U.S. Society, SOC 310, Sec 2
CRN 63230  Spring 2012, 4 credits

CLASS: Online course
INSTRUCTOR: Frances Marx Stehle, M.S.
OFFICE HOURS: Online availability 5 to 7 days a week via D2L e-mail
PHONE: (please use e-mail as first option) SOC department: 735-3926

E-mail : Use D2L's mail system as a preferred option. You must be in D2L and use their D2L mail function to reach me this way. Another option is: frances1205@comcast.net (Please put “SOC 310” in the subject heading. I do not open messages from unknown persons.) Please, do NOT send assignments to this e-mail address; use the D2L dropboxes. E-mail is checked at least 5 times a week.

** Additional readings will be made available on D2L.

D2L: https://d2l.pdx.edu. You will need your Odin login name and password.

VIDEOS: Some videos will be viewed as a part of this class and they will be "on your own" and at your own expense (most are free), max. cost of $2.99 per video for max of 5 videos. There are discussion questions that will be provided, so check those out before you view. Other media includes Youtube clips.

1) Sicko- http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/sicko (free)
Netflix dvd if you are member (not streaming), Amazon Instant video $2.99

2) Food, Inc.- Netflix – streaming (play) for free if you are member; Amazon Instant Video $2.99
**OR, if you have seen Food, Inc. you have two other options...
   a) "Michael Pollan: The Omnivore's Dilemma" (1:19:04) ...he is speaking at a college...informative, interesting and humorous! http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEUxk12U9ZQ

   OR
   b) Peter Singer "The Ethics of What We Eat" as a substitute: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHzwqf_JkrA (1:13:00) Singer is a bio-ethics professor at Princeton who is a proponent of veganism. Note: As with many intellectuals, he holds outspoken views on several contentious topics, some of which we may or may not agree with. That's one of the great things about higher education...exposure to ideas with a challenge for us to sift through all of the ideas to see what fits for us. His university home page if interested: http://www.princeton.edu/~psinger/

3) clips of King Corn- Youtube links provided in content, if interested, entire video on Netflix, streamed for free for members, and 99 cents on Amazon Instant Video

4) Maxed out- Free on Netflix streaming if you are a member; Free at http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/maxed-out/ Also on Youtube in 9 parts.

5) World's Most Dangerous Drug (methamphetamine)-
- Free on Netflix streaming if you are a member:
- Youtube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F69LM0kA89o&feature=fvsr

INTRODUCTION: This course presents a sociological perspective on social problems in contemporary US society. Sociological approaches to such institutions as the economy, health, education, and the family are explored. Attention will be given to comparison with other industrialized countries as well.
~First, attention will be paid to rationalization, bureaucractization (Max Weber) and McDonalization, particularly when it comes to the food industry: Industry/Agriculture/Big Business/Government.
~Second, health and the health care system will be explored in terms of how our health as a society is rationalized and trivialized, and the serious financial and physical consequences for people. We will use the symbolic interaction theory to discuss how individuals also rationalize their own health. This theory will address the “meaning of food” and eating for Americans and other cultures.
~Third, rationalization at work and distribution of jobs (Fast Food Nation) will also be discussed. Oregon
data as well as national data will be used to examine labor trends and how that affects industries and individuals. Within this context we will look at changes in the U.S. Economy, inequality, the distinct role of politics, and the role of education in addressing stratification and overall life chances. The problem of hunger in America will be examined very briefly.

~Fourth, education will be discussed. We will examine research on inequities, including social class and race.

~Fifth, we will be exploring a video and having a discussion about consumer debt and the macro reasons (corporate and political), and effects of, this problem on our society and the individuals within it.

~In the latter part of the course, social problems affecting the family will be studied in terms of the effects of poverty, alcohol/drug abuse, child abuse, foster care/adoption. Factors contributing to institutional stability and change are identified. Turning Stones will provide a “real-life” understanding of the serious problems many families face, and their interactions with social health and welfare agencies. Lecture and discussion will include information on local programs and data. Videos, news stories and local hard data will add to the discussion of the problems of drugs for families.

Of great importance, we will be looking at solutions: to address the changing economy, labor market, smart money management (individual,) food and health concerns. We will explore what is working for people.

