

Soc 101: Sociological Thinking

Professor Mary B. Olson
Office: 212 College Hall
Phone: 319-895-4359(O) 920-647-1227(C)
Email: molson@cornellcollege.edu

Course activities will occur: M-F
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

"The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two in society."

C. Wright Mills

C. Wright Mills tells us that we are "seldom aware of the intricate connections between the patterns of [our] own lives and the course of world history." [As he says], "We do not often possess the sociological imagination." The purpose of this course is to help you to develop your sociological imagination. It aims to help you understand the logic of sociological inquiry, the nature and breadth of sociological theory, and the methods of sociological research. In order to do this, we will examine a range of issues, including the nature of the social system, the dynamics of social inequality, the place of the individual in society, and the process of social change.

Course Objectives:

Students should emerge from the course with a solid understanding concerning what the field of sociology is and a firm grasp of the central topics upon which the discipline is focused, including culture and socialization, social structure, social inequality, and social change.

Through readings, lectures, discussions, written work, group projects etc., students will:

- *Explore essential sociological concepts, the logic of sociological inquiry, the nature of sociological theory, and the methods of sociological research
- *Investigate the kinds of questions sociologists typically ask, and identify and examine sociologically relevant problems and issues.
- *Gain an understanding of social inequality and an awareness of the complexity of social life.
- *Develop critical thinking, oral communication, and writing skills which demonstrate an ability to understand and analyze social issues and to apply these skills to their lives and the world around them.

This course supports the Educational Priorities and Outcomes of Cornell College with emphasis on knowledge, inquiry, communication, and intercultural literacy.

Evaluation Criteria:

Class activities will vary from day to day. Students are expected to complete all readings before the beginning of the class period during which they are assigned, to attend class, to contribute to classroom discussion, and to complete all written assignments on time. Class attendance is expected and each unexcused class period absence will result in the lowering, by 1/2 a grade point, of the student's overall class participation grade. The course features a relatively heavy reading schedule

and challenging reading materials. Lectures and class discussions will focus on developing an in-depth understanding of the assigned material.

Each student is responsible for (1) short paper applying the sociological imagination to their own lives, (1) one mid-term examination, (1) one group presentation on political ideology, (1) one low cost budget project, which includes a formal in-class group presentation and accompanying written material outlining how a family of four will live on a low cost budget in Cedar Rapids, (1) one formal in-class group presentation and accompanying written material outlining a social change project; an occasional pop quiz, and daily class participation that may include a graded written component. No late written work will be accepted unless prior arrangements have been agreed to in writing. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and will result in a grade of F being assigned to any written work in which plagiarism or cheating is discovered.

The “Who Am I?” paper is a three to four page analysis applying the sociological imagination to your own life. It will require you to analyze the ways in which race, or class, or gender have shaped who you are. The mid-term examination will feature two required essays that will ask you to analyze key issues raised in the course. The presentation on political ideology will require you to apply the sociological imagination to individual’s lives, examining the ways in which social class, gender, ethnicity, and regional location shape their conservative political beliefs. The group budget project will ask you to construct a low-cost monthly budget for a family living in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. This project will take you out into the community and is meant to deepen your understanding of the American stratification system. The group social change project and paper will ask you to choose a social problem and design a social change project to address the problem. The pop quiz component of the class will test your ability to respond to questions about daily reading. Daily oral, and possibly written, participation will ask you explore major ideas covered in each of the day’s readings.

Excellent examinations, papers, and presentations will be well organized and well argued. They will demonstrate evidence of critical thinking, and indicate both breadth and depth of understanding of the course material. Excellent class participation will depend both upon your attendance in class and upon your ability to outline major ideas covered in each of the day’s readings, to connect ideas in each day’s readings with those addressed in earlier books and articles, and to reflect upon the day’s readings through an identification of issues the readings raise for you. Evaluation of daily participation will depend upon evidence of high levels of engagement with the course materials.

