Introduction to Sociology

Sociology 200 sec 003

Fall 2013

Lectures: Tues/Thurs 10-11:50 CH 271

Instructor: Kim Ulmer Langston, M.S., M.A.

Office: CH 263

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-2 or by appointment

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Texts: Sociology Project (available at the PSU bookstore)

Course Description and Objectives: This course is an introduction to sociology as a way of understanding the world. Sociology is a field of study that explains social, political, and economic phenomena in terms of social structures, social forces, and group relations. I will introduce you to the field by focusing on several important sociological topics, including socialization, culture, the social construction of knowledge, inequality, race and ethnic relations, poverty, and political sociology. You will leave this course with:

- The ability to apply these perspectives and theories to contemporary social problems

- Insight into the critical link between social structures, social forces and individual circumstances;

- Insight into how you shape society and how society shapes you.

Exams, Papers and Grading: There will be two multiple choice exams including the final. They are both worth 100 points each. Each exam will consist of 50% lecture material and 50% text material. There will be also be 1 written assignments worth 100 points and 2 quizzes worth 50 points each for a total of 400 points possible for the course. The writing assignment will be approximately 3.5 pages in length double spaced and each one will be a critical analysis of a topic covered in lecture that is presented in a film shown in class.

Paper assignment requirements: *Critically analyze*tie in sociological themes*do not just summarize*apply concepts in film to other areas in sociology*about 3.5 pages (no less than 3 pages, no more than 4.5) double spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point times new roman font-you are not fooling anyone with large margins! Make sure to have an introduction paragraph (sociological concepts illustrated in the film include…the concepts I will discuss in this paper
are….) Organize your paper (I highly recommend making an outline beforehand—Introduction, body paragraphs and a conclusion is required). Include transition sentences. Use complete sentences. Have a conclusion paragraph summing up your major points. In the first paragraph of your paper, briefly summarize the main points of the video/article that are relevant to your argument. In the rest of your paper, provide your reactions to the video/article through the construction of an argument that integrates at least one theory or class concept and one piece of supporting evidence presented in course readings or lecture. An academic argument includes 1) a thesis statement with a question and a position and 2) at least one claim that is supported by 3) evidence or theory. By evidence I mean findings based on empirical research, not merely your own anecdotal evidence. For more information about how to make an academic argument see “Establishing Arguments” at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/588/01/. Use FORMAL LANGUAGE. Do not write as if you are writing an email or a blog. Do not use contractions (don’t, isn’t, etc…).

**Questions to be answered in your papers:** How did this film portray sociological concepts? (give concrete examples) What is a critique of this film? How can this film’s sociological topic be applied to an area not addressed in the film? The film shown in class for the paper is just as important as a test so make sure you are here on that day, or make arrangements to view the film outside of class. Grading scale is as follows: 360-400= A; 320-359=B; 280-319=C; 240-279=D; 239 or below=F

**Course Schedule** - schedule is subject to change and changes will be clearly stated in class.

- Oct. 1  Introduction and course expectations
- Oct. 3  Chapter 1 The Sociological Imagination & Chapter 2 Studying the Sociological World
- Oct. 8  Chapter 3 Social Interaction
- Oct. 10  Chapter 4 Social Structure
- **Oct. 15**  Chapter 5 Culture, Media, and Communication… followed by Quiz 1 (ch 1-4)
- Oct. 17  Media cont. no readings. Film shown during lecture (55 min). Trigger warning (adult themes)
- Oct. 22  Chapter 6 Power and Politics
- Oct. 24  Chapter 9 Social Stratification, Inequality, and Poverty
- Oct. 29  Park Avenue Shown (70 min), discuss how it relates to chapters 6 and 9.
- **Oct. 31**  TEST 1 (Chapters 5,6,9, and lecture material from Oct. 17 & Oct. 29)
- Nov. 5  Return tests. Chapter 10 Race and Ethnicity
- Nov. 7  Race discussion continued. Film shown “White Like Me”
- Nov. 12  Chapter 16 Crime, Deviance, and Social Control- “Broken on all Sides”
*Nov. 14*  
**Quiz 2** (chapters 10, 16 and lecture material from Nov. 7 and Nov. 12) at the beginning of class. Followed by... Chapter 11 Gender and Sexuality (trigger warning: rape culture and domestic violence covered in lecture)

Nov. 19  
Gender continued. Chapter 13 Families and Family Life.

*Nov. 21*  
**Film Shown for Paper**

*Nov. 26*  
**Paper Due!** No readings. Lecture will cover the concept of Medicalization. No office hours for me

Nov. 28  
No Class! Happy Thanksgiving

**Dec. 3**  

Dec. 5  
Chapter 15 education, wrap up

**Dec. 10**  
**FINAL EXAM 10:15 in this room**

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**COURSE POLICIES**

**Please turn off your cellphones**, ipods, etc. during class, and please turn your attention away from materials (e.g. newspapers) that are not relevant to the class.

