

SYLLABUS
Spring 2010
SOCI 101 Principles of Sociology
Monday, Wednesday and Friday
10:25 AM until 11:15 AM
Bates Hall 111

Professor Gabriel Aquino
Office Hours:
Monday, Wednesday and Friday
2:00 PM until 3:00 PM
Or by appointment
E-mail: use Plato mail or reach me
through: gaquino@wsc.ma.edu

Description:

An introduction to the fundamental concepts of group behavior, major social institutions, principal theoretical perspectives and the nature of sociological research. Topics to be covered include, but are not limited to the development of the discipline of sociology, components of culture, socialization, research methods, deviance, stratification and social change.

Grading:

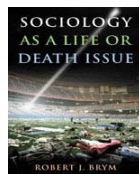
Class, Online Participation	
Discussions & other	40%
Assignment(s)	
Exam #1	20%
Exam #2	20%
Final Exam	20%
Total	100%

Textbooks:



Sociology: The Essentials, 6th Edition

Margaret L. Andersen | Howard F. Taylor
ISBN-10:0495812234 |



Sociology as a Life or Death Issue, 1st Edition

Robert J. Brym
ISBN-10:049560075X



This course uses Plato and you must be logged in and prepared.

All assignments, the readings, exams, discussions, and other course materials will be available through Plato and will be submitted through Plato.

A Note about Written Assignments:

All assignments, unless otherwise noted, must be typed! No exceptions!

Handwritten assignments will not be accepted. Yes, spelling and grammar count. I reserve the right to deduct points, as much as 20% for poor grammar and proofreading. **All papers submitted in person must be handed in 8½” by 11” paper, written using 12 New Times Roman font, with one inch margins all the way around. The papers must be double-spaced with no extra spacing between the paragraphs. Any directly quoted sections that are more than a paragraph (Use the three sentence rule) should have a 1½ margin on the left and right with size 12 fonts and single space. (DO NOT OVER QUOTE); shorter quotes or quotes that are one or two sentences long should be incorporated within the text.**

Please make sure that you are familiar with Westfield State College’s Academic Conduct Policies in the College Bulletin. I expect us all to abide by it and to respect intellectual property.

Attendance, Participation and Preparation:

This portion of your grade involves completing all the reading assignments; attending all classes; evidence of thorough participation like bringing completed, thoughtful, timely assignments to class; on-task behaviors; active participation in individual tasks, group activities and discussion; taking notes during video presentations; taking notes and posing questions to guest speakers; demonstrating effective communication skills like listening and speaking in a thoughtful manner, and asking and answering relevant critical questions (in class and in group activities). Note that to achieve excellence in this area, attendance in class and doing all assigned readings is essential, but it does not in any way guarantee or entitle you to an “A”. An “A” grade is reserved for work and/or contributions that are deemed truly outstanding in some way. As a result, mere completion of tasks is insufficient grounds to award an outstanding grade. Also, note that I reserve the right to lower your grade for unexcused absences, and **only three unexcused absences allowed.** If you miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining any assignments (including quiz announcements), handouts, class notes, etc., and for finding out what you missed, including the completion of in-class assignments.

Sociological Imagination and Classroom Discussion/Readings:

Although the reading is extensive for some weeks, I expect you to come to class prepared to discuss the material without exception. This not only requires that you read the material, but that you also interact with the reading. Failure to do so will be reflected in your participation grade.

I would like to keep the classroom discussion-oriented. **This is only possible if you are willing to stay current with the reading schedule** and if you abide by the conventions of civilized discourse. This does not mean “political correctness” in speech, but it does mean that all points of view must be expressed politely and with due respect for differing opinions of others. Finally, your work should reflect sociology and not simply your own opinions. In other words, did you use your “sociological imagination” and base your conclusions and/or contributions on

research, not simply anecdotal evidence? This principle applies to all contributions in this class, written and oral alike.

