

11-79  
App-1/26/12  
DEC 22 2011  
Info - 2/21/12

**Undergraduate Distance Education Review Form**  
(Required for all courses taught by distance education for more than one-third of teaching contact hours.)

**Existing and Special Topics Course**

Course: SOC 151-Principles of Sociology

Instructor(s) of Record: Melissa Swauger, PhD

Phone: 724-357-0158 Email: mswauger@lup.edu

**Step Two: Departmental/Dean Approval**

Recommendation:  Positive (The objectives of this course can be met via distance education)

Negative

*Melissa Swauger* 12-12-11  
Signature of Department Designee Date

Endorsed: *A. Ann* 12/12/11  
Signature of College Dean Date

Forward form and supporting materials to Liberal Studies Office for consideration by the University-wide Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. Dual-level courses also require review by the University-wide Graduate Committee for graduate-level section.

**Step Three: University-wide Undergraduate Curriculum Committee Approval**

Recommendation:  Positive (The objectives of this course can be met via distance education)

Negative

*Gail Sedquist* 1-26-12  
Signature of Committee Co-Chair Date

Forward form and supporting materials to the Provost within 30 calendar days after received by committee.

**Step Four: Provost Approval**

Approved as distance education course  Rejected as distance education course

*Richard W. Hemson* 2/8/12  
Signature of Provost Date

Forward form and supporting materials to Associate Provost.

Received  
DEC 22 2011  
Liberal Studies

## **Step One: Proposer**

A. Provide a brief narrative rationale for each of the items, A1- A5.

1. How is/are the instructor(s) qualified in the distance education delivery method as well as the discipline?

As an Assistant Professor at IUP, I have taught 16 sections of Principles of Sociology over 5 consistent semesters. I use Moodle as a supplementary learning management tool for the course. Students are required to access Moodle to print daily handouts, monitor their grades, and read weekly announcements. I learned Moodle by attending a training and having a one-on-one session with staff at the IT Support Center. Moodle has proven to be a very effective tool in managing close to 200 students enrolled in the Principles of Sociology course each semester. In addition to the Principles course, I have used Moodle as a supplement and to manage all other courses taught since the Fall of 2009.

In the Summer of 2010, I taught a global service learning course (SOC 481/581) which utilized online learning in weeks one and five and traditional learning while immersed in the culture of Petersfield, Jamaica. The online portion of the course was conducted via Moodle and students were required to access lecture notes, PowerPoint slides, and travel announcements on the site and were evaluated through online quizzes, discussion board participation, and writing assignments submitted on Moodle. This course enrolled 9 students who also completed pre and post program evaluation that I developed using Qualtrics. I will be offering this course again in the Summer of 2012 and intend to use these instructional technological tools again.

In the Fall of 2011 I attended a symposium entitled, "WGS 2.0: Making the Cultural Shift to Embodied Voices and Virtual Selves." This symposium began a dialogue about the possibility of creating a Women and Gender Studies online major among partnering PASSHE universities. The agenda included various presentations and virtual demonstrations by Women's Studies professionals focusing on online feminist pedagogy, cross-institutional collaborations, and making a cultural shift from traditional classroom to online learning. As a member of the Women's Studies committee, I intend to stay involved in the discussion (and hopefully implementation) of an online Women and Gender Studies major across PASSHE institutions.

Prior to coming to IUP, I was a full-time instructor from 2005-2008 and an Assistant Professor from 2008-2009 in the Sociology Department at Carlow University. As an Assistant Professor at Carlow, I taught Introduction to Sociology as an online course in the Spring of 2007. I taught this course for 4 semesters with an average of 15-20 students in each section. In order to teach this class, I had to attend a Blackboard training and work closely with the Department of Instructional Technology. There was no formal evaluation for this course but emails and conversations with students provided very positive feedback as one non-traditional student (who was also a part-time instructor at Carlow in an unrelated field) said she had learned more in this class than most traditional courses she had taken.

Regarding my discipline, I have been an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology since the Fall of 2009. I hold a PhD in Sociology from the University of Pittsburgh and have published peer-reviewed journal articles in my field and presented at numerous national and international conferences. Since starting at IUP, I have taught 16 sections of Principles of

Sociology with over 900 students. I consistently receive stellar evaluations for this course. For example, no less than 90% of students in all 16 sections combined said they strongly agreed or agreed they learned valuable skills from taking the Principles course and no less than 90% of students strongly agreed or agreed that they would take another course with me. Also since coming to IUP I have taught 6 different Sociology and Women's Studies courses across the undergraduate (upper and lower division), masters, and doctoral levels. At Carlow I taught 6 different Sociology and Women's Studies courses in both the traditional and Adult Education undergraduate programs including Introduction to Sociology each fall and spring semester from 2005-2009.

I hope to offer SOC 151 online in the Summer of 2012. In preparation for this course, I intend to attend a Desire 2Learn training and implement the course on the Desire 2Learn learning management system.

2. How will each objective in the course be met using distance education technologies? Learning regarding each of these objectives is intended to build on itself, with the understandings and perspectives achieved in each module being actively applied in the next, such that the analyses in the latter part of the course incorporate all tools provided to that point. Some use of distance education technologies such as online PDF readings, Web Pages, online video and audio content streams, MS Word, Power Point, and Discussion Forums will be common to all the modules and thus, serve all objectives. In each module students will complete a pre-chapter assessment to see what they know about the material prior to being exposed to the content. Then, each week students will be required to read a chapter from a textbook as well as a supplementary article from a companion reader which applies key terms to a specific social phenomenon. To support attention to and comprehension of the substantive issues, I will provide a PowerPoint and lecture notes that succinctly summarize the key concepts of that module and emphasize the critical information students will need for their writing and analysis. Students will respond to related questions I pose in postings to the discussion board and will be directed to reference a particular concept or set of concepts from their readings in their postings. Students will also be asked to conduct an "Applied Sociology Project" which asks them to observe and reflect upon how a sociological concept works in their everyday lives. These papers will be submitted via the course website. Finally, students will be evaluated through an online midterm and final exam.

Some ways in which the use of distance education technologies will be used for specific objectives includes the follow:

- **Identify and define central sociological concepts.** The first 2 modules are dedicated to introducing students to basic terms and concepts in sociology including the sociological imagination, fundamental sociological theories, culture, socialization, social structure and interaction, social groups and networks, and deviance. Students will learn these central concepts through the learning modules, readings, discussion forums, and writing assignments. Each of these modules will contain information related to key sociological concepts. Supplemental optional materials will also be provided for further study. For example, when learning about social groups and networks, they will be asked to access Dalton Conley's (a leading sociologist) YouTube site which interviews leading researchers on the topic. Here they will watch 2 seven minute videos, one discussing social networks and the importance of "consequential strangers" and the other on the "6 Degrees of Separation" theory. For example, students might also be asked to access such sites as *A Sociological Tour Through Cyberspace* <http://www.trinity.edu/mkear/theory.html> or *SociolSite: Famous*

*Sociologists* <http://www.sociosite.net/topics/sociologists.php> or the blog *Sociological Imagination* at <http://thesociologicalimagination.com>, among others. I will ask students to incorporate a critical analysis of some element of these internet sources in their discussion post, to familiarize themselves with the sociological resources available, and also to develop critical thinking and information literacy. Students will be asked to reference this material in answering discussion board questions and their knowledge of this topic will also be assessed on exam questions.

- **Define culture, explain its components, and discuss how culture impacts individuals, groups, and social structures.** Module one includes Chapter 2 of the text entitled, "Culture". The chapter text defines culture, listing key concepts associated with the terms, photographic illustrations, and questions for consideration. The chapter emphasizes cultural relativism as a way for students to reflect on their own cultural biases and where they have learned them. The supplementary reader provides students with an illustration of the terms, culture, ethnocentrism, cultural relativism as well as a culture very unlike their own. Students are asked to reflect on this reading through analytically writing in a reading response paper. Lecture notes and PowerPoint slides reinforce student reading and provide students with additional examples of culture and other terms for illustration. Students will then be asked to write a response to a discussion board question that asks them to share something they experienced from a culture other than their own. Finally, student learning will be assessed by exam questions on the topic.
- **Describe, differentiate, and apply classical and contemporary sociological theories to explore problems in societies including deviance, sexism, racism, poverty, and global stratification.** Students will be introduced to theories of functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interaction in the first module of the course. Later modules will ask students to examine social problems using these major theoretical perspectives. In readings, lecture notes, and PowerPoint presentations, students will be regularly provided with examples of how these theories can be used to explain social inequalities and social problems. For example, when covering the topic of immigration, students will be asked to watch a YouTube video that takes the Conflict approach to understanding racial/ethnic tensions among natives and immigrants, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nN1kp1ggWvM>. Students will be asked to show their understanding by applying a theory to a particular social issue on exams and in writing.
- **List and compare methods used for the scientific study of the human societies and discuss ethical issues in social research.** Module 1 also introduces students to sociological research. Students will be exposed to this material in readings, lecture notes, and a PowerPoint presentation. The supplemental reader provides students with a very interesting illustration of a sociologist in action conducting research among members of the Ku Klux Klan. Students are asked to critically read and respond to this reader chapter. Students will also be tested on this material on the first exam. In addition to the lecture material and course readings, students will be given several empirical examples of current and classic sociological research.
- **Employ a cross-cultural analysis of how social institutions, processes, and group interactions shape your own and others' experiences, thinking, and behavior.** The textbook provides students with numerous cross-cultural examples of social phenomena. Moreover, illustrative examples will allow students to make cultural comparisons. For example, one chapter in the course is "Global Inequality". In addition to readings, lecture notes, PowerPoint slides, the students will be asked to view clips from a film entitled, "Life and Debt" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UzL67RqO-8> which focuses on how Jamaica fares in a global economy. The professor (who has run a service learning trip to Jamaica and

Ghana, Africa) will provide students with relevant photographs from these trips to help illustrate the concepts associated with Global Inequality.

