

SOC 101: Introduction to Sociology

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Introduction to Sociology

(3 credits)

Class Size: 15-25

Faculty: Andrew London, Professor, Syracuse University

Administrative Contact: Christina Parish, Director, Project Advance

Course Catalog Description

Principal concepts, methods, and findings in sociology. Societal structures, processes, institutions, and social roles from both macro- and microanalytic human behavior perspectives. Shared Competencies Critical and Creative Thinking.

Course Overview

What is Sociology? According to the American Sociological Association: "Sociology is the study of social life, social change, and the social causes and consequences of human behavior. Sociologists investigate the structure of groups, organizations, and societies, and how people interact within these contexts. Since human behavior is shaped by social factors, the subject matter of sociology ranges from the intimate family to the hostile mob; from organized crime to religious cults; from the divisions of race, gender and social class to the shared beliefs of a common culture; and from the sociology of work to the sociology of sports. In fact, few fields have such broad scope and relevance for research,

theory, and application of knowledge.

“Sociology provides many distinctive perspectives on the world, generating new ideas and critiquing the old. The field also offers a range of research techniques that can be applied to virtually any aspect of social life: street crime and delinquency, corporate downsizing, how people express emotions, welfare or education reform, how families differ and flourish, or problems of peace and war. Because sociology addresses the most challenging issues of our time, it is a rapidly expanding field whose potential is increasingly tapped by those who craft policies and create programs. Sociologists understand social inequality, patterns of behavior, forces for social change and resistance, and how social systems work” (ASA 2006: What is Sociology? www.asanet.org; last retrieved July 2006).

SOC 101 is an analytic, skills-based introduction to sociology. The emphasis is on analytic reading and conceptual analysis. The approach to sociology is to view it as an empirical social science. The readings are based on empirical research studies or are review articles of research in an area of sociological investigation. It is a writing-intensive course. As the course progresses, students should obtain increasing skill in analytic reading and writing, sociological reasoning, empirical investigation, and in the ability to make empirical and conceptual generalizations about self and society in an increasingly global world.

The course introduces C. Wright Mills’ classic notion of “the sociological imagination” and the promise of sociology, and encourages students to see and think about the social world, themselves, and the relations between themselves and the social world in new ways.

The course also includes a brief introduction to social science research methods and offers students the opportunity to practice some research skills over the course of the

semester.

The following readings that introduce “Sociological Perspectives” and “Doing Social Research” are organized into five substantive units, which together help form a cohesive introduction to sociology:

1. Culture, Groups, and Social Structure;
2. The Power and Influence of the Media;
3. Self and Identity;
4. Social Inequalities – Race, Class, and Gender; and
5. Thinking about Social Change.

Readings for each of the units in the class are drawn primarily from Susan J. Ferguson’s reader entitled Mapping the Social Landscape (8th edition), which includes excerpts from published, empirical studies of the social world. A small set of readings drawn from recent social science journals or research centers supplements the Ferguson reader. There are also some optional readings that may be useful to the classroom instructor and/or students in the class.

Students’ understanding of the material covered in this class will be evaluated through a variety of means. These include, but are not limited to: individual and group projects associated with the central themes of the units and the readings; the completion of individual article summaries and synthesis papers (extended essays) that integrate the material of the unit; classroom presentations; assignments that encourage students to learn and apply research skills; and library and field research projects completed in consultation with the instructor.

Pre- / Co-requisite

N/A

Course Objectives

N/A

Laboratory

N/A

Required Materials

Mapping the Social Landscape, 8th Edition; Ferguson, S.J.
ISBN: 9781506368283 (SAGE Publishing, 800-818-7243)

Instructor Recommendations

N/A