

Introduction to Sociology, Section T1
Saturday, 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. in Scott Hall, Room 202

Instructor: John T. Lang

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URL:

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Office Hours: TBA

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Duneier, Mitchell (2001). *Sidewalk*. Farrar Straus & Giroux. ISBN: 0374527253. Paperback.
- Henslin, James (2003). *Essentials of Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach*. 5th Edition (includes workbook). Allyn & Bacon. ISBN: 020540488x. Paperback.

Both items can be purchased at New Jersey Books (108 Somerset Street, New Brunswick).

A hardcopy cover of the Duneier book has also been placed on reserve at Alexander Library. Be aware that the page numbers in the syllabus will not match but the chapter numbers will.

GRADING:

Exam I, 20%; Exam II, 25%; Exam III, 25%; Group Presentation: 20%; Participation and Attendance, 10%.

You must complete all parts of the course to pass. In other words: skipping one exam means you will fail this course, even if you have perfect grades for everything else. Put yet another way: *totally blow off participation and attendance, fail the entire course, no exceptions.*

INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to Sociology! Sociology is the systematic, scientific study of the patterns and processes of social life, touching on all of its major dimensions – economic, political, religious, familial, and criminal, to name a few – and investigating it at both the level of grand social and historical developments, and the level of everyday, mundane interactions. It studies both individual actors, and the informal groups and formal organizations that populate the social landscape.

This course cannot be comprehensive in its coverage of the discipline of social science, but it will introduce you to some basic concepts in sociological analysis, to some fundamental arguments about the constitution of society and the individuals who comprise it, and to important substantive topics and problems in a variety of the subfields of sociology.

We will explore some of the big questions we face as social beings, and talk about some of the intriguing answers – and questions, for that matter – that sociologists have provided.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The course schedule is tentative and somewhat subject to change. Although I will do my best to keep us on schedule, it is possible that some adjustments will be made as we progress through the semester. I will give as much notice – both in class on and on the course website – when changes are necessary.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Week 1

May 31	Introduction To The Course & To Sociological Thinking
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What is the sociological perspective? Why is it important?
 Handout: Syllabus & Guidelines for Group Presentations
 Review: Syllabus & Guidelines for Group Presentations

Week 2

June 7	Methods and Tools of Sociology	Contract Due
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To the extent that sociology forsakes myth, folklore, and wishful thinking and bases its conclusions on scientific evidence, it is a science. How would you go about studying something sociologically?
 Reading: Henslin – Chapter 1 (pp. 1-32)

Week 3

June 14	TBA
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Reading: Duneier, *Sidewalk* – Introduction, Part 1 (pp. 1-114).
 Meet for Group Presentations

Week 4

June 21	The Self & Social Context	Exam I
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This class concerned with central ideas and theories on formation of self, agents of socialization, and re-socialization. A central point of the lecture is that individual identity comes from social processes.
 Reading: Duneier, *Sidewalk* – Introduction, Part 1, Part 2 (pp. 115-156).

Week 5

June 28	Language, Meaning, & Culture
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What is culture and what does it do? Explains what sociological concept of culture is, and the crucial place of language in shaping social reality.
 Review: Exam I
 Reading: Henslin – Chapters 2 & 3 & 4 (pp. 33-108)

Week 6

July 5	Group Presentations
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Due: 500-750 word paper detailing your contribution and your position on the presentation topic.

Week 7

July 12	Race & Ethnicity	Paper Due
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One of the most important set of problems in America today concerns race relations. Here, we'll ask what it means to be in one race as opposed to others, what difference it makes in someone's life chances that they belong to a particular race.
 In-Class Movie: Charles Mingus: Triumph of the Underdog
 Reading: Duneier, *Sidewalk* – Part 3, Part 4, (pp. 157-230)
 Reading: Henslin – Chapter 9 (pp. 221-256)

Week 8

July 19	Social Stratification	Exam II
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A widely believed ideology holds that with hard work and determination people can be anything they want to be. Sociologists, however, have discovered this is true only under certain conditions. The key condition has to do with a college degree, yet research shows most people don't directly apply the knowledge they glean in college. So what are the connections between a college education and social sorting? Covers some key ideas, theories, and data on how and why people are stratified. Also covers some sociological ideas about discrimination.

