

Southern Illinois University
SOC 108 Introduction to Sociology
Fall 2010

Lecture: TR 9:00am-9:50am (Parkinson 124)

Discussion Sections: R (times and locations vary)

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Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with an overview of the sociological perspective. The course will focus on key concepts and definitions, the major theoretical perspectives, and the research process. The goal is to use these analytical tools to better understand the social world, our position in it, and the limits and possibilities of change. Through reading assignments, lectures, discussions, oral debates, written position papers, in-class exercises, and examinations, students will learn to develop their “sociological imagination.” This involves shifting our perception and analysis of things from common sense (which perceives “private troubles”) to sociology (which perceives “public issues”). It is challenging to think sociologically because it involves questioning all that we take for granted.

Course Format

The course has two components: lectures and discussions. Lectures will be held each Tuesday and Thursday at 9:00am in Parkinson 124. Discussions will be held on Thursdays with 25-30 other students and one of the teaching assistants. Unless special permission is granted by your instructor, you must attend the lecture and discussion section for which you are registered.

Required Materials

1. Macionis, John. 2009. *Society The Basics: a la cart* (10th Edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. [**Macionis**]

2. Selected readings available through MySocLab. [**MySocLab**]

Course Requirements and Grading

1. *Exam I, Exam II, Exam III, and Final Exam:* (worth 60% of the final grade) Each of the exams will be based on a synthesis of the materials covered in readings, lectures, and classroom discussions. Exams are scheduled for September 16, October 14, November 9, and December 16. The exams will consist of multiple choice questions. The final exam will *not* be comprehensive. (**Note: Make-up exams will be permitted only for situations that are extremely serious; you must notify the instructor in advance if you need to reschedule an exam at other than the scheduled time**)

2. *Oral & Written Project:* Five class periods will be devoted to classroom debates on controversial social issues related to the themes that organize the course. Two groups will be responsible for presenting the opposing views. As an individual you are responsible for:

1. Meeting with the other members of the group to discuss the arguments from both sides of the controversy. Together, you must prepare two lists: a column of arguments on one side, and a column of arguments on the opposing side (just draw a line down the middle of the page to create the two columns). The assignment is due in your discussion section the week before your scheduled debate. Use course readings, lectures, and outside materials to prepare your lists. You'll receive comments from the teaching assistant regarding your lists before your scheduled debate. You may use this feedback to shape the arguments in debate.

2. Preparing a position paper stating your argument. This should be roughly 3-4 pages long (not including the cover sheet or reference page) and is due the day of your debate. This paper must be in your own words, and must include the argument, any hypotheses, and evidence based on the materials you marshaled to produce your two-column list (and anything else you wish to add). This position paper must *take a position on the issue, presumably the same position you are arguing in the debate*. Your paper must include a clear thesis statement, supporting evidence, and a conclusion. Your supporting evidence should include material from the course as well as outside references; do not just write a paper that is purely your opinion or your personal experience. Rather, use the paper as an opportunity to show that you have engaged the course material and other relevant information.

General formatting of in-text citations and the bibliography should follow ASA style guidelines. For more information on ASA style, you should google "ASA Style Guide" (I also encourage you to see me, your teaching assistant, or someone from the SIU Writing Center if you have any questions about the mechanics of writing a "position" paper). The paper **must** contain a minimum of 4 academic references from either professional journals or books, and must follow all university rules related to academic honesty. For journal articles, consider using these search engines: *SocINDEX* and *Social Science Citation Index* (Just go to the SIU library website and click on "Databases/Find Articles"). Also consider *WorldCat*, which is useful in searching books.

Papers must be typewritten or word processed, double spaced, and in standard 12-point fonts. Be sure to hand in a *final draft* -- that means a draft that you have revised based on the comments of either one or more of your teammates or of a consultant at the Writing Center (or both). It should contain no grammatical or typographical errors. (**Note: Written work must be submitted on time; late work will be penalized a letter grade per day from the due date**)

Plagiarism: When you copy something word for word, you must place it in quotation marks and reference it (Note: if you must quote another author, only use quotations that are essential to your argument. The use of "nonessential quotations" will result in a lower grade). If you are paraphrasing ideas in your own words, it is not necessary to use quotation marks, but you must cite the source. This should be done according to ASA guidelines (see above). If you use another author's words without citing them, you are committing plagiarism and will receive a F.