Shared Responsibilities:

Teaching and learning are reciprocal parts of an interactive process. It is my responsibility to come to class prepared to class, share information with you in an intelligible manner, direct you to resources which help you fulfill your tasks, provide you with opportunities to meet outside of class, ensure that the classroom is a place where we are free to respectfully acknowledge and express our differences, answer your questions, simulate creative thought, facilitate discussions, evaluate your progress, and return your work in a timely fashion. It is your responsibility to come prepared to class, ask questions, participate in class discussions, think critically, and apply the concepts you will learn in class, be respectful of others and me in the classroom, and finish your assignments on time. If either one of us fails to live up to these standards, this interaction will break down and education becomes more difficult. To maximize your learning, I expect that you will have the reading completed BEFORE class, you will attend class, and you will inform me when you are having difficulty meeting your obligations. Last, I value your comments regarding the development of the course. If you are particularly pleased or dissatisfied with some aspect of this class, I encourage you to speak to me.

Grade distribution:

Letter		Number Grade		If a letter grade is assigned this is the number equivalent
A	=	100-93	=	100
A-	=	92-89	=	92
B+	=	88-85	=	88
B	=	84-81	=	84
B-	=	80-77	=	80
C+	=	76-73	=	76
C	=	72-69	=	72
C-	=	68-65	=	68
D+	=	64-61	=	64
D	=	60-57	=	60
D-	=	56-53	=	55
F	=	52-0	=	0

Class Schedule:

Date		Readings in Margaret L. Andersen & Howard F. Taylor	Readings in Robert J. Brym
20-Jan-09	Wednesday	PART I: INTRODUCING THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION.	Preface: The Fifth Dimension.
22-Jan-09	Friday	1. The Sociological Perspective.	1. Sociology as a Life or Death Issue.
25-Jan-09	Monday	PART II: STUDYING SOCIETY AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE.	
27-Jan-09	Wednesday	2. Culture and the Media.	2. Hip Hop from Caps to Bling.
29-Jan-09	Friday		
1-Feb-09	Monday	3. Doing Sociological Research.	On Plato
3-Feb-09	Wednesday		
5-Feb-09	Friday		
8-Feb-09	Monday	4. Socialization and the Life Course.	3. Explaining Suicide Bombers.
10-Feb-09	Wednesday		
12-Feb-09	Friday		
15-Feb-09	Monday	5. Social Interaction and Social Structure.	On Plato
17-Feb-09	Wednesday		
19-Feb-09	Friday		
22-Feb-09	Monday	6. Groups and Organizations.	4. Hurricane Katrina and the Myth of Natural Disasters.
24-Feb-09	Wednesday		
26-Feb-09	Friday		
1-Mar-09	Monday	7. Deviance and Crime.	5. Sociology as a Vocation.
3-Mar-09	Wednesday		
5-Mar-09	Friday		
8-Mar-09	Monday	PART III: SOCIAL INEQUALITIES.	On Plato
10-Mar-09	Wednesday	8. Social Class and Social Stratification.	
12-Mar-09	Friday	9 Global Stratification.	
15-Mar-09	Monday		
17-Mar-09	Wednesday		
19-Mar-09	Friday		

Date		Readings in Margaret L. Andersen & Howard F. Taylor	Readings in Robert J. Brym
22-Mar-09	Monday	10. Race and Ethnicity.	On Plato
24-Mar-09	Wednesday		
26-Mar-09	Friday		
29-Mar-09	Monday	11. Gender.	On Plato
31-Mar-09	Wednesday		
2-Apr-09	Friday		
5-Apr-09	Monday	12. Sexuality.	On Plato
7-Apr-09	Wednesday		
9-Apr-09	Friday		
12-Apr-09	Monday	PART IV: SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS. 13. Families and Religion.	On Plato
14-Apr-09	Wednesday		
16-Apr-09	Friday		
19-Apr-09	Monday	14. Education and Health Care.	On Plato
20-Apr-09	Tuesday		
21-Apr-09	Wednesday		
23-Apr-09	Friday		
26-Apr-09	Monday	15. Politics and the Economy.	On Plato
28-Apr-09	Wednesday		
30-Apr-09	Friday		
3-May-09	Monday	PART V: SOCIAL CHANGE. 16. Population, the Environment, and Social Change.	On Plato
5-May-09	Wednesday		
7-May-09	Friday		
10-May-09	Monday		
19-May-09	Wednesday		

How to tackle the readings:

1. What is the issue being studied?
2. What does the literature claim about the issue?
3. What does the scholar think they will find?
4. Whom is the scholar studying?
5. What is the research design and methods?
6. What are the findings?
7. What are the scholar's conclusions?
8. Are there weaknesses to the author's conclusions? Why or why not?
9. Is this a major theoretical contribution or a minor one?

