

Introduction to Sociology: SOC 101

Oxford College of Emory University

Spring 2009

Dr Valerie Singer

Office: 101 Language Hall

Office Hours: Mondays 1-2:30, Tuesdays 10-11, Wednesday 9:30-10:30, Thursdays 9:30-11, and/or by appointment.

I encourage you to make an appointment with me whenever needed.

Email: vsinger@emory.edu

Office Phone: x 4614

Course Objectives:

This course will introduce you to the basic concepts of sociology. By the end of the course each student will be able to demonstrate familiarity with:

- The meaning of a “sociological imagination”
- The elements of social structure and how these elements interact to create society
- The four main sociological “perspectives” – functionalism, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism, and the feminist perspective
- The social construction of concepts such as race and gender, and the effect of these concepts on U.S. society
- The meaning and function of social institutions, (such as family, religion, education) in society
- The sociological significance of our institution’s history and present, both Oxford College and Emory University
- The relationship of social stratification to individual life change
- The dilemmas of the working poor in current society
- The significance and dynamics of social movement activism in current society

Required Texts:

- Essentials of Sociology, a Down to Earth Approach (8th edition) by James Henslin
- Diamond, A Struggle for Environmental Justice in Louisiana’s Chemical Corridor by Steve Lerner
- The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down by Anne Fadimann
- Additional readings on electronic reserve through the library

Course Grade Breakdown:

Exam One	15%
Exam Two	20%
Exam Three (Final)	25%
Attendance and Participation:	15%
Weekly reading quizzes:	10%
Term paper:	15%

Total: 100%

Academic Honesty:

Both Oxford College and I take the matter of academic honesty very seriously. I would like to remind you that you are required to follow the Honor Code. Any suspected breaches to the Honor Code will be referred to the Honor Council for review and possible disciplinary action. This includes acts of plagiarism. I have found in the past that many college students do not understand what does and does not constitute plagiarism. We will be discussing proper citation methods later in the semester.

Exams:

Each exam will include definitions, short answers, and at least one essay. The third (final) exam will be cumulative. I will distribute a review sheet at least two days before each exam.

Please note: if you miss an exam due to unexpected circumstances, you **MUST** contact me within 24 hours of the exam period, or you will not be able to make up the exam. Missed exams can only be made up in extreme situations, i.e. hospitalization or death of a family member. If you are ill at a scheduled exam period, you are expected to take the exam anyway. If you are severely ill, you must contact me **BEFORE** the exam for permission to reschedule.

Attendance:

I will be taking attendance each day. Each student is allowed TWO absences during the semester. This is to allow for the occasional illness, personal matter, or accidental nap.

Each additional absence will result in a 1 point lose to your attendance and participation grade (out of 15 points). There are only two exceptions to this policy: 1) absences for religious holidays *if you notify me at least 24 hours ahead of time that you will be absent*, and 2) extreme unexpected situations (extended illnesses, death in the family, etc.). If you have an extreme situation that prevents you from attending class, please notify me as soon as possible, and be prepared to show documentation of the situation.

Participation:

Your active participation is a vital part of this course. You are expected to have carefully read the assigned materials before each class session, and come prepared for discussion. I believe strongly that you can each learn a great deal in the classroom from your fellow students, not just from your professor. We are all both learners and teachers. You share with me the responsibility of creating a classroom atmosphere in which all of your

classmates feel comfortable expressing their individual questions, ideas, and opinions. Students with perfect attendance who remain silent in the classroom will receive a B- for their attendance and participation grade.

I will be setting up a class conference for us on Learn Link. **As part of your participation grade, you need to contribute to the class conference regularly.** Your contributions may include comments on the readings or in-class lectures, discussions, or films. I also encourage you to write “discussion questions” for the rest of the class to respond to or comment on. I envision this conference as being a way to create more dialogue between students on how sociological concepts apply to and are reflected in our society.

Quizzes:

You will be quizzed weekly on the readings. These reading quizzes will ask questions which are obvious and simple to answer if you have done the readings, and otherwise impossible. The day of the week of the quizzes will vary, so there is a ‘pop’ nature to them. Your first quiz will include the syllabus itself! At the end of the semester, I will count your 10 highest quiz grades. If you are absent from or LATE TO class, you will not be able to make up the day’s quiz.

