Introduction to Sociology (Soc 105)

Professor John Rice
Spring 2009
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Office Hours: MWF 1:00-1:30, 3:00-3:30; TR: 1:00-1:30 (or by appointment)
Course Web Page: http://people.uncw.edu/ricej/Intro/

Course Outline

I. Purpose of the Course

The world we inhabit, the choices we make, and the types of people we become are in important ways all shaped by the society, culture, and time in which we live; they are inextricably linked with and shaped by particular historically•specific patterns of economic production and distribution, political power, familial structures, and systems of belief. Sociological theories and concepts are directed towards cultivating a capacity to understand human behavior as it is shaped within these context(s) of time, place, and social situation.

The discipline of sociology was "born" in the 18th century •• an era in which the whole idea of society was in question: feudalism and the monarchical system of government were dying; the idea of the individual as a distinct social entity endowed with natural rights made its first appearance; science began to overshadow religion as a way of thinking about and understanding the world. The social sciences, then, emerged in response to the question •• "how do we build another kind of society?" In the most general sense, the citizens of the modern world live under one or the other of the two main answers to that question •• capitalism or communism/socialism, liberal democracy or the planned state. It is to these "modern" societies and how human behavior affects and is affected by modern social life that sociology is attuned.

From a sociological perspective, "Modern Society," or "Modernity," refers to specific and distinctive ways of structuring economic activities, allocating power, organizing intimate and familial relationships. Over the course of this semester, employing a variety of sociological concepts and theories, we will examine both the specific traits of modern societies and the impact of modernity upon human social life. This will require learning the vocabulary, theories and concepts of the discipline. Over the next 4•5 weeks, you will learn about these basic elements of sociology and the key contributors to the discipline. The remainder of the semester will be devoted to examining current societal and cultural conditions employing these concepts and theories.

II. Course Requirements

A. Texts: There are two required texts for this course:

1. Richard T. Schaefer, Sociology: A Brief Introduction, McGraw Hill Publishing, 5th Edition. (NOTE: THIS IS A CUSTOM TEXT)
2. John Macionis and Nijole Benokratis, eds., Seeing Ourselves: . . . Readings in Sociology, New York: Prentice Hall, 7th Edition.

B. Course Learning Objectives: By the end of the semester, students will:

- Have a basic understanding of the ways in which sociological theory and concepts comprise a unique way of thinking about human social behavior
- Have a basic understanding of the methods of research used by sociologists to provide empirical support for sociological theory and concepts
- Have a basic understanding of the ways in which sociological theory and method can be and are applied in everyday life

C. Student Evaluation: It will be possible to earn a total of 100 points in this course, distributed among the following criteria:

1. There will be three examinations:
   a. an early exam -- **to be given February 6th, DURING CLASS TIME** -- worth 25 points; this exam will give you some idea of how you are doing

while there is still plenty of time to solve any problems you might be having
b. a mid-term exam -- **to be given March 6th, DURING CLASS TIME** -- worth 30 points
c. a comprehensive final exam worth 30 points, on **Wednesday, April 29th, 3:00-6:00 p.m.**

Tests will cover both readings and lectures; the emphasis will be roughly evenly divided between the two. The format will be a combination of multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-blank and/or short essay questions, to be determined at my discretion.

2. Attendance and Participation: 5 points. I will take attendance regularly during the first part of the semester, so that I can learn students' names. After that time, I will pass around attendance sheets. There is a strong correlation between engagement in the intellectual life of the class and student performance: simply put, it almost never fails that students who attend and are involved in class do well and those who do not and are not usually do poorly. The flip-side to this is that knowing who attends helps me to differentiate among students who work hard but are struggling, from students who are struggling because they are not involved or up on the work. In addition, I prefer classes in which there is room for intelligent discussion and active involvement; by definition, this requires a present and engaged student body.