Grades will be computed according to the following formula:

“Who Am I?” paper	-- 10% of grade
Presentation on Political Ideology	-- 15% of grade
Low cost budget Analysis	-- 20% of grade (group work 10%, individual paper 15%)
Exam I	-- 20% of grade
Pop Quiz (1 or more) collectively	-- 05% of grade
Social Change Project	-- 20% of grade
Class Participation	-- 10% of grade

Required Texts

-Eve Howard, Classic Readings in Sociology.

-Mary Crow Dog, Lakota Woman.

-Michael. Zweig, The Working Class Majority.

-Arlie Russell Hochschild, Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right.

Several additional articles will be utilized in the course. They are identified on your syllabus with an ® and are available on moodle.

Academic Honesty Expectations:

Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is his or her work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Compass, our student handbook, under the heading, "Academic Policies-Honesty in Academic Work."

Students with Disabilities:

Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should notify the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising and their course instructor of any disability related accommodations within the first three days of the term for which the accommodations are required, due to the fast pace of the block format. For more information on the documentation required to establish the need for accommodations and the process of requesting the accommodations, see The Disability Services and Resources Web Page.

COURSE OUTLINE

The daily class schedule is noted in the course outline. The instructor reserves the right to add or delete hours to the daily schedule if it becomes necessary in order to complete the assigned material. All readings must be completed before class meets. All readings identified with an ® are available on moodle. In order to facilitate effective class discussion, please bring hard copies of all articles with you to class on the day for which they are assigned.

SECTION ONE: SOCIOLOGY, SOCIETY, AND THE INDIVIDUAL

First Monday: Introduction to Course-The History of the Discipline, the Sociological Imagination, and the Study of Society (TP=28)

Course will meet: 9:00-10:00 and 12:30-3:00 ***Please come to afternoon class with all three readings completed and ready to be discussed.***

Readings: (All articles marked with an ® are on moodle.)

- Peter L. Berger, "Invitation to Sociology," in Wadsworth Classic Readings in Sociology, 2000, pp. 6-9.

- C. Wright Mills, "The Promise," in Wadsworth Classic Readings in Sociology, 2000, pp. 1-5.

-® Michael Lerner, "Equality Requires a Fight for Recognition and Meaning," in The Ethnic Moment, Pp. 117-135.

Assignment: Chapters from Hochschild assigned for group presentations on Wednesday.

First Tuesday: Political and Cultural Sociology: Culture, Social Structure and History

Course will meet: 12:30-3:00

Readings:

-Arlie Hochschild, "Preface," "Traveling to the Heart," "One Thing Good," "The Rememberers," Appendix A, B, and C," Strangers in their Own Land.

Class Format: I will lead the discussion in a short lecture and question and answer format.

First Wednesday: Political and Cultural Sociology: Culture, Social Structure and History

Course will meet: 9:00-11:00 and 12:30-3:00

Readings:

-Arlie Russell Hochschild, "The Candidates," "The Least Resistant Personality," "Industry," "The State," "The Pulpit and the Press," "The Team Player," "The Worshiper," The Cowboy, "The Rebel," "Strangers no Longer," "They Say There Are Beautiful Trees," "The Fires of History," and "The Deep Story," Strangers in their Own Land.

Class Format: Group presentations of each of the chapters identified will be presented today. Each presentation will have a 15 time limit. Power-point presentations are recommended.

Assignment: Begin working on the "Who Am I?" paper analyzing how race, or class, or gender have shaped your life.

First Thursday: Political and Cultural Sociology: Culture, Social Structure and History/Economic Sociology: Modern Capitalism and its Culture/Social Structure and Social Inequality

Course will meet: 9:00-11:00 and 12:30-3:00

Readings:

-Arlie Russell Hochschild, "Afterword," Strangers in their Own Land.

-Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party, Classic Readings in Sociology, 2007, pp. 10-17.

-Max Weber, "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism," Classic Readings in Sociology, 2007, pp. 84-89.

