



INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Sociology is the scientific study of society. Sociologists use the tools and methods of science to understand how and why humans behave as they do in groups. Sociology focuses on the social relations that structure individual and group behavior. We will look at social collectives, which include legal and health organizations, economic class, families, social movements, race, ethnicity, and gender identities. We will investigate the societal forces beyond our control and often beyond our awareness that influence how we think, feel, and act. We will explore how relationships and social movements create and maintain inequalities for the individual, group, and society. Further, we will explore how inequality within society affects individual health and how social groups use the legal system to promote change.

The field of sociology explains human behavior as being fundamentally social, Influenced and coordinated by groups, e.g. cliques, families, gangs, organizations, with overlapping and competing interests, cultures, and varying degrees of material resources, power, and privilege.

Sociology investigates how many aspects of our personal identities – our race/ethnicity, gender, and tastes for music, art, literature and food – are clearly



more social than “biologically given”. And behaviors that may seem entirely personal and biological – depression, suicide, creativity, career choice – are also clearly shaped by social factors. Sociology shows that often behaviors that we assume are innate are actually a product of “social construction” and explains the social context in which choices are made.

Course Overview

Learning Objectives:

- To think like a Sociologist
- To understand inequalities observed in different societies
- To understand and explain in greater depth a specific area of interest in Sociology

Course Expectations

The goals of this course will be accomplished through my lectures and through your class participation. Students are expected to ‘team’ read assigned textbook readings prior to the class meeting.

I am requesting that you make a commitment to attend all 20 class meetings and to be there promptly. If you are seriously ill please bring an official note from the doctor or dean.

Requirements:



There will be a lecture for the first hour of each class. The second hour will involve students breaking up into groups to discuss lecture topic of the day, prepare group presentations and practice exam questions that pertain to that day's lecture and reading.

Exams will cover material from lectures, films, and readings from the textbook. The format for the exam will be multiple choices. There will be mini 'in class' practice exams at the end of each lecture to prepare students for the final exam.

Group Oral presentation: explore in depth a specific area in Sociology 15%

In class assignments: 15%

Mini quizzes: 20%

Final Exam: 50%

Required course text:

(1) Conley, Dalton. 2015. You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist (4th Edition). New York: W.W. Norton.

Dates
Reading

Topics

Part I: Using your Sociological Imagination

July 12 W
Chapter 1

Sociological Imagination: Introduction

July 13 Th
Chapter 2

Methods

July 14 F
Chapter 3

Culture and Media

July 17 M
Chapter 4

Socialization & the Construction of Reality



July 18 T
Chapter 5

Groups and Networks

July 19 W
Chapter 6

Social Control and Deviance

Part II: Social Division and Inequality

July 20 Th
Chapter 7

Stratification

July 21 F
Chapter 8

Gender

July 24 M
Chapter 9

Race

July 25 T
Chapter 10

Poverty

July 26 W
Chapter 11

Health and Society

Part III: Building Blocks: Institutions of Society

July 27 TH
Chapter 12
July 28 F
Chapter 13

Family

Education

July 31 M
Chapter 14

Capitalism and Economy

Aug 1 T
Chapter 15

Authority and the State

Aug 2 W
Chapter 16

Religion

Aug 3 TH
Chapter 17

Science, Environment, Society

Aug 4 F
Chapter 18
Aug 7 M
Aug 8 T

Collective Action, Social Movements, and
Social Change

Review for Final
Final Exam



Code of Academic Integrity

Please familiarize yourself with the Code of Academic Integrity in the Beijing Jiaotong University. It is your responsibility to ensure your behavior does not violate this code. You must observe the policies regarding various forms of academic dishonesty. The following statement about academic dishonesty has been provided by the Beijing Jiaotong University, “Activities that have the effect or intention of interfering with education, pursuit of knowledge, or fair evaluation of a student’s performance are prohibited.” Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and may be handled by the Office of Student Conduct.