

SOCL101: THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Course Overview

Enrolled students should consult Moodle for a current syllabus.



The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. That is its task and its promise.

—C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*

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COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is an introduction to sociology. Sociologists are curious about the social lives of people and groups, our behaviour as social beings, and the structures and institutions that shape, and are shaped by, social interaction. Sociology is not just about acquiring knowledge. In this course, we will be exploring topics you are probably already familiar with (such as advertising, families, smiling, work and school, shopping, gated communities, and patriotism), but we will be approaching them from a perspective that may be new to you: the sociological perspective.

The course focuses on the ‘sociological imagination’, a sociological approach that draws connections between personal biographies and broader social structures. We will look at how sociologists think about the relationship between the individual and society and consider the way our everyday lives are intertwined with wider social processes. The course will begin with an overview of the theories, methods, concepts and analytical frameworks that sociologists use to make sense of the social world and our place in it. We will then look at how these theories and methods are applied in empirical studies of social life. We will examine the relationship between the individual and society in a series of social arenas, beginning with the intimate spheres of the body and the family, and moving on to the wider worlds of school, work and leisure, communities and suburbs, and national and global society. Throughout the course, we will focus on the way race, class and gender shape the relationship between the individual and society in these overlapping contexts.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By participating in this course, you will:

- Understand what sociology is and how sociology differs from other disciplines in terms of the kinds of questions sociologists ask and the methods they use to address those questions.
- Develop your ‘sociological imagination’ – the ability to think critically about how individual biographies (including your own) shape and are shaped by social and historical forces.
- Practice applying your sociological imagination across a range of social contexts, from the body to the global, and across intersecting social categories such as race, class and gender.
- Be familiar with sociological explanations of social inequalities.
- Develop your critical reading, writing and verbal skills by engaging with the course literature, exchanging ideas with your classmates, facilitating class discussion, and formulating sociological analyses in written assignments and exams.

REQUIRED READINGS

Blakely, Edward J. & Snyder, Mary G. (1999) Fortress America

Henslin, James M. (Ed.) (2005) Down to Earth Sociology, 14th edition (DES)

Hochschild, Arlie Russell (1983) The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling

Lareau, Annette (2003) Unequal Childhoods

Required texts are available in the bookstore. In addition to these texts, several required articles, chapters and other readings and resources will be made available through ERes (password: SOCL101).

Achieving the outcomes listed above will require you to engage carefully with the assigned readings. I expect you to do all of the readings, to draw connections between texts, and to practice applying concepts from the readings both in class and on your own. The midterm and final exams will draw heavily from the readings. As you read the assigned texts, you should keep the following questions in mind:

1. What is the author’s main point or argument?
2. What research methods does the author use to address his/her questions?
3. What key pieces of evidence are presented in support of the author’s argument?
4. What questions does this argument raise for you?
5. Have you experienced or observed the issues or phenomena the author describes? How do your experiences or observations compare to the author’s analysis?
6. How does this article or chapter relate to previous discussions or readings?

I will also place reading and viewing guides on Moodle to accompany required texts and the films we will be watching this semester. Please download these guides and bring them to class on the appropriate days.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING POLICY

Class Discussion, Participation & Attendance (5%)

This course combines lectures, presentations, small group work and class discussion, so it is essential that you do all of the assigned readings and come to class prepared to thoughtfully discuss the readings and course topics. Readings should be completed for class on the date they are listed. Regular attendance is expected and only documented absences may be excused. After the first unexcused absence, your participation grade will drop by one letter grade for every subsequent undocumented absence (for example, an A becomes a B, B+ becomes a C+, and so on).

Group Presentation (5%)

Working in pairs, you will prepare a short presentation and facilitate a class discussion on an assigned reading. Your presentations, including discussion time, should be no more than 15 minutes long. You should prepare a hand-out or PowerPoint slides outlining the key concepts, evidence and arguments from the reading. However, your presentation should not consist entirely of summary. It is your responsibility to *explain* and *interpret* the reading and to relate it to your and your classmates' lives. I encourage you to apply the concepts from the readings to additional examples, including stories from the news, clips from film or television, advertisements, etc. If you make a hand-out, bring enough copies for everyone; if you prepare PowerPoint slides, email them to me so that I can post them on Moodle for class access.