Reading: Duneier, *Sidewalk* – Part 5 (pp. 231-318)

Reading: Henslin – Chapters 7 & 8 (pp. 165-220)

Week 9

July 26	Deviance & Crime
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What is social about deviance? Outlines basic approaches to studying and theorizing what deviance is and how we recognize it.

Review: Exam II

In-Class Movie: Wall Street.

Reading: Duneier, *Sidewalk* – Afterward, Appendix (pp. 319-358)

Reading: Henslin – Chapter 6 (pp. 137-164)

Week 10

August 2	Organizations & Rationalization
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From cradle to grave organizations shape our lives, yet people are often unaware of the main forces behind organizational functioning. This is an introduction to the main ideas of organizational sociology, including the sometimes dry but always important ideas of Max Weber.

Reading: Henslin – Chapter 6 (pp. 109-136) & Chapter 11 (pp. 293-322)

Week 11

August 9	Exam III
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COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

I will hold you responsible for the information in this syllabus, so I expect you to read it, understand it, and ask questions about anything you don't understand.

READINGS:

Your most basic duty in this class is to read all of the assigned texts. Be sure to read the calendar of class meetings, readings, assignments, and exams. All readings are due on the day they are listed. You must have read them carefully, taken notes, and be prepared to pass a quiz and discuss them intelligently. Some of the time I won't cover the readings in class, but the lectures will make more sense if you've done the reading ahead of time.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

You are expected to be familiar with the Rutgers University Policy on Academic Integrity (<http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html>), which defines all forms of cheating and the procedures for dealing with violations. As is always the case, you are responsible for your own work. If you find yourself questioning whether you have documented or cited your sources properly, it is your responsibility to come see me about these issues prior to submitting an assignment. If you find yourself thinking about submitting work that is not your own due to pressure, frustration, perfectionism, or any other reason, please come talk to me. I am here to help you resolve these issues before they become a problem for your academic career.

GRADING:

The 3 exams are composed of multiple choice, true/false and matching type questions. The exams are not cumulative. They will cover assigned reading, lectures, material from group presentations, and discussion points from class. I do not give extra-credit assignments, nor will I allow make-ups on the exams without a superb, legitimate explanation (bring me medical records, phone numbers of surviving relatives, etc.). Weddings, personal holidays, the Rutgers bus system, etc. are not acceptable excuses for missing exams. Drop the course now if there is a conflict between the test days and your personal schedule. The make-ups are essay tests, consisting of 4 questions. Since these tests must replace a huge percentage of your total grade, the answers for the make-ups must be extremely thorough to warrant a high grade. It is not to your advantage to miss my scheduled tests.

STYLE:

Although this course does not contain much written work, I expect all materials you give me to be typed. Hard copies must be double-spaced, with one-inch margins on both sides and the top and bottom. Handwritten corrections are acceptable, but should be minimal. For each assignment, your bibliographic entries and in-text citations must be complete and correct. I will not compromise on this point. We will review citation styles in class, and I will expect you to conform to them.

PERSONAL DATA SHEET

NOTE: Completion of this sheet is entirely optional. Information is used to facilitate class activities and to give me a sense of your interests and objectives in the course.

Name _____

Phone _____

Class year _____ Major, if any _____

Your college or university if you are a visiting student _____

Email address _____

What other Sociology courses have you taken? _____

Other courses this summer? _____

Other responsibilities this semester? _____

Why did you select this course? Please be honest! _____

Any special interests you would like to explore in this class? _____

How can I, as your instructor, best help you in this course? _____

Please add anything else you would like me to know. Thanks