

SOCIOLOGY 115 D: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

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Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:20-3:30, PPHAC 302

Abstract: In this class, we will explore the basic concepts and methodologies of the field of Sociology. We will explore what it means to view the world with a “sociological eye” and to use a “sociological imagination.” Human beings all over the world and across time have organized themselves in a myriad of ways. We will explore how the different structures and functions of society impact the human experience.

Main Text: Societies and Social Life: An Introduction to Sociology, by James W. Russell (Sloan Publishing, New York, 2006). In addition to this text, supplementary readings will be posted on Blackboard and distributed in class.

Assignments: Short papers (about four pages, double-spaced) will be submitted every two weeks. The first paper will be due on September 4th. A goal of this class is to get students accustomed to and comfortable with writing in the field. Your papers will be on a series of different topics and will include field notes/observations. There will be some choice in topics from week to week. You will write a total of 14 short papers over the course of the semester. There may also be short assignments such as some basic interpretation of data, or collection of data (such as distributing short surveys to classmates and/or family members). Each assignment will be graded on the following 0.0-4.0 scale:

4.0: A	2.0: C
3.7: A-	1.7: C-
3.3: B+	1.3: D+
3.0: B	1.0: D
2.7: B-	0.7: D-
2.3: C+	

I will try to make it as clear as possible what I expect from the short paper assignments. You will be posting the papers on Blackboard and I will discuss notable papers each week. You will learn to become a better writer by reading each other's papers, so I will expect you to take a look at a subset of the papers every two weeks—I will direct you in particular to different papers based on what I want you to learn from the various submissions. Sometimes a paper excels because it is well constructed and argued. Sometimes a paper catches your attention because it has been written with great passion. We will collectively explore how various elements of writing are used to make an argument and develop your own voice while writing within a discipline's paradigm.

Attendance rules: attendance is mandatory. If you will not be able to attend class, I expect you to send me an email or leave a phone message prior to the start of class. Part of the grade will be based on class participation.

Class Participation: I expect that students will have completed the week's readings at the start of class on Tuesday of each week. I also expect that students will participate in the class discussions.

Grade Distribution:

Short Papers: 70% (each paper is worth 10%)

Class Participation: 15%

Activities/Short Assignments: 15%

Outline of Weekly Readings:

Week 1: Introduction to the class, review of expectations, assignments, and discussion of basic concepts.

How do sociologists use the concepts of structure, function and culture?

Week 2: Chapter 1: Sociology, and Chapter 2: Individuals and Society

How does sociology differ from other social sciences, especially anthropology and psychology? It is sometimes said that the anthropologist makes the strange familiar and the sociologist makes the familiar strange.

Week 3: Chapter 3: Technological Change, and Chapter 4: Past Societies

What factors lead to specialization according to Durkheim? Excerpts from The Division of Labor (handout).

Week 4: Chapter 5: Contemporary Societies and the World Economy

PEWS is a unique section in the American Sociological Association. It is the only section that directly addresses issues under the heading of development studies, yet it seeks to consider such issues in their world-historical context. The Section's emphasis is above all on the relationship between local and global social, economic, and political processes, whether of historical or contemporary significance. Some research topics investigated by PEWS sociologists include:

Third World development

- Global restructuring of production in manufacturing, service, and agricultural sectors
- Household dynamics and survival strategies, including gender, race, and class issues
- Global environmental problems
- Local political and cultural resistance
- New social movements
- Global expansion
- Incorporation of new areas and new peoples

- Global networks
- Prehistoric and premodern world-systems
- Urban patterns on a global scale
- Relations between formal and informal labor markets
- Transnational corporations
- State formation and state system dynamics
- Socialist states in the world economy

Week 5 and Week 6: Chapter 6: Classical Sociological Theory:

Marx: dominance of the system of production, false consciousness

Durkheim: social facts, mechanical and organic solidarity, specialization, collective conscious

Weber: rationality

Week 7: Chapter 7: Power, Politics and the State

Mission Statement

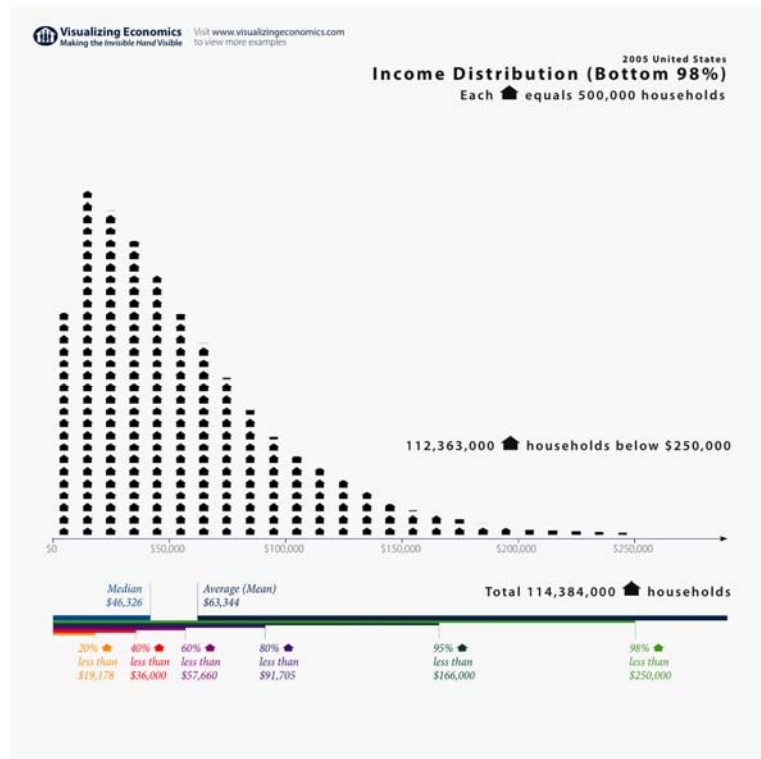
The purpose of the Section on Political Sociology is to promote the scholarly research and professional activities of those concerned with a sociological understanding of political phenomena. The phrase "sociological understanding" is interpreted to encompass the wide variety of theoretical and associated methodological approaches with which sociologists attempt to describe and explain social phenomena. The phrase "political phenomena" is interpreted to encompass the wide variety of topics that sociologists investigate, including social and cultural bases of power and authority.

