

Dr. Mark Auslander	Tel. 770.784.4664
TTh 1):11:15	mausland@learnlink.emory.edu
Library Video Conference (2 nd floor)	Office Hours: Mon 9-9:30 & 2-4, Tues 2-3, Fri 1:30-2:30 and by appt
Fall 2001	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.

Four papers (5 pages each)	15 points each	60%
One take home examination (15 point)		15%
Sociological Journal.		10%
Web-ready entry		5%
Class participation (includes quizzes, extra 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 authors' 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: The core text for this course is "Thinking Sociologically," by Zygmunt Bauman, a rather philosophical overview of sociology and modern social thought. We will work through the book slowly over the semester, in reference to the other assigned readings. However, I encourage you to read Bauman's entire book during the first weeks of the term, and to return repeatedly to it throughout the course.

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 JOURNAL: 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.

WEB-READY JOURNAL ENTRY: You must submit at least one journal entry/observation exercise in a form that can be uploaded to the web. (Some of you may choose to use the latest Learnlink client to do this). Each student will be assigned a specific due date for this project; please burn a CD and submit it on time to me.

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:

Zygmunt Bauman, Thinking Sociologically.

James M. Henslin (Editor) Down to Earth Sociology : Introductory Readings

Sudhir Venkatesh. American Project. The Rise and Fall of an Urban Ghetto.

Mary Patillo-McCoy. Black Picket Fences : Privilege and Peril Among the Black Middle Class

Max Weber. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.

David Brooks. Bobos in Paradise. The New Upper Class and How They Got There. Touchstone (Simon and Schuster). 2000.

Course Outline

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. August 30. **Introduction.** How to read carefully: discuss in class, Alfred Schutz. “The Frame of Unquestioned Constructs,”

Observation Exercise #1: Reproducing the Social. Acting as a sociologist, Carefully observe the Convocation ceremony at Allen Memorial Thursday evening. What messages about social institutions (Oxford College, Emory University or Higher Education in general) are being 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, how long they clap.

Please post at least one page of detailed observations about convocation on the class LearnLink conference by Friday August 31 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. September 4. **Glimpsing the Social, Apprehending Ourselves.**

Peter Berger. “Exploring the Social World” DES 1. Pp. 3-7.

Zygmunt Bauman. Introduction. Thinking Sociologically. Pp. 1-19.

Fei Xiatong. “The Shallowness of Cultural Tradition” (1943-1944) pp. 171-181. (handout)

Discuss in class: Is Fei Xiatong correct in his characterization of North American culture? Are we fundamentally lacking in deep traditions? How might he account for the Allen Memorial convocation ceremony, a seemingly “traditional” event?

Thursday, September 6. **Are We Free Agents?**

Bauman. Chapter One. ("Freedom and Dependence".)

Erving Goffman. "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life." (DES Chap. 11. pp. 117-127)

Discuss again: Schutz. "The Frame of Unquestioned Constructs"

Observation exercise 2, "Presentation of Self." During this week, please select a location on campus (the library, the Dining room, a Residence Hall lounge, and describe in detail how those you observe "present" themselves in Goffman's terms. What rules appear to govern these performances (of clothing, comportment, gesture, and so forth?) You may wish to sign out a wireless laptop in the library for the purpose of making notes.

Learnlink. By Friday 9/7 at 4:00 p.m. Post detailed notes on observation exercise 2. You may wish to discuss if Goffman's model adequately accounts for your observed data. Please read your fellow students' postings over the weekend; again, please bring hard copies of the three most interesting postings to class and be prepared to discuss them.

Tuesday, September 11, **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.

Discuss yet again: Schutz. "The Frame of Unquestioned Constructs"

Thursday, September 13. **Others**

Bauman, Chapter Three. "Strangers." pp. 53-70

Georg Simmel. "The Stranger" (on electronic reserve)

Observations Exercise 3: Pick a location (it could be the same as last week or different) and observe social interactions, with attention to patterned contrasts between social groups. You might pay attention for interest to gender differences among students, or to the contrast between students and service workers (on the grounds crew or dining service), or to faculty/student interactions.

Learnlink. By Friday 9/14 at 4:00 p.m. Post detailed notes on observation exercise 3. You may wish to discuss if Bauman's model adequately accounts for your observed data, or if Thorne and Luria's concept of "social scripts" is helpful in making sense of what you observed. Please read your fellow students' postings over the weekend; again, please bring hard copies of the three most interesting postings to class and be prepared to discuss them.

Tuesday, September 18. **Knowing, and Not Knowing, Others**

Georg Simmel. Secrecy, Chapters One and Two. pp. 307-44 (on electronic reserve)

Observation Exercise: Please write something about secrecy on campus. You may post this on learnlink or write it only in your journal.