You should also prepare *two discussion questions* for the class. One should be based on a quote from the reading and the other should ask students to apply some argument or concept from the reading to their own lives. Sign up for presentation dates/readings on Moodle.

Doing Sociology (10%)

Throughout the semester, you will complete **three** exercises that require you to do some of your own sociological analysis. You will write a brief report (not to exceed 2 double-spaced pages; ~500 words) on each exercise. In some cases, additional materials for the exercise will be available on Moodle. Your 'Doing Sociology' grade will be an average of the marks you earn on these three reports. See detailed directions for each exercise on pp. 15-16 of this syllabus.

Midterm Exam #1 (25%)

The first midterm exam will cover Parts I and II and will consist of short answer and essay questions. Please make a note of this date when arranging your spring break travel plans as make-ups will **not** be offered except in documented cases of emergency.

Midterm Exam #2 (25%)

The second midterm exam will focus on Parts III and IV, though it will inevitably also draw on concepts from earlier in the course. It will consist of short answer and essay questions. Please make a note of this date as make-ups will **not** be offered except in documented cases of emergency.

Final Exam (30%)

The final exam will be cumulative. Like the midterms, it will consist of short answer and essay questions. The final exam will be administered during the exam period set by the Registrar: **DATE AND TIME TO BE ANNOUNCED.**

Important Information about the Final Exam:

PLEASE NOTE that the final exam will **ONLY** be administered during the date and time scheduled by the registrar, with **NO** exceptions. Please keep this in mind when making any travel arrangements or other commitments as make-up exams will **not** be offered except in documented cases of emergency.

Late Policy: It is your responsibility to schedule your workload in order to meet the deadlines stated in this syllabus. Unless I receive notification from your class dean, unexcused late submissions of written work *will lose one letter grade per calendar day.*

GRADING

Final grades will be assigned as follows:

A 94-100	B+ 87-89.99	C+ 77-79.99	D+ 67-70.99
A- 90-93.99	B 84-86.99	C 74-76.99	D 60-66.99
	B- 80-83.99	C- 70-73.99	F 59 and below

MOODLE

Additional course information and materials are available on Moodle, so please check Moodle regularly for any updates. I will place PowerPoint slides from the lectures on Moodle under each corresponding week. PowerPoint slides from the group presentations will also be made available on Moodle. Reading and viewing guides for books and films will also be posted on Moodle. It is your responsibility to download, read and print these materials and to bring them to class on the appropriate days.

OFFICE HOURS

Whether you have a specific question or concern about the course or assignments or would like to talk more generally about the course topics or your academic interests, I hope you will feel free to visit me during office hours. **Email:** I am more than happy to correspond with you via email regarding any questions or concerns related to the course. If I can, I will answer your question over email. If the question is too complex to address over email, I'll ask you to set up a time to meet with me in person. I try to check email every day and will reply as quickly as possible. Please email me from your HC account so your message doesn't end up in my junk mailbox.

I will use email to contact you for various reasons – it is your responsibility to check your HC email account regularly!

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I expect you to be familiar with and abide by the Holy Cross statement on academic honesty: If you haven't read the statement, or haven't looked at it in a while, take a moment now to go over it: <http://www.holycross.edu/catalog/academic-honesty-policy.pdf>

Academic honesty is a matter of trust within the academic community as well as a matter of respect for intellectual property. It is also essential to learning. Learning involves reading and critiquing texts for yourself, developing your own ideas, and synthesizing themes and debates through your own words. Of course, as you engage with academic debates and research, you will draw on the work of other scholars. In these cases, you must *always* cite your sources including books, chapters, magazine or newspaper articles, journal articles, websites, or any other resource. Learning is also a collaborative process, and I encourage you to study and discuss the course materials together. But when it comes time to write your essays and reports, make sure that the ideas you present as your own *are* your own ideas – and if they are not, be sure you cite them properly. I take academic honesty very seriously and I am always happy to discuss any questions you might have concerning this matter.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