- **Compare and contrast theories of social change and provide examples of ways individuals and groups have changed social structures and processes.** In the last module, students will learn about social movements and social change, although much discussion throughout the semester centers around human understanding and empowerment. Students will read text and reader chapters on the topic and have access to lecture notes and PowerPoints discussing movements and change. The last discussion board topic will ask students to reflect upon their own place as informed citizens and change agents in society.
- **Practice and develop transferable skills, such as information literacy and application; effective communication (through writing and speaking); critical thinking and analysis; and research, synthesis, and presentation of reliable information using various formats and employing intellectual honesty.** Student learning and assessment are designed to develop these skills. For example, the use of Desire 2Learn to manage the course, view course content, interact with other students, etc. will develop students' technological literacy and application, practice in writing papers and communicating with peers on discussion forums help develop student's written communication skills. Further, discussion board questions, applied sociology projects, and reader response papers encourage students to think and analyze material crucially. The applied sociology projects and chapter on research methods are specifically useful in exposing students to sociological methods of researching and reporting data in the social sciences.

3. How will instructor-student and student-student, if applicable, interaction take place?

The primary format for interaction will occur through discussion forums, one for each module. Students will be required to respond to my posted questions, but may also post questions or topics of their own as well. Students will be encouraged to respond to or integrate thoughts from other students in their post. As the instructor, I will read and respond to posts in this forum. However, in addition, students may email me with particular questions. I will provide a response within 6 hours Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 9 p.m.

4. How will student achievement be evaluated?

The course grade will be determined by participation which includes pre-chapter assessments and discussion board participation, writing assignments including reflective essays on readings and application projects, and 2 exams.

Pre-Chapter Assessment	5X3 points =	15
Discussion Board	5X6 points =	30
Discussion Board response to peers	5X3 points =	15
Reader Response Papers	3X10 points =	30
Applied Sociology Projects	2X10 points =	20
Midterm Exam	50 points =	50
Final exam	50 points =	50
<b>Total</b>		<b>210</b>

The letter grade for the course will be determined as follows:

A = 90-100%	D = 60-69%
B = 80-89%	F = below 60%
C = 70-79%	

5. How will academic honesty for tests and assignments be addressed?

Sixty percent of the grade will come from student writing in which the design of the assignments reduces the potential for cheating or plagiarism. Students will prepare reflection papers on readings asking them their beliefs about some social issues (i.e., what it means to be a woman/man, why are people poor), what influenced their thinking about these things, and their assessment/evaluation of the author's position in the article. Students will also be asked to conduct applied sociology projects, which require them to gather data or observe social situations and report what they see. For example, students are asked to examine how we learn gender through children's toy's by looking at toy store websites or to examine anti-sweatshop websites to learn more about conditions facing workers in developing nations. In order to write these papers, students must conduct the research themselves, decreasing the probability that they will plagiarize or cheat. Also, directions for discussion forum postings in each module will require students to demonstrate their knowledge about the topics by applying the concepts to their research and in their own lives. Further, the information and concepts of each module build on the preceding one.

I will monitor all writings for patterns of understanding of concepts and applications, and will take a close look at any aberrations in expected patterns. Aberrations in expected patterns might include: students who routinely score well on quizzes, but whose discussion posts reflect a poor understanding of the concepts; inconsistency in representation and application of concepts; and inconsistency in writing style. As warranted, I will use the "Turn It In" website to evaluate any writings that I suspect of plagiarism of published work.

Students will only have one opportunity to take the exams. The question and the order of the multiple choices answers on the exams will be shuffled so as to vary the presentation to different students.

- B. Place the Undergraduate Distance Education Review Form on top of the Proposal and then submit to the department or its curriculum committee the responses to items A1-A5, the current official syllabus of record, along with the instructor developed online version of the syllabus, and the sample lesson. This lesson should clearly demonstrate how the distance education instructional format adequately assists students to meet a course objective(s) using online or distance technology. It should relate to one concrete topic area indicated on the syllabus.

**SYLLABUS OF RECORD**  
**SOC 151, Principles of Sociology**

**I. Catalog Description**

SOC 151, 3 credits, **Prerequisites:** None

Catalog Description”

A scientific study of structure and functioning of human societies with special attention to factors responsible for the organization and transformation of socio-cultural systems. Specific course content varies from one instructor to another.

**Suggested Change:**

A scientific study of the structure of human societies and the behavior of individual people and groups in society. Examines the relationship between individuals and societal institutions, processes, and interactions. Provides students with an overview of the discipline including key concepts, main theoretical perspectives, the methods and research findings of sociologists, and social inequalities.

**II. Course Outcomes:**

Students will be able to:

1. Identify and define central sociological concepts.
2. Define culture, explain its components, and discuss how culture impacts individuals, groups, and social structures.
3. Describe, differentiate, and apply classical and contemporary sociological theories to explore problems in societies including deviance, sexism, racism, poverty, and global stratification.
4. List and compare methods used for the scientific study of the human societies and discuss ethical issues in social research.
5. Employ a cross-cultural analysis of how social institutions, processes, and group interactions shape your own and others' experiences, thinking, and behavior.
6. Compare and contrast theories of social change and provide examples of ways individuals and groups have changed social structures and processes.
7. Practice and develop transferable skills, such as information literacy and application; effective communication (through writing and speaking); critical thinking and analysis; and research, synthesis, and presentation of reliable information using various formats and employing intellectual honesty.

**III. Course Outline**

- A. The Foundations of Sociology (4 hours)
1. Sociological Perspective
  2. Theoretical Perspectives in Sociology
  3. Social Research Methods Culture

- B. The Foundations of Society (9 hours)
1. Culture
  2. Socialization
  3. Social Interaction in Everyday Life
  4. Groups and Organizations

- 5. Sexuality and Society
- 6. Deviance and Social Control
  
- C. Social Inequality (9 hours)
  - 1. Social Stratification
  - 2. Social Class in the United States
  - 3. Global Stratification
  - 4. Race and Ethnicity
  - 5. Gender Stratification
  - 6. Aging and the Elderly
  
- D. Social Institutions (9 hours)
  - 1. The Economy and Work
  - 2. Politics and the Economy
  - 3. Families
  - 4. Religion
  - 5. Education
  - 6. Health and Medicine
  
- E. Social Change (9 hours)
  - 1. Population, Urbanization, and Environment
  - 2. Collective Behavior and Social Movements
  - 3. Social Change: Traditional, Modern, and Postmodern Societies

Culminating Activity during Final Exam Week (2 hours)  
 In-class exam and/or presentations

**IV. Evaluation Methods**

The final grade will be determined as follows:

Participation	0 to 15%
Writing assignments	10 to 50%
Class presentation(s)	0 to 25%
Quizzes (may be in-class or take-home, multiple choice and/or essay)	0 to 40%
Exams (may be in-class or take-home, Multiple choice or essay)	25 to 75%
Other forms of evaluation	0 to 50%
Must total 100%	

This arrangement is designed to provide faculty with maximum flexibility and academic freedom in regard to the design of their courses.

[Note: Individual faculty members should determine the methods of evaluation for student learning in the course. The methods and their proportion of the course grade should be listed in the syllabus provided to students. The percentages may vary from those indicated here; the parameters above are merely suggested minimum and maximum weights for different types of methods of evaluation frequently used in courses.]

**V. Grading Scale**

Grading Scale: A: 90% or higher    B: 80-89%    C: 70-79%    D: 60-69%    F: 59% or lower

**VI. Attendance Policy**

IUP expects students to attend class. University policy permits students unexcused absences without penalty as follows: 3 absences in classes that meet for 50 minutes 3 times per week (i.e., MWF classes); 2 absences in classes that meet for 75 minutes twice per week (i.e., T, Th



classes); and 1 absence in classes that meet for 150 or more minutes once per week.

[Note: Individual faculty members should develop an attendance policy for the course that it is in keeping with the university's policy (see the undergraduate catalog for Undergraduate Course Attendance Policy). The faculty member's attendance policy for the course should be included in the syllabus provided to students.]

## **VII. Required textbooks, supplemental books and readings**

**[One text, such as the sample texts below, supplemented by other readings and videos.]**

1. Ballantine, Jeanne and Keith Roberts. 2008. *Our Social World (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (Any edition will suffice—feel free to purchase a used, earlier edition online.)
2. Macionis, John, J. (2010). *Sociology*, 13<sup>th</sup> Edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
3. Henslin, J. (2009). *Essentials of Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach. Eighth Edition*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon

## **VIII. Special resource requirements**

### Technology Skills and Software

Students enrolled in this course should possess the following technology skills:

- The ability to access information via the Web
- The ability to use an appropriate web based instructional software such as Moodle and associated tools, including discussion/chat, quizzing, and assignment submission features
- The ability to use word processing software and to save in either Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format
- The ability to use Internet communication tools, specifically e-mail
- The ability to demonstrate appropriate online conduct

### Technical Support

Technical support for computer issues and technology related to this course is available from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania IT Support Center (724-357-4000, G-35 Delaney Hall). When you contact them you should be prepared to give specific details regarding your technical issue(s), including what you were doing before the error occurred and the exact text of any error messages received. If you experience issues outside of the normal IT Support Center hours, you can also submit your error or question via e-mail at [it-supportcenter@iup.edu](mailto:it-supportcenter@iup.edu) or via electronic form available online in Moodle.

### **Disability Services**

IUP is committed to ensuring equal access to education as intended by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Disability Support Services provides services to students with disabilities of all kinds, including learning, physical, hearing, vision, or psychological. Students who plan to request accommodations should contact the Disability Support Services Office at the beginning of each semester. To determine whether you qualify for accommodations, or if you have questions about services and procedures for students with disabilities contact: Office of Disability Support Services, 216 Pratt Hall, 724-357-4067.

### **Academic Integrity**

IUP students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity. You are responsible for knowing and abiding by the IUP Academic Integrity Policy, (website: <http://www.iup.edu/teachingexcellence/nfo/acadintegrity.shtm>). Practicing academic integrity means you do not:

- Provide or receive unauthorized assistance in coursework, including papers, quizzes, and examinations.
- Use unauthorized materials and resources during quizzes and tests.
- Possess course examination materials without the prior knowledge of the instructor.
- Plagiarize
- Engage in behaviors that are disruptive or threatening to others.
- Use computer technology in any way other than for the purposes intended for the course.

Plagiarism involves using the words, facts, or ideas of another person or source as if they were your own. It is illegal and violates both university policy and the principles of scholarship. To avoid plagiarism, you must properly cite other people's words, facts, and ideas that you incorporate into your work. If you paraphrase (put into your own words) or quote (use the author's exact words) from any source (including material from the Internet), the paraphrase or quote must be cited properly. Quotes need to be placed in quotation marks, with the page number(s) indicated in the properly formatted citation of the source. Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty are grounds for receiving an F on an assignment or exam, an F for the course, and referral to the university for judicial review and potential sanctions that may include suspension or expulsion from the university.