**Learner Outcomes...**

**At the end of the term a student will be able to:**

1) utilize a sociological perspective on social behavior to examine social inequality and social institutions;
2) examine specific social institutions from a macro level orientation and understand the functions of these institutions;
3) demonstrate an understanding of the theory of rationalization, and of McDonaldization, and explain how those principles, in particular, have affected U.S. food production and distribution;
4) describe the connection between macro forces and individuals, especially in terms of a person's health and health care.
5) describe factors associated with family problems and child abuse and current national and local statistics.
6) describe empirical findings in the discipline;
7) use assignments and discussions to formulate applications of principles.

**GRADING:** The course grade is based on the following:

A. Annotations on articles and books-
   Choice of 8 papers @ 10 points each. To help with workload, and allow for crises or overloaded weeks, you only do 8/10. You **must** skip one of these: #1, #2, #3, #4, or #6. You **MUST** do #5 and at least the last two of the annotations for Turning Stones (#9 & #10) You will incur a 5-point penalty if you do not complete the mandatory Annotation 10. It is very involved and you have two weeks to complete it-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------80 total.

B. Two writing assignments (1@ 50 pts., 1 @ 15 pts.) -----------------------------65 total

C. Assignment on “Groups for Change”---------------------------------------------20 pts.

D. Discussions: 3 pts per week X 9 (out of 10 weeks)= 27 , plus 4 extra points for the Groups for Change comments discussion= 31 pts. You MUST skip one week of a discussion, **NOT** Groups for Change.

A discussion entry (post) should be at least 70 words and a reply should be at least 35 words. There will be some flexibility, but I will mark down students whose posts are very brief.

**196 points available**

**Scale:** 184+ = (A), 176-183= (A-), 170-175 (B+), 164-169 (B), 156-163 (B-), 150-155 (C+), 145-149 (C), 137-144 (C-), 131-136 (D+), 125-130 (D), 117-124 (D-)

* Please use this grading scale when tracking your grade; D2L **percentages** are not accurate as the record includes points for all annotations and discussions, when you do not do all of them.

**EXTRA CREDIT:** You may view a current movie or video, which you can relate to this course. Write a 2-page paper explaining how this relates to this course and use at least 3 concepts from the course that you can explain via the movie/video. **5 points**
Annotations: These are explanatory notes on content that I often direct in the instructions. You should be summarizing, explaining, and analyzing: things/facts that you learned from the reading of the books, videos, articles AND the weekly notes that coincide with it.; themes; ideas, etc. The more you can synthesize your ideas, while summarizing content, the better. While I often include questions on videos, if there is a video assigned, you MUST write at least two points on the video showing that you did watch it. For Turning Stones, you can write about the story/events and your personal reactions, in addition to any facts that are raised in the book or in the readings or in online materials. Each paper will cover the assignment for that "class", and turned in at the end of the week, Sunday night, and should include 8 important points- total, minimum of 2 typed, single-spaced pages. These papers should be considered like a participation grade...if you do a decent job (including some specifics from source materials helps) and turn them in on time, you should receive 8 to 10 points. Please put the assignment # in the heading of your paper and place in the appropriate dropbox. There is a rubric (or grading feedback) on the course home page on the right side, and there is a sample paper was that was "excellent" there also. I am not able to provide written feedback to every paper every time, so the grading feedback that coordinates with your numerical score is important.

For the most part, the deadline for written work is Sunday night at 11:59 p.m. Exceptions will be noted on D2L. Discussions- you can skip one discussion, so NO late discussions allowed. Your first post for each discussion will be due by Saturday at 5:00 p.m. to allow students time to read it and reply before the Sunday midnight deadline. You will lose a point if you do not post by Saturday at 5:00. Writing exercises- 3 points deducted after Sunday night deadline for the first week, another 2 points deducted after that. Writing exercise #1 is particularly time-consuming, so please allow for that. Groups for Change- It is important to get this in on time, so your group members can read and post about it. So, a deduction of 3 points will be given after the deadline. Annotations – 1 point deducted after Sunday night deadline for the next week, then 2 points deducted after the second full week, then three points deducted after that. Keep in mind, you only have to write 8 weekly papers over an 11-week period. Example: If a paper is due Sunday Jan 22 at 11:59 p.m., anything turned in after that, and until the next Sunday, Jan 29 at 11:59 p.m. is 1 week late. After that, it becomes 2 weeks late.

