

SOCIOLOGY 115 A: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

Fall 2009

PROFESSOR VIRGINIA ADAMS O'CONNELL

Office: PPHAC 317

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Office Hours: Mondays: 9:00-10:00 am, Tuesdays: 1:00 – 2:00 pm

Class: PPHAC 102, Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:10-2:20 pm

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: Dalton Conley's, You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist (2008, W.W. Norton & Company, New York). There will also be supplemental readings distributed in class and posted on Blackboard.

Assignments: Short papers (about four pages, double-spaced) will be submitted every two weeks. The first paper will be due on September 9th. 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 may sometimes include field notes/observations. There will be some choice in topics from week to week. You will write a total of **seven 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 by distributing examples of good writing, outlines, and basic writing guidelines, but if at any time you do not understand, contact me before the assignment date. 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.

I also recognize that everyone may experience the occasional “bad week,” a time when you felt overwhelmed with your normative social roles and obligations (sociological terms!), and even the “best” student might find himself/herself performing below his/her own expectations. Given this reality, I will allow students to redo one of their papers and resubmit it in order to help increase their grade. I give feedback on all individual papers. Students can incorporate my edits as well as expand on the paper and resubmit. The new grade will be averaged with the old grade for the new grade. So the student who got a “C” but then earned an “A” on the revised version will end up with a “B” for the new paper grade.

It is never my policy to offer extra credit to individual students. Any extra credit assignments are offered to the entire class. So please do not request special extra assignments.

Class attendance/participation is mandatory. If you are going to miss a class, I expect that you will contact me prior to class to let me know, either by phone or email. Although I understand that people might occasionally miss class due to illness or personal emergencies, patterned absences will result in a lowering of your class attendance/participation grade and I will contact your advisor/the dean’s office. Regular attendance will yield a class attendance grade of a 3.0 (B). Participation will increase that grade upwards, and patterned absences will decrease that grade. Basically, everyone will start out with a B.

Cheating/plagiarizing: If any student is caught plagiarizing, you will automatically fail the class. If there are any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please review drafts of your assignments with me. Please also see Moravian College’s Academic Honesty policy (on the website) to review the institution’s definitions of cheating and plagiarism.

Due Dates and Formatting:

I expect **assignments to be handed in on time**, on the day that they are due. Late assignments will be docked one full grade for each day that they are late. So an “A-quality” assignment that was due on Tuesday that is handed in on Wednesday will drop to a “B.” If handed in on Thursday, the grade will drop to a “C.” I know students occasionally run into computer/printer problems, and if you are in this situation, email me as soon as possible. If you are having a printer problem, you can send me your assignment as an attachment so that you can still get full credit for handing the assignment in on time. I do not have much sympathy for students who wait until a few minutes before class begins to print up their assignment and then discover that they are having trouble. So try to make it part of your schedule that you will finish and print up your assignments at least the night before the assignment is due. This way, you will have time to either solve your problem or contact me.

I also expect assignments to follow whatever **formatting and page instructions** given when the assignment is assigned. For example, if I assign an essay question that I suspect will take at least two pages to answer, I expect a full two pages of writing will constitute your response. This is two pages, word processed, double-space, one inch margins, Times New Roman, 12-point font, without additional spaces between your name and date at the top of the page, and

between the title of your essay. Assignments that fall short of the page requirement will automatically lose points.

Cell phone, texting, email, web surfing: I expect that students will NOT be using their cell phones, texting, sending emails or web surfing during class time. Students who are caught engaged in any of these activities will immediately lose **one full grade** of their class participation grade (i.e. a B will drop to a C).

There are some circumstances under which I will allow students to take a phone call or surf the web during class.

Phone calls: I know some students occasionally have family, work and/or personal obligations that may need their immediate attention. For example, there may be students who have a sick child at home and need to be reachable during class time in case there is an emergency. If you find yourself in this kind of situation, please contact me before class via email or approach me at the beginning of class. I will expect your phone to be on vibrate, but I will allow you to leave the room to take the call.

