

SOCIOLOGY 108: Introduction to Sociology

Instructor	Ryan Ceresola	E-mail	rceresola@siu.edu
Office Location	Faner 3423	Class Location	Online
Office Hours	E-mail or D2L mail		
Class Hours	Online		

Readings

There is one required text for this course. The good news is that it is an open-source, freely available text that covers the major points necessary to introduce you to Sociology. I will upload a copy of the book to D2L, but if you'd like to access it yourself and read more about it, it's available at this link:

<https://openstaxcollege.org/textbooks/introduction-to-sociology-2e>.

I will also have readings uploaded on D2L for each module that support the textbook readings, so be sure to check those out as well.

Description

This course will explore some of the ways social scientists explain human behavior, with a particular focus on how the way our society is structured and how the collective experiences we've had in groups influence how we live. In this eight-week, intensive course, you'll learn about the building blocks that sociologists use to understand the world; you'll begin to see your everyday experiences in a new light, and you'll develop a "sociological imagination." Once we've laid the ground work, we'll be asking bigger questions that face our daily lives. Questions like, why is there so much racial conflict in the US today? Why are most people poor and a few other so wealthy? What's the deal with women earning less money than men, and being underrepresented in high-paying and powerful jobs like CEOs and politicians? Once we've gone through some of those questions together, you'll be free to explore a substantive area of sociological thought on your own – applying what you've learned to an intensive study of a unique sociological subfield.

Goals

Essentially, my goals for you are to understand and remember key concepts, terms, and definitions from the text; to know how to use course material you learn here in your daily life; to be able to relate sociology to other subjects and courses that you take here; to understand the personal and social implications of our society and the ramifications it has on your daily life; to care about the macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level of social characteristics; and to know how to keep on learning and developing your sociological imagination after this class ends. I will be your guide to help you reach these goals, but it will be up to you to fully achieve them.

Resources

E-mail: My email address is rceresola@siu.edu. E-mail me if you have any questions about the course, or to talk through any of the subjects more intensely. This might be your first time taking a Sociology course, so if you find these things interesting and are interested in majoring, minoring, or taking other classes, I'm available to chat about those options as well.

Office Hours: I'm available anytime by e-mail, but I especially focus on teaching for the first half of the day. If you send me an e-mail before noon from Monday through Friday, I should be able to get back to you that same day. If you send it afterwards, I'll respond by the next day. You can also set up a time with me to e-chat using D2L's instant-messaging service.

SIU Online: This class will be entirely undertaken using modules that I will create and upload to SIU Online. This site will also be the best place to check up on your grades, as I will have those updated at least weekly. Finally, I will have all documents I require for the course available online as well (including this very syllabus). The website is <http://online.siu.edu>.

Course Outline

The great thing about an online course is that you'll be able to work on the material and learn at your own pace. However, there will be weekly deadlines when each module will be finished, to ensure that you're keeping on track.

The course will be built into eight modules, four of which cover the building blocks of sociology, three of which cover the "big three" themes that sociology explores, and one of which will be available for you to decide what to learn based on your own interests. Below is a brief outline of each module as well as page length of the readings.

Section I: Sociological Primers

- Module 1: Introduction to Sociology
 - Ch 1: An Introduction to Sociology
 - Ch 2: Sociological Research
 - [44 pages]

- Module 2: Building Blocks of Social Interaction
 - Ch 4: Society and Social Interaction
 - Ch 5: Socialization
 - Ch 6: Groups and Organizations
 - [50 pages]

- Module 3: Culture and the Media
 - Ch 3: Culture
 - Ch 8: Media and Technology
 - [54 pages]

- Module 4: Deviance and Social Control
 - Ch 7: Deviance, Crime and Social Control [22 pages]
 - Heckert and Heckert “An Integrated Typology of Deviance Applied to Ten Middle-Class Norms”
 - Becker “Becoming a Marihuana User”

Section II: Major Subjects in Sociology: Race, Class, and Gender

- Module 5: Race
 - Ch 11: Race and Ethnicity [28 pages]
 - McIntosh “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”
 - Bertrand and Mullainathan “Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal?”
- Module 6: Class
 - Ch 9: Social Stratification in the United States
 - Ch 10: Global Inequality
 - [44 pages]
- Module 7: Gender
 - Ch 12: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality
 - Ch 14: Marriage and Family
 - [50 pages]

Section III: Individual Studies

- Module 8: Your Choice
 - Pick one chapter from the text that interests you that we haven’t covered and devise your own module from your chosen chapter (see attached for details).
 - Choices Include:

Ch 13: Aging and the Elderly

Ch 15: Religion

Ch 16: Education

Ch 17: Government and Politics

Ch 18: Work and the Economy

Ch 19: Health and Medicine

Ch 20: Population, Urbanization, and the Environment

Ch 21: Social Movements and Social Change

Breakdown of Modules

While each module will be a bit different, the basic breakdown will go like this. Each module will contain one recorded lecture, one timed quiz, and one writing assignment. I will upload module content to D2L every Monday by 6 am. You will be expected to watch the recorded lecture, read the required chapters, complete the quiz, and write the assignment for each module. Each module (with the exception of module 8) will be worth 10% of your grade.

