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Library Video Conference  
Office Hours MWF 10:40-11:30 & TTh 9:30-10:00  
Spring 2002 Oxford College of Emory University

## INTRODUCTION TO GENERAL SOCIOLOGY SOC 101

**AIMS OF COURSE:** This course introduces students to the methodologies and conceptual "tool kits" of sociology and the interpretive social sciences. We will give particular attention to problems of social inequality and social reproduction: how are relations of power and domination maintained, or altered, over time? Like professional social scientists, students in this course will move back and forth between "theory" and "practice," carefully considering the assigned readings in light of empirical observations, and re-interpreting their observations in light of our analytic discussions and readings.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** In addition to keeping up with the reading and fully participating in class discussion, four short (5 pages) papers and sociological journal are required. One entry of this sociological journal should be developed into a form that may be presented on the web, incorporating images and text. (details below) A final examination will be given.

Regular LearnLink postings are required (at least one per week, preferably more) in response to the readings, to other students' postings, class discussion and students' day to day observations. Occasional (usually unannounced) short quizzes on the readings will be given. Written work will be partly based on original student research on campus social and cultural life.

Three papers (5 pages each)	15 points each	45%
One midterm examination	15 point	15%
One final examination (15 point)		20%
Sociological Portfolio.		10%
Class participation (includes quizzes, learnlink)		10 %

You are expected to come to class on time having read and thought carefully about the assigned readings. Please remember to bring hard copies of all the assigned readings for that day (including those you have printed out from electronic reserve) and to bring your notes on those readings. I advise you to

bring relevant learnlink postings by fellow students as well. Pop quizzes may be given from time to time, without prior announcement.

**Attendance and Lateness Policy:** Students are required to attend each class, on time. It is the student's responsibility to sign in on the sign in sheet at the front of the classroom. Missed in-class quizzes will not be re-administered, regardless of circumstances (including illness or family emergencies). Students will not be directly penalized for the first three classes that they miss (although they will miss the chance to take a quiz that day, if one is administered). For each subsequent class missed (regardless of cause) a grade level will be deducted from the student's course total (for example, a B+ will turn into a B). Eight absences will be regarded as grounds for failing the course. One or more points will be deducted for each lateness or for leaving class prematurely.

**Note on Writing and Plagerism.** Plus/minus grading is used in this course and the Honor Code is always in course. Students must be scrupulous to avoid plagerism, and to give very precise and complete citations for any work used in any way. Always make it precisely clear to the reader through the use of quotation marks and citations which words, if any, are taken from some other source. Be very careful if you draw on any internet source to give the precise source of each and every word used. Lifting text from the web, without giving full and complete attribution, is considered an extremely serious violation of the honor code. In all essays, please make specific references, as appropriate, with internal citations: for example, "Paradoxically, common sense actions are often not understood consciously in terms of common sense. (Schutz:19)" Avoid direct quotations from the text whenever possible; I am much more interested in your paraphrasing of, and commentary upon, the author's arguments than in your ability to quote directly. Each paper must be typed, double spaced and in 10 or 12 point. Please append a bibliography.

**READINGS:** Reading is an active process of questioning and reinterpretation. As you take written notes on Bauman and the other texts, try to put the author's concepts into your own words, rather than quoting verbatim. Indicate when a particular passage is puzzling or ambiguous, and be sure to bring up these points in class discussion or on LearnLink. Your written notes on the readings are a valuable resource that will serve as the basis for your essays and exam preparation. You are expected to bring these reading notes to class and to revise them in light of class discussion.

As you read any academic book or essay, please ask yourself the following questions:

- \* What major questions does the author formulate at the start?

- \* To what extent does the work as a whole answer these questions?
- \* What new questions does the work raise by its conclusion?

Pose yourself these questions, as well, about your draft essays.

**SOCIOLOGICAL PORTFOLIO:** Throughout the semester, please keep a sociological journal, recording your observations about social interactions on the campus and in the wider surroundings, as well as your thoughts on the readings and class discussions. You may type entries or write them in long hand. Part of the journal will be the required observation exercises, listed below.

Some of the readings are on electronic reserve, available from the library home page. The following books are available for purchase in the college bookstore:

- ? A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of the Lynching of African-Americans in the American South, 1882-1930 by Stewart Emory Tolnay, E. M. Beck 1995. Univ of Illinois Pr
- ? Dalton Conley. Being Black, Living in the Red: Race, Wealth and Social Policy in America. University of California Press, 1999.
- ? Sudhir Venkatesh. American Project. The Rise and Fall of an Urban Ghetto. 2000
- ? Elijah Anderson. Code of the Street; Decency, Violence and the Moral Life of the Inner City. W.W. Norton. 1999.
- ? Stephanie Coontz. The Way We Really Are: Coming to Terms with America's Changing Families. Basic Books, 1997.

## **I. The Idea of Society; The Problem of Shared Knowledge.**

We start the course with fundamental but difficult questions: what do we mean by "society"? How do we know the "social" exists? In what sense does "society" or "culture" emerge out of, or transcend, individual experience and personal consciousness?

Thursday, January 17. **Introduction: The Sociological Project.**

Observation Exercise #1: Find a place to observe human behavior for at least 15 minutes. To what extent do the actors take for granted certain features of their interaction? What evidence can you observe of the "taken for granted"? Please post your observations on LearnLink by Monday, 1/21 at 5:00 p.m. Read your fellow students' comments, and bring hard copies of the three most interesting postings to class on Tuesday.