The topic of our course means that we will be exploring personal issues in order to better understand how they are shaped within social and historical contexts. In order for class sessions to facilitate a deeper understanding of the course material, the tone of our discussions needs to be one of mutual respect. Everyone will have an opportunity to participate and we need to respect each other in what we say, how we say it, and by listening attentively to each other.

Showing respect also means coming to class on time, being prepared, turning your phone or other gadgets OFF during class time (which means NO texting or phone use during class – whether or not texting in class distracts *you*, it certainly distracts *me*, so please don't do it), participating actively and, except in the case of an emergency, staying until the end of class.

CLASS SCHEDULE & READINGS*

Readings should be completed for class on the day listed.

Legend: DES = *Down to Earth Sociology: Introductory Readings*, ed. James M. Henslin

RT = Required Text

ERes = Electronic Reservation

PART I: DEVELOPING THE 'SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION'

Learning objectives for Part I:

By the end of Part I, you should be able to:

- Describe concepts such as the sociological imagination, socialization, social identity and the social construction of the self.
- Describe the historical development of sociology as a discipline and outline the contributions of important classical theorists.
- Identify the kinds of research questions and methods sociologists use to understand the social world and our place in it.

Topic	Readings	Due Dates/Activities
Introduction to the Course	None for today.	Make sure you can log on to Moodle and ERes!

Sociology as a Discipline

Topic	Readings	Due Dates/Activities
Sociology as a Way of Seeing	(DES) Berger, Peter L. , 'Invitation to Sociology,' pp. 3-7. (DES) Mills, C. Wright , 'The Promise,' pp. 20-27. (DES) Henslin, James M. 'What is Sociology?' pp. 8-19.	What does Mills mean by the 'sociological imagination'? Can you think of an example of how your personal biography has been shaped by social or historical structures?
Asking Sociological Questions	(ERes) Durkheim, Émile (2009) 'What Makes Sociology Different' in <i>Readings for Sociology</i> ed. by G. Massey (NY: W.W. Norton), pp. 19-26. (ERes) Weber, Max (2007) 'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism' in <i>Classic Readings in Sociology</i> ed. by E. L. Howard (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth), pp. 84-89. (ERes) Schwalbe, Michael (2010) 'Finding Out How the Social World Works' in <i>Mapping the Social Landscape</i> ed. by S. Ferguson (NY: McGraw-Hill), pp. 33-43.	According to Weber, what is the relationship between culture and capitalism? What does Durkheim mean by a 'social fact'?

* The schedule is subject to change. I will notify you by email and/or in class of any changes.

Topic	Readings	Due Dates/Activities
Doing Sociology	<p>(DES) Henslin, James M. 'How Sociologists do Research,' pp. 35-47.</p> <p>(RT) Lareau, Annette (2003) Appendix A, <i>Unequal Childhoods</i>, pp. 259-274.</p> <p>(ERes) Adler, Patricia A. and Adler, Peter (2003) 'The Promises and Pitfalls of Going into the Field' <i>Contexts</i> 2(2): 41-47.</p>	What are some of the strengths and limitations of Lareau's research methods?

