

# **SOC 201: Introduction to Sociology I**

## **Course Syllabus: Fall 2012**

*Subject to Change*

Class: Tuesday & Thursday 2 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.

Seefelt Building, Room 355

Main Office Phone Number: (703) 878- 5712

**Instructor:** Andrea Zach Rutan

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**Cell Phone:** 571-420-7019 / \* Feel free to text me; just be sure to tell me who you are when you do!

**Office hours:** Tuesday & Thursday half an hour before class, or by appointment

**Course Website:** <http://andreaszach.net>

(Click on teaching link at bottom, then click on SOCI 201)

### **Course Description and Goals**

The goals of this course are to develop a foundation in the field of sociology through the active engagement and critical analysis of social issues in the United States and globally. This course is designed to give you basic sociological tools that will enable you to understand and explore potential avenues for social change. You as a student are encouraged to apply concepts and ideas learned to your own life experiences. Knowledge in methods, theory, and social issues will be presented throughout the semester.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Discover historical, modern, and alternative perspectives on social issues.
- Challenge ones own assumptions, stereotypes, biases, and misinformation about groups, circumstances, and events with which one is unfamiliar.
- Base claims, ideas, and perspectives in sociological evidence.
- Find the relevance of sociology in one's own life.
- Develop skills in ethical listening, critical thinking, and thoughtful reflection through writing and discussion.

### **Instructional Methods**

This course will include in-class discussions, material relevant exercises and videos, small group discussions, short papers, and non-cumulative exams.

### **Course Materials**

#### **Textbook: required**

Macionis, John J. 2012. *Sociology: 2010 Census Update*. 14<sup>th</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

## **Student Assessment**

- 1) Three (3) Exams:** Each exam will consist of multiple choice and short-answer questions. The exams are not cumulative, but rather cover only the block of material addressed during each segment of the course. Each exam is worth 20 points, for a total of 60 points in all.

You will be allowed a “cheat sheet” on 8 ½ X 11 in. paper, both sides for a reference during the exam. The cheat sheet **MUST** be handwritten, and your own work. You may not type or photocopy your cheat sheet. All cheat sheets will be handed in with the exam. Students who do not hand in their cheat sheets will receive a zero for the exam. Lastly, if you opt not to use a cheat sheet you will be asked to sign a list to ensure that you receive credit for the exam. You will be given the entire class period to complete the exam and then are free to leave quietly.

- 2) Two (2) four-page papers:** Over the course of the semester students will be asked to write two (2) four-page papers on various topics discussed in class. These papers should use Times New Roman or Arial font, be double-spaced, with 1 inch margins, in size 12 font. Students will not be penalized for going over four pages; however, they will be penalized for not meeting the minimum requirements. Papers should not be summaries of topics, but well thought-out analyses. These assignments are meant to fine-tune your writing and analytical skills in sociology. **Papers must be handed in at the beginning of the class. Papers will not be accepted later during the class period or following the class in which they are due.** Placing papers in my mailbox during or after class will not be accepted.

- a) **Paper Topic #1:**

Choose a social problem in the United States today that is of interest to you. Use both a sociological perspective and your sociological imagination to explore, discuss, and analyze this issue. You are required to have at least 3 sources, where only one of which can be an online source, to provide a context and support for your claims and analysis. Be careful not to make assumptions or draw your conclusions based on stereotypes. Please be sure to not only cite your sources in the text of your paper, but also provide a works cited or reference page at the end of your paper. (Note: The works cited/reference is not part of the four pages.)

When using a sociological perspective remember to do the following:

- 1) See the general in the particular.
- 2) See the strange in the familiar.
- 3) See personal choice in the social context of our everyday lives.
- 4) See how society shapes individual lives through marginality and crisis.

In using your sociological imagination, be sure to discuss the following:

- 1) How and why is this problem a public issue rather than simply a personal trouble?

- 2) How has this problem been framed as a personal trouble in the past? What were the consequences and limitations of such a vantage point on the implementation of social change?
- 3) How is your social problem reframed when viewed as a public issue?
- 4) What direction do you suggest is taken regarding this social problem so that it is addressed effectively in a sociological sense?