Thursday., September 20, Georg Simmel. Secret Society. on electronic reserve. Pp. 345-376 (on electronic reserve)

Monday. September 24. First paper due at 9:00 a.m. in Dr. Auslander's office.. **The Realm of the "Taken for Granted" at Oxford.** Bauman argues that 'common sense' is neither natural nor automatic, but is socially determined. Present an analysis of some aspect of "common sense" on the Oxford College campus. Your discussion should thoughtfully take into account all of the readings we have done thus far, including Schutz, and make specific references to at least three LearnLink observations by fellow students (please print and out attach these observations to your essay.)

II. Capitalism and Modernity: Classic Discussions

In this section of the course, we consider the nature of capitalism and modernity." We begin with two classic considerations, George Simmel's discussion of the metropolis, and Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*". We then turn to a more recent attempt desire and privilege among the American upper middle class. To what extent is Weber's analysis still relevant in understanding how capitalist culture operates in contemporary North America?

Tuesday, September 25. Georg Simmel. "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (on electronic reserve)

Thursday, September 27. Max Weber. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. pp. 35-94. (N.B. read pp. 47-78 very closely and always be sure to read Weber's footnotes.)

Observation Exercise #4. During this week, observe people's interactions with, and around, money. Or talk to people about their feelings towards money.

Learnlink: By Friday 9/28 at 4:00 p.m. Post notes on observation exercise # 4.

Tuesday, October 4. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism." pp. 95-154

Thursday, October 6. " Protestant Ethic." pp. 155-183

Observation #5: This week, select a locale in which you might observe the kind of phenomena characterized by Weber; you might go to a bank, or a "rationalized" institution. Post your observations on Learnlink by Friday, 10/7.

Tuesday, October 9. Ritzer. "The McDonaldization of Society", in DES.

Thursday, October 11. Karl Marx. Capital (brief selection)

Friday, October 12. **Paper 2 due.** (5 pages) by 4:00 p.m. Compare the approaches to modern experience and capitalism taken by Simmel, Weber, Ritzer and Marx.

Tuesday, October 16. Fall Break: No Class.

Part III. Poverty and Inequality.

Thursday, October 18. **The Underclass.**

Herbert Gans, "The Uses of Poverty: The Poor Pay All." DES 30. pp. 336-342

Jonathan Kozol. "Savage Inequalities." DES 31, pp. 343-351.

See video on Cabrini.

Tuesday, October 23. Sudhir Venkatesh. American Project: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Ghetto pp. 1-109

Thursday, October 25. American Project: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Ghetto pp. 110-190

Bauman. Chapter Five. "Gifts and Exchange."

Learnlink posting by Friday 10/256 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?

Tuesday, October 30. **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, November 1. American Project: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Ghetto. pp.191-288

Monday, November 5. Paper 3 due in Dr. Auslander's office by 9:00 a.m. Propose an alternate development plan for the Robert Taylor Homes, based on the readings and our discussions. You may wish to integrate the voice of your fictional character into the proposal.

Part IV. Race, Class, and "Agency".

Tuesday, November 6. Bauman, Chapter Six. "Power and Choice."

Thursday, November 8. Mary Pattillo-McCoy. Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril Among the Black Middle Class pp. 1-43

Friday Learnlink posting: How different does the African American Chicago neighborhood described by Pattillo-McCoy seem to be from that described by Venkatesh? How do you account for the similarities and differences.

Tuesday, November 13. Black Picket Fences. pp. 44-116

Thursday, November 15. Black Picket Fences. pp.117-146

Friday Learnlink posting: propose an analysis of an advertisement (Nike or another brand) along the lines proposed by Patillo—McCoy.

Tuesday, November 20. Patillo-McCoy. pp.167-225

Paper 4 due. Wednesday, November 21 by 12 noon in Dr. Auslander's office.

V. Culture and Consumption

Tuesday, November 27. David Brooks. Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How they got there. pp. 9-102.

Thursday, November 29. Video in class, tba (Dr. Auslander will be out of town, at the annual Anthropology meetings in Washington D.C.)

Friday Learnlink/Observation Exercise: Go to a locale (a shopping mall, boutique, themed restaurant) of the sort described by Brooks; what do you see, and how do people act there?

Tuesday, December 4 Bobos. Pp. 103-188

Thursday, December 6. Bobos. Pp.189-273

Tuesday, December 11. Final Class. Hand in sociological journal Take home examination distributed in class.

Friday, December 14. **Take home examination due** in Dr. Auslander's office by 4:00 p.m.