepts, theories, findings, controversies, and critiques that emanate from the readings, classroom discussions, films, guest presentations, student journal entries, and other materials.

Prepare yourself to carry your own weight. I strongly encourage you to make notes on the assigned readings, jot down questions you have about the readings, and specify in writing some of the connections between and among readings. Then bring these written materials to class to serve as a resource for you in the context of class discussion.

For every unexcused absence I will reduce your final course grade by one complete letter (e.g., a “B” to a “C”). Also, every three tardies or early departures you accrue will count as one absence. I maintain a strict policy on the excusal of absences and tardies/early departures (see below). I will grade your in-class participation assignments on a scale appropriate to the exercises themselves. Examples of classroom assignments include brief impromptu essay responses to films, submission of discussion questions, “pop” quizzes, brief presentations, etc.

Therefore, if you incur an unexcused absence, your grade will be reduced one full letter grade AND the total points of the in-class participation assignment you failed to complete by your absence. I firmly believe that a great deal of one’s success in life is contingent to a large degree on “showing up.” So show up. Or don’t. After all, you’re an adult and it’s your life. If you don’t show up, don’t expect any special treatment; you will suffer consequences, without any exceptions.

Classroom participation, as evidenced in your oral contributions to discussion/lectures and the quality and consistency of your ESJ entries, comprises 10% (50 points) of your final course grade.

Critical Reading Reviews
Ten percent (10%) of your course grade will depend upon submitting two (2) “critical reading reviews,” with guidelines to be found on D2L. The reading review form contains a series of questions designed to guide your critical dissection of assigned readings. Since nearly every class session will implicate multiple readings, you will have many opportunities to complete this assignment.

You may choose to write a CRR on any of the assigned articles in the Everyday Sociology Reader or the D2L archive, but at least one of the reading reviews must be submitted BEFORE THE END OF WEEK 5. In the 10th week of class (our final week), I will accept a MAXIMUM of one reading review. You see what I’m up to here: I am trying to prevent an onslaught of reading reviews from 45 students who waited until the last minute to write them.
You will submit two completed reading review forms, each of which will receive either “credit” or “no credit” (criteria to be discussed in class). Completed reading review forms are due at the start of the Wednesday session of the week your chosen reading was assigned per the course outline below. There is no partial credit for this assignment. If you submit and receive “credit” for two reading reviews, you will receive full credit. If, however, you submit and/or receive “credit” for fewer than two reading reviews, you will receive NO credit for this assignment.

In all, the critical reading reviews—essays, really—are worth 100 points, or 10% of your course grade.

Interim Tests
Two multiple-choice tests (weeks four and seven) will assess your understanding of the readings and lectures. Each exam covers all course material assigned up through the class period prior to the exam date. The second test is not cumulative (i.e., it pertains only to material covered AFTER the first test). Review the readings, your reading notes (I do expect you to take notes while reading), and lecture notes (yes, I expect those too). Find a study partner or group and organize a study session. I also invite you to review course content with me anytime during the semester—just email me to set up a meeting.

Each test is worth 100 points (20% of your final grade). Combined, the interim tests constitute 40% of your final course grade.

Final Examination
The final exam will be cumulative, covering all readings, classroom lectures, videos, and discussions for the entire 10-week quarter. You will be required to integrate theories, concepts, paradigms, arguments, and insights covered throughout the term. The exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions.

The final exam is worth 200 points (40% of your final course grade).

Study Tips: Our textbook publisher, Pearson, provides the online resource “MySocLab” (linked from the D2L website) where you will find all kinds of resources (e.g., practice quizzes, flashcards, review questions) for studying material from the book. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this wonderful resource.

Grading Scale
In this course I do not “give” you a grade. I assign a grade based on the percentage of total points you EARN. Here is the distribution of points in this course; there will be no exceptions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Participation/ESJ</td>
<td>50 pts.</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Reading Reviews</td>
<td>50 pts.</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 1 (week 4)</td>
<td>100 pts.</td>
<td>(20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 2 (week 7)</td>
<td>100 pts.</td>
<td>(20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination (cumulative)</td>
<td>200 pts.</td>
<td>(40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>500 pts.</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I will assign final course grades according to the following scale, without exception:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
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CLASSROOM PROTOCOL: THE RULES

CELL PHONES, TABLETS, AND COMPUTERS
Because of their potential for disruption and distraction, cell phones are not allowed and should never be seen or heard in the classroom. Upon entering the classroom you must disable or set to “vibrate” mode all cell phones and pagers. Exceptions to this policy must be directly negotiated with me. As for laptop computers and tablets, you may use them to take notes. However, if I observe you using a laptop or tablet for any purpose not directly related to the class session, I will reduce your final course grade by one full letter for each infraction.

EXTRA CREDIT
None. Ever.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS
Every late assignment receives ZERO points. This is non-negotiable.

LATE ARRIVALS, EARLY EXITS
If you expect to be late to class, or if you know that you will have to leave class before its official end time, I strongly advise you to notify me BEFORE the class session starts. Notification may occur by telephone, e-mail, or a note in my mailbox. Arriving late and leaving early are at best disruptive and at worst disrespectful to your fellow students and me. You will lose points for tardiness and early departure.