***DUE: September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at the beginning of class.***

b) Paper Topic #2:

In this paper you will be asked to conduct a breeching experiment and write about it. A breeching experiment entails going into a particular environment and engaging in a behavior that defies the normative expectations of behavior in that environment. We as human beings are trained to behave in particular manners in various public settings. However, when we deviate from such behaviors and patterns, we make others uncomfortable and react to us in a particular way. I want you to choose a setting, act in an inappropriate way, and observe how other people react or even sanction you.

Now, I **DO NOT** want you to do anything that will get you arrested, is illegal, or will harm you or those around you. A few examples of what I am looking for include sitting next to a group of people on a bus when there are plenty of open seats elsewhere, talking in an elevator, talking too closely with other people, committing a random act of kindness, or shopping out of another person's cart at the grocery store. You are by no means restricted to these options, but these are the simple types of behaviors I am looking for in your experiment.

Writing Assignment Requirements:

Write a four page paper detailing out your experiences. This should include:

- A detailed description of the norm defying behavior you engaged in.
- A detailed description of the setting in which you conducted your breeching experiment.
- In-depth discussion of the outcomes of your norm defying behavior (how others reacted verbally, physically, facially, socially).
- An analysis of the results of your experiment, and why you believe you received the outcomes you did.
- A brief reflection on how you felt engaging in the norm defying behavior, and why you felt that way.

***DUE: October 25th, 2012 at the beginning of class***

Papers should be thoughtful, reflective, critical, and analytical. They should not have grammatical mistakes and should be proofread to ensure that they flow properly. Papers should not be summaries of topics, because this does not demonstrate an understanding of the

material. Students will not be marked down for expressing their views or perspectives, as long as they are well organized and thorough. Students are encouraged to disagree and engage with the paper topics. Please express your own thoughts and ideas and not what you think I want to hear. An important component of writing is being able to soundly and strongly express your ideas with confidence, clarity, and sound evidence to support your claims. Each paper is worth 15 points for an overall total of 30 points.

- 3) Participation:** Class attendance and participation are crucial to successful learning. Attendance will be taken every class period to measure the number of times students show up for class. However, participation also entails making meaningful contributions in class, ethically listening to classmates and the instructor, and taking part in in-class activities. I understand that some students are shyer than others, or may not speak English as their first language, so if this is the case please come speak to me. My expectation that all students speak in class is meant to help you develop and fine-tune your public speaking skills. Participation is worth 10 points.

If there is an emergency, you must contact me as soon as possible, preferably before class. Documentation of emergencies will be required.

### **Make-Up Exams and Assignments**

Make-up exams and papers will be allowed in the event that a true emergency has taken place. In such an event, a student must provide documentation of the emergency, and make-up the exam or paper in a timely manner as determined through talking with me. All make-up exams and papers that are not completed in the agreed upon time frame will receive a grade of zero.

### **Course Evaluation**

Exam I	20 points
Exam II	20 points
Exam III	20 points
Paper I	15 points
Paper II	15 points
Participation	10 points

### **Grading Scale**

**A: 100-90 %      B: 89-80 %**  
**C: 77-70 %      D: 69-60      F: 59 % and below**

### **Course Policies**

The classroom dynamic will be egalitarian in nature, where all, including the instructor, will have a mutual responsibility to and respect for one another as learners and human beings. It is

expected that everyone, including the instructor, will be challenged and/or made uncomfortable by some of the material discussed in class. This is normal, and everyone will be encouraged to take risks and seek out new information in thoughtful ways. I will not operate under a notion of neutrality and/or objectivity, because neither is truly possible. We all have biases and vantage points that shape our identities and perspectives on various topics. By being honest with each other, we can delve deeper and promote more meaningful learning. You will not be punished for having dissenting viewpoints, but it is required that you ethically listen to all viewpoints. (Ethical listening is a commitment to attend fully to another person in order to understand what he or she is thinking, saying, and communicating. Ethical listening is not the same as agreement; it is a revolutionary tool.)

