

# ***Introduction to Sociology: SOC 101***

Oxford College of Emory University

Spring 2010

Dr Valerie Singer

Office: 101 Language Hall

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 1:30-2:30 or by appointment. (Making an appointment is the BEST way to meet with me in person. 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
- Additional readings on electronic reserve through the library

## **Course Grade Breakdown:**

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

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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 loss 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.

**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**

January 13	Course introductions
January 15	<i>Sociological Perspectives</i> Witt (textbook) chapter 1
January 18	No Class, MLK day
January 20	<i>Invitation to Sociology (e-reserve)</i> <i>The Promise of Sociology (e-reserve)</i>
January 22	<i>Sociological Research and Early Sociologists</i> Witt chapter 2
January 25	<i>Culture</i> Witt Chapter 3
January 27	<i>Socialization</i> Film: Becoming a Woman in Okrika Witt chapter 4

- January 29     ***The Five Building Blocks of Social Structure***  
Witt chapter 5
- February 1     ***Deviance: When Norms are Broken or Challenged***  
Witt chapter 6
- February 3     ***Family***  
Witt chapter 7  
*The Nuclear Family is the Backbone of American Society* (e-reserve)
- February 5     Gender  
Witt chapter 12  
*Changing Advice to American Women* (e-reserve)
- February 8     *How Subtle Sex Discrimination Works* (on e-reserve)  
Film: Killing us softly
- February 10    ***Sociological perspectives on sexuality and homosexuality***  
*When Debbie Met Christina* (on e-reserve)  
*The Family of Women chapter 1* (on e-reserve)
- February 12    **Exam 1**
- February 15    ***Social Class in American and Global Stratification***  
Witt chapter 10  
*Getting a Job in Harlem*
- February 17    Witt chapter 11  
Film: Black Gold
- February 19    ***Focus on Global Inequality: Haiti***  
(readings TBA)
- February 22    ***Race and Racism in American Society***  
Witt chapter 13  
Film: Ethnic Notions
- February 24    *The Souls of Black Folks*  
*America is the Land of Equal Opportunity*  
(on e-reserve)
- February 26    *When Did Jews Become White Folks?*
- March 1        ***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 3      ***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 5      ***Emory and Oxford: The Past Fifty Years of Change***  
Racial Integration, a look at Bowdon and Johnson  
(segments of Turner's articles)
- Mar 8-13      Spring Break  
***THERE WILL BE NO WORK ASSIGNED OVER SPRING BREAK. I  
WANT ALL STUDENTS TO TAKE BREAK FROM THIS COURSE,  
AND COME BACK REFRESHED AND READY TO WORK HARD  
FOR SEVEN MORE WEEKS***
- March 15      ***Where are your sociological imaginations?....  
Checking In Mid-Semester***
- March 17      Witt chapter 14
- March 19      ***Sociology and Public Health***  
***Reading TBA***
- March 22      **Exam 2**
- March 24      The Spirit Catches You Chapters 1-3
- March 26      The Spirit Catches You Chapters 4-6
- March 29      The Spirit Catches You Chapters 7-9
- March 31      The Spirit Catches You chaps 10-12
- April 2      The Spirit Catches You chaps 13-15
- April 5      The Spirit Catches You chaps 16-19
- April 7      Witt chapter 15
- April 9      ***Social Movements and Societal Change***  
***On the Origins of Social Movements***  
**Paper Due**
- April 12      ***Making Our Lives Count***  
***We Don't Have to Be Saints***

April 14	<i>Blessed Unrest</i> by Paul Hawken
April 16	<i>The Long Green</i>
April 19	<i>Unforeseen Fruits</i> <i>We Interrupt this Empire</i>
April 21	<i>The Call of Stories</i> <i>Values, Work, and Family</i>
April 23	Exam Review
April 26	Last Day of Class <b><u>Exam 3</u></b>