WAKEFULNESS
Sleeping in class will not be tolerated. If I catch you in the midst of slumber, I reserve the right to wake you up in ways ranging from subtle (e.g., a clearing of my throat) to conspicuous (e.g., shouting your name). I intend to stay awake for the whole class period and I expect the same of you.

EATING
I have no problem with your eating in class. If you choose to eat, however, please be respectful of others by adhering to basic table manners.

TALKING
My hope is that we’ll be having lots of lively and engaging classroom discussion. Whether during lecture time or open discussion, I expect your spoken contributions to be geared toward course
content. If I notice you engaging in what appears to be a private conversation with another student, I'm likely to interrupt you and ask you to share your conversation with the rest of the class.

CIVILITY
Classroom discussions of course content are likely to provoke strong reactions in at least some of you. I strongly encourage respectful debate and critical argument. In some unfortunate cases, though, oral debates erupt into angry disputes. I reserve the right to moderate all classroom discussions and do whatever I see fit to ensure that they are grounded in mutual respect.

OFFICE HOURS
Let’s end this draconian section on a positive note, an “up and out” as we used to say in the commune. I genuinely want you to do well in this class. It would be thrilling for me if everyone were to earn an “A” and come out of the class with sterling sociological skills. A good deal of the material in this class will be new to you, and I promise you that quite a bit of the reading will be difficult. Forming your own critical thoughts and angles on the readings and lecture material also will be challenging. Not to mention the tests. Trust me, I’m not known for being an “easy A” kind of instructor. But I am known for being passionate about teaching and committed to my students. I strongly encourage you to meet with me during my office hours to discuss the readings, class projects and assignments, upcoming or past tests, your academic plans, your future, and/or whatever you want to discuss. Additionally, if you are uncomfortable speaking in class, you can make up participation points by discussing our work with me during office hours. If my posted hours are inconvenient for you, I’m happy to set up an appointment for another time.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES: THE DUDE ABIDES
DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others, and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any form, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to your own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university’s academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit Academic Integrity at DePaul University (http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu) for further details.

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES: USE THEM!
I strongly encourage you to take advantage of the resources available to DePaul students. They will most certainly help both your short- and long-term academic performance. These are just two of the many services available to students.
The Writing Center
Consider visiting the Writing Center to discuss your assignments for this and/or any other course. You may schedule appointments (30 or 50 minutes) on an “as-needed” or regular weekly basis, with an allowance of up to 3 hours’ worth of appointments per week, per student. Online services include Feedback-by-Email and IM conferencing (with or without a webcam). All writing center services are FREE OF CHARGE.

Writing Center tutors are specially selected and trained graduate and undergraduate students who can help you at almost any stage of your writing. They will not do your work for you, but they can help you focus and develop your ideas, review your drafts, and polish your writing. They can answer questions about grammar, mechanics, different kinds of writing styles, and documentation formats.

They also can answer questions and provide feedback online, through IM/webcam chats and email. Obviously, the tutors won't necessarily be familiar with every class or subject, but they can provide valuable help from the perspective of an interested and careful reader as well as a serious and experienced student-writer.

For more information, visit http://www.depaul.edu/writing/

The Library
Librarians can be an invaluable resource in conducting literature reviews and putting together data for original research. Go chat with a reference librarian on the first floor of the Richardson Library as you start to develop your final project. They can help you navigate journal databases, locate data sources, and think through novel places to find information. It’s vital that you become skilled at locating resources in the library, in particular the periodicals database (where you’ll find the lion’s share of scholarly articles published in peer-reviewed journals).

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD). Doing so enables access to accommodations and support services that could be integral to success in this (or any) course. There are two office locations that can furnish enrollment information, or inquire via email at csd@depaul.edu.

Loop Campus - Lewis Center #1420 - (312) 362-8002
Lincoln Park Campus - Student Center #370 - (773) 325-1677

Students are also invited to contact me privately to discuss challenges and how I may assist in facilitating course-related accommodations. This is best done early in the term and our conversation will remain confidential.

COURSE OUTLINE
As you have already figured out, this course has a significant reading requirement. Before each class
session, you should read and think about the day’s assigned material. I expect you to come to class prepared to ask questions and participate actively in a discussion of the day’s topics. Please ask questions and express your concerns in the classroom, via e-mail, conversations in office hours, and/or writing notes to me. The process of addressing your questions and concerns will be good for the entire class and for me too.

**Part 1: The Discipline of Sociology: History, Parameters, Practices**

**Week One: The Sociological Imagination (A Useful and Marketable(?) Technological Skill)**

**M 1/4**  No readings. Introductions; overview of syllabus; begin discussing elementary sociological concepts and theories.