a. In the interests of fairness, I start all student scores on this measure at 4 points (which is 80% of the total points you can earn for attendance/participation), and either add to or subtract from those points based upon your in-class performance. Points will be added for perfect or near-perfect (all but 1 or 2 classes) attendance, and for positive involvement in the life of the class; they will also be added in the event that -- for those reluctant to actively participate in discussions -- students take advantage of my office hours to clarify any points about which they are uncertain or interested. Points will be subtracted for excessive absences and/or late arrivals, and for being a negative presence in the class (disruptions, mentally absent). At the extremes, it is possible to earn all 5 points or to earn no points at all.

b. **IF YOU HAVE MORE THAN 10 UNEXCUSED ABSENCES, YOU WILL RECEIVE AN "F" FOR THE COURSE.**

3. Assigned Reading Quizzes: 10 points. There will be either 5 or 10 unannounced quizzes on assigned readings (from either/both the text and the reader). Whether it is to be 5 or 10 quizzes will depend upon you: if it is clear from class discussion and engagement that you are doing the assigned readings, there will be 5 quizzes, worth 2 points each; if not, there will be 10, worth 1 point each.

An additional important point! Disruptive and/or unacceptable behavior initiates the following sequence of events:

1st offense: Being asked to stop the behavior.
2nd offense: Being told to leave the class; this infraction requires you to meet with the dean of students' office before you may be readmitted to the class.
3rd offense: Removal from the course altogether
Disruptive/unacceptable behavior includes any rude, crude, or disrespectful (to me or any of your fellow students) acts, including:

- Insulting remarks (regarding others' comments, appearance, etc.)
- Text messaging or any non-class related use of phones, laptops, etc.
- Carrying on conversations with others excessively in the midst of class lecture or discussions
- Repeated lateness

C. **Late Assignments and/or Missed Exams/Quizzes**: The general rule, here, is to not do either of these things. If you must miss an exam or turn in an assignment late, you will be expected to *notify me in advance*, and/or *be able to provide some proof of your trouble* (obviously, in the case of an emergency, advance notification may well be impossible). If you are not able to meet these conditions *you will not be allowed to make up the missed exam or quiz; papers or other assignments that fail to meet these criteria* will be docked the equivalent of ONE LETTER GRADE for each day they are late.

D. **Make-Up Exam Policy:** There will be ONE date and time for ALL make-up exams: **be at my office on Reading Day, April 28th, at 10:00 a.m.** Do NOT miss a make-up exam. There will be no other opportunity to make up the work. You need to be aware that, for obvious reasons, make-up exams are of a different format than the regularly scheduled, in-class exams: they are short answer and/or short essay format only.

E. Grading: Your course grades will be based upon a standard conversion of the total points you have earned into a corresponding letter grade.

A = 94-100 B+ = 87-89 C+ = 77-79 D = 60-69
A- = 90- 93 B = 83-86 C = 73-76 F = 59 or below
B- = 80-82 C- = 70-72

THERE WILL BE NO POSSIBILITY FOR EXTRA CREDIT WORK! YOUR COURSE GRADES WILL DEPEND UPON YOUR PERFORMANCE IN THE REQUIRED COURSE WORK ONLY!

F. **Cheating, Plagiarism**: All work -- tests, papers -- must be the product of your own efforts. Any attempt by a student to represent the work of another as his or her own is considered plagiarism. This includes copying the answers of another student on an examination or copying or substantially restating the work of another person or persons in any oral or written work without citing the appropriate source, and collaborating with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging his or her contribution. **Any student caught cheating/plagiarizing on any assignment or exam will receive an F for the entire course.**

G. **Important Notes About the Organization of the Course**: This course consists of three interconnected parts: the main text, the accompanying reader, and class lecture and discussion. The text provides a discussion and illustrations of the central concepts that make up the discipline of sociology, whereas the reader gives you tangible examples of how sociological ideas translate into actual research articles on a wide variety of topics. The lectures provide the core of the course. They are logically organized into a narrative structure -- which is to say that they tell a story into which is woven all of the concepts presented in your textbooks. The "story" that the lectures tell is a story of the process of what sociologists call "modernization," the transformation of human societies from pre-modern to modern forms. The central question that the course addresses is "what is the impact of modernization on human existence?" The answers that the course provides to this question are derived from sociological theory, sociological concepts, and sociological methods of study. What is essential for you to recognize is that you very likely will not do well in the course unless you do the required work in all three parts of the course: it is, for example, only in the lectures that you will be exposed to the story of modernization and its impact on all of our lives.