## IX. Bibliography

1. Atkinson, Maxine P. and Andrea N. Hunt. (2008). Inquiry-Guided Learning in Sociology. *Teaching Sociology*, vol. 36: pp. 1 - 7.
2. Hodges Persell, Caroline, Kathryn M. Pfeiffer, and Ali Syed. (2008). How Sociological Leaders Teach: Some Key Principles. *Teaching Sociology*, vol. 36: pp. 108 - 124.
3. Hodges Persell, Caroline, Kathryn M. Pfeiffer, and Ali Syed. (2007). What Should Students Understand After Taking Introduction to Sociology? *Teaching Sociology*, vol. 35: pp. 300-314.
4. Hohm , Charles S. and William S. Johnson, Eds. (2001). *Assessing Student Learning in Sociology*. Washington, DC: American Sociological Association.
5. Hoop, Katrina C. (2009). Students' Lived Experiences as Text in Teaching the Sociological Imagination. *Teaching Sociology*, vol. 37: pp. 47 - 60.
6. Howard, Jay R. (2004). Just-In-Time Teaching in Sociology Or How I Convinced My Students to Actually Read the Assignment. *Teaching Sociology*, vol. 32: pp. 385 – 390.
7. Ferguson, S. 2010. *Mapping the Social Landscape: Readings in Sociology*. New York: McGraw Hill.
8. Goodwin, Jeff and James Jasper, eds. 2008. *The Contexts Reader*. Norton: New York.
9. Kebede, Alem. (2009). Practicing Sociological Imagination Through Writing Sociological Autobiography. *Teaching Sociology*, vol. 37: pp. 353 - 368.
10. Kimmel, Michael and Amy Aronson. 2011. *Sociology Now: The Essentials, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
11. Koeber, Charles. (2005). Introducing Multimedia Presentations and a Course Website to

an Introductory Sociology Course: How Technology Affects Student Perceptions of Teaching Effectiveness. *Teaching Sociology*, vol. 33: pp. 285 - 300.

12. Korgen, Kathleen Odell and Jonathan White. 2009. *The Engaged Sociologist: Connecting Classroom to the Community*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Los Angeles, CA: Pine Forge Press.
13. Macionis, John and Nicole Benokraitis. 2010. *Seeing Ourselves: Classic, Contemporary, and Cross-Cultural Readings in Sociology*. Boston: Prentice Hall.
14. Newman, D. and Jodi O'Brien. 2008. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press.
15. Sikora, James and Njeri Mbugua. (2003). *Introductory Sociology Resource Manual*. Washington, DC: American Sociological Association.
16. Tsui, Ming. (2010). *Interteaching: Students as Teachers in Lower-Division Sociology Courses*. *Teaching Sociology*, vol. 38: pp. 28 - 34.

[See also American Sociological Association teaching resources available at [www.asanet.org](http://www.asanet.org).]

<b>Conceptual Framework</b>	<b>INTASC Standards</b>	<b>NCSS Program Standards</b>	<b>Course Objectives</b>	<b>Course Assessment</b>
1a.	1	1 Culture and Cultural Diversity	To understand central sociological concepts, theories and methods for the scientific study of human societies.	Midterm evaluation Final evaluation
		5 Individuals, Groups and Institutions	To examine ways in which social influences shape individuals' experiences, thinking, and behavior, as well as how individuals create and change society	Midterm evaluation Final Evaluation
		4 Individual Development and Identity	To apply sociological concepts and understanding of social processes to personal experiences and the world	Midterm evaluation Final evaluation
			To develop critical thinking and information literacy skills	Midterm evaluation Final evaluation

**Principles of Sociology-Online  
Course Syllabus  
Indiana University of PA, Department of Sociology**

SOC151-3 credits  
Summer 2012: June 4 – July 6

Instructor: Melissa Swauger, PhD  
Office: 112H McElhaney Hall  
Office Hours: As requested and through email  
Phone: (724) 357-0158  
E-mail: mswauger@iup.edu

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**Course Overview**

**IUP Catalog Course Description:** Sociology is the scientific study of structure and functioning of human societies, with special attention to factors responsible for the organization and transformation of sociocultural systems.

**Course Summary and Goals:** While all of us are aware that we live in a society and that we belong to various social groups, we do not usually spend much time pondering how being a member of society and social groups contributes to who we are as individuals. This is the work of sociologists. Sociology asks how society is formed and how society and the individual are linked. This course provides you with an overview of the discipline of sociology and introduces you to key concepts, main theoretical perspectives, important social issues, and the methods and research findings of sociologists. In this course, you will reflect on the work of sociologists and learn how to apply them to your everyday experiences.

**Course Objectives:** By the end of this class, students will be able to:

1. Identify and define central sociological concepts.
2. Define culture, explain its components, and discuss how culture impacts individuals, groups, and social structures.
3. Describe, differentiate, and apply classical and contemporary sociological theories to explore problems in societies including deviance, sexism, racism, poverty, and global stratification.
4. List and compare methods used for the scientific study of the human societies and discuss ethical issues in social research.
5. Employ a cross-cultural analysis of how social institutions, processes, and group interactions shape your own and others' experiences, thinking, and behavior.
6. Compare and contrast theories of social change and provide examples of ways individuals and groups have changed social structures and processes.
7. Practice and develop transferable skills, such as information literacy and application; effective communication (through writing and speaking); critical thinking and analysis; and research, synthesis, and presentation of reliable information using various formats and employing intellectual honesty.

## Course Materials

Two books—a textbook and a book of readings— are required for this course:

Henslin, J. (2011). *Essentials of Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach. Ninth Edition.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Henslin, J. (2011). *Exploring Social Life: Readings to Accompany Essentials of Sociology, Fourth Edition,* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

## Course Format

This course will use the following structure:

- Five weeks, each focusing on one or more of the topics listed in the course description and outline.
- Weekly folders posted in a time-released order containing a pre-chapter assessment, learning objectives, readings, discussion board activities, lecture notes and PowerPoint handouts.
- Graded writing assignments to assess application of content.
- A midterm and final exam to assess content knowledge.

## Course Requirements

### ***Pre-Chapter Assessment***

You will earn 3 points for completing the Pre-chapter assessment each week regardless of your score. This assignment is to familiarize you with the ideas and concepts within the chapter before you learn the material and help assess which material you need to spend more time on.

### ***Discussion board***

You will earn points for responding to the weekly discussion board questions. To earn full-credit, you must respond in a timely manner with an adequate and accurate reply. There are two questions posed each week. You are to respond to each question and you are also required to respond to at least one of your fellow students' responses, thus creating discussion threads. To be timely, responses should be posted by the end of each week according to the course schedule. For example, week 1's question(s) should be answered by the end of week 1. **I highly encourage you to post your initial response by Wednesday in order to encourage collaboration among your peers.**

**How Participation Points are Earned:** You will earn **6 points** for responding to the two weekly discussion board main topic questions in an accurate, adequate, and timely manner. Responses should be substantive and be at least 75 words in length. I will assess your ability to critically analyze and respond to the discussion topics. Your ideas should be well developed and well expressed. Then you must respond to at least one other student's posting. You will earn 3 points for responding to another student's response in an accurate, adequate and timely manner. Your response to another student should be substantive and at least 40 words in length. I will assess your ability to analyze another student's response and your ability to provide substantive feedback. Thus, for each discussion board forum you need to provide an initial response to two main topic questions and one student responses for a maximum **9 points/forum**. You are encouraged to respond more frequently than required as collaboration tends to augment your learning.

**Please note:** Be sure to communicate in an appropriate manner. Rudeness, vulgarity, and other inappropriate comments will not be tolerated. Violations of the college's policies on uses of technology may result in disciplinary action or expulsion from the course

*Discussion Board entries will be graded based on the following criteria:*

Distinguished (6 points)-Demonstrates knowledge of and application of course concepts, ideas, and readings. Incorporates critical thinking.

Proficient: (3-5 points)-Shows knowledge of course content but does not apply/incorporate, i.e., refers to an idea or concept but does not illustrate the idea or does so inadequately.

Developing: (0-2 points)-Needs to show knowledge and application of course concepts and ideas or student does not submit.

*Discussion Board responses will be graded based on the following criteria:*

Distinguished (3 points)-Shows analysis of students' responses and provides substantive feedback.

Proficient: (2 points)-Needs to demonstrate more analysis of student's responses / more substantive feedback

Developing: (0-1 points)-Does not respond or does not respond to students in a substantive manner.

### ***Applied Sociology Projects***

Applied projects are directly related to the chapter topics and are attached to the syllabus and posted on Desire 2Learn. You will complete 2 applied sociology projects. Each project is worth 10 points, must be 2 pages in length, 12-point font, and single-spaced. For these projects you will choose a project, conduct the research, and write a response. The write up should include an account of what happened in the exercise, what you learned in relationship to what you have been reading and what we have been discussing in class, and answer any questions specifically asked in the exercise you choose. While there are options to complete ten applied projects, you only have to do two. You must turn the paper in on the respective due date listed in the course calendar and once the deadline for an applied project has passed, you may not go back and do that project. An example of an applied sociology project is attached to the syllabus and provided on the Desire 2Learn site.

*Papers will be graded based on the following criteria:*

**Summary of project (up to 4 points)** – the summary explains when, where, and how the project was conducted and who participated. Also provides a detailed account of what happened, i.e., what was your role, what were the reactions of others, etc.

**Reflection (up to 3 points)** – what did you learn about the topic in general and in relationship to course material, i.e., if the assignment helps you learn about norms in society, what did you learn about norms and how does what you learned relate to what you have been reading in your text and reader and other class material?

**Questions (up to 2 points)** – questions are thoughtful and include a context from which the writer is approaching the material. That is, the writer indicates thoughts that led to the question and explains why she may be asking the question.

**Clarity and organization (up to 1 point)** – the paper is proofread with limited spelling, grammar, and usage errors.

### ***Response Papers***

Response papers are directly related to chapters in the *Life in Society* Reader. These reviews are worth 10 points each and should be typed, 2 pages in length, single-spaced, 12-point font, 1 inch margins. In the event that they cause your review to be unclear, I will take off points for typos, grammar problems, and misspellings. An example of an article review is attached to the syllabus and provided on the Desire 2Learn site.