Week 8: Chapter 8: Class, Race and Gender

Changing class, race and gender distributions.

Mission Statement:The purpose of the Section on Race, Gender, and Class is to support research, teaching and practice that examines the interactive effects of race, gender, and class phenomena, and a curriculum which underscores the centrality of race, gender, and class in society and in sociological analysis.

Race	% of US Total 2005
White Non-Hispanic	66.00
Black	12.10
Hispanic/Latino	14.50
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.10
Asian	4.30
Native American	0.80
Mixed Race	1.90
	99.70



Week 9: Chapter 9: Organizations

The purpose of the section on Organizations, Occupations, and Work is to foster the development of these branches of sociology through the advancement of theory and research, and through the communication of knowledge. The Section focuses on concepts and theories from the various social sciences as they apply to problems of organizations, occupational roles and the changing nature of work.

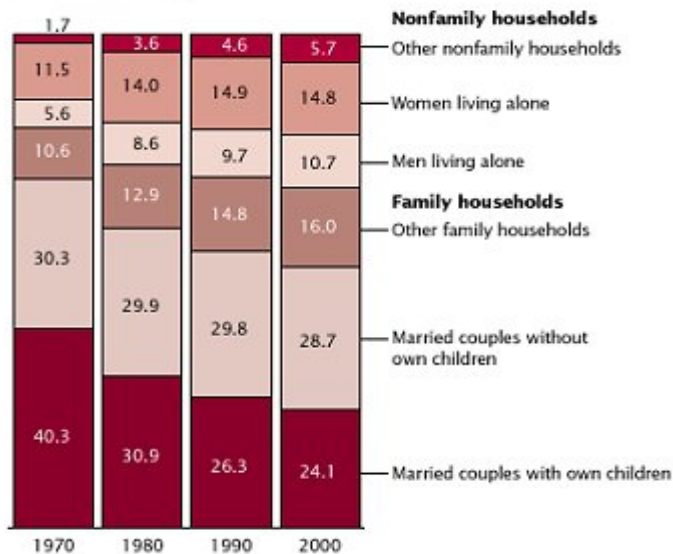
Week 10: Chapter 10: The Family

ASA Family Section Who We Are...

The purpose of the Section on Family is to encourage the development of sociological perspectives on families, to bring together those who study and teach about families, and to consider the implications of such analyses for public policy, politics and professional practice. The section seeks to foster understanding of family structures and practices, of differences between and within families and of those social institutions and forces -- race, class, and gender; the economy, culture, social movements, the law, and demographic trends -- that shape families or are shaped by them.

Changing family structures

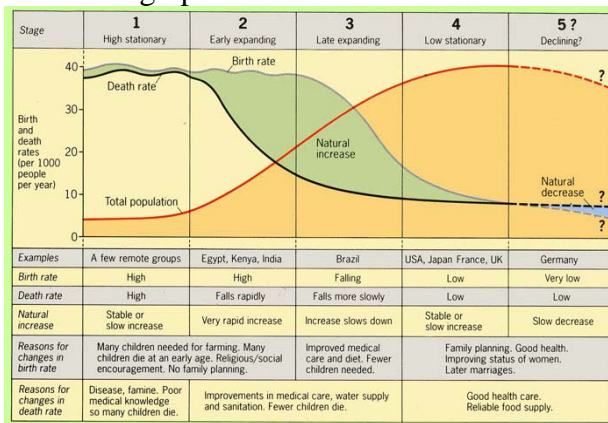
Households by Type: Selected Years, 1970 to 2000
(Percent distribution)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March Supplements: 1970 to 2000.

Week 11 and Week 12: Chapter 11: Population

An introduction to demography/population composition.
The Demographic Transition



Week 13 and Week 14: Chapter 12: Social Research

Section on Methodology

The purpose of the Section on Methodology is to foster the development of this aspect of sociology through the organized interchange of ideas and research results. The term methodology shall be interpreted in its broadest sense to include the development of investigative techniques appropriate to any branch of sociology, of statistical and experimental procedures, and of mathematics, data processing, and such other interests as may be useful in sociological research.