3. Presenting your position with other members of your team in class. You may bring notes on a *single 3" by 5"* note card. You may **not** read a prepared statement. Each team member will have 1-2 minutes to make an initial statement and each team will have 3 minutes to make a rebuttal statement in which you engage with the opposing teams' arguments and make counter-arguments. You will then have to answer questions from your classmates and participate in the subsequent discussion.

Each student will prepare *one* controversy presentation and paper over the course of the semester. The most successful debates make it clear *who is on which side*, rather than simply having each participant present materials and arguments at random. Don't just make inflammatory statements in order to provoke discussion; build and support the arguments on each side of the controversy by sharpening the contrast between your two teams. Present your rival hypotheses and evidence clearly and persuasively. **(Note: Failing to present will result in a zero for this assignment)**

Your oral and written project grade will be based on the presentation, the group list, and individual position paper and is worth 25% of the final grade.

DEBATE DATES AND TOPICS:

1. September 16 – Reflecting on the sociological perspective: Is objectivity possible and desirable in sociology?
2. October 14 – Reflecting on individuals in society: Does American society criminalize too many behaviors?
3. November 4 – Reflecting on social inequalities: Has affirmative action outlived its usefulness?
4. November 18 – Reflecting on social institutions: Is the decline of the traditional family a national crisis?
5. December 9 – Reflecting on social change: Is life in the United States getting better or worse?

3. Discussion Sections: The discussion sections are an essential part of this course. Participation in discussion section activities is worth 5% of the final grade. Another 10% of the final grade is based on in-class exercises, including pop quizzes, given during the discussion sections (For more details, see below). In addition, teaching assistants will be taking attendance in discussion sections. You are allowed to miss up to 3 discussion sections. You will be docked 5 percentage points from the final grade for any additional discussion sections you miss, **REGARDLESS OF THE EXCUSE. (Note: If you fail to come to class on time or leave before class is dismissed, you will be marked "absent")**

4. In-Class Exercises: There will be a number of in-class exercises, including pop quizzes, given during the discussion sections over the course of the semester. The exercises will be linked to concepts, issues, or questions drawn from the readings, class lectures, and possibly film material. These exercises will serve several purposes: (1) to "jumpstart" the process of thinking sociologically during the discussion section; (2) to help you make sense of the reading, lecture, and/or film materials; (3) to develop students' critical thinking and/or writing skills; and (4) to help the teaching assistant assess who is having difficulty understanding the material and/or expressing ideas in writing so that appropriate measures may be pursued. The writing exercises will be graded only as "complete" or "incomplete," and are worth 10% of the final grade. In addition, they will help assess student attendance; therefore, no-make-up or late exercises will be accepted because of absence or tardiness.

5. Attendance Naturally, attendance is expected and necessary in order to successfully complete this course as readings will be a supplement to and not a reiteration of lectures and class discussion. Experience has proven that students who regularly miss class do poorly on the exams and in the course. Attendance checks will be made in the discussion sections but not in the larger lecture hall.

Grading Scale: Out of 100 Percentage Points: A=90-100; B=80-89; C=70-79; D=60-69; F=59 and below.

Exam 1 = 15 %

Exam 2 = 15 %
Exam 3 = 15 %
Final Exam = 15%
Oral & Written Project = 25%
Participation in Discussion Section = 5%
In-Class Exercises = 10%

Other Important Information

1. Classroom Decorum: No *disruptive, distracting, or demeaning behavior* will be tolerated in this class. If your *cell phone* must be on for medical, childcare, or other reasons, please set it to vibrate, not ring. *Computer laptops* are not allowed in class unless you have written permission from “Disability Support Services.”

2. Cheating: All SIUC policies regarding plagiarism and academic dishonesty will be upheld in this course. A grade of “0” will be recorded for all works in which you were found to have been involved in any acts of academic dishonesty. If you are not familiar with the definitions and consequences of cheating or with your rights, refer to your *Student Conduct Code*, see an academic advisor, or ask me.

3. Grade Appeals: Any student who believes that she or he has been graded unfairly may appeal that grade following standard university procedures. Certain procedural rights are guaranteed to all students charged with academic dishonesty who are subject to disciplinary action. These rights are outlined in the *Student Conduct Code*.