Use the following outline (including the headings) to construct the article review, each section is worth 2 points.

*Article summary* (two paragraphs). State the central research question or thesis and summarize the main points the author attempts to make.

*Relationship to class material.* (one paragraph). Incorporate notes you take from weekly readings and class sessions and connect them to the article, i.e., how is the author illustrating key ideas, concepts, and terms we have discussed in class and in the readings.

*Evaluation* (one paragraph). Analyze, that is, provide a thoughtful, informed, response to the main points and discuss (in your opinion) the most powerful example or illustration of these arguments. Suggest whether or not the author makes strong, valid, and substantiated arguments, and why/why not? Also include (if applicable) anything missing from the argument.

*Questions for discussion:* Your questions should draw from your comments. Write two-three questions that specifically engage with the content of the article, such as, a point of a theory that is unclear, a contradiction, or the meaning of a key term. Do not write broad, general questions such as, "What does this mean for society today?" or "What are some solutions to these problems?"

*Clarity and organization*– the paper is proofread with limited spelling, grammar, and usage errors.

### **Exams**

There will be a midterm and final exam each worth 50 points and consisting of multiple choice and true/false questions. The exams will cover material in the text, lecture notes, and PowerPoint slides. The exam will only be offered during the scheduled time. If you miss the exam due to an illness or emergency, you must contact me as soon as possible and before the next class. If a make-up exam is approved, it is your responsibility to make arrangements with me to take the exam.

### **Evaluation**

Pre-Chapter Assessment	5X3 points =	15
Discussion Board	5X6 points =	30
Discussion Board response to peers	5X3 points =	15
Reader Response Papers	3X10 points =	30
Applied Sociology Projects	2X10 points =	20
Midterm Exam	50 points =	50
Final exam	50 points =	<u>50</u>
<b>Total</b>		<b>210</b>

The letter grade for the course will be determined as follows:

A = 90-100%	D = 60-69%
B = 80-89%	F = below 60%
C = 70-79%	

### **Course Expectations**

You should expect to spend 8-10 hours per week completing the assignments. Some assignments may take more time; others may take less. Successful completion of this course is directly related to your level of commitment, discipline, motivation, and participation. The course is structured by weeks in a progression format, with week 2 building upon the content from week 1, and so on. If you fall behind, it is nearly impossible to catch up. So, please adhere to the course structure and assignment deadlines.

Please remember that you can ask me questions using e-mail or the discussion board. If you choose to email me, I have a 1 business day return policy, meaning that I will try my best to respond to your

question within 1 business day. Also, if you do not receive a response from me within 1 business days, chances are that I did not receive the email. In which case, please resend. If you have a question that can be posed to the entire class, please feel free to post on the discussion board.

Finally, I hope you enjoy the class. I am here to help you in any way that I can. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns. I look forward to learning with you. ☺

**Students with Special Needs Related to Learning or Testing:** IUP is committed to ensuring equal access to education as intended by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans With Disabilities Act. Disability Support Services provides services to students with disabilities of all kinds, including learning, physical, hearing, vision, or psychological. Students who plan to request accommodations should contact the Disability Support Services Office at the beginning of each semester. To determine whether you qualify for accommodations, or if you have questions about services and procedures for students with disabilities contact:

Office of Disability Support Services  
216 Pratt Hall  
Phone – 412-357-4067

### **A NOTE ON HONOR:**

While this course is an undergraduate course and an academic code of honor is expected of all university students, I include the following information in my syllabus for the benefit of the student as a gentle reminder of the seriousness of plagiarism, be it intentional or unintentional. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, or need a refresher, please read the following article "Plagiarism: What it is and how to recognize and avoid it" at the following site

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.htm>

***Academic Integrity-*** IUP students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity. This means that all work submitted in your courses must be your own. You should familiarize yourself with definitions of cheating, plagiarism, and other violations of academic integrity. While most people know that cheating is dishonest, many students do not understand what constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity. Plagiarism involves using the words, facts, or ideas of another person or source as if they were your own. It is dishonest, illegal, and violates both university policy and the principles of scholarship. To avoid plagiarism, you must properly cite other people's words, facts, and ideas that you incorporate into your work. If you paraphrase (put into your own words) or quote (use the author's exact words) from any source (including material from the Internet), the paraphrase or quote must be cited properly. Quotes need to be placed in quotation marks, with the page number(s) indicated in the properly formatted citation of the source. Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty are grounds for receiving an F on the assignment or exam, an F for the course, and referral to the university for judicial review and potential sanctions including suspension or expulsion from the university. **You are responsible** for knowing and abiding by the IUP Academic Integrity Policy. For your convenience and information, I have attached the policy to this syllabus.

## **Indiana University of Pennsylvania**

### **Academic Integrity Policy**

IUP is an academic community within the society at large. All members within this community are expected to accept the responsibility for academic integrity and honesty. Academic dishonesty seriously erodes the quality of educational pursuits and is unacceptable at IUP. The following policies and procedures have been established to preserve the academic integrity of the university



community, while also providing a process that protects the rights of students who allegedly violate these policies.

## Policy

- A. **Types of Violations.** Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, the following:
1. Providing or receiving unauthorized assistance in coursework, with lab work, theses, dissertations, or during examinations (including qualifying and comprehensive exams) or quizzes.
  2. Using unauthorized materials or devices, such as crib notes, during examinations or quizzes.
  3. Plagiarizing papers, theses, dissertations, essays, reports, speeches and oral presentations, take-home examinations, computer projects, or other academic exercises by misrepresenting or passing off the ideas, words, formulas, or data of another as one's own. Plagiarism is dishonest and illegal. Writers are indebted to authors from whom they borrow exact words, ideas, theories, opinions, statistics, illustrative material, or facts (beyond common knowledge). Writers are also indebted *if they summarize or paraphrase in their own words* material from sources. All quoted material requires the acknowledgement of the source by the use of quotation marks or indentation (if exact wording is incorporated). In addition, both directly quoted and summarized material must be acknowledged by use of a note or parenthetical citation that indicates the author and/or date of publication and page number or numbers. If the writer indents a quotation, it must be clearly set off from the body of the text and must be documented in the aforesaid manner. To verify the various documentation procedures, writers should consult the style sheet in the particular discipline for which they are preparing the assignment (MLA, APA, Chicago, BC, etc.).
  4. Using the same paper or work more than once without authorization of the faculty member(s) to whom the work is being submitted.
  5. Possessing course examination materials before the administration of the exam, without the prior knowledge or consent of the instructor.
  6. Intentionally evading IUP academic policies and procedures; for example, improperly processing course withdrawals, grade changes, or other academic procedures.
  7. Falsifying information, including falsification/fabrication of research data and/or statistical analyses, forging signatures on various forms and documents, or altering or adding answers on academic exercises or exams after work has been graded.
  8. Computer dishonesty, including: tampering with or making unauthorized change to another person's or the university's computer system, illegally copying computer software, personal use of another individual's computer account, unauthorized activity involving another individual's personal computer system or any system belonging to the university, and other unauthorized use or violations involving computer use.
  9. Noncompliance: failure to follow through with sanction(s) imposed as a result of an academic violation.


The university reserves the right to discipline any student for any action that an ordinary, reasonable, intelligent college student knows or should know might lead to the issuance of discipline. This means the university maintains the right to issue discipline for reasonable cause.

Charges of academic integrity violations may be brought by faculty members or administrators. Students who observe or become aware of a violation of academic integrity by another student are strongly encouraged to report it to a university official. A faculty member/administrator who believes that a student has violated an academic policy may elect to resolve the matter by Informal Resolution, by Documented Agreement, or by Formal Adjudication. *Sanction(s) may not be imposed upon a student believed to have violated an academic policy without following one of these three procedures.*

If charges are brought, the accused student(s) shall have a fair and reasonable opportunity to answer, explain, and defend against the charges. The university shall have the burden of proof in all cases. Hearsay should not be used as the sole evidence to establish any fact necessary to establish guilt or innocence. **Source:** Indiana University of Pennsylvania Undergraduate Catalog

## SOC 151-Principles of Sociology Summer 2012 Course Schedule

Although the instructor may deem it appropriate to deviate from the following schedule, the design of the course will follow the basic schedule below. (Note: All weekly readings, activities, assignments, will be posted within the weekly folders in the Course Information area of Desire 2Learn.)

Week (Folder in Desire2Learn)	Readings	Activities / Assignments	Due Date
<b>Week 1</b> <b>June 4-10</b>	"Getting to know each other" Read syllabus & course schedule, browse the course site, etc. Text: Chapter 1 & 2 Reader: Chapter 2 & 5	Pre-chapter Assessment quiz Discussion board topics Response Paper Reader 2 OR 5	Complete all items in week 1 folder by <b>Sunday, June 10</b>
<b>Week 2</b> <b>June 11-17</b>	Text: Chapters 3, 4 & 5 Reader: Readings 3, 4 & 6	Pre-chapter Assessment quiz Discussion Board Topics Applied sociology project- (Choose ONE from options 1-5)	Complete all items in week 2 folder by <b>Sunday, June 17</b>
<b>Week 3</b> <b>June 18-24</b>	Text: Chapters 6, 7 & 8 Reader: Reading 7, 8, & 9	Pre-chapter Assessment quiz Discussion Board Topics Response Paper Reader 3, 4 OR 6	Complete all items in week 3 folder by <b>Sunday, June 24</b>
<b>Week 4</b> <b>June 25-July 1</b>	Text: Chapter 9, 10, & 11 Reader: Reading 10, 11, & 12	Pre-chapter Assessment quiz Discussion Board Topics Applied sociology project (Choose ONE from options 6-10)	Complete all items in week 4 folder by <b>Sunday, July 1</b>
<b>Week 5</b> <b>July 2-6</b>	Text: Chapters 12 & 15 Reader: Readings 14, 15 & 16 FINAL EXAM	Pre-chapter Assessment quiz Discussion Board Topics Response Paper Reader 10, 11 OR 12 FINAL EXAM	Complete all items in week 5 folder by <b>Sunday, July 6</b>
	<b>Final Exam – Must take by Thursday July 6 by 9 pm</b>		

**Applied Sociology Projects**  
**Principles of Sociology, Dr. Melissa Swauger**  
**Summer 2012**

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Two applied sociology projects are due this semester. Papers must be two pages in length, single-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font. For these projects you will choose an activity (listed 1-10 below) conduct the activity, and write a response. While there are options to complete ten applied projects, you only have to do two.

