

SOCIOLOGICAL INQUIRY

SOAN 190, Section 02
Fall 2008
TTh 9:00 – 10:20 am, 2224 BT
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday
10 am – 2 pm (or by appointment)

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Course Description:

According to Peter Berger, a sociologist is one who is “concerned with understanding society in a disciplined way.” Such a disciplined, scientific understanding leads us to seeing our everyday world in a new light, a light which C. Wright Mills calls the “sociological imagination.” During the semester, students will take their first steps toward developing their own sociological imaginations - an awareness of the intersection between self and society, biography and history. More specifically, students will examine contemporary situations that involve various levels of social behavior and interaction within a social-structural framework, and attempt to describe and explain sociologically: 1) what is taking place in each situation, 2) the common threads and patterns across the situations, and 3) the broader significance of the analysis. Such critical thinking and analytical skills are essential for moving on to higher levels of inquiry in the social sciences. In this process, students will gain a broad knowledge of the major investigative methods and theories of sociology, and increase their understanding of social patterns and relationships, social change, race, class and gender inequality, globalization, and other contemporary social issues.

As a social scientific mode course, sociological inquiry offers an opportunity for students to demonstrate competence in the following areas:

- § Thinking systematically about humans, societies, and/or organizations, and their interactions;
- § Applying critical thinking skills and analytical capabilities in the social sciences;
- § Understanding major generalizations, discoveries, principles, concepts, methodologies, technical language, and theories in at least one of the social science disciplines (Psychology, Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology, Economics, and Geography);
- § Understanding what constitutes evidence in the social sciences and how social scientists utilize empirical observations for drawing inferences and conclusions; and,
- § Connecting ideas in the social sciences to real world applications, and to the context of their historical development.

A **basic ground rule** for this class is that everyone’s contribution must be treated with respect. No one should have to fear being personally attacked, or worry about giving the “wrong answer.” Everyone is expected to read with a critical eye - in other words, actively question and carefully analyze what you read and hear. Then share your questions and insights with the class so we can learn from one another. Discussion is not a matter of performing for the instructor - discussion is a way of actively learning.

Required Books: The following book contains most of the required readings and is available at both bookstores.

Giddens, Duneier and Appelbaum. *Introduction to Sociology*. 6th edition. W.W. Norton, 2007.

I strongly advise you to read the assigned materials for a topic prior to the day we will be discussing it. This will put you in a better position to understand the lectures, successfully complete in-class assignments, and contribute to class discussion.

Course Requirements:

- 1. Quizzes:** There will be three quizzes, including the final. Each quiz will cover 1/3 of the material in the class, and will consist of 10 multiple choice and 8 short essay questions. Make-up tests will only be given in cases of excused absences (with 24 hours notice) or genuine (documented) emergencies.
- 2. Reading Responses and In-Class Writing:** For the first two chapters, you will be asked to submit reading responses that focus on identifying key concepts in the reading. For subsequent chapters, you are encouraged to continue reading for comprehension, but instead of a reading response, you will be asked to write a brief response (5 minutes) to a question or statement related to the readings for that topic/chapter, or to engage in a classroom activity based on the reading. Each reading response or paper/class activity will be worth up to 5 points. These responses and/or activities, along with student questions, will serve as the basis for at least part of the class discussion.
- 3. Chapter Exercises:** Each chapter will be accompanied by a web-based data exercise or other applied assignment. Some assignments involve reading and reflecting on research articles; other assignments involve data analysis or simple research projects. Students are required to complete 8 assignments, and each assignment will be worth up to 10 points.
- 4. Academic Honesty:** You should all be familiar with Truman State's policy on academic honesty (in the *General/Graduate Bulletin*). I expect you to do your own work, and to give proper credit when you borrow quotes of ideas from the work of others. This means that when you copy or closely paraphrase someone else's work you should use quotations and/or give them credit as a source.
- 5. ADA Compliance:** The university is committed to making every possible effort to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Disability Services office (x4478) as soon as possible.
- 6. Some advice:** The Writing Center in McClain 303B (x4484) is open from 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday, and is a very good resource for improving your writing. Also, please note that we will be making use of the Blackboard and Truview websites for email messages, announcements, etc. You need to be sure that the email address listed for you on the Blackboard and Truview websites is an address that you check regularly. If you use an email address other than your Truman email address, you need to find out how to change the address listed for you on Blackboard and Truview (call the IT help desk at x4544).

Your course grade will be calculated in the following way:

3 Quizzes (80 points each)	240 points
In-Class Writing Assignments/Class Activities (5 points each)	60 points
Chapter Exercises (10 points each)	80 points

TOTAL

380 points

A	=	90% or above
B	=	80%-89%
C	=	70%-79%
D	=	60%-69%
F	=	less than 60%

Office Hours and Assistance: Please feel free to come by during office hours to discuss any questions you may have regarding the course or issues raised in class. If you cannot come in during office hours, I will try to arrange a time that is convenient for you.

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

(Please note that the class schedule is tentative and may be modified over the course of the semester.)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
8/26	Doing Research Using Library Databases	
8/28-9/2	Sociological Theory	Chapter 1, pp. 12-25
9/4-9/9	Asking and Answering Sociological Questions	Chapter 2
9/11-9/16	Culture and Society	Chapter 3
9/18-9/23	Socialization and the Life Cycle	Chapter 4
9/25	Quiz 1	
9/30-10/2	Social Interaction and Everyday Life	Chapter 5
10/7-10/14	Groups, Networks and Organizations	Chapter 6
10/16-10/21	Conformity, Deviance and Crime	Chapter 7
10/23-10/28	Stratification, Class and Inequality	Chapter 8
10/30	Quiz 2	
11/4-11/6	Global Inequality	Chapter 9
11/11-11/13	Gender Inequality	Chapter 10
11/18-11/20	Ethnicity and Race	Chapter 11

1/25-12/2	Families and Intimate Relationships	Chapter 15
12/4	Social Movements	Chapter 13, pp. 412-428

FINAL EXAM Thursday, December 11, 8 am

NOTE: This course meets the intercultural requirement, and is part of the Social Scientific Mode of Inquiry in the Liberal Studies Program.