Recorded Lecture: At the start of every week, I will have uploaded an audio-recorded slideshow that will go over some of the key points from the chapters or readings as well as will link the key concepts to current events.

Module Quiz: There will be a timed half-hour quiz that will be due every Wednesday by midnight. When you click on the quiz, you'll have half an hour to complete it, and you won't be able to return to it, so make sure that you block off enough time to complete it. Most quizzes will be about ten multiple choice questions long, as well as a few short answer. Quizzes will be based off of both the textbook readings and the lecture notes.

Forum Discussion: By Thursday at midnight, everybody should post a statement on our forum website at least once. This statement will include your thoughts on the readings, and will respond to something that a classmate has previously stated. What I would like in each forum response is this:

1. A statement that says something you found that was interesting or new to you. That is, what did you learn from the reading?
2. A question that the reading raised for you. This isn't a yes/no question, or something that can be easily answered from the book, but instead a broader question that the ideas from the book raised.
3. A response to a previous student's comment, in some way or another. You can respond to any student who has commented before you, not just the last one.

The very first person to post on that week's forum (and the forum will be open on the Monday of the module) will only need to write parts 1 and 2, but everybody else will need to follow the three part structure here.

Here's an example of what I'm looking for:

Student 1: I thought that this week's readings were very interesting, and I didn't know that there was such a difference between conflict and functionalist theorists. I learned that functionalists think that society is the way it is because the way society is structured is overall necessary and good for keeping society running smoothly. This leads me to ask, do those in power really try to change things in our society for the better, or are they content with keeping things to be the status quo?

Student 2: I learned this week that conflict theorists think that those in power try to keep those who have no power down and use their power to get more power. I think that this is really the way that it is, so I would have to answer Student 1's question by saying that those in power want to keep things the status quo – or even want to get more power for themselves! What can we do as people without money or power to make life better for us?

You're only required to post once on the forum, but feel free to post more times if you want to clarify a statement, respond to someone responding to you, or engage in a deeper discussion. Sometimes our ideas will differ, though, so keep it civil!

Writing Assignment: Finally, each module will contain a writing assignment/mini-project that will be due every Friday by midnight. Some modules will just require you to reflect on the readings in a new way, while some might have you do something outside of the normal confines of the classroom and reflecting on that. So, you should definitely read the assignments earlier rather than later, so you can be able to plan for what steps you'll need to take to complete such a writing assignment. Writing Assignments will be 2 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman 10 or 12 point font, with one-inch margins, and will be uploaded to D2L using a Word document or a document saved in Rich Text Format. See Appendix I for a writing assignment template.

Final Project: Module 8

A great part of these online courses is that you have the freedom to investigate the topics that interest you the most. With that, your “final project” of sorts for the course will be for you to develop your own Module using one of the sections of the book that we do not have time to cover [see above]. This project will be worth thirty percent of your grade, and will consist of the following two parts:

1) An outline/power point that goes over the main concepts in the book as well as links it to current day events. This will be very similar to my PowerPoints that you’ll be able to access at the start of each Module. However, you do not need to audio record it, but merely present the content. Also, it doesn’t have to be a PowerPoint, but can also be an outline on Microsoft Word. A good rule of thumb is that you should turn in detailed notes so that someone else would be able to give a presentation using the outline/PowerPoint you provide. Depending on the chapter, these should be about 8 – 10 slides/major points.

2) A 3 page writing assignment where you’ll find at least two newspaper, magazine, or journal articles or blog posts from the past ten years that you’ll read and connect to the subject that you’re researching. For example, if you choose to study Ch 21: Social Movements and Social Change you could find an article about the Tea Party and about Occupy Wall Street and compare and contrast the way those movements formed using concepts from the chapter. In this piece, I will expect you to properly cite your sources using ASA format so I will be able to find them as well. Note: Wikipedia articles aren’t allowed, but Wikipedia often has good links at the bottom to point you to real articles that deal with the subject.

Note: If you have another topic that you’d like to investigate, e-mail me in the first month of the class, and we’ll be able to devise a suitable way for you to talk about your other topic in the same format.

Ryan Ceresola
SOC 108
Module 1

Appendix I: Template

This is how I want your writing assignment to look. Please put your name, the course number and the name of the module in the upper left-hand corner. Then, put the title above the first line and center it. Start the paper on the line after that, and you're ready to go. Please note the one-inch margins all around the body of the text and the fact that I'm using Times New Roman, 12 point font.

...

It should be noted that to receive full credit, I request that you write **at least** 2 pages of reflections on the writing assignment (3 pages for the final writing assignment in module 8). Feel free to go over the limit, but just so you know, two full pages means that the final paragraph should reach the end of the page, with only one or two lines blank below the paragraph. Two pages does not mean one full page and then a few lines on the next one, but you should actually fill up the final page. Your final paragraph should end somewhere like right here.