

Boston University
Department of Sociology

SO 100 (C1&HP)
Principles of Sociology
Spring, 2001

Lectures: Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays
9:00-9:50am

Photonics 211

[Students must also register for a discussion section: C2, C3, C4, or HS.]

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Moody's Office Hours:

Wednesdays, 10am-12pm, 2-3pm
By appointment

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Tuesdays, 12:30-2pm
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Course Summary:

While this course is meant to introduce you to the world of sociology, the main goal is not for you to learn a set of key “facts” about society, or a set of central “theorems” explaining all social life. Although you will come away with many facts—e.g., about sociological topics like culture, group dynamics, crime, race, gender, social class, the family, social movements, etc.—the primary goal of this course is to help you understand, and learn to adopt, what has aptly been called a “sociological perspective.”

Adopting a sociological perspective might seem, at first blush, to involve little more than observing and commenting on the world around you, or offering your opinions on what causes certain social phenomena. But in fact, a sociological perspective requires much more systematic and sophisticated analysis than mere “arm-chair” or commonsensical commentary and opinion. A sociological perspective is systematic and sophisticated both in terms of method and in terms of theory or analysis. In its method, a sociological perspective seeks explicitly to put all observations, opinions, or hypotheses about how society works to a rigorous empirical test. In its theory and analysis, a sociological perspective seeks to peer beyond the surface of casual observations to get at what is hidden, unexpected, taken-for-granted, or unspoken about social life and social processes. Sociologists are very often trying to reveal how something that might seem very simple to describe or explain (e.g., the causes of crime) is in fact much more complex and nuanced when analyzed in depth. Sociologists are also often looking for the regularities and

patterns that underlie what appear, to the non-sociological observer, to be mere random or individual phenomena. So in general, the sociological perspective involves careful and organized inquiry that produces not just more accurate observations about society and social behavior, but also more creative and imaginative insights as well.

Learning to take a sociological perspective will give you fascinating and often surprising insight into your own society, culture, groups, and behavior. In this course you will read and hear about sociological studies of groups and behaviors that are quite familiar to you (e.g., high school sports and cliques, gender relations on campus), but you will probably be surprised by what sociologists reveal about these familiar phenomena. We will also deal in depth with many contemporary social issues and problems, some of which you might find controversial. Hopefully, our investigations will help you see how your own attitudes and behaviors, even your identity, is intimately connected with, and even partly produced by, your society, social interactions, and culture. You will be able to see the incredible complexity and diversity of the social world, and be better equipped to grasp the range of issues you confront as a member of various groups and a citizen of a community or nation.

Specifically, the course will introduce you to the terms, methods, applications, interests, and evidence that sociologists deal with everyday in their research and writing. The course will also prepare you for further coursework in sociological theory, methods, and many specific topical areas. At the beginning of the class, we discuss the nature of sociological reasoning, the requirements of proper sociological research methods, and the ethics of social scientific inquiry. Then we spend the next several weeks introducing you to the major concepts and categories used by sociologists—culture, social structure, socialization, social interaction, social groups, social movements, deviance. The middle part of the course examines the primary forms of social difference and inequality that sociologists examine—social stratification and class, race and gender inequality. Finally, the last several weeks of the course will cover more briefly a number of topical areas and social “institutions” that sociologists study—marriage and the family, religion, economics and work, etc.

Format:

The lecture sessions will usually be just that—a lecture—but we will also have occasional moments of class discussion and one documentary film. You are encouraged to ask questions or make comments in lectures (perhaps bringing in questions you have from the readings), although the time for questions will be limited. Every student must also attend a once-a-week discussion session in which you will discuss lectures and readings in greater depth, clarify difficult or confusing points, prepare for exams, and receive help with the paper assignments. Full and regular engagement in these weekly discussions is essential to the course.

The reading load for the course is not overwhelming (roughly 40-50 pages a week) and you might even find some of it entertaining. The primary textbook and the additional book of readings complement each other, and together they allow us to cover a sufficient range of material while also looking in depth at particular issues or case studies. The specific reading assignments are listed under the numbered section headings in the schedule in this syllabus, and the instructors will make periodic announcements about when to move on to the next section’s reading assignment (note that the sections do NOT correspond to a particular “week” in the semester). We may also revise reading assignments at times.