Web surfing: Sometimes a class activity might actually involve searching the web for resource materials. In this case, I may ask students with laptops to help search for a piece of data or reference during class. But I will expect that students will be searching for the task assigned and not looking up newly posted videos.

In-class Activities/Quizzes/Short Assignments: We will have a number of **in-class activities/quizzes** throughout the semester—this is another reason why regular class attendance is so important. These activities will help to solidify the concepts of the course. There will also be **sporadic short out-of-class activities**. These two kinds of assignments will constitute the short assignment/quizzes grade. I expect people to keep up with the readings for the class, otherwise you will not be able to successfully complete the in-class activities.

Final Project: For your final project, you will put together a portfolio of your work for the semester. As I see how the semester unfolds, I will formulate an outline of the portfolio materials. You will receive a detailed outline of the materials and instructions on how to pull the whole portfolio together, and a description of any additional analysis required.

Breakdown of grade:

Class attendance and participation: 20%

Short assignments/quizzes: 20%

Short papers/final portfolio: 60%

Professor/Student dialogue: I highly value good communication between us, and I therefore encourage you to contact me at any time in the semester to talk about the class in general or your individual performance. Few things are as frustrating for me than to get to the end of the semester to find out someone struggled with some aspect of the course (for example,

understanding the assignments!). If you do not understand some aspect of the course material, or my assignment instructions, then please send me an email, call, or stop by my office hours. I am more than willing to read and respond to drafts of your work, so please take me up on my offer to read work before final due dates. I typically ask for at least one week to turn work around.

Blackboard and Email: Moravian College recognizes email as a form of official communication between faculty and students and I will use both Blackboard and email as a communication device. I will occasionally send out a message for you to take a look at an article online, or check a new posting on Blackboard before the next class. And as we work on our projects, I will often need to check in with you between classes. Therefore it is your obligation to regularly check your email account for messages from me. You should check your email accounts at least once a day. Failure to complete an assignment/request because “I did not see your email—I did not check my account,” will not suffice as a legitimate excuse.

Week 1: Review of Class Syllabus and Basic Frameworks of the field of Sociology

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

Read Chapter 1: Sociological Imagination, pp 3-15

Week 2: Review of some of the classical theorists

Comte

Durkheim

Marx

Weber

Read Chapter 1: pp 15-39

Week 3: Methodology

What are the major methodologies of the field of sociology? We will review the different forms.

Read Chapter 2: Methods

Week 4: Culture, Socialization and the Construction of Reality

Read Chapter 3: Culture and the Media and Chapter 4: Socialization and the Construction of Reality

Week 5: Networks and Organizations

Read Chapter 5: Networks and Organizations

Week 6: Social Control and Deviance

Read Chapter 6: Social Control and Deviance

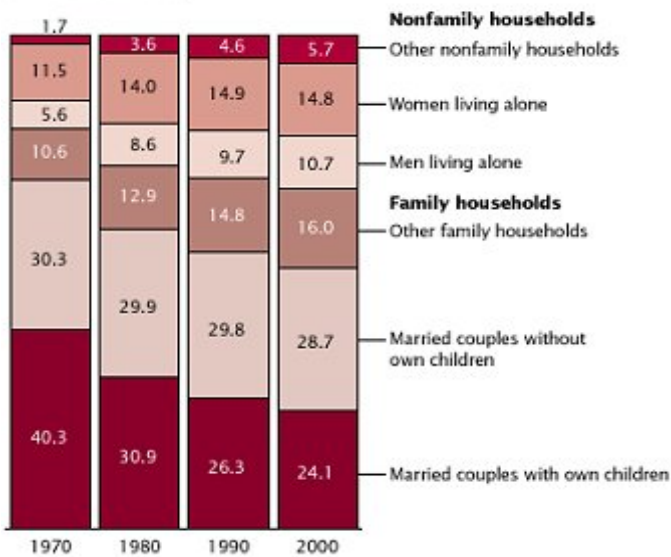
The US rate of incarceration is the highest in the world.