*Papers will be graded based on the following criteria:*

The write up should include an account of what happened in the project, what you learned in relationship to what you have been reading and what we have been discussing in class, two thoughtful discussion questions about course content that relates to the project, and **answer any questions specifically asked in the assignment** you choose.

**Summary of applied project (up to 4 points)** – the summary explains when, where, and how the project was conducted and who participated. Also provides a detailed account of what happened, i.e., what was your role, what were the reactions of others, etc.

**Reflection (up to 3 points)** – what did you learn in general about the topic and in relationship to course material, i.e., if the assignment helps you learn about norms in society, what did you learn about norms and how does what you learned relate to what you have been reading in your text and reader and other class material?

**Questions (up to 2 points)** – questions are thoughtful and include a context from which the writer is approaching the material. That is, the writer indicates thoughts that led to the question and explains why she may be asking the question.

**Clarity and organization (up to 1 point)** – the paper is proofread with limited spelling, grammar, and usage errors.

**Applied Projects (Choose Three Exercises)**

1. Ask one friend (not in the class) and one family member why child abuse occurs in the United States. Then consult a newspaper/magazine article, talk show, website, news report, or book to find out why child abuse occurs in the United States. Report the reasons/rationales listed by each of these sources. Then, use the sociological perspective to comment on these responses. Are your sources using bad or faulty generalizations about social phenomena that are based on commonsense or do they employ a sociological perspective? Be sure to give a detailed explanation about why you think the message is based on generalization or sound research.
2. Choose a norm that provides order in society and break that norm in a social situation. For example, do not say hello when someone greets you, wear your bra on the outside of your shirt, sit in the front seat of the bus reserved for older/handicapped persons. Observe the reactions of others and also your own reaction to the violation. Then explain to others why you broke the norm and talk to them about how they felt. Remember, break a simple norm, **do not break the law or cause extreme embarrassment or harm to anyone**. Include your observation and conversation with outsiders in your report.
3. Research gender socialization by examining song lyrics and a music video from one of your favorite songs. Analyze the messages conveyed about gender in each of these. For example you may list the roles played by women in a video and discuss if they are traditional/nontraditional, and/or describe the relationships between men and women, i.e., subordinate/equal, and/or list the behaviors learned from this medium and discuss whether or not they are stereotypical.

4. Keep a log of interactions with bureaucracies for several days. List those you dealt with, the nature of your business, the outcome, and whether or not you were satisfied. Include in your write up the characteristics of the bureaucracy that were most helpful in getting something done, why it may have been difficult to accomplish your goal, and how the organization could change some of its rules or policies to make it easier for you to accomplish your goals.
5. Using the internet, find 3 anti-sweatshop websites to research labor practices occurring in the garment industry. First, list the three websites in your paper. Throughout the remainder of the paper discuss how the sites define/describe sweatshops?, report some of the statistical information they include, describe employment in the industry, including wages and working conditions, name some of the companies participating, and discuss whether or not this research will impact what you buy? Why or why not?
6. Visit two neighborhoods that represent contrasting social classes, i.e., a wealthy neighborhood and a poor neighborhood and conduct field research by documenting observations including how the neighborhood looks, what people there are doing, pedestrian and automobile traffic, anything that you see. Be sure to go to each neighborhood during similar time periods, i.e., in the afternoon on a weekday. *Be sure to give the names* of the neighborhoods you observed.
7. Collect examples from online media of the social classes identified in the Weberian model including capitalists, old money, new money, upper middle, lower middle, working class, working poor, and underclass. Copy and paste pictures in a word document entitled, "US social class ladder." In your write up explain why each example is placed in each description.
8. For 2 evenings observe a total of 3 prime-time television shows (8:00pm-11:00pm). Record the number of people from different races/ethnicities including Hispanic, Asian, African American, and White portrayed on each show. Record and discuss the type of characters members of each race/ethnicity plays. Also pay attention to the way these characters are portrayed including their social class and status, behaviors, and attitudes. Write up a description of what you see.
9. Interview someone who is an immigrant or a refugee. Ask them about their reasons for migrating to the US, their experiences here, and how they are regarded by others. Have their expectations been met? Present and discuss the results of your interview.
10. Watch television until you have viewed at least 10 different commercials in which an entire family or a member of a family is the central focus. On a piece of paper make extensive and systematic notes of how the family in each commercial is portrayed. List the names of the products advertised and the characters in the commercial. Take notes on the makeup of the family, the ethnicity, and marital status. Discuss how the media does/does not portray what we discussed in class as the "normative" family, i.e., white, heterosexual, two-parent, conforms to traditional gender roles, etc.

## Applied Project Example

For this project, I explored how children learn appropriate gender roles through various medium. First I went to toysrus.com and examined the Little Mommy Doctor Set. The toy set is used for interactive role play to take care of a baby doll. The toy set is marketed to girls and I found it ironic that this toy is titled “Little Mommy” when girls, as well as boys could enjoy this toy. Clearly the makers of this toy label the female as the primary caregiver. This role portrayed by the doctor set is traditional because it represents the classic image of women as caretakers, teaching young female children to take care of babies.

Next, I went to the book section on toysrus.com and found that the books were organized into such categories as Baby and Mom’s Favorites, and Boys and Men. So, even books are separated into varying gender appropriate categories. I ended up choosing to examine the book “Tonka Emergency,” which was located under the category of Boys and Men. This book featured various emergent situations, in which male figures came to the rescue illustrating to young boys that the role that men play in life is the “independent hero.” The author did not consider that a woman could be a firefighter too. This just supports the typical stereotype that men, not women, are called upon in demanding physical and heroic situations.

For my next examination, I chose the song lyrics to Miss Independent, sung by Kelly Clarkson. This song goes against the grain of stereotypical female dependency on men. The lyrics progress through the song with such lines as “Miss self-sufficient”... “Miss never let a man help her off her throne.” However by the end of the song, the message changes into a woman who was so independent that she never fell in love. Why can’t a woman be independent and in love at the same time. This song starts off with a great message towards “girl power” and sadly ends in “if you don’t become dependent, you’ll never find love.”

Lastly, I choose to examine the music video “I’m a Slave for You,” by Britney Spears. The title alone foretells what you can expect the role of a woman to be in this video. Miss Spears is showcased throughout the entire clip in a revealing, skimpy outfit. Her body is lathered with oil to make her appear sweaty. Overall, she is portrayed as easy and seductive. The dance throughout the video primarily involves her stroking her stomach slowly and shaking her stomach and butt. This video sends a message that women are meant to bow down to men, to “be a slave.” Britney is also portraying women to be sexy and worshipping of men. Clearly, this is not a positive perspective that young women and girls should be exposed to. This video completely tramples the idea of equality between men and women.

Following my research, I’m saddened to see how much every day forms of entertainment affect the views, values, and beliefs of those exposed to them. All of these examinations illustrate the topic of gender socialization as we have been discussing in class. Toys, books, music, and videos send the perpetual message that girls are caretakers and should be most interested in finding and keeping a man. Through these same medium, boys learn male supremacy, they are expected to save women, and they must be physically strong and dominant to prove their masculinity.

### Questions for discussion:

1. More women are working outside of the home today than ever before. As a result men should be doing more work in the home to take some of the burden off of women. How does gender socialization, through medium such as those discussed above, contribute to traditional ideas about women’s work in the home and does this cause strain for families?

2. Does learning traditional forms of masculinity, such as the need to support women and families, the expectation to be tough and dominant, and that men should think of women as “slaves” hurt men in their relationships with women?

## Response Paper Example

Out of Control by J. Doe

“Out of Control,” an article located in the July 2000 issue of Sports Illustrated magazine, gives a detailed depiction of the importance of sports in the lives of contemporary youth and how it varies due to adult intervention. Parental violence at youth sporting events not only has detrimental results for the adults, but furthermore deters the child’s interest in sports and attitude towards sports. The author of this article aims to bring awareness to aggressive and often tragic situations which occur due to factors which are shaped both internally and socially. By analyzing parents’ presence in their child’s sports and activities, one can see the impact it has on youth and the relevance to the sociological aspects of sports.

By referencing scenarios of violence between parents at youth sporting events, the author strives to create a vague timeline or progression of youth ideologies of sports. When analyzing North American youth sports from a sociological perspective, it is crucial to recognize the values it promotes. Sports and recreational activity in general naturally have a positive effect on youth. They are socialized with peers, learn specific skills and are given the opportunity to succeed thereby lifting personal self esteem. According to the author, youth sports teach, “fair play” and how to cope with adversity. When these values are overcome by the need for achievement and success, the child’s enjoyment of the activity is jeopardized. Youth sports were originally founded during the organized play movement to promote healthy, safe living. It kept youth off of the streets and out of trouble. However, as parents became more involved in their child’s activities, the child feels more pressure to succeed. This idea is often emphasized when parents and adults attempt to live vicariously through their children. The homerun is no longer his homerun, but their (the parents and child’s) accomplishment. This creates a new form of pressure. When children do not succeed the parents feel they did not either. This tension and the hunger to win is what fuels parental violence. The author provides multiple examples of parental violence and the effects of these actions both on the adult and the child. Many victims are seriously injured while the antagonist must face legal penalties. However, the author accentuates the effects on the child stating that many lose interest or enjoyment in the game and associate sports with pressure and negativity.

There are evident relationships between the content of the article and our recent class discussions. During lecture we have begun to define the core elements of sociology and the commonalities between American values and sports values. An important argument in the article is how the parent’s behavior affects the child’s feeling and actions. This relates to an important sociological sub-topic known as socialization. Socialization is defined as the process by which we observe/learn. One of the most instrumental mechanisms which socialize youth is parents. Their thoughts and actions shape their children’s. If the parent places winning or achievement on the highest pedestal, the child will too. On the other hand, the author discusses how sports give children the opportunity to experience positive socialization through peers. In class, we have defined achievement and success as one of the core American values and sporting values. We strive to live the “American Dream:” good job, nice house, two parent family etc. In sports, the goal is often to win. However, this value is often taken to extremes. When winning or succeeding becomes the only option and all other values are placed by the wayside, there is room for destruction. Lastly, the author discusses what happens when “children lose control of the games.” More specifically, the parents become so involved with their child’s performance and outcome that they begin to live vicariously through their child. This was brought up in class when we were talking about the characteristics of a sports fan. Parents



begin to feel so passionately about the game that they feel as though they are experiencing it as well as their child. This brings a new level of intensity to the game. The author sums this idea up perfectly when she says, "the games themselves become extensions of the parent's lives, often more important to them than to the kids." Since children are socialized products of their parents, they constantly seek reassurance and approval in order to maintain high self esteem. When a parent feels that their child's performance is their own, this bond may be fractured.