**Deadlines and Make-ups.** Assignments and readings are to be completed by the beginning of class on their due date, and I prefer that you turn in a hard copy of all assignments. **Prior approval is required for e-mailed assignments**. (E-mail assignments at your own risk – they sometimes get lost in my inbox.) Late work is penalized 10% per each class day after due date. Missed exams cannot be made-up without prior approval. Please document any family or medical emergency and notify the professor before the class you will miss. Make-up exams must be taken in the testing center [(503) 725-5301 or testing@pdx.edu].

**Attendance:** Attendance will be taken every class. This is a part of your overall attendance and participation grade. You will NOT be penalized for missing class, however, you will be rewarded for good attendance with a higher participation grade at the end of the term. Class participation will be taken into account for final grading as well; each student is responsible for completing the reading and being prepared to contribute to class discussion. “90 percent of life is just showing up” (I have no idea who said that, but it’s true!).

**Class Participation.** This class is designed to promote students to think critically about assumptions regarding sociology, our own conventional wisdom, political structures affecting our everyday lives and more. Many of us may have strong feelings about these issues, and in order to make our class a safe and open place for discussion, respectful behavior towards classmates and the instructor are expected at all times. Moreover, hateful speech or attacks towards members of the class, instructor, or specific social groups will not be tolerated.

**D2L.** Course materials will be available at https://d2l.pdx.edu. I may also use D2L to communicate with the class. Please let me know if you are unable to access D2L. It is your responsibility to maintain an updated email address with D2L so that you can receive emails and announcements. **PLEASE DO NOT email me through D2L**. The best way to get in touch with me is by emailing me directly at ulm@pdx.edu. If you are having trouble accessing your D2L account or do not have an ODIN account please contact the OIT help desk (Smith Memorial Student Union (SMSU) 18) at 503-725-HELP (4357) or help@pdx.edu.
Plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense than can result in a failing grade and other serious consequences, including expulsion. Plagiarism occurs when you utilize the ideas, expressions, phrases or words of another person without correctly citing that person or source. Make sure you understand how to *correctly* cite sources, including when and how to paraphrase and quote.

**Students with disabilities.** who may require accommodations, are encouraged to contact the PSU Disabilities Resource Center (DRC) and the professor at the beginning of the term to arrange accommodations. The DRC is located in 435 Smith and can be contacted at 725-4150 or by email at drc@pdx.edu. Visit their site at www.pdx.edu/uasc/drc.

**Recommended Materials**
Here are some helpful on-line grammar and writing resources:
The OWL at Purdue University
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/679/01/
The Emory Writing Center
http://www.writingcenter.emory.edu/writing.html

**Resources to Help You Succeed at PSU**
Writing Center (http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu)
One-on-one help with writing, on a drop-in or appointment basis
188F Cramer Hall, 725.3570

Millar Library (http://www.lib.pdx.edu)
Reference desk, phone, IM, email, 24/7 chat: http://library.pdx.edu/askus.html
Research guides, research survival guide: http://library.pdx.edu/researchguides.html

Undergraduate Advising and Support Center (UASC) (http://www.pdx.edu/uasc)
Drop-in advising hours are Monday-Friday, 10-3 (subject to change) OR call to schedule an appointment
425 SMU, 725.4005, askuasc@pdx.edu

Student Health and Counseling Center (SHAC) (http://www.shac.pdx.edu)
Counseling, psychological evaluation and intervention, testing services, and all health-related concerns

**Professors Pet Peeves**

**By Lisa Wade, PhD from the societypages.org**

I got this email from a Yale student when I arrived to give a speech. She was responsible for making sure that I was delivered to my hotel and knew where to go the next day:

Omg you’re here! Ahh i need to get my shit together now lol. Jk. Give me a ring when u can/want, my cell is [redacted]. I have class until 1230 but then im free! i will let the teacher she u will be there, shes a darling. Perhaps ill come to the end of the talk and meet you there after. Between the faculty lunch and your talk, we can chat! ill take make sure the rooms are all ready for u. See ya!

To say the least, this did not make me feel confident that my visit would go smoothly.

I will use this poor student to kick off this year’s list of Professors’ Pet Peeves. I reached out to my network and collected some things that really get on instructors’ nerves. Here are the results: some of the
“don’ts” for how to interact with your professor or teaching assistant. For what it’s worth, #2 was by far the most common complaint.