4. Emergency Procedures. Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on the BERT’s website at www.bert.siu.edu, Department of Public Safety’s website www.dps.siu.edu (disaster drop down) and in the Emergency Response Guidelines pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

5. Note for History-Education Students: Your work will be assessed as part of the accreditation review for the National Council for the Social Sciences. This course will explore and analyze a number of issues you will impart to your future high school students, including: how role, status, and social class impact interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions; the form, function, and evolution of institutions, their relationships, and how they influence people, events, and culture; how groups and institutions aim to meet individual needs and promote the common good, but create tensions between social conformity and expressions of individuality; how behavioral science sciences can be applied to the examination of social problems.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

The Sociological Perspective

WEEK 1

Aug 24 Course introduction

Aug 26 Macionis: Chapter 1

Discussion Group: Introduction

WEEK 2

Aug 31 Macionis: Chapter 1; Chapter 16 (Pp. 494-496)

Sept 2 Macionis: Chapter 1

Discussion Group: MySocLab: C. Wright Mills “The Promise”

WEEK 3

Sept 7 Macionis: Chapter 1

Sept 9 Macionis: Chapter 2

Discussion Group: MySocLab: Harold Minor “Body Ritual among the Nacirema”;

MySocLab: John Hostetler’s “The Amish: A Small Society”

Debate Group One: Two-column arguments due

Individuals in Society

WEEK 4

Sept 14 Macionis: Chapter 2; Chapter 9 (Pp. 248-254)

Sept 16 **EXAM ONE**

Discussion Group: DEBATE 1: Reflecting on the sociological perspective: Is objectivity possible and desirable in sociology?

WEEK 5

Sept 21 Macionis: Chapter 3

Sept 23. Macionis: Chapter 4

Discussion Group: MySocLab: Howard Becker “Becoming a Marijuana User”;

MySocLab: Erving Goffman “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life”

WEEK 6

Sept 28 Macionis: Chapter 5

Sept 30 Macionis: Chapter 6

Discussion Group: MySocLab: Judith Treas & Deirdre Giesen “Sexual Infidelity Among Married and Cohabiting Americans”

WEEK 7

Oct 5 Macionis: Chapter 6

Oct 7 Macionis: Chapter 7

Discussion Group: MySocLab: Elijah Anderson “Code of the Streets”

Debate Group Two: Two-column arguments due

WEEK 8

Oct 12 Macionis: Chapter 7

Oct 14 **EXAM TWO**

Discussion Group: DEBATE 2: Reflecting on individuals in society: Does American society criminalize too many behaviors?

Social Inequalities

WEEK 9

Oct 19 Macionis: Chapters 8 & 9

Oct 21 Macionis: Chapters 8 & 9

Discussion Group: MySocLab: Kingsley Davis “Some Principles of Stratification”;
MySocLab: Melvin Tumin “Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis”

WEEK 10

Oct 26 Macionis: Chapters 8 & 9

Oct 28 Macionis: Chapter 10

Discussion Group: MySocLab: Nijole Benokraitis “How Subtle Sex Discrimination Works”;
MySocLab: Phyllis Rosser “Too Many Women in College?”
Debate Group Three: Two-column arguments due

WEEK 11

Nov 2 Macionis: Chapter 10

Nov 4 Macionis: Chapter 11

Discussion Group: DEBATE 3: Reflecting on social inequalities: Has affirmative action
outlived its usefulness?
Debate Group Four: Two-column arguments due

WEEK 12

Nov 9 **EXAM THREE**

Nov 11 No class – VETERANS DAY

Social Institutions

WEEK 13

Nov 16 Macionis: Chapter 13 (Pp. 372-392)

Nov 18 Macionis: Chapter 13 (Pp. 372-392)

Discussion Group: DEBATE 4: Reflecting on social institutions: Is the decline of the
traditional family a national crisis?

Nov 23 No class – THANKSGIVING BREAK

Nov 25 No class – THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 14

Nov 30 Macionis: Chapter 12 (Pp. 334-352)

Dec 2 Macionis: Chapter 14 (Pp. 410-429)

Discussion Group: MySocLab: William Julius Wilson “When Work Disappears”;
MySocLab: Jonathon Kozol “Savage Inequalities: Children in America’s Schools”

Debate Group Five: Two-column arguments due

Social Change

WEEK 15

Dec 7 Macionis: Chapter 15 (Pp. 450-468)

Dec 9 Macionis: Chapter 16

Discussion Group: DEBATE 5: Reflecting on social change: Is life in the United States getting better or worse?

Dec 16 **FINAL EXAM** (7:50am – 9:50am)