

Introduction to Sociology - SOCY 1001

Summer 2008

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Office Hours: M 4:05 - 5:05 pm, R 1:30-2:30 pm and by appt

Course Description

This intensive survey course provides an introduction to Sociology. We will discuss the scope, methods, and insightfulness of examining the world sociologically and learn how to employ a “sociological imagination” to understand and analyze current human conditions and creative imaginings of possible futures. Since this intensive class meets five days a week for a short five weeks, expect daily reading loads of between 30 and 50 pages per day. It is essential that you come to class with the assigned readings completed, ready to discuss what you found useful, informative, or problematic. The primary goal of my teaching philosophy is to encourage the learning process through interactive feedback and discussion – thus your preparation for and participation in each session are critical to your success as well as the success of everyone else in the classroom. I will not stand at the front of the room and lecture to passive receptors. Having been a student sitting in the same chairs you now sit in, I know how painful and boring such a class format can be. What you get out of this class will be a direct reflection of the work and effort you put into it.

In order to create a comfortable and open environment where all members of the class are willing to share their thoughts and ideas, it is required that all students behave in a respectful manner towards one another at all times. While enthusiastic debate and discussion are essential and encouraged, insensitive or rude comments based on race, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or beliefs will not be tolerated at any time.

I have no tolerance for anyone interrupting another speaker. Interruption is disrespectful. I know this happens accidentally especially during large group discussions but we need to make a deliberate effort to respect the rights of others to speak and be heard without interruption. Consistently or continuously interrupting other speakers may result in my asking you to leave or no longer attend class. Please be mindful of others’ right to speak, particularly if you disagree. I will make every effort to allow anyone who is interested in speaking a full opportunity to do so.

Course Readings and Cost Concerns

The required texts are - *The Practical Skeptic: Core Concepts in Sociology* by Lisa J. McIntyre and *An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire* by Arundhati Roy. Please make sure that you do **NOT** get *The Practical Skeptic: Readings in Sociology*. These are two separate titles that are designed to be used together. We will only be using the *Core Concepts* text. This text is currently in the fourth edition and it is this most recent edition which will be stocked by the campus bookstore. However, any edition will work for this course. You are welcome to acquire the text from used bookstores or online in order to save on cost. All other required readings are posted on CULearn.

If someone other than you is paying for your textbooks I *strongly encourage* you to have her or him deposit money to your Buff OneCard for printing the additional readings. Based on campus printing prices I expect you will need approximately \$50 to produce paper copies of all of the readings for this class. Funds for printing can be deposited by you or anyone with the necessary information by going here: <http://services.jsatech.com/index.php?cid=59> and following the “Make A Deposit” link on the right-hand side.

I STRONGLY ENCOURAGE YOU TO PRINT PAPER COPIES OF THE READINGS.

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I have repeated this statement intentionally in hopes that more students will take this advice. Printing a paper copy of readings allows you to bring readings to class to reference during discussions. Doing so also allows you to underline, highlight, and take notes directly on the readings. Further it greatly facilitates being able to compare and contrast the articles with one another which you will need to do in order to do well in this class. If you are having

trouble in the course my first piece of advice will be to start printing paper copies of the readings if you have not done so.

There are numerous computer labs on campus where you can access printers. You can send documents to be printed on campus printers from any computer with internet access. The instructions for doing so are available here: <http://www.colorado.edu/cpi/remote/index.htm>. Inkjet printers are expensive and slow. If you are in your first or second year of school I strongly recommend purchasing a very basic black and white laser printer. These can now be obtained for less than \$100 and are ideal for printing high numbers of text documents. If you want advice or specific models and/or ways to find these for sometimes as little as \$50 please ask.

Course Objectives

You will be given the opportunity to meet and achieve these benefits from your participation in this course, and I will be looking for how well you demonstrate your abilities with respect to these objectives in my final evaluation of your performance in this course.

If we both are successful in this course you will:

- develop the ability to see individual (including your own) choices and situations in a larger social context of trends, history, culture, and structure—appreciating the influence of social forces on individual circumstances (this is the definition of a sociological imagination);
- gain an understanding of the different theoretical perspectives and important concepts utilized within sociology;
- practice the application of your sociological imagination and the various theoretical perspectives for a richer understanding of your self (your values, choices, beliefs), people, relationships, inequality, societies, and see possibilities for social transformation;
- have the opportunity to improve your test taking, study, and writing skills through practice on the evaluation components and individual coaching from your instructor;
- demonstrate your understanding of course material and your ability to meet academic standards of excellence on the papers, exams, and in discussions.

Evaluation Components

Your grade and performance in the class will be measured in the following ways.

