**Introduction to Sociology**

**Instructor**

Xuewen Yan ([xy364@cornell.edu](mailto:xy364@cornell.edu))

**Course Overview**

Quoted from the American Sociological Association (ASA):

The introductory-level Sociology course is designed to introduce students to the sociological study of society. Sociology focuses on the systematic understanding of social interaction, social organization, social institutions, and social change. Major themes in sociological thinking include the interplay between the individual and society, how society is both stable and changing, the causes and consequences of social inequality, and the social construction of human life. Understanding sociology helps discover and explain social patterns and see how such patterns change over time and in different settings. By making vivid the social basis of everyday life, sociology also develops critical thinking by revealing the social structures and processes that shape diverse forms of human life.

Learning Goals

1. To understand what the sociological perspective is and how it is useful for our understanding of society.
2. To become familiar with major paradigms and concepts in sociology.
3. To be acquainted with key research areas and findings in contemporary American and Chinese sociology.
4. To be prepared for original observations and research in sociology.

**General references**

* Conley, Dalton. 2011. *You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking like a Sociologist*. WW Norton & Company.
* James, Cara, and Others. 2015. “An Introduction to Sociology 2e.” *Openstax.org*. Available online at [Introduction to Sociology 3e - OpenStax](https://openstax.org/details/books/introduction-sociology-3e)
* 戴维 波普诺 （李强等译）. 2008. 《社会学: 第十一版》，中国人民大学出版社
* Harari, Yuval Noah. 2014. *Sapiens: A brief history of humankind*. Random House.

**Course Agenda**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Meetings** | **Day** | **Proposed Topic** |
| 1 | Tuesday | What do sociologists do? |
| 2 | Thursday | A brief history of sociology |
| 3 | Tuesday | Social research methods |
| 4 | Thursday | Stratification |
| 5 | Tuesday | Gender & race/ethnicity |
| 6 | Thursday | Culture & institutions |
| 7 | Tuesday | Education |
| 8 | Thursday | Deviance & control |
| 9 | Tuesday | Groups & social networks |
| 10 | Thursday | Health & medicine |

**Readings (updated in time)**

Meeting 1

* Conley Chapter 1, Sociological Imagination; The Sociology of Sociology
* Mills, Chapter 1
* p7 exercise slides

Meeting 2

* Conley Chapter 1, The Sociology of Sociology, Two Centuries of Sociology
* Readings in Meeting 2 folder
* Watch this video: [Exchange | Chapter 2 - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhFHmzKe5nI)

Meeting 3

* Conley Chapter 2, Research 101

[An Introduction to Sociology (asanet.org)](https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/introtosociology/StudentResources/Exploring%20Data%20Resources/DataSocExplan1.html)