

Introduction to Sociology: SOC 101

Oxford College of Emory University

Spring 2011

Dr Valerie Singer

Office: 101 Language Hall

Office Hours: **By appointment only.** Please email me for an appointment or for any other concern.

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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 society

Required Texts:

- Soc by Jon Witt
- The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down by Anne Fadiman
- Soul of a Citizen by Paul Roget Loeb (**second edition mandatory**)
- Additional readings on electronic reserve through the library

Course Grade Breakdown:

Exam One	15%
Exam Two	20%
Exam Three	25%
Interview assignment	10%
Participation:	15%
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 multiple choice questions. 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:

This semester I have no formal attendance policy. You are adults and must take the primary responsibility for your time and your education. **HOWEVER**, please realize that you **CANNOT** do well in this class without being present in the classroom. You cannot get a good participation grade, and you cannot learn all of the material necessary. Much of what you need to know is presented in class lectures and not repeated in the readings. I do not give students copies of my power point presentations, so you must be present in class, both physically and mentally, to take thorough notes to succeed in this course.

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. Students who miss a great deal of class, no matter what their participation when they are present, will receive a failing participation grade.

ALL CELL PHONES MUST BE TURNED OFF IN CLASS.

LAPTOPS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE CLASSROOM.

I am sorry, but too many students abused that privilege in previous semesters. You will have to take notes the old fashioned way.

Papers:

In this course you will write two papers....the first is an interview assignment for which you will work with one other classmate to interview Oxford students about their experiences of class and/or race. You are expected to work with your partner, but turn in individual (thus DIFFERENT) papers. Each paper should be approximately 3 pages long. This first assignment includes a 5 minute class presentation of your findings and will be worth 10% of your final grade.

The term paper 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. You MUST NOT discuss your paper with any other present or former sociology students. I will discuss requirements for the paper with you in detail later in the semester.

Late Papers are graded down one full letter grade for each 24 hours late, including Saturday and Sunday.

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

(I reserve the right to make additions or changes to this schedule.)

January 19	Introductions What is Sociology?
January 21	<i>Sociological Perspectives</i> Witt (textbook) chapter 1 <i>Invitation to Sociology (e-reserve)</i>
January 24	<i>Sociological Research and Early Sociologists</i> Witt chapter 2 <i>The Promise of Sociology (e-reserve)</i>

- January 26 ***Culture***
Witt Chapter 3
- January 28 ***Socialization***
Film: Becoming a Woman in Okrika
Witt chapter 4
- January 31 ***The Five Building Blocks of Social Structure***
Witt chapter 5
- February 2 ***Deviance: When Norms are Broken or Challenged***
Witt chapter 6
- February 4 ***Family***
Witt chapter 7
The Nuclear Family is the Backbone of American Society (e-reserve)
- February 7 Gender
Witt chapter 12
Changing Advice to American Women (e-reserve)
- February 9 *How Subtle Sex Discrimination Works* (on e-reserve)
Film: Killing us softly
- February 11 ***Sociological perspectives on sexuality and homosexuality***
When Debbie Met Christina (on e-reserve)
- February 14 The American Marriage Debate: Society in Action
Readings TBA
- February 16 **Exam One**
- February 18 ***Social Class in American and Global Stratification***
Witt chapter 10
Getting a Job in Harlem
- February 21 Witt chapter 11
Film: Black Gold
- February 23 ***Focus on Global Inequality: Haiti***
(readings TBA)
- February 25 ***Race and Racism in American Society***
Witt chapter 13
Film: Ethnic Notions

- February 28 *The Souls of Black Folks*
America is the Land of Equal Opportunity
(on e-reserve)
- March 2 *When Did Jews Become White Folks?*
- March 4 ***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 7-11 ***SPRING BREAK***
- March 14 ***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
Exploring Race and Class in the lives of Oxford Students
– interview assignments
- March 16 Witt chapter 14
- March 18 Class Presentations
- March 21 Class Presentations
Interview Essays due
- March 23 **Exam 2**
- March 25 The Spirit Catches You Chapters 1-4
- March 28 The Spirit Catches You Chapters 5-8
- March 30 The Spirit Catches You Chapters 9-12
- April 2 The Spirit Catches You Chapters 13-16
- April 5 The Spirit Catches You Chapters 17-19
- April 7 ***Social Movements and Societal Change***
On the Origins of Social Movements
Witt Chapter 15
- April 9 Soul of a Citizen Intro and Ch 1
Final Paper Due
- April 12 Soul of a Citizen chapters 2-4

April 14 Soul of a Citizen chapters 5 and 6

April 15 Soul of a Citizen chapters 7 and 8

April 18 Class canceled for Passover

April 20 Soul of a Citizen chapters 9 and 10

April 22 Soul of a Citizen chapters 11 through postscript

April 25 Last Day of Class
IN CLASS FINAL EXAM