### **Student Resources**

If you have a diagnosed and documented disability, which may cause you to have difficulty with any portion of the requirements of this course, please contact the Special Needs Counselor in the Counseling Center Room 202. Also, please inform me at the beginning of the course so that we can discuss appropriate accommodations.

If you are struggling at any point in the course with the course material or writing, the Math and Writing Center has peer tutors and assistance with writing which is free to all students. I am more than willing to meet with students who are struggling, but if you are unable to meet with me, or feel more comfortable working with a peer tutor, this is a great resource. The Math and Writing Center is located in Room 328. You can also find more information at their website: <http://www.nvcc.edu/woodbridge/tutoring-center>.

### **Academic Dishonesty:**

Cheating on exams and/or plagiarism in papers will result in an automatic grade of F. The college academic dishonesty policy is enforced in this course. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of dishonorable conduct. Such dishonesty will not be tolerated. Penalties can range from the issuance of failing grades (on an assignment, exam, or in the course) to being referred to the Dean of Student Development for further disciplinary action, including possible expulsion from the College. More detailed information about the college policy is in the college catalogue and student handbook or can be viewed on the college web page at <http://www.nvcc.edu/resources/stuhandbook>.

### **Working Classroom Agreement:**

#### **What you can expect from ME in SOC 201:**

- 1) The syllabus has been carefully, thoughtfully, and thoroughly planned.
- 2) There will be NO busy work! The activities, videos, readings, writing assignments, and exams have been carefully chosen and developed to help foster and evaluate your learning progress and growth.
- 3) I will be prepared for every class period and every topic.

- 4) I will do my part to help facilitate a meaningful, respectful, thoughtful, and critical discussion during each class period.
- 5) When lecture is necessary, I will do so in an engaging and interactive manner.
- 6) I will create a caring environment where all of our differences are welcome and completely respected.
- 7) I will be an ethical listener when students in the classroom and guest speakers are sharing with our class.
- 8) I will be more than willing to share my expertise with any students who may be struggling and wish to talk with me.
- 9) I will spend a significant amount of time and energy giving you helpful, constructive feedback on your papers, exams, and any questions you may bring to class.
- 10) I will learn as much from my experience with you as you will hopefully learn from me.

**What I can expect from YOU in SOC 201:**

- 1) You will be mindful that being late to class disrupts the experience for all. (If you are late, please enter quietly and sit near the door so not to disrupt the class discussion.)
- 2) You will not text or talk on your cell phone during class, because it is disruptive and disrespectful to your instructor and classmates.
- 3) You will not use computers or other electronic devices for purposes other than taking notes or looking up information regarding a topic we are discussing in class and require the use of the Internet to find an answer.
- 4) You will come to class having read the material assigned and prepared to engage in the topic of focus each week.
- 5) You will meet the course expectations by turning in materials on their designated due dates, unless emergencies prevent you from doing so. (In the case of an emergency, you are required to contact me beforehand, or as soon as possible, in order for accommodations to be made.)
- 6) You will share the responsibility of creating a caring classroom.
- 7) You will do your part to help facilitate a meaningful, respectful, thoughtful, and critical discussion during each class period.
- 8) You will be an ethical listener when fellow classmates, your instructor, or guest speakers are sharing in our class.
- 9) You will not plagiarize and/or knowingly use other author's ideas without properly citing them in the proper format.
- 10) You will not cheat on exams, because this ultimately does a disservice to yourself.
- 11) You can enjoy and learn from this class if you put the energy and time into preparing for it!

Final Note: Disagreement and discussion are welcome and encouraged, but there is no debating, because this tends to shut down rather than invigorate engagement and conversation. Further, there is no discounting of another's experience at any time, because we all know ourselves the best and we each have unique ideas and perspectives that need to be heard and considered in the classroom.

