Course Description

“Society” is an incredibly complex concept, and yet it can be studied scientifically. The goal of this course is to learn how sociologists study social phenomenon and what some of their findings are. The primary aim is to develop critical thinking skills when considering the issues of our time, from “fashion deviance” to war, from racism and sexism, to religion and sex. We will be tackling the subjects that are “impolite” dinner topics so we can bring them to the table with knowledge, insight and compassion. In a media-driven culture it is incredibly important to be able to cut through the spin and develop macro-level perspectives about our culture.

In a class this size I would still like to encourage discussion. We will generally follow a lecture format, but questions and comments are always welcome and we will have opportunities for greater class participation. We will use Riane Eisler’s The Chalice & the Blade as an orienting source, and relate it to current hot topics, like sexuality.

Disclaimer: This course applies a critical approach to topics like God, gender, race, sexuality and social class. You may have your core assumptions about these issues challenged. This is what it means to become educated.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to come to class and be committed to the course goals. I would ask that you show respect for your fellow students, the instructor and higher education by not coming to class late, not eating in the classroom and turning off your cell phones, laptops and texting devices. Please leave your weapons at home. Your final course grade will be based on the following:

Quizzes (10%) There will be two short in-class quizzes on Oct. 12 and Nov. 16. The quizzes will be two short essay questions each.

Midterm (20%) The mid-term exam will be Oct. 22. The exam will cover the course material and the readings. The format will be multiple choice and short essay.

Research Exercises (35%) Throughout the course there will be approximately 5-6 short class exercises designed to give you research experience in the sociological method.
Online Chapter Quizzes (5%) Students are required to complete at least 3 chapter quizzes available at: http://www.wwnorton.com/college/soc/real-world3/

Final Exam (25%) The final will be on Wed, Dec. 5, 10:15-12:05. The exam will cover the course material and the readings but will not be cumulative. The format will be multiple choice and short essay.

Attendance (5%) Attendance in each class is mandatory. Someone is paying an increasing amount of money for you to be here and I rely on your daily input. You cannot just “get the notes.” A roll will be passed around each class and you will sign your own name. Your attendance score is based on the percentage of classes you're in attendance for. There are no excuses, only choices.

Make-up tests and late assignments Make-up tests and quizzes must be scheduled in advance. They are essay format and generally more difficult than the original exam. Late assignments are marked down 20% each day they are late. After 5 days, they are no longer accepted.


Online version of the Real World text: http://www.wwnorton.com/college/soc/real-world3/

Class Schedule
Week of: Topic: READINGS:
Sept. 24 The sociological imagination and the social construction of reality
R: 1
C: Introduction
S: 1-2

Oct. 1 Classic theory and methods
READINGS:
8 Culture and Society
READINGS:
R: 3, 14
C: 3-4
S: 9, 13
Quiz #1 Friday

15 Socialization and gender roles
READINGS:
R: 9, 15
C: 5
S: 14, 37

22 Interaction and social groups
READINGS:
R: 4-5
C: 6
S: 18
Mid-Term Monday

29 Deviance and criminality
READINGS:
R: 6
C: 7-8
S: 11, 29

Nov. 5 Social stratification
READINGS:
R: 7, 11
C: 9
S: 23-24

12 Race and Racism
READINGS:
R: 8
C: 10-11
S: 22, 26
Quiz #2 Friday
No class Mon. (Thanks vets!)

19 Religion and the family
READINGS:
R: 10, 12  
C: 12  
S: 41, 43  
No class Fri. (Thanks!)

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26  
Social Change
READINGS:
R: 16  
C: 13, epilogue  
S: 46, 49

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Dec.  5  (Wednesday) Final Exam 10:15

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Honor Policy

The vast majority of PSU students believe in honor and fairness. Unfortunately there are those who do not who screw it up for everyone else. So here is the deal:

1) Written Assignments – All you have to do to not be accused of plagiarism is to cite your sources. Do not download text and paste it into a paper. Just properly cite it. Suspicious papers will be checked on www.turnitin.com, Google and the professor’s files. Students caught plagiarizing on assignments will be given a failing grade on that assignment and reported to the Office of Student Affairs.

2) Exams – All cell phones must be turned off and text messengers out of sight during exams. Students are not to wear billed caps during exams. Students may be asked to change seating before or during an exam. Students caught cheating on an exam will be given a failing grade on that exam and reported to the Office of Student Affairs.

3) Respect yourself.

“What good fortune for governments that people don’t think” – Hitler
Attention Laptop Users!

Aren’t laptops great? I love mine! However, it’s been my experience that people who take class notes with laptops don’t do very well in my classes. I have no scientific research to back this up, but anecdotally I’ve noticed that laptoppers do poorly on the test questions based on lecture material. How quickly can you type this diagram?

It makes more sense to liberate yourself from your laptop and handwrite (talk to someone from the 20th century) your notes. Then you can type them up later. Think of how smart that will make you! Besides, if you have a laptop open in my class, I just assume that you are a) updating your Facebook, b) downloading music and/or porn, or c) working on something for another class. Besides, it’s distracting to your fellow students. So don’t be a chump. Close the Powerbook and open your head.

In other words: **No laptop use during class (or cellphones, smartphones, Blackberrys, phasers, vibrators etc. Your texts can wait.)**