

Introductory Sociology
Soc 115 B, meets LinC M4 requirement
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:20-11:30; PPHAC 117

Professor Daniel Jasper

PPHAC 316

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:15-2:15; Fridays 8:00-10:00; other times by appointment

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Course Overview: This course is designed to provide an introduction to the academic discipline of sociology. The primary focus will be to develop the skills of sociological observation, questioning, thinking, analysis, and argument. Students will, therefore, be introduced to the theoretical principles, empirical methods, and historical development of the sociological perspective. Students will become familiar with some of the central structures and processes of social life. Topics will include the social order, culture, socialization, stratification, and institutions. Throughout the term, we will emphasize the application of sociological insights to the social worlds with which we are familiar.

Course Goals: By the end of the course students will:

- understand sociology's intellectual origins and its current underpinnings
- understand the basic ideas and perspectives of sociology
- understand the role of social structure in our everyday lives
- be able to pose sociological questions
- be able to collect and analyze data to address these questions through observation and library research
- be able to apply sociological insights, perspectives, and thinking to questions
- improve their ability to construct and analyze academic arguments

Course Requirements and Expectations: It is expected that all students conduct themselves as professional scholars in this course. This means that students will arrive for class on time, prepared to participate in the collective work of the course. Students will have all necessary materials with them—including the texts under discussion, and leave unnecessary distractions (such as cell phones) behind.

It is expected that all students will have thoroughly and thoughtfully completed the assigned readings and be prepared to discuss these. Students are expected to regularly contribute to in-class discussions with reactions and responses that deal directly with the issues and texts being considered.

Students must abide by the conventions of scholarly work, most importantly, the conventions of citation. All students should read and be familiar with the college policy on Academic Honesty included in the student handbook. All written work must include full and proper citations. There are no exceptions, including ignorance. Cheating and plagiarism will result in failing this course.

Assessment: Student learning will be assessed through a variety of means during the course of the semester. **Quizzes** are designed to assess the thoroughness and depth of students regular engagement with course materials. During the semester, there will be six quizzes: the first three will be scheduled, the final three will be unannounced. The five highest scores will comprise this portion of your grade; missed quizzes cannot be retaken. Cumulative midterm and final **exams** will assess students abilities to synthesize, analyze, and apply course material. **Essays** are designed to assess students ability to observe social life, conduct research, and develop scholarly arguments. **Participation** assesses the degree to which students have contributed to the collective work of the class.

Grading:

5 Quizzes (5 pts. each)	_____/25
Midterm Exam	_____/10
Final Exam	_____/15
Journal Article Review Essay	_____/10
Annotated Bibliography Essay	_____/15
Status Essay	_____/15
Course Participation	_____/10
Total Points	_____/100

Final Grades

	87-89.9 = B+	77-79.9 = C+	67-69.9 = D+
94-100 = A	83-86.9 = B	73-76.9 = C	63-66.9 = D
90-93.9 = A-	80-82.9 = B-	70-72.9 = C-	60-62.9 = D-
Below 60 points = F			

Texts:

Matthewman, Steve, Catherine Lane West-Newman, and Bruce Curtis, Eds. (2007) *Being Sociological*. New York: Palgrave. (Matthewman in schedule.)

Milner, Murray. (2006) *Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids*. New York: Routledge. (Milner in schedule.)

Course Schedule: Please note, the outline below is merely a guide. Changes are possible as the semester progresses.

