

New York City College of Technology – CUNY
Division of Liberal Arts, Department of Social Sciences

Instructor: Despina Lalaki

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Office Hours: Monday 2:15-3:15pm or by appointment at Social Science, Namm Hall, N-600

Prerequisite: CUNY Proficiency in Reading and Writing

Elements of Sociology, SOC 1101 – section D506 – Spring 2018
MoWe 10-11:15am (3 class hours – 3 credits) – N-701A

Catalogue Description:

Perspectives on sociology as an analytical science. The emphasis is on concepts, hypotheses and theories, which explain social behavior and social change.

Overview:

The primary objective of the course is to provide an introduction to what constitutes the 'sociological perspective' and explore the ways in which everyday life can be analyzed, explained and understood through the lenses of sociology. The relationship between what C. Wright Mills calls 'personal troubles' and 'public issues', how individuals' lives are influenced by the larger social structures in which they find themselves is at the center of this introductory course.

Rationale:

Sociology is the field of study that takes up to explain social, political, cultural and economic phenomena in terms of social structures, social forces and group relations. The course introduces students to several sociological topics, including socialization, culture, the social construction of knowledge, inequality, social stratification, social institutions such as religion, government, family, race and ethnic relations, poverty and deviance, among others.

Sociology is the art of asking questions; big questions such as "What is race?" or "How class structure and social stratification impacts people's lives?", "How culture matters?", "Why states go to war?", or more detailed and focused questions, like: "Why working class children get working class jobs?", "How fast food chains impact American family relations?", "How the social media impact communication?", "How college education has changed over the past decades?" Acquiring the conceptual and methodological tools to address more broad but also narrower sociological questions of that kind is one of the main objectives of this course.

While sociology assumes that human actions are patterned, it also suggests that individuals have ample of room to change their conditions and direct social change. In that sense the quest to understand society is important and always urgent, for if we cannot understand the social world that we live in, we are more likely to be overwhelmed and ultimately incapacitated by it. As a specialist, the sociologist systematically gathers, processes and analyzes information with the objective to provide insights into what is going on in a situation, present alternatives and often assist policy-makers in making informed decisions and formulating policies. Sociology however, and the sociological imagination is not the prerogative solely of specialists. Sociology, further than being a discipline, a field in social sciences, it constitutes a mode of thinking. Thinking sociologically is also directly related to acting socially. An important objective of this course is to learn how to think alongside others, connect our condition to those of others and understand the importance of not only thinking but also acting collectively.

The course, in addition to the theoretical texts assigned for reading and analysis, incorporates journalistic accounts of social issues, autobiographies, memoirs, oral histories and materials like photographs and film, in order to encourage students to experiment with original sociological research. Learning, also, to apply sociological language and concepts to events and situations we encounter daily, like 'sociological location' (identities like race, gender and class) and 'social institutions' (organized entities that structure society, like education and religion) is of key importance. By the end of the course, students should be well on their way to developing their own 'sociological imagination.'

Class Structure:

The class will be based on reading, data collection and analysis, writing and debating. We will read key theoretical texts while using as a guide the required textbook Introduction to Sociology by Anthony Giddens et al. (9th edition or later) In addition select parts of the texts listed in the syllabus will be made available on line in a timely manner so students can do the readings in advance and come prepared in class in order to further reflect and collectively work on the studied materials. Students will be called to write short discussion memos, critically consider concepts and ideas examined in class and work in groups preparing in-class presentations that will extend the readings, rather than simply summarizing them. In the final exam students will be tested on their newfound sociological knowledge and asked to reflect upon their own experience and trajectory while employing their new sociology tools.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes:

1. Explain and illustrate through examples the ways that social forces shape our everyday lives.
2. Explain how sociologists analyze social problems, including the different theoretical perspectives they use in attaining this objective.