The US incarcerates at a rate 4 to 7 times higher than other western nations such as the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Germany and up to 32 times higher than nations with the lowest rates such as Nepal, Nigeria, and India.

Week 7: Family and Education

Read Chapter 7: Family and Chapter 8: Education

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



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

Population 25 years and over	195,646,383
Less than 9th grade	6.5%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	9.5%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	30.0%
Some college, no degree	19.6%
Associate's degree	7.4%
Bachelor's degree	17.1%
Graduate or professional degree	9.9%

Week 8: Religion

Read Chapter 9: Religion

Major Religious Traditions in the U.S.

Among all adults...

	%
Christian	78.4
Protestant	51.3
Evangelical churches	26.3
Mainline churches	18.1
Hist. black churches	6.9
Catholic	23.9
Mormon	1.7
Jehovah's Witness	0.7
Orthodox	0.6
Greek Orthodox	<0.3
Russian Orthodox	<0.3
Other	<0.3
Other Christian	0.3
Other Religions	4.7
Jewish	1.7
Reform	0.7
Conservative	0.5
Orthodox	<0.3
Other	0.3
Buddhist	0.7
Zen Buddhist	<0.3
Theravada Buddhist	<0.3
Tibetan Buddhist	<0.3
Other	0.3
Muslim*	0.6
Sunni	0.3
Shia	<0.3
Other	<0.3
Hindu	0.4
Other world rel.	<0.3
Other faiths	1.2
Unitarians and other liberal faiths	0.7
New Age	0.4
Native American rel.	<0.3
Unaffiliated	16.1
Atheist	1.6
Agnostic	2.4
Nothing in particular	12.1
Secular unaffiliated	6.3
Religious unaffiliated	5.8
Don't Know/Refused	0.8
	100

Due to rounding, figures may not add to 100 and nested figures may not add to the subtotal indicated.

* From "Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream," Pew Research Center, 2007

Week 9: Capitalism, the Economy, Authority and the State

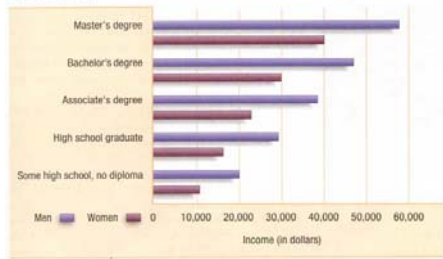
Read Chapter 10: Capitalism and the Economy, and Chapter 11: Authority and the State

Week 10: Gender

Read Chapter 12: Gender

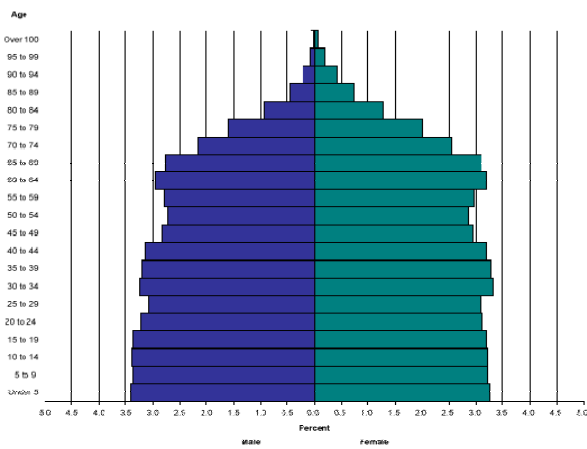
Education and income. FIGURE 1.1

Median annual income of persons with income 25 years old and over, by gender and highest level of education, 1999.



Source: U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-60, "Money Income in the United States, 1999."

(NP-F3) Projected Resident Population of the United States as of July 1, 2025, Middle Series.