PART I: BACKGROUND AND BASIC CONCEPTS	
Date	**Topics**
Jan. 7	(Note: Dates are approximations. For the most part, we will fairly closely adhere to the dates on the course outline, but at any given time we may be slightly behind or ahead of actual dates. Thus, pay most attention to the **substantive content**, and time your preparations accordingly. **Test dates, however, are firm**.) Course overview; discuss course outline Disciplines and Areas of Study C. Wright Mills: The Sociological Imagination **Readings:** (note: assigned readings are for the next class meeting) 1. **Course Outline** 2. Macionis & Benokraitis (hereafter called **Reader**): Readings 1 (Mills: “The Promise of Sociology”), 2 (Berger: “Invitation to Sociology”)

Jan. 9-12	The Three Great Revolutions and Modernity: Scientific Industrial Political Birth of sociology Sociological Theory and the Scientific Method Types of Sociological Research Macro / Micro **Readings:** Reader: 5 (Weber, "The Case for Value-Free Sociology"), 6 (Babbie, "The Importance of Social Research"
Jan. 14-16	January 14: Last Day to Drop / Add Types of Sociological Research (cont'd) Macro / Micro Quantitative / Qualitative Toward a Synthesis The Major Theoretical Traditions Functionalism Conflict Theory Interactionism **Readings:** Text, Chapter 3, "Culture" Reader: 4 (Miner, "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema"), 8 (White, "Symbol: The Basic Element of Culture"), 11 (Harris, "India's Sacred Cow")
NO CLASS JAN. 19 – Martin Luther King Day	
Jan. 21, 23	Key Sociological Concepts Culture: Signs, Symbols, Language Values, Norms, Sanctions, Roles Diversity, Ethnocentrism, Relativity Film: *Coming of Age in Samoa*
Jan. 26, 28, 30	Key Sociological Concepts (cont'd) Status and Role role sets role strain / conflict ascribed and achieved status status consistency Groups Organizations **Readings:** Text, Chapter 4 Reader: 16 (Mead, "The Self"), 17 (Kilbourne, "Socialization and the Power of Advertising")

Feb. 2, 4	Socialization Sigmund Freud: *Civilization and Its Discontents* Psychoanalysis and the Self Social Action & Interaction: George Herbert Mead & the Social Self Review for Exam
Feb. 6	**EXAM #1**
Feb. 9, 11, 13	Return, go over exams Society: Four Universal Institutions: Kinship, Polity, Economy, Religion "The Great Transformation" **Readings:** **Reader**: Toennies, "Gemeinschaft and Gesselschaft"; Weber, "The Disenchantment of Modern Life"; Simons, "The Price of Modernization"; Marx, "Alienated Labor"; Durkheim, "Anomy and Modern Life"
PART II: THE IMPACT OF MODERNITY: ECONOMY	
Feb. 16, 18, 20	The Story Begins: Modernization and Industrialization Economy and Inequality Social Differentiation, Specialization, & Social Stratification The Consequences of Specialization Adam Smith Emile Durkheim Karl Marx **Readings:** **Text,** Pp. 258-263; 274-282
Feb. 23, 25	FEB. 24: Last Day to Withdraw Industrialization, Economy and Inequality (cont'd) The Stratification of Society Max Weber: Class, Status, Party Adam Smith Marx: bourgeoisie and proletariat **Readings:** **Text:** 127-161 **Reader**, 33 (Davis and Moore), 34 (Hacker), 47 (Wilson), 48 (Newman)
Feb. 27, Mar. 2-4	Selected Measures of Stratification (continued) Distributions and Trends Wealth, income, poverty, unemployment by gender, race, ethnicity "Post-Industrial Society?" The nature of work: white collar and the service economy Review for Exam 2