-@ Sut Jhally, "Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse," in Paula S. Rothenberg, (ed.), Race, Class, and Gender in the United States (7th Ed.)(RCG). 2007, Pp.621-629.

Video: Farid: Factors influencing why Trump won the presidency (if time allows).

Morning Format: Finish Discussion of any chapters left from Hochschild. I will lead the discussion of the "Afterword" from Strangers in the Own Land. Then, we will move on to discuss Marx and Engels, Weber, and Jhally.

Afternoon Format: Discuss Marx and Engels, Weber, and Jhally. I will lead the discussion.

First Friday: Economic Sociology and the Sociology of Religion: Traditional Indigenous societies; racial and cultural diversity

Course will meet: 9:00-11:00 and 12:30-3:00

Readings:

-@ Genesis 1-3, Bible

-@ Robin Wall Kimmerer, "Skywoman Falling," Braiding Sweetgrass, Milkweed Editions, 2015, pp. 3-10.

-@ Jim Lichatowich, "The Rise of Salmon-Based Economies," Salmon without Rivers, First Edition, Island Press, 2001, pp. 28-41.

-@ Joseph Marshall, III, "When the Grasses Talk," The Dance House: Stories from the Rosebud, 1998.

Video: The Teachings of the Tree People

Assignment Due: Who Am I? Assignment is due at the beginning of morning class today

Assignment: Low-cost Budget Analysis groups are assigned and project is explained at the end of afternoon class.

Class Format: I will lead discussion.

Friday Afternoon, Saturday, Sunday: Your assignment is to work on the group budget project. Plan to meet with members of your assigned group and spend time together developing the basis of your low-cost budget analysis. This will involve developing a monthly budget, including costs for such items as a 30 day menu, rent, insurance, transportation, child care, communications, medical care, and entertainment. Anticipate working Friday afternoon and several additional hours over the weekend on putting this group assignment together.

SECTION TWO; THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

Second Monday: Social Stratification: Socioeconomic Inequality in the United States

Course will meet: 9:00-11:00 and 12:30-3:00

Readings:

-Michael Zweig, "Introduction," "The Class Structure of the United States," "What We Think about When We Think about Class," and "Why is Class Important?" in The Working Class Majority.

Video: Making It in Good Times and Two American Families (begin if time permits)

Class Format: We will discuss the class structure of the United States and the ways in which we fail to "see" class while class continues to remain important to understanding life chances in the United States.

Second Tuesday: Social Stratification: Social Inequality and Family Life

Course will meet: 9:00-11:00 and 12:30-3:00

Readings:

-® Lillian Rubin, "Mother Goes to Work," "The Transformation of Family Life," "When You Get Laid Off...," and "Shattered Dreams," in Families on the Faultline. pp. 69-140

Video: Making it in Good Times and Two American Families

Class Format: We will finish discussion of Monday's concepts and videos and then discuss how working class position may affect family life.

Second Wednesday: Social Stratification: Inequality, and Poverty

Course will meet: 12:30-3:00 (from 3:00 to 5:00 groups may meet with me to discuss their presentations.)

Readings:

-Michael Zweig, "Looking at the Underclass." in The Working Class Majority.

Class Format: We will discuss poverty in the United States

Second Thursday: Social Stratification: Group Presentations

Course will meet: 9:00-11:00 and 12:30-3:00

Class Format: Each group's low-cost budget material will be presented today.

Assignment Due: Each group's budget analysis summary is due at the beginning of morning class.

Assignment: Take-home examination distributed at the end of class.

Second Friday: Take-home examination is due by noon, as a word attachment (doc or docx) sent to me at Molson@cornellcollege.edu. Late examinations will not be accepted unless prior written arrangements have been made.

SECTION THREE: THE NATURE OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Third Monday: Social Change: Globalism and Food/Globalization and Job Movement/Globalization and the Global Exchange of Labor

Course will meet: 9:00-11:00 and 12:30-3:00

Readings:

-® G. William Domhoff, "Who Rules America?" in Susan J. Ferguson, (ed.), Mapping the Social Landscape. (5th Ed.), Pp. 266-279. (Sets the stage for discussion of who is in control of the process of globalization.)