The author gains credibility by providing specific examples, statistics and factual references to form an argument against aggressive and violent parental behavior at youth sporting events. In order to explain the impact of parental violence on the child, the author highlights shocking statistics. Statistics, specifically in sociology, reveal information in which analysts can draw conclusions. For example, two statistics which I consider positive additions to the article are, "5% of a crowd of parents get out of line at a youth athletic even--i.e., to embarrass their children or be abusive toward the kids, officials and coaches." As a result, "14 million will quit before age 13, and they will say they dropped out mostly because adults--particularly their own parents--have turned playing of games into a joyless, negative experience." The author cites over thirteen examples of parental fights at youth sporting events and the legal outcome of these discrepancies. Also, the author includes quotes from specialists from organizations such as the Center of Sport Psychology and the Juvenile Law Center in Philadelphia. Their input directly supports his argument about aggressive parents. Although the article contains extensive, insightful research, I would have liked to see a couple of quotes from parents who stand behind their violent actions. Most of the "out of control" parents featured in the article are very apologetic and embarrassed of their actions but I am sure there are some who are not. Also, I think an important voice missing from the article is the children. Hearing specific reactions from children whose parents acted violently or who parents were victims of violence would have made the argument more effective. Parental violence and verbal abuse have no place in children's sports and activities. When analyzing this growing problem from a sociological perspective, one can see larger, widespread negative effects on children.

#### Questions for Discussion:

- 1) The author discusses the rise of youth sport and the purposes it fit in the past. Do sports still fill the same purposes in child's lives today, or have sports become activities that children feel they must engage in? How do the parents add to the pressure to succeed in sports?
- 2) At one point in the article, the author makes a comparison between how fans act vicariously at pro sporting events and how parents act vicariously at their child's sporting events. How are the two levels the same and how are they different?

## Module One

### - Objectives

- Explain objectives, assignments, and policies involved in the course.
- Define "sociology"
- Describe how sociologists view the world through a sociological perspective.
- Identify the four major theoretical perspectives in sociology and describe the viewpoints and concerns associated with each.
- Compare and contrast scientific research with other methods used to evaluate knowledge claims
- List and describe the tools social researchers use to collect data
- Define validity, reliability, generalizability
- Explain why social research should be concerned with ethics

### - Welcome

I wanted to extend a warm welcome to the online Introduction to Sociology course for Summer 2012. Please review the course syllabus and course schedule and pay particular attention to the structure of the course and the due dates. I'm looking forward to an enjoyable session with you! Let's Get Started!!!

### - Pre-Assessment Quiz

1. Sociology is the study of
  - a. the internal and biological mechanisms that influence our behavior
  - b. the scientific study of society and human behavior
2. Sociologists give statistical evidence to issues that the general public already knows as common sense?
  - a. True
  - b. False
3. People are naturally ethnocentric, that is they use their own culture as a yardstick to judge other cultures.
  - a. True
  - b. False
4. Generally, people are creatures of free will. That is, they do what they want without being influenced by others or the larger society.
  - a. True
  - b. False
5. Which of the following topics would a sociologist be likely to study?
  - a. School shootings
  - b. Abuse in relationships
  - c. The career aspirations of children
  - d. All of the above

- Assigned readings
  - o Text Chapter 1: As you read, be sure to pay special attention to the explanation of the sociological perspective/imagination, the major theoretical perspectives, and the methods sociologists use to gather data.
  - o Text Chapter 2: As you read, be sure to pay special attention to the difference between ethnocentrism and cultural relativism, the differences between values, norms, folkways, mores and taboos, and how the values of a country influence the behaviors of its individuals.
  - o Reader Chapter 2: As you read, be sure to pay special attention to the issues of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism.
  - o Reader Chapter 5: As you read, be sure to pay special attention to the ways Dr. Blee illustrates various research methods and the ethical considerations she confronts while carrying out the research.
  
- Lecture outline
  - o Attached chapter 1
  - o Attached chapter 2
  
- Power point slides
  - o Attached chapter 1
  - o Attached chapter 2
  
- Discussion board topics
  - o Introduction
  - o Sample question for Text chapter 1 and 2
    - Take the "Enjoying a Sociology" Quiz on page 21 of your text and check your answers on page 22. Are sociology and common sense really any different? What are these differences? What if you believed one thing based on your experiences, i.e., women are more naturally nurturing than men, and then you read in a sociology book that women are not more naturally nurturing than men but learn nurturing behaviors through socialization? Would you be more likely to trust the evidence of your own experiences, or what you have read in a sociology book?
    - Share an example of something you know that is practiced in another culture that disgusts, disturbs, or bothers you. Discuss why it bothers you and if you are able to think differently about the example after reading about cultural relativism.
  - o Sample question for Reader chapter 5 and 2
    - Reader chapter 5: I had the pleasure of having Dr. Blee as a research methods professor in my PhD program at Pitt and she is truly an amazing researcher. In our class, she explained to us not only how difficult it was

to interview people with such different values from her but also how scared and threatened she felt. For example, interviewees were often skeptical of her, believing she was employed by the FBI. She told us of one incident that occurred during an interview in a diner, when a woman warned her there were people on every corner outside ready to hurt her if she tried anything funny. She also said that long after her project she continues to be listed on the websites of White Supremacy groups as a "Race Traitor" and receives letters threatening herself and her children. If you could ask Dr. Blee one question about her work, what would it be?

- Reader chapter 2: Napoleon Chagnon illustrates that being ethnocentric hurt his relationships with the people from whom he was trying to gather data and once he became "culturally relativistic" they seemed to open up to him. I think these two terms are often really difficult to think about. Can we always practice cultural relativism? Are we supposed to practice cultural relativism when people are being harmed, as in the case of the abuse inflicted on women in the Yanomamo society? Or what about Female Genital Mutilation practiced in some African countries?

– Assigned writing

- Choose One Reader chapter 2 OR 5 and write a response paper:

– For further study/optional supplemental information:

- Majors and Careers in Sociology:
  - American Sociological Association's Website [www.asa-net.org](http://www.asa-net.org) Click *Students* or *Careers* for more information
- Films:
  - The film *Preschool in Three Cultures* is an excellent illustration of culture in the US, China, and Japan and the ways we are socialized into the values of our countries as early as preschool. I have a copy if anyone would like to borrow it. There is also a book available with the same title.
- Readings:
  - Blee, Kathleen. (2002). *Inside Organized Racism: Women in the Hate Movement*. University of California Press.

## Chapter One Lecture Notes

- I. The sociological perspective
  - a. This perspective is important because it provides a different way of looking at social life and it contributes to our understanding of why people are the way they are
  - b. Sociology stresses the broader social context of behavior
    - i. At the center is the question of how people are influenced by their society
    - ii. Sociologists look at the social locations—culture, social class, gender, race, religion, age, and education to understand why/how people act
    - iii. Sociologists consider external influences--people's experiences—that are internalized and become part of a person's thinking and motivations
  
- II. Origins of Sociology
  - a. The study of sociology emerged as a result of the changes taking place in European societies at that time. These changes include: (1) the Industrial Revolution, in which traditional society and culture were transformed; (2) the American and French revolutions, out of which new ideas about the rights of individuals within society were accepted; and (3) the application of scientific methods to find answers for questions about the natural order and our social world.
  - b. Auguste Comte coined the term *sociology* and suggested the use of positivism—applying the scientific approach to the social world—but he did not utilize this approach himself.
  - c. Herbert Spencer, another social philosopher, viewed societies as evolutionary, coined the term *the survival of the fittest*, and became known for social Darwinism.
  - d. Karl Marx, founder of the conflict perspective, believed that class conflict—the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie—was the key to human history.
  - e. Emile Durkheim studied the social factors that underline suicide and found that the level of social integration, the degree to which people are tied to their social group, was a key social factor in suicide. Central to his studies was the idea that human behavior cannot be understood simply in individual terms, but must be understood within the larger social context in which it occurs.
  - f. Max Weber defined religion as a central force in social change, i.e., Protestantism encouraged greater economic development and was the central factor in the rise of capitalism in some countries.
  
- III. Sexism in Early Sociology
  - a. In the 1800s women were assigned the roles of wife and mother. Few were able to acquire the education required to become sociologists and the work of those who did was ignored.
  - b. Harriet Martineau was exceptional. She studied social life in Great Britain and the United States and eventually published *Society in America* two to three decades before Max Weber or Emile Durkheim were even born.

#### IV. Sociology in North America

- a. Sociology was transplanted to the United States in the late nineteenth century, first taking hold at the University of Chicago, the University of Kansas, and Atlanta University.
- b. Jane Addams was active in promoting social reform. In 1889 she founded Hull House, a settlement house that served the needs of Chicago's urban poor. Sociologists from the nearby University of Chicago were frequent visitors.
- c. W. E. B. Du Bois was the first African American to earn a doctorate at Harvard University. He spent most of his career at Atlanta University, where he conducted extensive research on race relations in the United States. He was committed to social action, helping to found the NAACP.
- d. During the 1940s, the focus shifted from reform to theory; Talcott Parsons developed abstract models of society to show how the parts of society harmoniously work together. In the 1950s, C. Wright Mills urged sociologists to get back to social reform. He saw imminent danger in the emergence of a power elite within the United States.