3. Explain the role of industrial revolution in creating the need for sociology as a discipline.
4. Explain the difference between ethnocentrism and cultural relativism and the relevance of those concepts to the debates arising within multicultural societies.
5. Explain the ways in which social structures and systems of stratification by class, race and gender affect people's range of choices and life chances.

General Education Learning Outcomes:

1. Knowledge: Develop an introductory knowledge of the concepts and theories deployed by sociologists in their analysis of society and social phenomena.
2. Skills: Develop and use tools needed for communication, inquiry, analysis and productive work.
3. Integration: Work productively within and across disciplines.
4. Values, ethics and relationships: Understand and apply values, ethics, and diverse perspectives in personal, civic, and cultural/global domains.

Assessment Methods - Requirements – Grading policy:

Both the course-intended and the general education outcomes will be assessed through the combination of quizzes, exams, essays and oral presentations on in-class small groups work. More specifically, you will be evaluated based on:

- Quizzes, short oral presentations and written exercises based on select readings 20%
- Class participation 20%
- Midterm exam 30%
- Final exam 30%

Required Textbook: Anthony Giddens et al, Introduction to Sociology. New York, NY: W.W. Norton.

Policy on Attendance and Lateness Policy

Students are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly. More than 3 absences will result in a failing final grade. If a student is more than 10 minutes late to a class, this will count as an absence. Participation is key to seminar pedagogy.

Statement on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's work as one's own in all forms of academic endeavor (such as essays, theses, examinations, research data, creative projects,

etc.), which may be derived from a variety of sources (such as books, journals, Internet postings, student or faculty papers, etc.). Students should refer to the Academic Integrity Policy Manual in the New York City College of Technology catalog for full information on the consequences of plagiarism.

Statement on Academic Integrity

Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. The complete text of the College policy on Academic Integrity may be found in the catalog.

In Class Cell Phone and Computer Policy

No cell phones and computers are allowed in class except for research purposes and in class assigned projects.

WEEK 1

PART I: The Foundations of Sociology

What is Sociology? – Basic Concepts (Social Construction, Social Order, Agency and Structure, Social Change) – The Development of Sociological Thinking – Modern Theoretical Approaches (Symbolic Interactionism, Functionalism, Marxism & Class Conflict, Feminism & Feminist Theory, Rational Choice Theory, etc Micro and Macrosociology) – How Can Sociology Help Us?

· C. Wright Mills, “The Promise” in *The Sociological Imagination*, London: Oxford University Press, 1959, pp. 3-24.

Film: *Pierre Bourdieu: Sociology is a Martial Art*, 2002.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7U46Hbn9qFQ&list=PLihbNr7imHOGInzTo_sTF6feKAZD6Gfn5

WEEK 2

PART II: The Individual and Society

Culture and Society – Basic Concepts (Values & Norms, Material Culture, Language, Symbols) – The Sociological Study of Culture (A “Cultural Turn” in Sociology? Early Human Culture, Industrial Societies – Research Today: Understanding the Modern World (The Global South, Contemporary Industrial Societies: Cultural Conformity or Diversity).

- Emily Martin, “The Egg and the Sperm: How Science has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles,” *Signs*, vol. 16, no. 3 (Spring 1991), pp. 485-501.

Film: *Edward Said on Orientalism*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVC8EYd_Z_g

WEEK 3

Groups, Networks and Organization – Basic Concepts – Theories of Groups, Organizations, and Networks (In-groups and Out-groups, The Effects of Size, Bureaucracy, The Strength of Weak Ties) – Contemporary Research on Groups and Networks (The McDonaldization of Society? Personal Taste, The Internet as Social Network)

- George Ritzer, *The MacDonalidization of Society. An Investigation Into the Changing Character of Contemporary Social Life*, Pine Forge Press, 1996.

WEEK 4

Conformity, Deviance and Crime – Basic Concepts – Society and Crime: Sociological Theories (Functionalist Theories, Crime and Anomie: Durkheim and Merton, Interactionist Theories, Conflict Theory, Control Theory, etc) – Research on Crime and Deviance Today.