Sociology and the Self

Topic	Readings	Due Dates/Activities
Self and Society	(ERes) Mead, George Herbert , 'The Self', in <i>Classic Readings in Sociology</i> ed. by E. L. Howard (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth), pp. 25-32.	Mead argues that the self is made and not born. What does this mean? How does Mead support his argument?
Self and Society	(DES) Goffman, E. <i>The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life</i> . pp. 135-146.	What do Goffman's and Mead's concepts of the self have in common?
Socialization	(ERes) Berger, Peter L. and Luckmann, Thomas 'Socialization: The Internalization of Society' in <i>The Meaning of Sociology</i> ed. by J. Charon (Prentice Hall: New Jersey), pp. 35-37.	What do Berger and Luckmann mean by 'socialization'? Can you think of an example of how you have been socialized?
Socialization and Class	<p>(ERes) Gilbert, D. (1998) 'The American Class Structure and Growing Inequality', in <i>The American Class Structure</i> (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth), pp. 267-280.</p> <p>(DES) Morris, Joan M. and Grimes, Michael D. 'Moving Up from the Working Class?' pp. 383-394.</p> <p>(DES) Higley, Stephen 'The US Upper Class,' pp. 395-406.</p>	<p>Can you draw any connections between Gilbert's outline of the American class structure and the other two readings?</p> <p>DUE: Doing Sociology #1</p>
Socialization and Gender	<p>(DES) Henslin, James M. 'On Becoming Male,' pp. 161-172.</p> <p>(DES) Eder, Donna 'On Becoming Female,' pp. 173-179.</p>	In class: Playing with class and gender.

PART II: INTIMATE SOCIAL SPHERES

Learning objectives

By the end of Part II, you should be able to:

- Explain the significance of the body and family as sites of negotiation between self and society.
- Describe how the media acts as an agent of gender socialization.
- Explain how parenting styles are shaped by social factors.
- Understand how emotions are socially constructed.

The Body

Topic	Readings	Due Dates/Activities
Sociology of the Body	(DES) Katz, Sidney 'The Importance of Being Beautiful,' pp. 341-348. (ERes) Howson, Alexandra (2004) <i>The Body in Society: An Introduction</i> , (Cambridge: Polity), pp. 1-14.	
Representing Gender	(ERes) Barthel, Diane , (1997) 'A Gentleman and a Consumer' in <i>Signs of Life in the USA</i> ed. by S. Maasik and J. Solomon (Boston: Bedford Books), pp. 144-154.	Film: <i>Still Killing Us Softly</i> by Jean Kilbourne Download a copy of the viewing guide from Moodle and bring it to class.
The Body as a Project of the Self	(ERes) Gimlin, Debra (2002) 'Body Work as Self Work' and 'Cosmetic Surgery: Paying for Your Beauty' in <i>Body Work</i> (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 1-15 & 73-109.	According to Gimlin, what is the relationship between the body and identity?

The Family

Date/Topic	Readings	Due Dates/Activities
<i>Unequal Childhoods</i>	(RT) Lareau, Annette (2003) Chapters 1, 2, 3, & 4, <i>Unequal Childhoods</i> .	Group 1: Presentation (3) Group 2: Presentation (4) DUE: Doing Sociology #2
<i>Unequal Childhoods</i>	(RT) Lareau, Annette (2003) Chapters 6 & 7, <i>Unequal Childhoods</i> .	Group 3: Presentation (6) Group 4: Presentation (7)
<i>Unequal Childhoods</i>	(RT) Lareau, Annette (2003) Chapters 8 & 12, <i>Unequal Childhoods</i> .	Group 5: Presentation (8) Exam Review
Midterm Exam #1		

PART III: THE SOCIOLOGY OF EVERYDAY LIFE: WORK, LEISURE, CONSUMPTION

Learning objectives

By the end of Part III, you should be able to:

- Explain the significance of work, leisure and consumption as sites of negotiation between the self and society.
- Reflect critically on the social factors that shape the everyday lives of the working poor.
- Explain how personal taste and consumption patterns are socially constructed.
- Understand how social class is reproduced through taste and consumption.