Mar. 6	**EXAM #2** **NO CLASS WEEK OF MARCH 9th – SPRING BREAK**
Mar. 16, 18, 20	**Readings:** 1. Text, "Religion": pp. 222-240 2. Reader: Readings 55 (Weber, "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism"), 24 (Weber, "The Characteristics of Bureaucracy")
PART III: THE IMPACT OF MODERNITY: ECONOMY AND RELIGION	
	Return, go over exams Sociological Approaches to Religion Durkheim: Sacred & Profane, Social Integration & Moral Regulation Totemic Societies & *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* Marx: Religion and Class Reproduction Max Weber: *The Protestant Ethic & the Spirit of Capitalism* Formal Rationality & the "Ideal-Typical" Bureaucracy Frederick W. Taylor and Scientific Management Human Relations Management
PART IV: THE IMPACT OF MODERNITY: POLITICS AND THE STATE	
Readings: 1. Text: pp 263-274 2. Reader, 49 (Mills, "The Power Elite")	
Mar. 23, 25, 27	The Death of Feudalism and Monarchies and the Rise of the Nation-State Power and Authority Types of Authority Party and State Types of Democracy **Readings:** Reader: 64 (Simmel), 65 (Wirth)
PART V: THE IMPACT OF MODERNITY: URBANIZATION AND DEVIANCE	
Mar. 30, Apr. 1, 3, 6	The Origin of Cities, Urban Growth, and Urbanization The Chicago School: An "ecological" view of cities and city growth Culture and natural areas Concentric rings of growth Race, Ethnicity, & Class Louis Wirth: "Urbanism as a Way of Life" Social Disorganization Social Conflict Deviant Behavior **Readings:** **Text:** pp. 98-126

	Reader: 27 (Durkheim) 28 (Rosenhan)
Apr. 8, 10 13, 15	Sociological Theories of Deviance Differential Association Anomie Functions of Deviance Labeling Theory **Readings:** Text, Chapter 12 Reader: Readings 36 (Mead), 32 (Carrier), 52 (Bernard, "His and Her Marriage"), 53 (Popenoe, "The Decline of Marriage and Fatherhood"), 54 (Ingoldsby, "Mate Selection and Marriage Around the World")
PART VI: THE IMPACT OF MODERNITY: GENDER ROLES, FAMILY	
Apr. 17-27	Gender Roles Men and Women • • nature v. nurture? Socialization's consequences on men and women Changing roles Impact of Modernization on the Family Birth rate, household composition Patterns of locality and lineality Bureaucratization of the American family Last Day of Classes (4/27); Course Summary
FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, April 29th, 3:00-6:00 p.m.	

On Anomie, on Being a Student
and on Doing Well
in This, and Other, University Courses

Now, more than ever before, the transition from high school to university is, for many students, extremely rough. There are sociological reasons for the rockiness of this transition -- i.e., reasons that are largely unrelated to your personal characteristics, but that have everything to do with the cultural and social circumstances, and the historical conditions, in which we are all living out our lives.

In the discipline of sociology, as you will learn -- or have already learned -- there is a term that can help to make sense of the roughness of the transition to being a university student: "anomie." The concept of anomie was devised by the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, to refer to a problem unique to modern societies. Because modern societies are so complex, so specialized, and so highly differentiated, Durkheim reasoned, they have an extremely difficult time passing on to people clear guidelines for what is expected of them. Anomie, then, is roughly translated as a condition of "normlessness" -- the absence of clearly articulated and unambiguous rules for social behavior. It is important to recognize that anomie is a social and cultural condition, not an individual problem (although it is experienced by individuals).

Making the transition from high school to university student is an anomic experience. Students frequently report that they do not understand why they are having a difficult time in their classes; in high school, they explain, they had always gotten good, or at least passing, grades and had barely had to study at all. This concern is the product of anomie. What has not been clearly articulated to you -- and thus, what underlies the special form of normlessness that university students are most likely to experience -- is that universities operate according to utterly different criteria than do the vast majority of (though not all) contemporary American high, junior high, middle, and elementary schools. As a result, what worked for you in high school will very likely not work well for you

as a university student. The pivotal difference between university and pre-university schooling centers on how the relationship between students and academic standards is organized. In high school, it is fairly common practice -- though, again, not universal -- to adapt the educational standards to the students. This is why some students report that, even though they rarely or barely studied, they were able to do well in high school. In universities, this relationship between students and academic standards is, for all practical purposes, reversed. Students are expected to meet a set of standards -- to demonstrate that they have understood and learned to use a body of knowledge which has been conveyed to them in class lectures and texts. If students do not meet those standards, they do not pass their courses; and not passing a course is not only disappointing, it is also, and frequently, a mystifying experience.