-® F. Lappe and J. Collins, "Why Can't People Feed Themselves?" in Dennis Vnenchak and Ernest Kilker, Readings in Social Science, 1988 Ed. pp. 251-262.

-® William M. Adler, "Job on the Line," in Garth Massey, (ed.), Readings for Sociology.(4th Ed.)

**® Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Hochschild, "Introduction," and Arlie Hochschild, "Love and Gold." in Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Hochschild, (eds.). Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy. Pp. 1-30.

Videos: Hungry for Profit/Possibly-Maquiladores (City of Factories)/ Maid in America (if time permits)

Class Format: I will lead discussion.

Third Tuesday: Social Change: Is there a Development Alternative?/Producing Social Change—What are Social Movements and How are they Done?/"Freedom Summer" in the African American Civil Rights Movement

Course will meet: 9:00-11:00 and 12:15-3:00*

Readings:

-® Bill McKibben," An Alternative to Globalization," in Garth Massey, (ed.), Readings for Sociology, (4th Ed) pp. 473-480.

-® Sally Belfrage, "Freedom Summer," in Dennis Vnenchak and Ernest Kilker, Readings in Social Science, 1988 Ed, pp., 195-232.

Video: Freedom Summer

Assignment: Social Change Project Assignment Distributed.

Class Format: I will lead discussion.

Third Wednesday: Social Change: Racism and Cultures in Conflict-Native Americans in the United States before the 1970s.

Course will meet: 9:00-11:00 and 12:30-3:00

Readings:

-Mary Crow Dog, Lakota Woman. pp. 3-72.

Class Format: I will lead discussion.

Third Thursday: Social Change: Activism and Social Movements –Producing Changes in the Lived Conditions of Native Americans in the 1970s.

Course will meet: 9:00-11:00 and 12:30-3:00

Readings:

-Mary Crow Dog, Lakota Woman. Pp 73-169.

Video: We Shall Remain-Wounded Knee

Class Format: Discussion of reading and documentary.

Third Friday: Social Change: Activism and Social Movements-Environmental Justice Movements in Indian Country Today.

Course will meet: 9:00-11:00 and 12:30 to 3:00 if necessary

Readings:

-® GreenAction, "Environmental Justice and Environmental Racism." <https://greenaction.org/what-is-environmental-justice/>

-® Stephen Keith, "Out of Spotlight, tribes keep fighting Dakota Pipeline," Reuters, August 2, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-south-dakota-native-americans/out-of-spotlight-tribes-keep-fighting-dakota-pipeline-idUSKBN1KN2HT>

-® Phil McKenna, "2016-How Dakota Pipeline Protest Became a Native American Cry for Justice," InsideClimateNews, December 27, 2016. <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/22122016/standing-rock-dakota-access-pipeline-native-american-protest-environmental-justice>

-® The Dakota Access Pipeline: Native American Perspectives. <https://libguides.unm.edu/c.php?g=556186&p=3824064>

Assignment: Social Change Project Distributed

Class Format: Discussion of Environmental Justice and Dakota Pipeline.

Friday/Saturday/Sunday Activity: Group work on social change project

Meet with your group, and with college librarian, to begin working on your social change project presentation and paper summary. You should plan to work together for several hours on Friday, Saturday and Sunday to finish your project.

Fourth Monday: Social Change: Activism and Social Movements-Children Organize in India

Course will meet: 12:30-3:00

Readings: -None

Video: The Revolutionary Optimists

Class Format: Watch and discuss the documentary.

Fourth Tuesday: Social Change Project Presentations

Course will meet: 9:00-11:00 and 12:30-3:00

Readings:-None

Assignment: The written component of all Social Change Projects due at the beginning of class.

Class Format: Student-led presentations.

Fourth Wednesday: Social Change Project Presentations

Course will meet: 9:00-11:00

Readings:-None

Class Format: Presentations will continue.