You are required to complete seven of the nine possible application activities. You may choose to complete eight and have the lowest grade dropped. These exercises, which will be explained further in class, will require you to consciously engage your own life using sociological ideas, theories, and understandings and to critically reflect on how such a perspective changes interactions and understandings. Each application will be graded on a scale of 1 - 10 as described below.

In addition, each student must submit five reading responses, one for each week of readings, during the course. These are to be two page, double-spaced critical, engaged responses to the week's non-textbook required readings. The specific content and form of these responses will be outlined in class. Like the applications, these responses will be graded out of ten points.

Each student will be required to present a portion of the textbook material to the class and assist in leading discussion.

Participation will include not only attendance but classroom behavior and engagement.

Finally, we will be working on a final project over the duration of the course. This assignment, as with the others, will be explained in class.

Point Breakdown

| | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Applications | 70 |
| Reading Responses | 50 |
| Class Presentation | 20 |
| Participation | 30 |
| Final Project | <u>30</u> |
| Total | 200 pts |

Here are the standards for earning a percentage or letter grade on any assignment and overall in the course:

| Letter Grade | Percentage Grade | Description |
|--------------|------------------|---|
| A | 90-100 | Exceeds all required elements of an assignment, and the quality of the work is considerably greater than what was required. The quality of the work is considerably above the class average and impressive to the evaluator. |
| B | 80-89 | Meets all required elements of an assignment, and the quality of the work is better than what is required and demonstrated by the class average. |
| C | 70-79 | Meets all required elements of an assignment, no more, no less. Quality of assignment is satisfactory for college level work. |
| D | 60-69 | Fails to meet all required elements of an assignment, and/or the quality of the assignment is less than satisfactory. |
| F | Less than 59 | Only meets some of the required elements of an assignment, and/or the quality of the assignment is considerably lower than satisfactory. 50% of points are not guaranteed. At this level points are only given if some elements of the assignment are met. If not, very low percentages are likely. |
| Zero | 0 | Fails to meet any of the required elements of an assignment, and/or the quality of the assignment is well below basic standards of writing, comprehension, and/or ability to follow instructions; assignment is late or incomplete; assignment is not turned in at all; assignment shows signs of plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty. |

These standards may be higher than you've encountered previously in your educational career. The distribution curve of final grades for this class consistently meets the standards for fair and rigorous evaluations. I am available to offer assistance, feedback, coaching, etc... to assist you in meeting these standards and taking away from this course the ability to perform at this level. You must seek me out and request this assistance, but if you do I promise the benefits of this course increase exponentially.

I give credit as it is earned based on the content of the work. Each assignment I evaluate begins as a zero and is awarded points according to the quality of the work. I am happy to discuss how and why I awarded points and how to do better in the future. However, I will not participate in discussions about grades that rely on the assumption that a paper should have earned full credit and thus why points were "lost" is what needs to be justified. If there is disagreement about a grade it is the burden of the student to justify why and how more points were earned than were given.

Progressive Grading Standards

In general grading standards will get progressively more rigorous as we progress through the semester. For example, on the first application essay I will not severely penalize formatting or typographic mistakes unless they are numerous. However, by the final application essay I expect that you will have received enough feedback from me such that citations will be formatted properly and typographic mistakes will be non-existent or minimal. If such pervasive mistakes do appear on a later essay the penalty to the grade will be significantly greater than it would be at the beginning of the semester.

Grade Concerns

I want you to do well in this class. Really.

I am here to teach you, improve your academic skills, and encourage your interest and understanding of these subjects. I am happy and willing to offer any help I can within reason. **If you become concerned about your grade, please see/contact me immediately preferably during office hours. Do not wait until the end of the term when it will be too late to work with you on improving your grade.**

When I return written work to you with a grade, take some time to read my comments. I take the time to correct and comment on papers for a reason. If you cannot read my writing or are not familiar with standard proofreading symbols please ask me about them. If you have concerns, make an appointment with me during office hours and come to the meeting having written down your specific questions and/or comments.

Formatting Rules for Written Assignments

All written assignments for this course must adhere to the following formatting requirements. Failure to do so will either result in a lower grade or all or part of the assignment not being accepted for credit.

- Handwritten assignments *will not be accepted for any credit* unless specific arrangements have been made with me at least 48 hours prior to the due date and time.
- Assignments submitted electronically *will not be accepted for any credit* unless specific arrangements have been made with me at least 48 hours prior to the due date and time.
- If you have made arrangements to send me emailed assignments the content must appear in the body of the email. Emails with an attachment I delete without reading.
- Assignments that are more than one page must be stapled or I will only accept the first page for credit, if at all. Do *not* use paper clips, binder clips, fancy folds, tape, glue, or any other method of attaching paper together other than a staple.
- All assignments should have 1” or 1.25” margins on all sides, be printed in black ink in a standard, legible font that is either 11 or 12 point in size.
- Assignment-specific guidelines take precedence over these general guidelines if there is any contradiction.
- Two-sided printing and printing on a clean side of scrap paper is acceptable and encouraged for assignments with length limits longer than one page.