Texts:

Both the books listed below are required and available at B&N. (The abbreviations indicate how the text is referred to in the rest of the syllabus.) Be sure you purchase the correct editions of each text. A copy of the main text (EOS) is available on two-hour reserve at Mugar Library. EOS comes with a supplemental CD-ROM, with extra material and study aids, and there is a website you can use as well: http://cw.abacon.com/bookbind/pubbooks/henslin_ab2.

- ◆ James Henslin, *Essentials of Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach*. 3rd Edition. [EOS]
- ◆ James Henslin, ed. *Down to Earth Sociology: Introductory Readings*. 10th Edition. [DOES]

Grading:

Grades for the course will be based on your performance on two exams (one midterm, one final), two short papers, and class participation (in lectures and discussion sections). Grading will be done by both instructors in the course, and thoroughly crosschecked.

Midterm Exam (25%):

There will be an in-class, multiple-choice midterm exam on Friday, March 16th. The exam will cover all material (lectures, discussions, readings) reviewed to that point in the course.

Short Papers (15% each):

Two short (3-4 page) paper assignments will be given in the course of the semester—one in the first half (due Tuesday, February 20th—*NOTE: this is a substitute Monday schedule of classes day*) and one in the second half (due Monday, April 23rd). In general, these assignments will require you to evaluate critically the course readings and lecture content and/or apply this material to some situation, group, process, or culture with which you are familiar. The specific paper assignments will be given a week and a half in advance, and are due at the beginning of class on the date listed.

Final Exam (30%):

There will be a comprehensive final exam on Wednesday, May 9th, from 2-4pm. The exam will cover all course readings, class lectures, and discussions from the entire semester. The exam will have a multiple choice section and an essay section. For the essay, you will choose one of two questions to answer.

Class Participation (15%):

Regular attendance in lectures, and substantial participation in discussion sections, is an essential part of this course. Most of your class participation grade will come from the discussion sections, but lectures will count as well. As required by the Dean, attendance will be taken at each class, and unexcused absences will lower your participation grade (as will a significant number of excused absences). Any form of positive participation will improve your participation grade, such as participating in discussions, attending office hours, sending emails with substantive queries, etc. The

quality rather than merely the quantity of your participation is important, and your participation should demonstrate your work and preparation outside of class.

Students are expected to abide by all university and departmental standards on plagiarism and academic conduct. Consult the College of Arts and Sciences Academic Conduct Code and Department of Sociology policies for clarification of official standards. Plagiarism from any source (including the internet), cheating on exams, and other academic misconduct will not be tolerated in any form. No make-up or late exams (or extensions on the paper assignments) will be given, except in extreme emergencies, and then only with adequate documentation and the instructor's agreement that it was an emergency.

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

Part I: Basic Concepts and Processes

1. Sociology as a Perspective and a Method (Jan. 17th to Jan. 24th)
 - ◆ EOS, Ch. 1
 - ◆ Peter Berger, "Invitation to Sociology," Ch. 1 in DOES
 - ◆ William Foote Whyte, "Street Corner Society," Ch. 6 in DOES

2. Culture (Jan. 26th to Feb. 2nd)
 - ◆ EOS, Ch. 2
 - ◆ Horace Miner, "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema," Ch. 7 in DOES
 - ◆ Edward Hall and Mildred Hall, "The Sounds of Silence," Ch. 9 in DOES
 - ◆ James Henslin, "The Survivors of the F-227," Ch. 23 in DOES

3. Socialization (Feb. 5th to Feb. 9th)
 - ◆ EOS, Ch. 3
 - ◆ Kingsley Davis, "Extreme Isolation," Ch. 12 in DOES
 - ◆ Harry Gracey, "Learning the Student Role: Kindergarten as Academic Boot Camp," Ch. 37 in DOES