- James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, “broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety,” *Atlantic*, March 1982.
- James Baldwin, “A Report from Occupied Territory,” *Nation*, July 11, 1966.

Film: *13th*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V66F3WU2CKk>

WEEK 5

PART III: Structures of Power

Stratification, Class and Inequality – Basic Concepts (Systems of Stratification, Income, Wealth, Education, Occupation, Class and Lifestyle) – Theories of Stratification in Modern Societies (Marx: Means of Production and the Analysis of Class, Weber: Class and Status, etc).

- Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, New York: Verso, 1998.

WEEK 6

Ethnicity and Race – Basic Concepts — Historical Perspectives on Race and Ethnicity (Ethnic Antagonism: A Historical Perspective, The Rise of Racism, African-Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans in the U.S. – Models of Ethnic Integration, Global Migration.

- Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer, “What is Racial Domination?” *Du Bois Review*, 6:2, 2009, pp. 335-355.

WEEK 7

Gender Inequality – Basic Concepts (Understanding Sex Differences: The Role of Biology, Gender Socialization, The Social Construction of Gender) – Theories of Gender Inequality (Functionalist Approaches, Feminist Theories).

- Silvia Federici, *Wages Against Housework*, Published by Power of Women Collective and the Falling Wall Press, 1975.

Film: *Documentary on Women's Liberation Movement*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOsLjbpHV8M>

WEEK 8

Review and **MIDETRM EXAM**

WEEK 9

Global Inequality – Basic Concepts (High-, Middle-, Low-Income Countries) – Theories of Global Inequality (Market-Oriented Theories, Dependency Theories, World-Systems Theories, etc) – Research on Global Inequality Today.

Film: *The End of Poverty?*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrRiU2nuDpU>

WEEK 10

Government, Political Power, and Social Movements – Basic Concepts (Democracy, The Concept of the State) – Who Rules? Theories of Democracy (Democratic Elitism, Pluralist Theories, The Power Elite) – (Democracy in the U.S., Political Participation of Women, The Internet and Political Participation, Social Movements, The Nation-State and Globalization)

· Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, “Black Lives Matter: A Movement, Not a Moment” in *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, pp. 153-190.

WEEK 11

PART IV: Social Institutions

Work and Economic Life – Basics Concepts – Theories of Work and Economic Life (Types of Capitalism, Fordism and Scientific Management [Taylorism], Post-Fordism) – Current Research on Work and Economic Life (Corporations and Corporate Power, Transnational Corporations, Workers and their Challenges, etc).

· Aaron Bastani, *Fully Automated Luxury Communism. A Manifesto*, New York: Verso

SPRING BREAK

WEEK 12

Religion in Modern Society – Basic Concepts – What Do Sociologists of Religion Study? – Types of Religious Organizations, etc) – Sociological Theories of Religion – The Classical View, Contemporary Approaches: Religious Economy, Secularization).

· Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993
· Edward Said, “The Clash of Ignorance,” *The Nation*, October 2, 2001.

WEEK 13

PART V: Social Change in the Modern World

Population, Urbanization and the Environment – Basic Concepts – Urban Sociology: Some Influential Theories (The Chicago School, Urban Ecology, Jane Jacobs: “Eyes and Ears Upon the Street, Saskia Sassen: Global Cities) – The Rise of Megalopolis, Rural, Suburban and Urban Life in the U.S., Urban Renewal and Gentrification.

WEEK 14

Globalization in a Changing World – Basic Concepts – Current Theories: Is Globalization Today Something New – Or Have We Seen It All Before? (The Skeptics, The Hyperglobalizers, The Transformationalists) – The Effect of Globalization, Globalization and Inequality.

· Peter Dreier, John Mollenkopf and Todd Swanstrom, “Metropolitics for the Twenty-First Century,” in *Place Matters*. University press of Kansas, 2001.

WEEK 15

Review and **FINAL EXAM**