Week 1 (August 26 & 28) **Course Introduction**

Read: Matthewman, Introduction

Week 2 (September 2 & 4) **The Sociological Perspective**

Read: Matthewman, Chs. 1-2

Quiz: September 2

Week 3 (September 9 & 11) **Economic Structures and Processes**

Read: Matthewman, Chs. 3-5

Quiz: September 9

- Due:** Journal Selection on September 9th
- Week 4* (September 16 & 18) **Socialization and the Self**
Read: Matthewman, Chs. 11-12
Due: September 18th – Annotated Bibliography Question and Justification
- Week 5* (September 23 & 25) **Cultural Structures and Processes**
Due: Journal Review Essay on September 23rd.
- Week 6* (September 30 & October 2) **Power**
Read: Matthewman, Chs. 7, 15
Quiz: September 30th.
- Week 7* (October 9) **Structures and Processes of Inequality**
No Class: October 7 –Fall Break
Read: Matthewman, Ch. 6
- Week 8* (October 14 & 16) **Structures and Processes of Inequality, Part II**
Read: Matthewman, Chs. 8-10
Due: October 16th – Annotated Bibliography List of Resources
- Week 9* (October 21 & 23) **Taking Stock**
Midterm Exam: October 23rd.
- Week 10* (October 28 & 30) **An Inquiry into Social Status**
Read: Milner, Part I; Matthewman, Ch. 14
- Week 11* (November 4 & 6) **An Inquiry into Social Status, Continued**
Read: Milner, Part II
- Week 12* (November 11 & 13) **An Inquiry into Social Status, Continued**
Read: Milner, Part III
Due: November 13th – Annotated Bibliography Final Essay
- Week 13* (November 18 & 20) **An Inquiry into Social Status, Continued**
Read: Milner, Part IV
- Week 14* (November 25) **Taking Stock of Status**
Due: Status Essay on November 25th.
No Class: November 27 – Thanksgiving
- Week 15* (December 2 & 4) **Institutions**
Read: Matthewman, Chs. 13, 17-18
- Week 16* (December 9) **Course Conclusion**
Read: Matthewman, Ch. 20

Final Exam during the scheduled exam period: Friday December 12 at 1:30

Journal Review Essay

Read one of the following journal articles and write a critical reaction essay. Essays should present the argument of the author(s) and critically evaluate the degree to which the argument is convincing. What is the article about? Try to write a thesis statement for the author, including sub-theses. Does the author(s) convince you that the thesis is correct? Why or why not? What would make the argument more or less convincing? In writing your essay, you should directly address how the author understands 'culture'; you should be explicit about how evidence is used to support the author's claims; you should include questions that are raised.

You will first submit the article that you have selected with a brief statement as to why the particular article is of interest to you. Here, you will want to state what you see as the primary theme(s) of the article.

Hayes, Sharon.1994. "Structure and Agency and the Sticky Problem of Culture." *Sociological Theory* 12(1):57-72.

Schudson, Michael. 1989. "How Culture Works: Perspectives from media studies on the efficacy of symbols." *Theory and Society* 18: 153-180.

Schwartz, Barry. 1991. "Social Change and Collective Memory: The Democratization of George Washington." *American Sociological Review* 56(2): 221-36.

Swidler, Ann.1986. "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." *American Sociological Review* 51(2):273-286.

Review essays should be approximately 2000 words typed, double-spaced, with numbered pages. Provide a complete and proper citation for the article. Include your name, but no title page.

Due Dates:

September 9th: Journal Article Selection

September 23rd: Journal Review Essay

Annotated Bibliography Essay

The primary purpose of this essay is to become familiar with practices of sociological research. The primary tasks of this essay will be to (1) formulate a significant sociological question; (2) go through the preliminary steps of researching this question; and (3) reflecting upon how the research process impacts one's thinking about the question.

Over the course of the semester, you will submit three components of this assignment:

First, a sociological question that is worthy of investigation. You should include a justification as to why this is a significant question to investigate. (2 points)

Second, a list of ten (10) potential academic resources that might bear on this question. These will be identified through academic journals and databases available through Reeves Library. (We will discuss how to use JSTOR and Sociological Abstracts in class.) For each potential resource, you should state why and how you believe the article will bear on the question that you posed. (5 points)

Third, the final Annotated Bibliography Essay. In addition to the question, justification, and list of potential resources, the final version will include your annotations of three of the articles to be agreed upon by you and me. (We will discuss annotations in class.) You should also include a summary (approximately 500 words) of your new thinking on the question after reading the sources, and suggestions for future inquiry. (8 points)

Due Dates:

September 18th: Question with Justification

October 16th: Bibliography of 10 potential sources

November 13th: Final Annotated Bibliography

Status Essay

Your task is to write an essay that focuses on status relations and groups in your high school. The goals of this essay are to (1) apply the sociological concepts, ideas, and analytic perspectives to your own experiences, and (2) use your experiences to critique and evaluate Milner's arguments in *Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids*. To meet these goals, your essays should provide a 'thick description' of the setting, groups, and relationships prevalent in your high school. You should also analyze and interpret what you describe. That is, show clearly how the different groups separated themselves; established, maintained and policed boundaries; reproduced or challenged patterns from the larger society; and used various resources to distinguish themselves and narrate their own identity. A clearly defined thesis will help you to organize your observations and analyses.

Essays should be typed, double-spaced, and include page numbers. Approximately 2500-3000 words. Include your name, but no title page.

Due Date: November 25th