Source: National Projections Program, Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, D.C. 20233

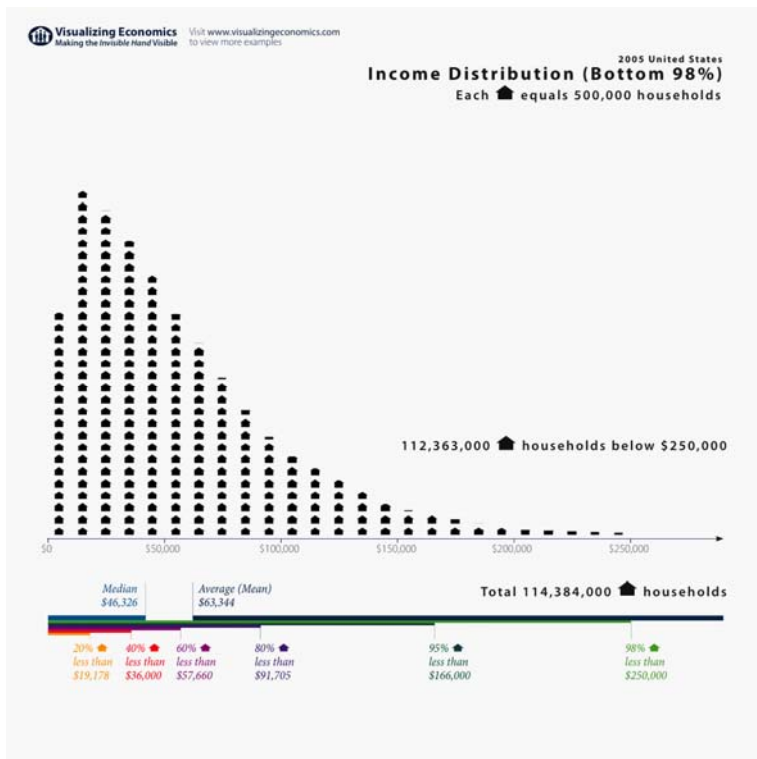
Week 11: Race

Read Chapter 13: Race

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 12: Stratification and Poverty

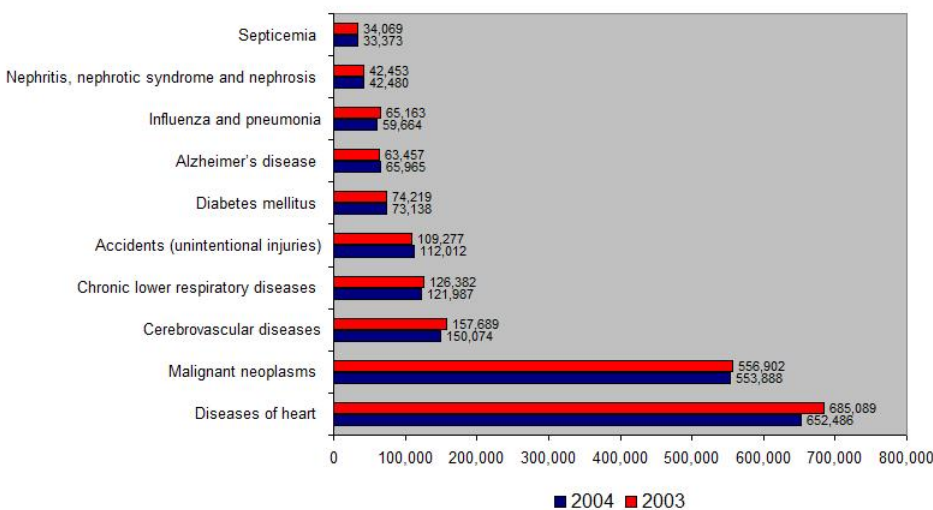
Read Chapter 14: Stratification, and Chapter 15: Poverty



Week 13: Health and Society, Science and the Environment

Read Chapter 16: Health and Society, and Chapter 17: Science, the Environment and Society

10 leading causes of death: United States, 2003–2004



Week 14: Collective Action, Social Movements and Social Change

Read Chapter 18: Collective Action, Social Movements and Social Change