1. Don’t use unprofessional correspondence.

Your instructors are not your friends. Correspond with them as if you’re in a workplace, because you are. We’re not saying that you can’t ever write like this, but you do need to demonstrate that you know when such communication is and isn’t appropriate. You don’t wear pajamas to a job interview, right? Same thing.

2. Don’t ask the professor if you “missed anything important” during an absence.

No, you didn’t miss anything important. We spent the whole hour watching cats play the theremin on youtube! Of course you missed something important! We’re college professors! Thinking everything we do is important is an occupational hazard. Here’s an alternative way to phrase it: “I’m so sorry I missed class. I’m sure it was awesome.” If you’re concerned about what you missed, try this instead: Do the reading, get notes from a classmate (if you don’t have any friends in class, ask the professor if they’ll send an email to help you find a partner to swap notes with), read them over, and drop by office hours to discuss anything you didn’t understand.

3. Don’t pack up your things as the class is ending.

We get it. The minute hand is closing in on the end of class, there’s a shift in the instructor’s voice, and you hear something like “For next time…” That’s the cue for everyone to start putting their stuff away. Once one person does it, it’s like an avalanche of notebooks slapping closed, backpack zippers zipping, and cell phones coming out.

Don’t do it.

Just wait 10 more seconds until the class is actually over. If you don’t, it makes it seem like you are dying to get out of there and, hey, that hurts our feelings!

4. Don’t ask a question about the readings or assignments until checking the syllabus first.

It’s easy to send off an email asking your instructor a quick question, but that person put a lot of effort into the syllabus for a reason. Remember, each professor has dozens or hundreds of students. What seems like a small thing on your end can add up to death-by-a-thousand-paper-cuts on our end. Make a good faith effort to figure out the answer before you ask the professor.

5. Don’t get mad if you receive critical feedback.

If an instructor takes a red pen and massacres your writing, that’s a sign that they care. Giving negative feedback is hard work, so the red ink means that we’re taking an interest in you and your future. Moreover, we know it’s going to make some students angry at us. We do it anyway because we care enough about you to try to help you become a stronger thinker and writer. It’s counterintuitive but lots of red ink is probably a sign that the instructor thinks you have a lot of potential.
6. Don’t grade grub.

Definitely go into office hours to find out how to study better or improve your performance, but don’t go in expecting to change your instructor’s mind about the grade. Put your energy into studying harder on the next exam, bringing your paper idea to the professor or teaching assistant in office hours, doing the reading, and raising your hand in class. That will have more of a pay-off in the long run.

7. Don’t futz with paper formatting.

Paper isn’t long enough? Think you can make the font a teensy bit bigger or the margins a tad bit wider? Think we won’t notice if you use a 12-point font that’s just a little more widely spaced? Don’t do it. We’ve been staring at the printed page for *thousands of hours*. We have an eagle eye for these kinds of things. Whatever your motivation, here’s what they say to us: “Hi Prof!, I’m trying to trick you into thinking that I’m fulfilling the assignment requirements. I’m lazy and you’re stupid!” Work on the assignment, not the document settings.

8. Don’t pad your introductions and conclusions with fluff.

Never start off a paper with the phrase, “Since the beginning of time…” “Since the beginning of time, men have engaged in war.” Wait, what? Like, the big bang? And, anyway, how the heck do you know? You better have a damn strong citation for that! “Historically,” “Traditionally,” and “Throughout history” are equally bad offenders. Strike them from your vocabulary now.

In your conclusion, say something smart. Or, barring that, just say what you said. But never say: “Hopefully someday there will be no war.” Duh. We’d all like that, but unless you’ve got ideas as to how to make it that way, such statements are simple hopefulness and inappropriate in an academic paper.

9. Don’t misrepresent facts as opinions and opinions as facts.

Figure out the difference. Here’s an example of how *not* to represent a fact, via CNN:

Considering that Clinton’s departure will leave only 16 women in the Senate out of 100 senators, many feminists believe women are underrepresented on Capitol Hill.

Wait. Feminists “believe”? Given that women are 51% of the population, 16 out of 100 means that women *are* underrepresented on Capitol Hill. This is a social fact, yeah? Now, you can agree or disagree with feminists that this is a *problem*, but don’t suggest, as CNN does, that the fact itself is an opinion.

This is a common mistake and it’s frustrating for both instructors and students to get past. Life will be much easier if you know the difference.

10. Don’t be too cool for school.

You know those students that sit at the back of the class, hunch down in their chair, and make an art of looking bored? Don’t be that person. Professors and teaching assistants are the top 3% of students. They likely spent more than a decade in college. For better or worse, they *value* education. To stay on their good side, you should show them that you care too. And, if you don’t, pretend like you do.