Work

Topic	Readings	Due Dates/Activities
Emotional Labor	(RT) Hochschild, Arlie (1983) Chapters 1, 2, & 6, <i>The Managed Heart</i> .	Group 6: Presentation (1&2) Group 7: Presentation (6)
Emotional Labor	(RT) Hochschild, Arlie (1983) Chapters 8 & 9, <i>The Managed Heart</i> .	Group 8: Presentation (8) Group 9: Presentation (9)
Work and Unemployment	Peck, Dan (2010) 'How a New Jobless Era Will Transform America' <i>The Atlantic</i> (March 2010). Schor, Juliet (2002) 'Why Americans Should Rest' <i>The New York Times</i> (2 September 2002).	Compare and contrast the arguments made in these two pieces by Peck and Schor and be prepared to discuss in class.
The Working Poor	(DES) Ehrenreich, Barbara 'Nickel and Dimed,' pp. 411-424. (DES) Gans, Herbert 'The Uses of Poverty: The Poor Pay All,' pp. 376-382.	Film: <i>30 Days: Minimum Wage</i> DUE: Doing Sociology #3
Work and Society	(DES) Leidner, Robin 'Over the Counter at McDonald's,' pp.497-507. (ERes) Marx, Karl & Engels, Friedrich (2007) 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' in <i>Classic Readings in Sociology</i> ed. by E. L. Howard (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth), pp. 10-17.	In class: Thinking about Marx in <i>Office Space</i> DUE: Doing Sociology #4

Leisure and Consumption

Topic	Readings	Due Dates/Activities
Consumption and Social Class	<p>(ERes) Seymour, Diane (2004) 'The Social Construction of Taste' in <i>Culinary Taste</i> ed. by D. Sloan. (Burlington, MA: Elsevier), pp. 1-22 (excerpted).</p> <p>(RT) Lareau, Annette Appendix B, <i>Unequal Childhoods</i>, pp. 275-278.</p>	<p>Film: <i>People Like Us</i> Download a copy of the viewing guide and bring it to class.</p> <p>How has your personal taste been socially shaped?</p>
Consumption and Social Identity: 'I Shop Therefore I Am'	<p>(ERes) Shove, Elizabeth & Warde, Alan (2002) 'Inconspicuous Consumption' in <i>Sociological Theory</i>, ed. by R. Dunlap, et al. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield), pp. 230-251.</p> <p>(ERes) The Economist (2005) 'Inconspicuous Consumption' 24 Dec 2005.</p>	See the <i>Economist</i> article on the 'Tyranny of Choice' posted on Moodle.
The Problem with Consumerism	<p>(ERes) Schor, Juliet (1999) 'What's Wrong with Consumer Society? Competitive Spending and the "New Consumerism"' in <i>Consuming Desires</i> ed. by R. Rosenblatt (Washington, DC: Island Press), pp. 37-50.</p> <p>(ERes) Ritzer, George (1995) 'The Credit Card: Private Troubles and Public Issues' excerpted in <i>Sociological Footprints</i> ed. by L. Cargan and J.H. Ballantine (Thomson Wadsworth), pp. 407-415.</p>	<p>What does Schor mean by competitive spending? Does this concept hold true today? Can you think of an example?</p>

PART IV: SPACES OF SOCIAL IDENTITY: COMMUNITIES & SUBURBS

Learning objectives

By the end of Part IV, you should be able to:

- Understand the concepts of social capital and community.
- Identify critiques of suburbanization in terms of community.
- Reflect critically on the way differences of race, class and ethnicity are reproduced in myths of suburbanization and gated communities.
- Describe how communities and suburbs are sites of negotiation between individuals and society.

Communities

Topic	Readings	Due Dates/Activities
Communities	<p>(ERes) Putnam, Robert D. 'Bowling Alone' in <i>Sociological Odyssey</i> ed. by P. Adler and P. Adler (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth), pp. 423-427.</p> <p>(RT) Blakely, Edward J. and Snyder, Mary Gail (1999) Chapter 2, <i>Fortress America</i>.</p>	How do Blakely and Snyder define community? How do their ideas correspond (or not correspond) to the Holy Cross community?
Networks and Social Capital	<p>Bourdieu, P. (2005 [1983]) 'The Forms of Capital: Social Capital' trans. R. Nice. Excerpted version on ERes. Available on ERes.</p> <p>Hunt, T. (2008) 'Social Capital and the Influence of Social Networks'.</p>	What does Bourdieu mean by 'social capital'? How does it relate to 'economic capital'? Can you map out your social network?