4. Micro- and Macro-Level Sociology (Feb. 12th to Feb. 20th—*No class, Feb. 19th*)
 - ◆ EOS, Ch. 4
 - ◆ Erving Goffman, "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life," Ch. 11 in DOES
 - ◆ Elijah Anderson, "Streetwise," Ch. 18 in DOES
 - ◆ Douglas Foley, "The Great American Football Ritual," Ch. 40 in DOES

****Short Paper #1 Due – Tuesday, February 20th (*Substitute Day for Monday, 19th*)**

5. Social Groups and Organizations (Feb. 21st to Feb. 26th)
 - ◆ EOS, Ch. 5
 - ◆ Philip Meyer, “If Hitler Asked You to Electrocute a Stranger, Would You? Probably,” Ch. 17 in DOES
 - ◆ Daniel Chambliss, “The World of the Hospital,” Ch. 41 in DOES

6. Social Change and Social Movements (Feb. 28th to Mar. 12th—*Spring Break, Mar. 3rd to Mar. 11th*)
 - ◆ EOS, Ch. 15, *only* pp. 387-404
 - ◆ Jerry Savells, “Social Change Among the Amish,” Ch. 44 in DOES

 - ◆ In-Class Film: “Eyes on the Prize: Ain’t Afraid of Your Jails”

Review Session – Wednesday, March 14th

Midterm Exam – Friday, March 16th

7. Deviance and Social Control (Mar. 19th to Mar. 23rd)
 - ◆ EOS, Ch. 6
 - ◆ William Chambliss, “The Saints and the Roughnecks,” Ch. 24 in DOES
 - ◆ Philip Zimbardo, “The Pathology of Imprisonment,” Ch. 27 in DOES
 - ◆ David Rosenhan, “On Being Sane in Insane Places,” Ch. 28 in DOES

Part II: Social Inequality

8. Social Stratification and Global Inequality (Mar. 26th & Mar. 28th)
 - ◆ EOS, Ch. 7
 - ◆ Herbert Gans, “The Uses of Poverty: The Poor Pay All,” Ch. 30 in DOES

9. Social Class, Mobility, and Poverty in America (Mar. 30th & Apr. 2nd)
 - ◆ EOS, Ch. 8
 - ◆ Robert Granfield, “Making It by Faking It,” Ch. 34 in DOES

10. Racial and Ethnic Inequality (Apr. 4th & Apr. 6th)
 - ◆ EOS, Ch. 9
 - ◆ Lawrence Otis Graham, “Invisible Man,” Ch. 32 in DOES

11. Gender Inequality (Apr. 9th to Apr. 13th)
- ◆ EOS, Ch. 10, *only* pp. 239-256
 - ◆ Barrie Thorne and Zella Luria, “Sexuality and Gender in Children’s Daily Worlds,” Ch. 14 in DOES
 - ◆ Patricia Yancey Martin and Robert Hummer, “Fraternities and Rape on Campus,” Ch. 33 in DOES

Part III: Social Institutions

12. Sociology of Marriage and the Family (Apr. 18th & Apr. 20th—*No class, Apr. 16th*)
- ◆ EOS, Ch. 12
 - ◆ Arlie Hochschild and Anne Machung, “Men Who Share ‘The Second Shift,’” Ch. 38 in DOES

****Short Paper # 2 Due – Monday, April 23rd**

13. Sociology of Religion (Apr. 23rd)
- ◆ EOS, Ch. 13, *only* pp. 339-End
14. Sociology of Authority, Power, and Politics (Apr. 25th)
- ◆ EOS, Ch. 11, *only* pp. 271-275, 281-282
 - ◆ G. William Domhoff, “The Bohemian Grove and Other Retreats,” Ch. 35 in DOES
15. Sociology of Economy and Work (Apr. 27th & Apr. 30th)
- ◆ EOS, Ch. 11, *only* pp. 282-End
 - ◆ William Thompson, “Hanging Tongues: A Sociological Encounter with the Assembly Line,” Ch. 20 in DOES
 - ◆ Barbara Ehrenreich and Annette Fuentes, “Life on the Global Assembly Line,” Ch. 36 in DOES

Review Session and Class Summary – Wednesday, May 2nd

*****Final Exam – Wednesday, May 9th, 2:00-4:00pm**