Grading Criteria

Your papers (as well as your exams) will be graded according to the following criteria:

Content

- A- Presenting a main point and using information to support your argument.
- B- Demonstration of your understanding of relevant concepts.
- C- Incorporation of course and outside reading.
- D- Incorporation of original insights.
- E- Responding fully to all questions.
- F- Developing a discussion that incorporates interesting details from multiple sources (personal experience, readings, and/or outside primary or secondary sources).
- G- Demonstrating critical thinking by moving in thought beyond merely summarizing, defining, or reporting to analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, drawing conclusions, or gaining insight.
- H- Engaging the reader through topic choice, original approach, thorough development, etc.

Organizational Factors

- ❖ Creating a coherent structure with an effective introduction/body/conclusion.
- ❖ Providing a clear introduction that identifies the topic/main point that establishes your intent in the paper.
- ❖ Using transitions where necessary within paragraphs and to introduce new ideas.
- ❖ Concluding in a way to draw main points together.

Language Use and Expression

- ❖ Using accurate and mature vocabulary to make the writing clear and appropriate for conveying your main points.
- ❖ Using clear, direct, complete, varied sentence structure (e.g., free of fragments or run-ons).
- ❖ Maintaining consistent verb tense and pronoun reference.
- ❖ Avoiding slang, colloquialisms, clichés, and jargon.
- ❖ Applying grammar and usage according to acceptable standards for writing.
- ❖ Applying correct mechanical skills (spelling, capitalization, punctuation, etc.)

Elements of Style

- ❖ Paper is typed or neatly word-processed.
- ❖ Paper is proofread and corrected for typos and other errors.
- ❖ Paper is printed on clean paper and stapled.

An 'A' Essay...

- ♻ Addresses the topic of the assignment fully and explores each aspect thoughtfully.
- ♻ Has a clear and substantial thesis.
- ♻ Shows substantial depth, fullness and complexity of thought.
- ♻ Expresses ideas clearly and commands the reader's attention.
- ♻ Demonstrates clear, unified and coherent organization.
- ♻ Is fully developed and detailed with ideas supported by persuasive reasons and well chosen examples or references to class material.

- ↳ Has a superior style (interesting sentence patterns, smooth transitions between ideas, excellent use of vocabulary).
- ↳ Has few, if any, minor errors in grammar, usage or mechanics.

An 'A-/B+' essay:

- ↳ Strongly addresses and explores each aspect of the assignment.
- ↳ Has a clear thesis explored fully in the essay.
- ↳ Shows some depth and complexity of thought.
- ↳ Expresses ideas clearly and in an interesting manner.
- ↳ Demonstrates effective organization.
- ↳ Is well developed with supporting details and appropriate examples or references to class material.
- ↳ Has an effective style (good sentence patterns, transitions between ideas, accurate use of vocabulary).
- ↳ Has few errors in grammar, usage or mechanics.

A 'B/B-' essay:

- ↳ Addresses and explores each aspect of the assignment in a satisfactory way.
- ↳ Has a clear thesis explored adequately in the essay.
- ↳ Shows clarity of thought, but may treat the topic simplistically or repetitively.
- ↳ Clearly communicates ideas.
- ↳ Is adequately organized.
- ↳ Is developed with sufficient examples, reasoning, or references for most of the ideas.
- ↳ Has an adequate style (some variety in sentence patterns, transitions between most ideas, vocabulary accurate for the most part).
- ↳ Has some errors in grammar, usage or mechanics.