#### V. Theoretical Perspectives in Sociology

- a. Theory is defined as a "general statement about how some parts of the world fit together and how they work." There are three major theoretical perspectives in sociology.
- b. Symbolic interactionism views society as composed of symbols that people use to establish meaning, define their relationship, develop their views of the world, and communicate with one another. A symbolic interactionist studying divorce would focus on the changing meanings of marriage, divorce, and family to explain the increase in divorce rates.
- c. Functional analysis sees society as composed of various parts, each with a function, which contributes to society's equilibrium. Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, and Emile Durkheim all contributed to the development of functionalism.
  - i. Robert Merton used the term *functions* to refer to the beneficial consequences of people's actions. There are both *manifest functions*—actions that are intended to help some part of the system—and *latent functions*—unintended consequences that help social systems adjust. There are also *latent dysfunctions*, unintended consequences that undermine a system's equilibrium.
  - ii. In trying to explain divorce, a functionalist would look at how industrialization and urbanization both contributed to the changing function of marriage and the family.
- d. According to conflict theory, society is composed of groups competing for scarce resources. Divorce is seen as the outcome of the shifting balance of power within the family. As women have gained power and tried to address inequalities in the relationship, men have resisted.
- e. The perspectives differ in their level of analysis. *Macro-level analysis* an examination of large-scale patterns of society is the focus for functional and

conflict analysis. Microlevel analysis—an examination of social interaction is the focus for symbolic interactionism.

- f. Each perspective provides a different and often sharply contrasting picture of the world. Sociologists use all three perspectives because no one theory or level of analysis encompasses all of reality.
- g. Research without theory is of little value. It becomes a collection of meaningless *facts*. Theory that is unconnected to research is abstract and empty, unlikely to represent the way life really is. Theory is used to interpret research findings and research in turn helps to generate theory. Theory and research have a reciprocal relationship.

## VI. Doing Sociological Research

- a. Common sense cannot be relied on as a source of knowledge because it is highly limited and its insights often are incorrect. To move beyond common sense and understand what is really going on and why, it is necessary to do sociological research.
- b. Scientific research follows eight basic steps.
  - i. Selecting a topic depends on what the researcher wants to know more about and explain.
  - ii. Defining the problem involves specifying exactly what the researcher wants to learn about the topic.
  - iii. Reviewing the literature uncovers existing knowledge about the problem.
  - iv. Formulating a hypothesis involves stating the expected relationship between variables, based on a theory. Hypotheses need operational definitions—precise ways to measure the variables.
  - v. Choosing a research method is influenced by the research topic.
  - vi. Collecting the data involves concerns over *validity*—the extent to which operational definitions measure what was intended—and *reliability*—the extent to which data produces consistent results.
  - vii. Analyzing the results involves the use of a range of techniques—from statistical tests to content analysis—to analyze data. Computers have become powerful tools in data analysis because they reduce large amounts of data to basic patterns in much less time than it used to take.
  - viii. Sharing the results by writing a report and publishing the results makes the findings available for replication and review by others.

## VII. Research Methods

- a. Surveys involve collecting data by having people answer a series of questions.
  - i. The first step is to determine a population—the target group to be studied—and selecting a sample—individuals from among the target population who are intended to represent the population to be studied.
  - ii. In a random sample everyone in the target population has the same chance of being included in the study. A stratified random sample is a sample of specific subgroups (e.g. freshmen, sophomores, juniors) of the target population (a college or university) in which everyone in the subgroup has

- an equal chance of being included in the study. Because a random sample represents the target population, you can generalize your findings.
- iii. The respondents (people who respond to a survey) must be allowed to express their own ideas so that the findings will not be biased.
  - iv. Sociologists must decide between asking closed-ended questions in which the respondent selects one from a list of possible answers and open-ended questions in which respondents answer the question in their own words.
  - v. It is important to establish rapport—a feeling of trust between researchers and subjects.
- b. In participant observation, the researcher participates in a research setting while observing what is happening in that setting.
  - c. Secondary analysis is the analysis of data already collected by other researchers.
  - d. Documents—written sources—may be obtained from many sources, including books, newspapers, police reports, and records kept by various organizations.
  - e. Experiments are especially useful in determining causal relationships
    - i. Experiments require an experimental group—the group of subjects exposed to the independent variable—and a control group—the group of subjects not exposed to the independent variable.
    - ii. Experiments involve independent variables (factors that cause a change in something) and dependent variables (factors that are changed).
  - f. Unobtrusive measures involve observing social behavior of people who do not know they are being studied.

### VIII. Ethics In Sociological Research

- a. Ethics are of fundamental concern to sociologists when it comes to doing research.
- b. Ethical considerations include being open, honest, and truthful, not falsifying results or stealing someone else's work, not harming the subject in the course of conducting the research, protecting the anonymity of the research subjects, and not misrepresenting themselves to the research subjects.
- c. Efforts by Mario Brajuha to honor his research ethics reflect the seriousness with which sociologists view ethical considerations. Research by Laud Humphreys raised questions about how researchers represent themselves to subjects.
- d. Weber advocated that sociological research should be value-free—personal values or biases should not influence social research—and objective—totally neutral.
  - i. Sociologists agree that objectivity is a proper goal, but acknowledge that no one can escape values entirely.
  - ii. Replication—repeating a study to see if the same results are found—is one means to avoid the distortions that differing values can cause.
  - iii. This debate illustrates the continuing tensions over what should be the goal of sociological research. Some sociologists lean towards basic sociological research that has no goal beyond understanding social life and testing social theory, others feel that the knowledge should be used to reform society.



## Chapter Two Lecture Notes

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- I. What is culture?
  - a. Culture is defined as the language, beliefs, values, norms, behaviors, and even material objects that are passed from one generation to the next
    - i. Material culture includes things such as jewelry, art, buildings, weapons, machines, clothing, hairstyles, etc.
    - ii. Nonmaterial culture is a group's ways of thinking (beliefs, values, and assumptions) and common patterns of behavior (language, gestures, and other forms of interaction.)
  - b. Culture provides a taken-for-granted orientation to life.
    - i. We assume that our own culture is normal or natural, but, in fact, it is not natural. Culture is learned. It penetrates our lives so deeply that it is taken for granted and provides the lens through which we perceive things.
    - ii. It provides implicit instructions that tell us what we ought to do and a moral imperative that defines what we think is right and wrong.
    - iii. Coming into contact with a radically different culture produces culture shock, challenging our basic assumptions about life.
    - iv. A consequence of internalizing culture is ethnocentrism, using our own culture (and assuming it to be good, right, and superior) to judge other cultures. It is functional when it creates in-group solidarity, but can be dysfunctional if it leads to harmful discrimination.
  - c. Cultural relativism consists of trying to appreciate other groups' ways of life in the context in which they exist, without judging them as superior or inferior to our own.
    - i. This view attempts to refocus the lens in order to help us appreciate other cultures.
    - ii. Robert Edgerton argues that we should develop a scale to evaluate cultures on their quality of life and that those cultural practices that result in exploitation should be judged morally inferior to those that enhance people's lives.
- II. Components of Symbolic Culture
  - a. Sociologists sometimes refer to nonmaterial culture as symbolic culture because the central components are the symbols people use
    - i. A symbol is something to which people attach meaning and for which people use to communicate with one another.
    - ii. Symbols include language, gestures, values, norms, sanctions, folkways, and mores.
  - b. Gestures, using one's body to communicate with others, are shorthand means of communication.
  - c. Language consists of a system of symbols that can be put together in an infinite number of ways in order to communicate abstract thought. Each word is a symbol, a sound to which a culture attaches a particular meaning. Language is important because it is the primary means of communication between people.

- i. It allows human experiences to be cumulative. Each generation builds on the body of significant experiences that is passed on to it by the previous generation, thus freeing people to move beyond their own immediate experiences.
    - ii. It enables us to share our past experiences, and extend time into the future, allowing us to share our future plans. It expands connections beyond our immediate, face-to-face groups.
  - d. Values, norms, and sanctions are also components of culture.
    - i. Values are the standards by which people define good and bad, beautiful and ugly. Every group develops both values and expectations regarding the right way to reflect them.
    - ii. Norms are expectations, or rules of behavior, that reflect a group's values.
    - iii. Sanctions are the positive or negative reactions to the way in which people follow norms. Positive sanctions (a money reward, a prize, a smile, or even a handshake) are expressions of approval. Negative sanctions (a fine, a frown, or harsh words) denote disapproval for breaking a norm.
    - iv. Norms can become rigorous, making people feel stifled. Moral holidays, like Mardi Gras, are specific times when people are allowed to break the norms.
  - e. Folkways and mores are different types of norms.
    - i. Folkways are norms that are not strictly enforced, such as passing on the left side of the sidewalk. They may result in a person getting a dirty look.
    - ii. Mores are norms that are believed to be essential to core values and we insist on conformity. A person who steals, rapes, or kills has violated some of society's most important mores and will be formally sanctioned.
    - iii. One group's folkways may constitute another group's mores. A male walking down the street with the upper half of his body uncovered may be violating a folkway; a female doing the same thing may be violating accepted mores.
    - iv. Taboos are norms so strongly ingrained that even the thought of them is greeted with revulsion. Eating human flesh and having sex with one's parents are examples of such behavior.

### III. Many Cultural Worlds

- a. Subcultures are groups whose values and related behaviors are so distinct that they set their members apart from the dominant culture.
  - i. Each subculture is a world within the larger world of the dominant culture. Each has a distinctive way of looking at life, but remains compatible with the dominant culture.
  - ii. United States society contains tens of thousands of subcultures, some as broad as the way of life we associate with teenagers, others as narrow as that of bodybuilders or philosophers. Ethnic groups often form subcultures with their own language, distinctive food, religious practices, and other customs. Occupational groups also form subcultures.
- b. Countercultures are groups whose values set their members in opposition to the dominant culture.

- i. Countercultures challenge the culture's core values.
- ii. Countercultures are usually associated with negative behavior. For example, heavy metal music adherents who glorify Satanism, hatred, cruelty, rebellion, sexism, violence, and death, are an example of a counterculture.
- iii. Often threatened by a counterculture, members of the broader culture sometimes move against it in order to affirm their own values

#### IV. Values in U.S. Society

- a. Identifying core values in United States society is difficult due to the many different religious, racial, ethnic, and special interest groups that are found in this pluralistic society.
  - i. Sociologist Robin Williams identified the following as core values: achievement and success (especially doing better than others); individualism (success due to individual effort); activity and work; efficiency and practicality; science and technology (using science to control nature); progress; material comfort; humanitarianism (helpfulness, personal kindness, philanthropy); freedom; democracy; equality (especially of opportunity); and racism and group superiority.
  - ii. Henslin updated Williams's list by adding education; religiosity (belief in a Supreme Being and following some set of matching precept); and romantic love (as the basis for marriage) and monogamy (no more than one spouse at a time.)
- b. Values are not independent units. Value clusters are made up of related core values that come together to form a larger whole. In the value cluster surrounding success, for example, we find hard work, education, efficiency, material comfort, and individualism all bound together.
- c. Some values conflict with each other. There cannot be full expressions of democracy, equality, racism, and sexism at the same time. These are value contradictions and as society changes, some values are challenged and undergo modification.
- d. As society changes over time, new core values emerge that reflect changing social conditions. Examples of emerging values in the United States today are: leisure; physical fitness; self-fulfillment; and concern for the environment.
- e. Core values do not change without meeting strong resistance. Today's clash in values is so severe that it is referred to a culture war.
- f. Values and their supporting beliefs may blind people to other social circumstances. The emphasis on individualism is so high that many people in the United States believe that everyone is free to pursue the goal of success, thereby blinding them to the dire consequences of family poverty, lack of education, and dead-end jobs.
- g. Ideal culture refers to the ideal values and norms of a group. What people actually do usually falls short of this ideal, and sociologists refer to the norms and values that people actually follow as real culture.

