

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

**Oxford College of Emory University**

**Fall 2005**

**Dr Valerie Singer**

Office: 214 C Seney Hall

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or by appointment (any changes in office hours will be posted to the class conference)

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(Feel free to call me at home, however I ask that you don't call after 9 PM.)

## **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 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 within current society

## **Required Texts:**

- Essentials of Sociology by Lindsey and Beach
- Nickel and Dimed, on not getting by in America by Barbara Ehrenreich
- 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%
Pop quizzes:	5%
Reflection papers: (2@ 10% each)	20%

**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 multiple choice and short answer questions. The second and third exam will also include one essay question. The third (final) exam will be partially cumulative, in that it will address themes we have discussed and built upon throughout the semester, and any terms or concepts that the majority of the class did not master in earlier sections of the course. There will be a review session before each exam.

**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 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 at least once a week.** 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.

**Pop Quizzes:**

There will be six pop quizzes over the course of the semester. These quizzes will be designed to test whether or not you have done the assigned reading for the day. If you

have done the readings, the quizzes will be quite easy. If you have not done the readings, the quizzes will be impossible to pass. Quizzes will be given at the beginning of class, and students who are absent or late to that day's class cannot make up a quiz. I will be dropping your lowest quiz grade so that the top 5 quizzes are worth 5% of your final grade.

### **Reflection Papers:**

In addition to your thoughts and comments on the class conference, you will write two more formal reflection papers during the semester. Each paper should be approximately 5 pages, and each will be worth 10% of your final grade. I will ask you to reflect on some of the issues discussed in the course readings, giving you specific questions a week before the paper's due date. These papers should illustrate to me that you are doing the reading with a significant level of depth and engagement, and that you are able to apply sociological concepts to specific examples.

### **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

### **Course Schedule**

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

Aug 31	Course introductions
Sept 2	Sociological Perspectives L&B (textbook) chapter 1
Sept 7	<i>Invitation to Sociology</i> and <i>The Promise of Sociology</i> (on e-reserve)
Sept 9	The Importance of Culture L&B chapter 2
Sept 12	The Building Blocks of Social Structure L&B chapter 3
Sept 14	Film: <i>Becoming a Woman in Okrika</i> Socialization L&B chapter 4
Sept 16	The Social Construction of Gender

	L&B chapter 10
Sept 19	Film: Killing us softly
Sept 21	Sexuality L&B chapter 5
Sept 23	<i>When Debbie Met Christina</i> (on e-reserve)
Sept 26	Exam Review
Sept 28	<b><u>Exam 1</u></b>
Sept 30	Understanding Stratification L&B chapter 8
Oct 3	Racial And Ethnic Minorities L&B chapter 9
Oct 5	Film: Ethnic Notions
Oct 7	<i>The Souls of Black Folks</i> <i>When Did Jews Become White Folks?</i> (on e-reserve)
Oct 12	Family and Religion: L&B chapter 11
Oct 14	<u>The Spirit Catches You</u> chapters 1-5
Oct 17	Film: The Split Horn <u>The Spirit Catches You</u> chapters 6-10
Oct 19	<u>The Spirit Catches You</u> chapters 11-15
Oct 21	Education and Health: L&B Chapter 12 <b><i>Guest Speaker: Dr Mike McQuaide on the Hmong in Vietnam</i></b>
Oct 24	<u>The Spirit Catches You</u> chapters 17-19
Oct 26	Examining “Deviance”: L&B chapter 6 <b>Paper 1 Due</b>
Oct 28	Crime and Criminal Justice: L&B chapter 7 <i>In Search of Respect</i> (on e-reserve)

- Oct 31      Pregnancy and Homicide  
Washington Post articles  
(on e-reserve)
- Nov 2      Exam Review
- Nov 4      **Exam 2**
- Nov 7      Political Economy and the Sociology of Work  
L&B chapter 13
- Nov 9      Understanding America's Working Poor  
*Getting a Job in Harlem*  
*Who Has How Much and Why?*  
(on e-reserve)
- Nov 11      *Alienated Labor*  
(on e-reserve)
- Nov 14      Film: Poverty Outlaw  
Nickel and Dimed introduction and chapter 1
- Nov 16      The Sociology of Domestic Work  
,  
Nickel and Dimed chapter 2
- Nov 18      An examination of Wal-Mart  
Nickel and Dimed chapter 3
- Nov 21      Nickel and Dimed chapter 4  
Paper 2 Due
- November 23-25 Thanksgiving Break
- Nov 28      Population, Urbanization, and the Environment  
L&B chapter 14  
*Rich Planet, Poor Planet: Global Environment and Poverty*  
(on e-reserve)
- Nov 30-Dec 2: Film: This is What Democracy Looks Like  
Reading: L & B chapter 15  
*On the Origins of Social Movements*  
(on e-reserve)
- Dec 5      *Affinity Groups and the Movement Against Corporate Globalization*  
(on e-reserve)

Dec 7            *Generating Commitment Among Students*  
(on e-reserve)

Dec 9            *Making Our Lives Count*  
*You Have to Pick Your Team*  
(on e-reserve)

Dec 12          Last Class/Exam review

**Final Exam: Wednesday December 21, 2-5 PM**

Please note: Although this is the last final exam period for the semester, I am not able to allow students to take this exam early.