### Weekly Schedule and Readings:

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Readings / Assignments Due:</b>
Aug. 23	Introduction to the course and the Discipline Sociology	Review Syllabus
Aug. 28	The Sociological and Global Perspectives	Readings: Chapter 1, pp. 2 – 11
Aug. 30	Sociological Theory and Its Application	Readings: Chapter 1, pp. 12 – 23 Exercise: Prioritizing Social Problems (in class)
Sept. 4	Sociological Investigation	Readings: Chapter 2, pp. 24 – 36 Video: Milgram's Study of Obedience and The Stanford Prison Experiment (in class)
Sept. 6	Methods of Sociological Research	Readings: Chapter 2, pp. 36 – 51 Exercise: The Lifeboat Game (in class)
Sept. 11	Culture and Its Elements	Readings: Chapter 3, pp. 52 – 64 Video: Growing up Online, PBS (in class)
<b>Sept. 13</b>	<b>Cultural Diversity</b>	Readings: Chapter 3, pp. 64 – 75 Video: Turkey's Headscarf Debate, <i>New York Times</i> (in class) <b>PAPER # 1 DUE</b>
Sept. 18	Understanding Socialization	Readings: Chapter 5, pp. 104 – 119 Exercise: Questionnaire "Who am I?"
Sept. 20	Social Interaction	Readings: Chapter 6, pp. 132 – 143 Video: <i>A Divided Class</i> (in class)
Sept. 25	Study Guide for Exam I	Video: <i>A Divided Class</i> , continued (in class) No readings / Study for Exam I
<b>Sept. 27</b>	<b>Exam</b>	<b>EXAM I</b>
Oct. 2	Social Groups	Readings: Chapter 7, pp. 146 – 153
Oct. 4	Organizations	Readings: Chapter 7, pp. 153 – 165 Exercise: Your Primary and Secondary Groups (in class)
Oct. 9	Understanding Sexuality	Readings: Chapter 8, pp. 168 – 183
Oct. 11	Theories of Sexuality	Readings: Chapter 8, pp. 183 – 191 Exercise: The Heterosexual Questionnaire" by M. Rochlin
Oct. 16	Deviance and Inequality	Readings: Chapter 9, pp. 194 – 205
Oct. 18	Deviance, Race, and Gender	Readings: Chapter 9, pp. 205 – 221 Exercise: Gender Role Boxes Video: <i>Bomb It! Street Art as Revolution</i> by Jon Reiss (suggestion)

Oct. 23	Social Stratification	Readings: Chapter 10, pp. 222 – 23 Exercise: Unequal Resources Activity (in class)
<b>Oct. 25</b>	Stratification and Conflict	Readings: Chapter 10, 233 – 243 Exercise: Rules of Social Class (in class) <b>Paper # 2 DUE</b>
Oct. 30	Study Guide Exam II	No readings / Study for Exam II
<b>Nov. 1</b>	<b>Exam</b>	<b>EXAM II</b>
Nov. 6	Social Class	Readings: Chapter 11, pp. 244 – 253 Video: <i>People Like Us: Social Class in America</i> (in class)
Nov. 8	Social Mobility	Readings: Chapter 11, pp. 254 – 267 Video: <i>People Like Us: Social Class in America</i> , continued (in class)
Nov. 13	Global Stratification	Readings: Chapter 12, pp. 265 – 280
Nov. 15	Applying Theory	Readings: Chapter 12, pp. 280 – 291
Nov. 20	Gender and Inequality	Readings: Chapter 13, pp. 292 -308
Nov. 27	Theories of Gender	Readings: Chapter 13, pp. 308 – 317 Exercise: Forced Choices—Gender (in class)
Nov. 29	Social Meaning of Race and Ethnicity	Readings: Chapter 14, pp. 318 – 328 Exercise: Unequal Resources Activity (in class)
Dec. 4	Majority and Minority: Patterns of Interactions	Readings: Chapter 14, pp. 328 – 324 Video: <i>Ethnic Notions</i> (in class)
<b>Dec. 6</b>	<b>No class / Study Guide via Email</b>	<b>Study for Exam III</b>
<b>Dec. 11 – NOTE THE TIME CHANGE</b>	<b>Exam III from 1:00 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.</b>	<b>EXAM III</b>