Class Policies

Returned Student Work

Keep ALL of your returned assignments and graded exams until the end of the semester. Students bear the burden of proof for disputes related to grades. In other words, it is your responsibility to provide the original document(s) I have graded, with my comments, for reconsideration or correction of my records.

General Policies

- Arriving to class late, leaving early, sleeping, talking, reading, or otherwise being distracted and distracting, are not acceptable classroom activities. Doing so will result in you losing credit for attendance for that day. Repeated violations may result in your being asked not to attend class.
- *I have no tolerance for cell phones in class. Do NOT set your phone to vibrate; turn them off or completely silence them.* As of the start of class I should neither hear nor see cell phones for any reason. Vibrating phones can still be heard by other students and are therefore still distracting. If I do see or hear a cell phone in class I reserve the right to penalize your grade for each occurrence. In addition, if I hear your phone in class I will ask you to leave for at least the rest of the day. This includes texting with your cell phone in your lap.
- I am prohibiting the use of laptops in the classroom this term. If you have a documented disability that is alleviated by the use of a laptop you will need to see me during office hours to arrange for an exception to this rule.
- You may not photograph, or use audio or video recording devices of any kind, including cellular phones, during class, without my express prior written permission.
- Please let me know immediately if you have a health problem or disability that necessitates leaving the room during class time, consistently arriving late, or needing to leave early. If other reasons will prevent you from being unable to regularly get to class on time or needing to regularly leave early you should drop this class. Arriving late and leaving early is distracting to me and other students. I reserve the right to penalize students for ALL of their attendance participation points if a particular student is consistently arriving late or leaving early. In addition, I will also ask that you no longer attend class. Clearly this will significantly impact your

grade. If an occasion arises where you need to leave early or arrive late please sit in a seat as near to the door as possible and take special care to enter/leave quietly.

- You may not make up in-class work. If you miss a class, please get notes from a classmate rather than asking me, the instructor, for notes. **You are responsible for all information communicated in class, whether or not you are in attendance.**
- Information on scheduling changes, changes to readings, and assigned work will be posted on CULearn. Please consult CULearn before contacting me with these questions.
- All written assignments must be completed on time and handed in as paper copies at the *beginning* of class on the stated due date. *Work sent electronically will not be accepted.* Written work should be spell-checked, grammar-checked, and proofread: the quality of your writing will significantly affect your grade. I am happy to read rough drafts or otherwise assist you in improving your writing during office hours.
- I will not give incompletes in this course except under extremely unusual, well-documented circumstances.
- I take cheating and dishonesty very seriously. Honor code violations will be reported to the Honor Code Council and will result in a zero (0) for the assignment *at a minimum* and may also result in a zero (0) for your course grade.

Changes

Although I do not expect to do so, I reserve the right to change any aspect of this course as I deem necessary.

University Policies

Honor Code

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid that constitutes academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening or intimidating behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council and those students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member involved and non-academic sanctions given by the Honor Code Council (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Please refer to <http://www.colorado.edu/honorcode> to view the specific guidelines. If you have any questions related to this policy, contact the Honor Code Council at honor@colorado.edu.

Behavioral Expectations

Students are expected to arrive to class on time, with all materials for the day and are not allowed to leave before class has come to an end barring exceptional circumstances. The University has a classroom behavior policy, (see <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html>) and students are required to adhere to the behavior standards listed in this policy document and to refrain from disrupting class.

Both students and instructors are expected to abide by the University's Honor Code, which can be found at the following website: <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>. Cheating and plagiarism are taken very seriously and will result in a failing grade *for the course*.

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to disciplinary measures. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion, and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, nationalities, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, and gender variance (a major part of this class).

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.

Discrimination and Harassment

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>.

Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, you should notify me at least two weeks ahead of time to request special accommodation if you have a conflict. See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

Students with Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to me from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>).

Disability Statement:

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter from Disability Services to me within the first four days of class. It is your responsibility to contact Disability Services and arrange for a letter to be provided to you. You can contact Disability Services at: 303.492.8671, Willard 322, www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices

Other Obligations

Every reasonable effort will be made to fairly deal with students who, because of religious obligations, participation in athletics or other structured activities, have just cause to request assistance coping with conflicts with attendance or assignments. All students to whom this applies must contact me in writing beforehand listing specific obligations and dates within the first two weeks of class. Forgetting to do so is not a valid excuse. No late reading responses, applications, or exams will be given or accepted except in the most extraordinary circumstances.

Graduating Seniors

Exceptions will not be made to these policies regardless of whether or not you are a graduating senior and/or have “walked” and/or just need this class to complete your degree.