A 'C+/C' essay:

- ↳ Inaccurately responds to or neglects part of the assignment.
- ↳ Has a simplistic thesis that may show limited knowledge of the issues involved in the assignment.
- ↳ Lacks focus or demonstrates confused, stereotyped or simplistic thinking.
- ↳ May not always communicate ideas clearly.
- ↳ Is ineffectively organized.
- ↳ May not provide adequate or appropriate details or references to support generalizations, or may provide details without generalizations.
- ↳ Has a stylistic weakness (little variety in sentence patterns, few transitions, and imprecise vocabulary).
- ↳ Has an occasional major error in grammar, usage or mechanics or frequent minor errors.

A 'C-' essay:

- ↳ Indicates confusion about the assignment or neglects important aspects of the assignment.
- ↳ Has an unclear or confusing thesis which shows little understanding of the assignment or which demonstrates a misinterpretation of the assignment.
- ↳ Demonstrates confused thinking.
- ↳ Often fails to communicate ideas clearly.
- ↳ Has very weak organization.
- ↳ Has very little development of ideas; uses very few examples or references to support points.

- ↳ Has an ineffective style (monotonous or fragmented sentence structure, no transitions, simplistic or inaccurate vocabulary).
- ↳ Has many repeated errors in grammar, usage or mechanics.

An essay containing one or more of the following would be considered unsatisfactory:

- ↳ An indication of an inability to comprehend or to respond meaningfully to the assignment.
- ↳ No thesis or has an incomprehensible thesis.
- ↳ Deliberately off-topic.
- ↳ An inability to communicate ideas clearly.
- ↳ Incoherent organization.
- ↳ Incomplete or inappropriate development of ideas.
- ↳ Incoherent style (difficulties with sentence structure, pattern of vocabulary errors).
- ↳ Pervasive pattern of errors in grammar, usage and mechanics.

Assignment 1: Observation Study

Due:

Guide: You are to conduct an observation study of a social setting. The purpose of this analysis is to make you aware of how sociology is a part of our everyday life. Additionally, you will apply two sociological perspectives to your analysis.

Guidelines: You are expected to find a setting you can go into for about a half an hour and observe other individuals' interactions or behaviors in that setting. It is important you pay attention to small behavioral details. You will be writing out what you believe are the rules of behavior in that environment and how your subjects followed or violated the norms you have observed and are claiming exist in that environment. Once you have compiled your observation you will analyze your observations using two sociological perspectives.

What to do:

1. Find a location.
2. Quickly write down on a notepad what you expect to find.
3. Walk away and come back another time or day.
4. Try to blend into the environment. It may be difficult to do so if you are visibly taking notes, so consider just become part of the environment. Observe for a half-hour or more. Ask the following questions as you do so:
 - a. What are people doing?
 - b. What are people wearing?
 - c. Who are these people?
 - d. Why are they here?
 - e. Are there specific patterns that you can make out about the way people behave? For example, when people enter an elevator, they all turn and face the door.
 - f. Are there less specific patterns that you can detect? For example, people at the movies not talking throughout the movie.
5. When you are done with your observations, go home, (some place quiet) and write out your observations as bullets. For example:
 - Students' walk in and sit in the back and furthest end from the door.
 - Students' sit-down and watch other students coming in.
 - Students' look for someone they know.
 - Students' who know each other sit together.
 - Students' who do not know anyone mostly stare forwards.
6. On the margins write out any norms (cultural rules) you have observed.
 - People in a class setting look for social support.
 - People without social support look for the professor for support.
 - People in a group setting try to hide.
7. Consider how you would interpret these interactions under two sociological perspectives.
8. Finally, write your observations as an essay: you can both compare and contrast or you can write your two perspectives one at a time. If you choose the latter you must provide an introduction and a conclusion that incorporates your format. In other words, pay attention to style and form, there are no excuses for bad writing.

First, an introduction: What did you do? Where did you do it? Why did you do it?

Second, your observations: What did you see?

Third, an analysis using two sociological perspectives: What was the social context or social relevance of your observations? What were the norms? What norms were violated and how? Are there consequences to following or violating these norms?

Fourth, your conclusion: What did you do? What do you think you found? Directly compare how the two perspectives complimented and/or contradicted the way you interpreted the behaviors. What have you learned from this assignment?