** ALL late work must be submitted no later than Saturday June 16 at 11:59 p.m.

Proper format: Please use Word docs or the free Open Office word processing program (.odt) http://www.openoffice.org/. I cannot open Mac documents (.Pages) unless they are properly exported to Word.

Suggestions on how to attack the workload:

1) Read the associated checklist for each class and/or the syllabus outline with "to-do" list. Check Course News for announcements. NOTE: The checklist is a stand-alone tool if interested. I don't grade it.

2) Read the instructions for the annotation and the instructions for the discussion first. When I say that, I mean read the instructions for the discussion in the actual discussion page (after you click on your group's week 1 discussion, for example). That will give you the exact questions AND the number of replies I am asking for that week.

3) Read the notes posted in Course Content in the modules. Consider this like a lecture. It is me imparting info, and posing questions for thought, like I would in class. There also links in the notes and please read linked material. The questions I pose in the notes are not necessarily ones you have to answer, although sometimes the annotation instructions may include one. They are questions for thought. The annotations will be based on the class notes.

4) Complete the annotation. The annotation instructions are all for that one annotation (paper). Prepare that in numbered form as you answer the questions. So, when you look at annotation #1 instructions, all of those questions (1 through 8) are annotation #1. Please do not include my questions in your papers, just the number and the response. Most annotations will be 8 thorough paragraphs although some students write more than that and that is fine. There is a sample annotation on the right side of the home page. That should serve as a "great" example.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Readings/Content</th>
<th>To Do this week</th>
<th>What's due?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1- Apr 2 | Introduction. Thinking about social problems. Sociological theoretical perspectives Fast Food nation (FFN)- the beginnings of fast food, history. Overview of health care and effects on individuals. | Read Week 1 notes  
Watch the video "Sicko" after reading instructions for annotation 1.  
FFN-begin... intro,ch.1,2,5 hopefully read by Apr 9.  
Review the instructions for Writing Assignment #1 in module "Materials for Course" (not due for a few weeks, but is time consuming) | 1) Discussion board #1:  
Post per instructions for Week 1 and reply per instructions. Initial post due Sat 4/7 by 5:00 p.m.  
Replies due by Sunday 4/8 @11:59 p.m.  
2) Annotation 1 due in dropbox 4/8 @11:59p.m. |
View video: “Food Inc.” OR the video Peter Singer "The Ethics of What We Eat" (link provided) OR Michael Pollan "The Omnivore's Dilemma" if you have seen Food Inc. Watch early in week if possible.  
Skim articles by mid week if possible.  
Begin to read FFN 3 &4 to complete by Apr 19, suggested deadline. | 1) Discussion board #2:  
Post and reply per instructions. Initial post due Sat 4/14 at 5:00 p.m.. Replies due by Sunday 4/15 @11:59 p.m.  
2) Annotation 2 due in dropbox 4/15 @ 11:59 p.m.  
3) Choose your organization for "Groups for Change" project by now and post your group's name in subject heading in proper board. |
| 3- Apr 16 | The relationship between large corporations and our food. Rationalization and our personal health. | FFN Ch. 6 - suggested by end of week  
Read week 3 notes  
Video: parts of King Corn on Youtube (links included), | 1) Discussion board #3:  
Post/reply per instructions. Initial post due by Sat 4/21 by 5:00 p.m.  
Replies due by Sunday 4/22 @11:59 p.m.  
2) Annotation 3 due Sun 4/22 @ 11:59 p.m. |
| 4 - Apr 23 | Food Justice. Food security. Fast Food Nation: Ranching as a changed industry. Factory Towns and Big Business. Dangerous Jobs. Rationalization and Health care. Companies profiting from obesity: pharmaceuticals and others. Organizations and small groups working towards positive change regarding health, fitness, nutrition, food, and more. | FFN Ch. 7,8,9 (for annotation #5)  
Read Week 4 notes  
View clips of "Unnatural Causes" on Youtube- links included | 1) Discussion board #4:  
Post and reply per instructions. Initial post due Sat 4/28 by 5:00 p.m.  
Replies due by Sunday 4/29 @11:59 p.m.  
2) Annotation 4 due Sun 4/29 @ 11:59 p.m.  
3) If you can, by Apr 27, post your "Groups for Change" paper by cutting/pasting it into proper discussion board (links in week 5 course content- Groups for |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
<th>Discussion Assignment</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5- Apr 30 | Life chances: through the lens of class, race and gender.                          | Change Post and Comment) by putting the name of your organization in the subject line and also submitting the paper in dropbox to me. | 1) Monday Apr 30 is final deadline to post your Groups for Change paper in discussion board "Groups for Change - Post and Comment" AND submit in dropbox to me.  
2) Discussion Board #5 "Groups for Change" : Begin commenting on your group members' organizations on Apr 30 (or earlier) by commenting in the same discussion board as the posts. You must comment/ ask questions on each person's paper in a way that shows you read their paper. **Deadline for comments is Tues May 8 (7 points for this discussion)**  
3) Annotation #5 due Sun May 6, 11:59 p.m. |
|           | Wrap up FFN: Global Realization, Mad Cow.                                          |                                                                                        |                                                                      |
|           | FFN: Ch. 10, epilogue, afterword                                                   |                                                                                        |                                                                      |