**W 1/6**  Background
Social Science Disciplines and Areas of Study
C. Wright Mills: The Sociological Imagination
Doing Everyday Sociology: Fractals, Theories, and Patterns

Readings:  
1. Course Syllabus – every last word  
3. Sternheimer (hereafter, “ESR”), pp. 1-6

**Week Two: Logics of Social Inquiry: The Scientific Method the Discipline of Sociology**

**M 1/11**  Birth of Sociology
Sociological Theory and the Scientific Method
Thinking Critically about Social Research

**W 1/13**  Types of Sociological Research: Designs, Methods, Techniques, and Activities
Asking and addressing research questions
Ethics of social research

Readings:  
1. TSP, Chapter 2  
2. ESR, pp. 7-24


**M 1/18**  Sociological Frameworks: Macro/Micro/Meso (Overview of Paradigms)
Analytical Frameworks Quantitative/Qualitative/Ethnographic: Toward a Synthesis?
Review of Theoretical Traditions: From Grand Theory to Sensitizing Concepts
  - Functionalism
  - Conflict Theory
  - Micro-Interactionism
  - Structuration
W 1/20  Focus on Microinteractionism: The Study of Social Interaction
        Developing “The Self”
        Making Sense of the World
        Impression Management: Statuses and Roles
        Labeling, Conformity/Obedience

Readings:  1. TSP, Chapter 3
           2. ESR, Chapter 3
           3. Gracey, “Kindergarten as Boot Camp” (D2L)

Video:  The Asch Elevator Experiment (Solomon Asch)
        The Asch Line Length Experiment (Solomon Asch)

Part 2:  Structure, Culture, and Power

Week Four:  Social Structure: Hierarchies, Institutions, Patterns, Rules, and “Free Will”

M 1/25  TEST 1 – ALL MATERIAL THROUGH WEEK 3 (not including Week 4)
        Power and Privilege

W 1/27  Institutions, Context, Roles and Norms, Social Problems
        Habitus

Readings:  1. TSP, Chapter 4
           2. Reader, pp. 82-98
           3. Rosenhan, “On Being Sane in Insane Places” (D2L)

Video:  The Obedience Study (Stanley Milgram)
        The Stanford Prison Experiment (Philip Zimbardo)

Week Five: The Question(ing) of “Culture”: Key Sociological Concepts and Approaches

M 2/1  Culture: Signs, Symbols, and Language
       Values, Norms, Sanctions, Diversity, Ethnocentrism, Relativity, Popular Culture
       The World in a Grain of Sand … or in a Balinese Cockfight

W 2/3  More on Habitus
       Cultural and Social Capital – Culture and Hierarchy
       Collective Identity
       The Media

Readings:  1. TSP, Chapter 5
           2. ESR, pp. 25-42
           3. Miner, “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema” (D2L)
4. Harris, “India’s Sacred Cow” (D2L)

Week Six: Power, Politics, and Markets

M 2/8  Forms and Distribution of Power
       Institutions of Power

W 2/10 Markets: Networks, Power, and Culture
       Organizations, Bureaucracies, and the Division of Labor
       Labor and Markets in the Digital Age

Readings:  1. TSP, Chapters 6 and 7
           2. ESR, Chapter 4

Part 3:  Structures, Systems & Practices of Stratification & Inequality

Week Seven: Social Stratification, Inequality, and Poverty

W 2/15 TEST 2 – ALL MATERIAL IN WEEKS 4, 5, AND 6 (not including Week 7)
       History of Inequality
       America – A Comparative View on Inequality

W 2/17 Economy, Differential Social Mobility, and Inequality
       Poverty and Homelessness in the United States

Readings:  1. TSP, Chapter 9
           2. ESR, Chapter 6 and pp. 257-273
           3. K. Marx, on “alienation”:
              http://www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/a/l.htm#alienation (D2L)
           4. E. Durkheim, “Anomic Division of Labor” (D2L)

Week Eight: Race and Ethnicity

M 2/22  Defining and Distinguishing Race and Ethnicity
       Race – Society, Biology, and Place

W 2/24 Race and Socioeconomic Status
       Racism and Prejudice: Structures and Practices
       Structures of Oppression Revealed through “Natural” Disaster

Readings:  1. TSP, Chapter 10
           2. ESR, Chapter 8
           3. Shrum, “Hurricane Stories from Within” (D2L)
Week Nine: Gender, Sexuality, and Families

M 2/29  Defining Gender, Sex, Sexual Orientation, and Sexuality
“Doing Gender” – The Performance of Roles, Rules, and Norms
Gender and Sexual “Revolutions”

W 3/2  Biology and Society
History of Sexuality – Michel Foucault
Sexual Behavior in America and abroad
Sex and Control: The International “Sex Positive” Movement

Readings: 1. TSP, Chapter 11
2. TSP, Chapter 12 (only pp. 348-363)
3. ESR, pp.173-198 and pp. 246-256
4. Shrum and Kilburn, “Ritual Disrobement at Mardi Gras” (D2L)

Week Ten: Social Control, Deviance, Crime, and Punishment

M 3/7  Social Norms and Transgression
Morality, Law, and Economy
Stigma and Institutions

W 3/9  Deviance – Labeling Perspective
White Collar Crime, State-Sanctioned Deviance, Terrorism
Social Control and the Criminal Justice System

Readings: 1. TSP, Chapter 16
2. ESR, Chapter 5 (105-132)
3. E. Hughes, “Bastard Institutions” (D2L)

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, March 16, 2016 from 11:30 AM to 1:45 PM