Tuesday. January 22. Alfred Schutz. The Frame of Unquestioned Constructs. (handout)

*\*\*\*Required: Special Event on the Emory Atlanta campus. Opening ceremony of iA Dream Deferredi exhibition. Cannon Chapel. 6:00 p.m.*

Observation Exercise #2: A Social Drama. Acting as a sociologist, carefully observe all aspects of the ceremony at Cannon Chapel. What messages about race and identity in American society are communicated by ritual participants, in words or in deeds? What images of the past are evoked by speakers, and why? What kinds of social alliances or networks are being formed among students before, during and after this event? When does the audience appear to be acting as an organic body, and do its members exhibit differentiated reactions? Everything is potential of interest: when people fidget or yawn, when they laugh, or cry, how long they clap.

Thursday January 24. **Are We Free Agents?**

Bauman. Chapter One. (iFreedom and Dependencei.)

Erving Goffman. "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life."

Please post at least one page of detailed observations about the Dream Deferred Opening on the class LearnLink conference by Friday, January 25 at 4:00 p.m. . Be sure to read all your fellow students posting over the weekend, and think about them carefully in light of the initial readings; print out the three most interesting postings and bring hard copies to class on Tuesday.

Tuesday January 29. **Opposition and Solidarity.**

Bauman. Chapter Two. "Us and Them." pp. 37-53.

Thorne and Luria. Sexuality and Gender in Children's Daily Worlds. DES. Pp. 153-164.

Thursday January 31. Georg Simmel. iThe Strangeri (on electronic reserve)

Friday, February 1 by 4:00 p.m. Post on Learnlink an observation or reflection about ius and themi on campus or in American society more generally. Who are the istrangersi among us?

Tuesday February 5. Paper 1 due at start of class. Select three LearnLink observation postings (one of these may be your own) and try to account for these

observations in light of the readings we have done thus far. You might concentrate on the problem of the taken for granted, the nature of freedom and dependence, or the mutual definition of self and other.

*Lecture on Lynching*

**Part II. The Problem of the 'Stranger' and Mass Violence: Lynching in the American South**

Thursday February 7. Video: TBA

Tuesday February 12. A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of the Lynching of African-Americans in the American South, 1882-1930 by Stewart Emory Tolnay, E. M. Beck 1995.

Thursday February 14. A Festival of Violence

To be scheduled: Class field trip to Walton County, to visit site of the 1946 Moore's Ford Lynching.

Tuesday February 19 A Festival of Violence.

Thursday February 21. Orlando Patterson, 'Rituals of Blood'

Tuesday February 26, Paper 2 due at start of class: Compare the approaches of Patterson and Tolnay & Beck to lynching. Can their explanations be reconciled?

*Lecture on Race and Class.*

**Part III. Race and Class**

Thursday February 28. Start: Dalton Conley. Being Black, Living in the Red: Race, Wealth and Social Policy in America. University of California Press, 1999. pp.1-81

Tuesday March 5 Being Black, Living in the Red. Pp.82-152,

Thursday March 7. Midterm Examination. (Please bring blue book)

Tuesday March 12. No class: spring vacation

Thursday March 14. No class: spring vacation

Tuesday March 19 . Sudhir Venkatesh. American Project: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Ghetto pp. 1-109

Learnlink posting by Friday at 5:00 p.m. : Was the "fall" of the project described by Venkatesh inevitable, by virtue of the project's design; or might alternate outcomes have been possible?

Thursday March 21. American Project: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Ghetto pp.110-190

Tuesday March 26. **Class Exercise: Debating the Role of Gangs: Recreating a Community Meeting in Chicago Public Housing, c.1990**

In this exercise, students will simulate a public meeting of the sort that was held in the Robert Taylor Homes. Before the meeting, each student will prepare a detailed fictional "biography" of a specific character, drawing on information from Venkatesh's book and other sources. Each biography should be posted on Learnlink, so students will already be familiar with one another's characters. We will a question that was seriously discussed by tenants with Chicago Public Authority during the late 1980s: should gangs, such as the Black Kings, be incorporated into the tenants' efforts to create a secure and livable environment within Public Housing projects? Students will the role of longtime tenants, children, Chicago Housing Authority police officer, and gang members.

Thursday March 28 American Project: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Ghetto. pp.191-288

Tuesday April 2. Begin: Elijah Anderson. Code of the Street; Decency, Violence and the Moral Life of the Inner City. W.W. Norton. 1999.

Thursday April 4 Code of the Street.

Tuesday April 9 Conclude: Code of the Street.

Thursday April 11. Due at Start of Class: Paper 3 on Violence, Race and Class in the Inner City. How do Venkatesh and Anderson differ in their explanations of the causes of violence among the urban poor? To what extent do they agree?

*Lecture on the American Family.*

#### **Part IV. Changing Families**

In the final section of the course, we examine the changing organization of American families. Each student will conduct an intensive interview with at least

one family, with particular attention to the relations between work and family responsibility, time-scheduling, childcare and the creation and reproduction of family culture. We will hold several workshops on this student research.

Tuesday April 16 Stephanie Coontz. The Way We Really Are: Coming to Terms with America's Changing Families. Basic Books, 1997. pp. 1-95

Thursday April 18 The Way We Really Are. Pp. 96-180

Tuesday April 23 Workshop: Analyzing our Changing Families.

Thursday April 25 Workshop: Analyzing our Changing Families.

Tuesday April 30 Final Class. (Sociological Portfolio Due)

*Final Examination. Please see schedule.*