|           | Read week 5 notes                                                                  |                                                                                        |                                                                      |
|           | You should have begun working on Writing Assignment #1- due Mon May 7              |                                                                                        |                                                                      |
| 6- May 7  | Problems of work and unemployment                                                  |                                                                                        | 1) Writing Assignment #1 due Mon May 7 11:59 p.m.  
2) Discussion board #6: Post per instructions. Initial post due Sat 2/18 @ 5 p.m. . Due by Sat 5/12 @11:59 p.m.  
3) Annotation #6 due Sun 5/13 |
|           | The economy and jobs.                                                               |                                                                                        |                                                                      |
|           | Oregon labor trends and national trends.                                           |                                                                                        |                                                                      |
|           | Read week 6 notes and check out links                                              |                                                                                        |                                                                      |
|           | Read “Revenge of the Baristas” early in week (for annotation 6)                   |                                                                                        |                                                                      |
|           | Read articles and data in this week's content, needed for annotation #6            |                                                                                        |                                                                      |
| 7- May 14 | Discussion on charts and graphs on the economy and poverty.                        |                                                                                        | 1) Discussion board #7: Post per instructions. Initial post due Sat 5/19 @ 5:00 p.m. Replies due by Sun 5/20 @11:59p.m.  
2) Annotation #7 due Sun 5/20 11:59 p.m. |
|           | The effects of poverty education.                                                  |                                                                                        |                                                                      |
|           | Cultural capital. Habitus                                                          |                                                                                        |                                                                      |
|           | School funding introduction.                                                       |                                                                                        |                                                                      |
|           | Read week 7 notes and check out links                                              |                                                                                        |                                                                      |
|           | Watch the two video clips on poverty and education. Watch trailer for documentary "Race to Nowhere." |                                                                                        |                                                                      |
|           | Read article "Indifferent to Inequality" (for annotation 7.)                       |                                                                                        |                                                                      |
| 8- May 21 | A close look at research on school funding and national and local stats on schools. |                                                                                        | 2) Annotation 8 due Sun May 27 11:59 p.m.  
3) Discussion board #8: Post per instructions. Initial post due Sat 5/26 @ 5 p.m. Replies due by Sunday 5/26@11:59p.m. |
<p>|           | Charter schools, magnet schools.                                                   |                                                                                        |                                                                      |
|           | Read week 8 notes                                                                 |                                                                                        |                                                                      |
|           | Try to begin reading Turning Stones (TS) early this week, suggested to read : Foreword, prologue, chs. 1,2. (for annotation 8) |                                                                                        |                                                                      |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10- Jun 4- this content is for 2 weeks!</td>
<td>Child Abuse. Foster care. Adoption. Organizations and programs working to help families and children.</td>
<td>TS chs. 6,7,8, epilogue, afterword. (I scanned and posted the afterword in &quot;Announcements&quot; on course home page as some editions don't have it.) Read week 10 notes Watch video: &quot;World's Most Dangerous Drug&quot;</td>
<td>Reminder: all students must complete Annotation 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11- Jun 11-finals week</td>
<td>Prepare Writing Exercise #2 on Turning Stones</td>
<td>Discussion #10 -post due by Monday Jun 11 @ 11:59 p.m. -replies by Sat Jun 16 @ 11:59 p.m. Due Sat Jun 16 @11:59 p.m.: 1) Writing Exercise #2 2) Annotation #10 3) Extra credit All late papers due Sat 6/16 @ 11:59 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>