Suburbs

Envisioning Suburbia	(ERes) Florida, Richard (2008) 'The Days of Urban Sprawl are Over ...' <i>Toronto Globe and Mail</i> (July 11, 2008).	Film: <i>Subdivided</i> Please download a copy of the viewing guide and bring it to class.
Class and Race in the Suburbs	<p>(RT) Blakely, Edward J. and Snyder, Mary Gail (1999) Chapters 3 & 4, <i>Fortress America</i>.</p> <p><i>Recommended:</i> (ERes) Teaford, Jon (2008) 'The Ethnic Diversity of Suburbia' in <i>The American Suburb</i> (NY: Routledge), pp. 58-71.</p>	Group 10: Presentation (3) Group 11: Presentation (4)
Class and Race in the Suburbs	(RT) Blakely, Edward J. and Snyder, Mary Gail (1999) Chapters 7 & 8 <i>Fortress America</i> .	Group 12: Presentation (7&8) EXAM REVIEW
Midterm Exam #2		

PART V: SOCIOLOGY IN TRANS/NATIONAL CONTEXT

Learning objectives

By the end of Part VI, you should be able to:

- Understand the concepts of imagined community, banal nationalism, and globalization.
- Describe how race and ethnicity have historically been used to determine citizenship in the United States.
- Reflect on the invisible privileges of whiteness in American society.
- Identify instances of national identity and global citizenship in everyday life.

Studying the Nation from a Sociological Perspective

Topic	Readings	Due Dates/Activities
Nation: Imagined Community	(ERes) Anderson, Benedict (1991) 'Introduction' in <i>Imagined Communities</i> (London: Verso), pp. 1-7. (ERes) Hall, Stuart (1992) 'National Cultures as "Imagined Communities"' in <i>Modernity and its Futures</i> ed. by S. Hall, D. Held and T. McGrew (Milton Keynes: Open University Press), pp. 291-299.	According to Hall, why are symbols and representations significant to national identity? DUE: Doing Sociology #5
Banal Nationalism	(ERes) Billig, Michael (1995) 'Flagging the Homeland Daily' in <i>Banal Nationalism</i> (London: Sage), pp. 93-127.	What does Billig mean by 'banal nationalism'? Can you identify an example of how you practice 'banal nationalism' in your everyday life?
Race and Ethnicity in America	(DES) Page, Clarence 'Showing my Color,' pp. 360-368. (RT) Review: Lareau, <i>Unequal Childhoods</i> , Ch. 2	Film: <i>Race: The Power of an Illusion</i> by PBS. Please download a copy of the viewing guide and bring it to the screening. DUE: Doing Sociology #6
Race and Ethnicity in America	McIntosh, Peggy (1990) 'Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack' <i>Independent School</i> 49(2), pp. 31-36.	What does McIntosh mean when she argues that privilege is invisible? What is the significance of 'forgetting' or not noticing that something is a privilege?

Global Sociology

Topic	Readings	Due Dates/Activities
Globalization	Chanda, Nayan (2002) 'Coming Together: Globalization Means Reconnecting the Human Community'.	
Globalization	(DES) Van Dusen Wishard, William 'Caught Between the Ages,' pp. 535-546.	Film: <i>Mardi Gras: Made in China</i> Please download a copy of the viewing guide and bring it to class.
Embodying Globalization/ Banal Cosmopolitanism	(ERes) Germann Molz, Jennie (2006) 'Cosmopolitan Bodies: Fit to Travel and Traveling to Fit', <i>Body & Society</i> 12(3): 1-21.	Think back to the beginning of the semester when we discussed the body and self. What links can you draw between that discussion and globalization?

PART VI: TAKING THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION FORWARD

Topic	Readings	Due Dates/Activities
Course Conclusion	Review for Final Exam	