Term Paper:

The term paper, due, is a 5-6 page paper will be worth 15% of your final grade. For this paper you will discuss how the building blocks of social structure differ within Hmong and American culture... and how the clash between the social structures of these two cultures shapes the life and story of Lia Lee. For this paper you will use **ONLY** resources from within class, primary The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down. I will discuss requirements for the paper with you in detail later in the semester.

Grading:

Please note that I WILL be grading using the plus-minus system.

100-93% = A	79-77% = C+
92-90% = A-	76-73% = C
89-87% = B+	72-70% = C-
86-83% = B	69-67% = D+
82-80% = B-	66-60% = D
	59% and below = F

Many students worry about professors’ subjectivity in grading. Please remember: I **NEVER give** grades, students **earn** their grades, irrespective of how I feel about them as individual people. The key to an A in this course is hard work and comprehension of sociology, not the ‘correct opinion’ or being buddies with Dr Singer.

Course Schedule

(any changes made to this course schedule will be posted on the class conference)

- January 15 Course introductions
- January 20 ***Sociological Perspectives***
Henslin (textbook) chapter 1
The Promise of Sociology
- January 22 ***The Importance of Culture***
Henslin chapter 2
Invitation to Sociology
- January 27 ***Socialization***
Film: Becoming a Woman in Okrika
Henslin chapter 3
- January 29 ***The Building Blocks of Social Structure***
Henslin chapters 4 & 5
- February 3 ***“Deviance”***
Henslin chapter 6
- February 5 ***Gender***
Henslin chapter 10
How Subtle Sex Discrimination Works (on e-reserve)
Film: Killing us softly
- February 10 ***Sociological perspectives on sexuality***
When Debbie Met Christina (on e-reserve)
Changing Advice to American Women (e-reserve)
- February 12 **Exam 1**
- February 17 ***Social Class in American and Global Stratification***
Henslin chapter 7
Who Has How Much and Why (e-reserve)
- February 19 ***Understanding America’s Working Poor***
Henslin chapter 8
Getting a Job in Harlem
(on e-reserve)
- February 24 ***Race and Racism in American Society***
Henslin chapter 9
Film: Ethnic Notions

- February 26 *The Souls of Black Folks*
 When Did Jews Become White Folks?
 America is the Land of Equal Opportunity
 (on e-reserve)
- March 3 ***Using Our Sociological Imagination:***
 Emory's Early Racial History in Black and White
 Andrew Sledd *The Negro, Another View*
 The Voice of a Prophet
- March 5 ***Emory's Early Racial History Beyond Black and White***
 Legacy of Heart and Mind pp 48-49
 Some of My Best Friends pp 169-173
- March 9-14 Spring Break
- March 17 ***Emory and Oxford: The Past Fifty Years of Change***
 Racial Integration, a look at Bowdon and Johnson
 (segments of Turner's articles)
 Dean Bowen's White Paper
- March 19 ***Family***
 Henslin chapter 12
 The Nuclear Family is the Backbone of American Society (e-reserve)
- March 24 **Exam 2**
- March 26 *The Spirit Catches You* Chapters 1-5
 Henslin chapter 13
- March 31 *The Spirit Catches You* chaps 6-10
- April 2 *The Spirit Catches You* chaps 11-15
- April 7 *The Spirit Catches You* chaps 16-19
- April 9 ***Social Movements and Societal Change***
 Henslin chapter 15
 On the Origins of Social Movements
 Making Our Lives Count
- Friday, April 10th **Term Paper Due**
- April 14 ***Environmental Racism***
 Diamond pp 1-54

April 16	<u>Diamond</u> 55-118
April 21	<u>Diamond</u> 119-152
April 23	<u>Diamond</u> 153-226
April 28	<u>Diamond</u> 227-286 Last Day of Class

Final Exam: Monday May 4th 9-12

Please note: I have no power to change your final exam period, or to let individuals take their final at a different time. The only person who can authorize this is Dean Anderson, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, and such permission is only given under exceptional circumstances. The administration is quite strict on this point.