I am calling your attention to these anomic conditions for a couple of important reasons. First of all, there is an all-too-common, and seemingly natural, tendency to individualize academic failure: that is, to attribute a "D" or an "F" grade in a course to shortcomings in the students who receive those grades. Certainly, there are individuals who fail a course because they have not worked hard enough, or who just cannot "get" the material. But, my suspicion is that there are many -- perhaps particularly first and second year -- students who have simply never been able to figure out, and have not been told, that the norms are different, now, that they will now be expected to meet standards, rather than have the standards adjusted to them. My second reason for telling you all of this is closely related to the first reason: namely, that you cannot succeed without knowing what the rules for, and the definitions of, success are. In short, my conviction is that the consequences of anomie can be at least partially offset by telling you what the norms are, and that they are different from what you may, have experienced, and in all likelihood did experience, in the past.

It is, of course, not enough to simply know that new norms are now in effect. You will also need to adapt yourself to those norms, not only to get good grades, but to get the most that you possibly can from a university education. For some of you, this will mean developing new habits. In what follows, I offer a selective list of suggestions towards developing those new habits.

1. First, and most obviously, you have to attend classes. Your attendance, moreover, must be both physical AND mental. Lectures in university classes (this depends on the discipline, of course) are rarely reiterations of assigned readings. My own classes are structured as narratives: that is, the lectures are designed, quite literally, to tell a story -- about the rise of modern societies, about changing conceptions of normality, about the creation and workings of the public education system in the U.S., and so on. The assigned readings are supplements to, illustrations and applications of, the narrative that unfolds only in the lectures. You must be in class to get that narrative, and you must be "tuned in" to what goes on in the class. (A surprising number of students confuse being physically present in a classroom with actual learning. Your brain has to be in the "on" position when you are there.) Also, try to recognize the narrative structure of the class: what is the "story" the class is telling you? Recognizing the narrative helps you to fit the various pieces together into a coherent whole. It should go without saying that if you are text messaging or surfing the net during lectures, you're likely not going to follow the narrative and logical structure of the course.

2. You must do the assigned reading. The readings for your courses are not optional (unless your professor identifies them as such: e.g., as "recommended" texts). In my courses, the readings have been chosen to provide you with additional clarification of points discussed in the lectures, and to show you how theories are applied in and through research. All assigned reading is material you are expected to know, and expected to understand. I will almost never lecture from or directly on the material you are assigned to read. If you have questions from the readings, write them down and raise them in class.

3. Take lecture AND reading notes. Again, an obvious point. In terms of lecture notes, of course write down important points from lectures, especially what your teacher writes on the board or shows you by way of overhead projectors and/or power point presentation. But also be certain that your notes make sense to you. It's not much use to have a notebook filled with terms, phrases, and the like, that are not clear to you. As for reading notes, write a short summary of the article's (or chapter's) content, identify its key ideas, and then write a brief description of the ways the article corresponds with what is going on in lectures. If you are not sure, then ask.

4. You must take responsibility for being certain that you understand the lecture and reading materials. If you do not understand a theory, a concept, a point raised in lecture, or whatever, do not just "shrug it off." Ask questions: in class, or, if you prefer, during your teacher's office hours. That is what our office hours are for -- and, from first-hand experience I can tell you that most of the time students do not take advantage of them.

5. Accept that a university education is hard work. As a full-time student, you will take at least four classes every semester for four years. You may find some classes that operate like your high school classes did, but for the most part you will find that the rules I have referred to will apply. The only way to adapt yourself to the standards governing a university education is through a commitment to working hard.