#### V. Technology in the Global Village

- a. Central to a group's material culture is its technology. In its simplest sense, technology refers to tools, in its broadest sense it includes the skills or procedures to make and use those tools.
  - i. New technologies refer to the emerging technologies that have a major impact on human life during a particular era.
  - ii. Technology sets a framework for a group's nonmaterial culture.
- b. William Ogburn first used the term cultural lag to refer to situations where not all parts of a culture change at the same pace: when some part of culture changes, other parts lag behind.
  - i. A group's material culture usually changes first, with the nonmaterial culture lagging behind.
  - ii. Sometimes nonmaterial culture never catches up to the changes. We hold on to some outdated form that was once needed but now has been bypassed by new technology.
- c. Most human cultures throughout history had little contact with one another. However, there was always some contact with other groups, resulting in groups learning from one another.
  - i. Social scientists refer to this transmission of cultural characteristics as cultural diffusion.
  - ii. Material culture is more likely than the nonmaterial culture to change because of cultural diffusion.
  - iii. Cultural diffusion occurs more rapidly today, given the changes in travel and communications that unite the world to such an extent that there is almost no "other side of the world."
  - iv. One consequence of cultural diffusion is cultural leveling, the process in which cultures become similar to one another. Japan, for example, no longer is a purely Eastern culture, having adopted not only Western economic production, but also Western forms of dress, music, and so on.

**The Sociological Perspective**

Chapter One

**Chapter Outline**

- Sociological perspective
- Theoretical perspectives in sociology
- Research Methods
- Ethics in social research

**Sociological Perspective**

- The most important first step in understanding sociology is to understand that sociology is a perspective, it is a way of looking at the world.
- Stresses the social contexts in which people live.

**Sociological perspective**

- Asking how groups influence people
- Asking how the bigger society influences people
- How social location—gender, race, class, age, ability, etc.—influences people

### **Sociological perspective**

- Example:
  - When one person is unemployed, we ask what is wrong with him/her, why doesn't he/she just find a job
  - The sociological perspective encourages us to ask about the larger social context of unemployment, i.e., current economic conditions, jobs available in the community, familial circumstances,

### **Sociology**

- Broadly defined, is the scientific study of human societies and cultures, and social behavior.

### **Sociology vs. the others**

- Other disciplines study human life too, i.e., Biologists, neurologists, psychologists.
- These disciplines focus on structures and process that reside within the individual. In contrast, sociologists study what goes on both inside and outside of individuals, groups, and societies.

### **Theoretical Perspectives**

- Functionalism
- Conflict theory
- Symbolic interactionism

### Functionalism-Emile Durkheim

- Social institutions play a key role in keeping society alive and stable.
- Institutions allow societies to attain their goals, adapt to a changing environment and train individuals into their social roles.
- The family is in charge of creating, controlling and socializing new members. Educational institutions train people for the future statuses or jobs they will fill. Religions help to reaffirm values and morals and maintain social ties among people.

### Functionalism

- All institutions, although separate, work together just like parts of the human body work together for the function of the whole.
- If an aspect of social life does not contribute to society's survival, it is seen as dysfunctional and will eventually disappear. If it does persist, i.e. drug industry, prostitution, war, functionalists believe they are somehow functional to society.
- How could each of these be functional to a society????

### Conflict theory—Karl Marx

- For conflict theorists, the structure of society is a source of inequality, which always benefits some groups at the expense of others.
- Instead of focusing on how all parts of society contribute to the smooth functioning of society and the ability to meet its goals, they function on how these elements and institutions promote division and inequality.

### Conflict theory—Karl Marx

- Functionalism has been criticized for accepting social arrangements the way they are. Where they see drugs as functional, conflict theorists would contest saying that the drug industry is a way for the dominant classes to subordinate the lower classes.
  - For instance, the poor and minorities often receive more and harsher punishments for drug use and possession, the crack/cocaine debate.

### Symbolic Interactionism—Howard Becker

- Functionalism and conflict theories are macro in their approach, that is, they focus on structures in society and the larger social institutions and their arrangements.
- SI's try to understand society and social structures through an examination of the micro-level, personal, day to day interaction of people.

### Symbolic interactionism

- Interaction takes place within a world of symbolic communication. The symbols we use, language, gestures, posture are influenced by the larger group or society.
- When we interact with others, we constantly try to interpret what they mean or what their message is. Is he looking at me because he wants to approach me, or because I have a bug on my face? We are constantly trying to "define the situation."
- Society emerges from the countless interpersonal interactions that individuals have. When we follow the behaviors and interact according to larger social institutions, when you play the role of student and I as professor, we reinforce the larger institution of the university.

### Research Methods

- We all do research in our everyday lives.
  - When we decide to try studying with a group for an exam, we compare our results from when we studied alone.
- Sociologists do more formal research.

### 3 Conditions of formal research

- Empirical- a systematic, careful and controlled process of collecting information and answering questions.
- Probabilistic- Researchers do not claim X always causes Y, instead they say, under certain conditions, X will probably cause Y.
- Purposeful- Personal research is guided by a hunch but most social research is guided by a particular theory.



### Types of research methods

- Survey research-Is usually done by taking a sample of people who are supposed to represent a larger group. Surveys can be done in person, telephone or mail. The information that is provided in a survey is usually converted into numerical data. What is a good example of a survey??? US Census
- Field Research-Directly observing a situation. Often entails a person directly participating in the situation. Often used by symbolic interactionists.

### Types of research methods

- Experimental Research-Varies the conditions that are of interest in order to measure effects. An experimental group receives a treatment, and a control receives no treatment. The two groups are compared to see if differences exist.
- Secondary Analysis-Using and analyzing data that have already been collected by other researchers or government or exist in forms such as historical documents, reports, official records.

### Other research concerns

- Validity-the degree to which your definitions measure what they are designed to measure.
  - How do you define school shootings-committed by students, students and teachers, on school grounds
- Reliability-a reliable measure is measuring something consistently.
  - If your definition of school shootings is not clear, can someone else replicate your study and get the same outcomes?

### Ethics in research

- Ethics-Experimental cautions:
  - Privacy-the individuals' right to define when and on what terms their acts can be revealed to public.
  - Confidentiality-not passing information that could be traced back to that individual.
  - Informed consent-informing subjects beforehand of the conditions of the experiment.

**Culture**

Chapter Two

**Chapter Outline**

- What is culture?
- Components of culture
- Many cultural worlds
- Values in US society
- Technology and culture

**What is culture?**

- The concept of culture is usually easier to describe than define. It is made up of language, beliefs, values, norms and even material objects that are passed from generation to the next.
- Unless you study culture, you rarely make mention of it or acknowledge you are a part of a distinct culture.
- It only seems that when we encounter someone from another culture that we realize how pervasive culture can be. We forget that our speech, gestures, beliefs and customs are a part of our culture. We take that for granted that we too have learned a culture, including what to believe, value and which behaviors are appropriate.

**Components of culture**

- Nonmaterial culture- (also called symbolic culture) refers to all the nonphysical products of society that are created over time and shared:
  - language, beliefs, values, customs, these are all common patterns of behavior and forms of interaction.
  - It is helpful to think of non-material culture as symbols. It is a groups way of thinking about the world and acting within the world.

### Components of culture

- Material culture-includes the physical artifacts that shape the lives of members of a society:
  - clothing, food, artwork,literature, music.

### Ethnocentrism

- In order to develop the sociological imagination, it is important to understand how pervasive culture is in our everyday lives.
  - We can see culture on other people who aren't like us, but do we look at how culture influences our own attitudes and behaviors?
- Culture's significance is profound touching almost every aspect of who and what we are. We came into this life without a language, values, morals, yet by this point in your lives you have all acquired these things.

### Ethnocentrism

- Not only did we learn language, values and morals, of our culture, they have become so engrained in us that we often tend to think of our language, values, morals as the "right way" of doing things.
- When we internalize our culture and think it is the right way of doing and thinking, we are being ethnocentric.
  - Ethnocentrism is when internalize our culture and think it is the right way of doing and thinking.

### Cultural relativism

- To counter our tendency to use our own culture as a standard by which we judge other cultures, we can practice cultural relativism by trying to understand a culture on its own terms.
- Cultural relativism is an attempt to look at other ways of life and try to understand them and appreciate them, rather than thinking our way is right.

### Subcultures and countercultures

- Culture can exist in smaller more narrowly defined units-subcultures.
  - Teens, gangs and cults, certain ethnic groups that distinguish themselves by clothing, food, language and who have values different than mainstream.
  - Amish and Ku Klux Klan are good examples.
- Subcultures consists of the values, behaviors and physical artifacts of a group that distinguishes it from the larger culture.
- Countercultures hold values in opposition to those of the dominant culture.

### Values

- A groups ideas of what is desirable in life.
- When we uncover values we learn the standards by which people define good and bad, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly.
- Values change depending on the social group one is speaking about.

### American Values

- |                               |                   |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Achievement and success     | • Humanitarianism |
| • Individualism               | • Freedom         |
| • Activity and work           | • Democracy       |
| • Efficiency and practicality | • Education       |
| • Science and technology      | • Romantic love   |
| • Material comfort            | • Religiosity     |
|                               | • Monogamy        |

### Technology and values

- Cultural lag refers to how a group's nonmaterial culture lags behind its changing technology.
- Cultural leveling refers to the ways that many underdeveloped and developing countries are adopting Western culture in place of their own customs, resulting in a loss of cultural richness around the world.