Soc l0l: Sociological Thinking College Hall

Professor Mary B. Olson Course activities will occur: M-F

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# Course Description

"The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two in society."

C. Wright Mills

C. Wright Mills tells us that we are "seldom aware of the intricate connections between the patterns of [our] own lives and the course of world history." [As he says], “We do not often possess the sociological imagination.” The purpose of this course is to help you to develop your sociological imagination. It aims to help you understand the logic of sociological inquiry, the nature and breadth of sociological theory, and the methods of sociological research. In order to do this, we will examine a range of issues, including the nature of the social system, the dynamics of social inequality, the place of the individual in society, and the process of social change.

# Course Objectives:

Students should emerge from the course with a solid understanding concerning what the field of sociology is and a firm grasp of the central topics upon which the discipline is focused, including culture and socialization, social structure, social inequality, and social change.

*Through readings, lectures, discussions, written work, group projects etc., students will:*

\*Explore essential sociological concepts, the logic of sociological inquiry, the nature of sociological theory, and the methods of sociological research

\*Investigate the kinds of questions sociologists typically ask, and identify and examine sociologically relevant problems and issues.

\*Gain an understanding of social inequality and an awareness of the complexity of social life.

\*Develop critical thinking, oral communication, and writing skills which demonstrate an ability to understand and analyze social issues and to apply these skills to their lives and the world around them.

This course supports the Educational Priorities and Outcomes of Cornell College with emphasis on knowledge, inquiry, communication, and intercultural literacy.

# Evaluation Criteria:

Class activities will vary from day to day. Students are expected to complete all readings before the beginning of the class period during which they are assigned, to attend class, to contribute to classroom discussion, and to complete all written assignments on time. Class attendance is expected and each unexcused class period absence will result in the lowering, by l/2 a grade point, of the student’s overall class participation grade. The course features a relatively heavy reading schedule and challenging reading materials. Lectures and class discussions will focus on developing an in-depth understanding of the assigned material.

Each student is responsible for (1) one mid-term examination, (1) one group presentation on political ideology, (1) one low cost budget project, which includes a formal in-class group presentation and accompanying written material outlining how a family of four will live on a low cost budget in Cedar Rapids and an individually created paper summarizing how readings done on stratification are illustrated by the group budget project, (1) one formal in-class group presentation and accompanying written material outlining a social change project; an occasional pop quiz, and daily class participation that may include a graded written component. No late written work will be accepted unless prior arrangements have been agreed to in writing.

The mid-term examination will feature two required essays that will ask you to analyze key issues raised in the course. The presentation on political ideology will require you to apply the sociological imagination to individual’s lives, examining the ways in which social class, gender, and ethnic location shape political beliefs. The group budget project and individual budget paper will ask you to construct a low-cost monthly budget for a family living in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. This project will take you out into the community and is meant to deepen your understanding of the American stratification system. The group social change project and paper will ask you to choose a social problem and design a project to address the problem. The pop quiz component of the class will test your ability to respond to questions about daily reading. Daily oral, and possibly written, participation will ask you explore major ideas covered in each of the day’s readings.

Excellent examinations, papers, and presentations will be well organized and well argued. They will demonstrate evidence of critical thinking, and indicate both breadth and depth of understanding of the course material. Excellent class participation will depend both upon your attendance in class and upon your ability to outline major ideas covered in each of the day’s readings, to connect ideas in each day’s readings with those addressed in earlier books and articles, and to reflect upon the day’s readings through an identification of issues the readings raise for you. Evaluation of daily participation will depend upon evidence of high levels of engagement with the course materials.

Grades will be computed according to the following formula:

Presentation on Political Ideology -- 10% of grade

Low cost budget Analysis -- 25% of grade (group work l0%, individual paper 15%)

Exam l -- 30% of grade

Pop Quiz (1 or more) collectively -- 10% of grade

Social Change Project -- 15% of grade

Class Participation -- 10% of grade

# Required Texts

-Eve Howard, Classic Readings in Sociology.

-Mary Crow Dog, Lakota Woman.

-Michael. Zweig, The Working Class Majority.

-Arlie Russell Hochschild, Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right.

Several additional articles will be utilized in the course. They are identified on your syllabus with an ® and are available on moodle.

### Academic Honesty Expectations:

Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is his or her work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College’s requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Compass, our student handbook, under the heading, “Academic Policies-Honesty in Academic Work.”

### Students with Disabilities:

Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should notify the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising and their course instructor of any disability related accommodations within the first three days of the term for which the accommodations are required, due to the fast pace of the block format. For more information on the documentation required to establish the need for accommodations and the process of requesting the accommodations, see The Disability Services and Resources Web Page.

# **COURSE OUTLINE**

The daily class schedule is noted in the course outline. The instructor reserves the right to add or delete hours to the daily schedule if it becomes necessary in order to complete the assigned material. All readings must be completed before class meets. All readings identified with an ® are available on moodle. In order to facilitate effective class discussion, please bring hard copies of all articles with you to class on the day for which they are assigned.

## SECTION ONE: SOCIOLOGY, SOCIETY, AND THE INDIVIDUAL

First Monday: Introduction to Course-The History of the Discipline, the Sociological Imagination, and the Study of Society (TP=30)

Course will meet: 9:00-9:30 and 1:00-3:00 ***Please come to afternoon class with all three readings completed and ready to be discussed.***

Readings: (All articles marked with an ® are on moodle.)

- Peter L. Berger, “Invitation to Sociology,” in Wadsworth Classic Readings in Sociology, 2000, pp. 6-9.

- C. Wright Mills, “The Promise,” in Wadsworth Classic Readings in Sociology. 2000. pp. 1-5.

-® Michael Lerner, “Equality Requires a Fight for Recognition and Meaning,” in The Ethnic Moment. Pp. ll7-l35.

**Assignment: Group Presentation Chapters from Hochschild Assigned.**

First Tuesday: Culture, Social Structure and History (TP 88)

Course will meet: 9:00-11:l5 and 12:30-3:00

Readings: (All articles marked with an ® are on moodle.)

**Readings**: Arlie Russell Hochschild, Strangers in their Own Land, pp. pix-xii, 3-23, 247-253, 25-82.

First Wednesday: Culture, Social Structure and History (TP 74)

Course will meet: 9:00-11:15 and 12:30-3:00

Readings: Arlie Russell Hochschild, Strangers in their Own Land, pp, 85-151,255-261.

**Assignment**: Group Presentations of Material

First Thursday: Culture, Social Structure and History (TP 90)

Course will meet: 9:00-12:00.

Readings: Arlie Russell Hochschild, Strangers in their Own Land, pp, 153-142.

**Assignment**: Group Presentations of Material.

**Video:** Farid: Factors influencing why Trump won the Presidency.

**Low-cost Budget Analysis groups are assigned and Project is explained.**

### First Friday: Work on the Low Cost Budget Analysis

Meet with members of your assigned group and spend at least three hours together developing the basis of your low-cost budget analysis. This will involve developing a monthly budget, including costs for such items as a 30 day menu, rent, insurance, transportation, child care, communications, medical care, and entertainment. Anticipate working most of Friday morning or afternoon and several additional hours over the weekend on putting this assignment together.

## SECTION TWO; THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

Second Monday: Modern Capitalism: Culture, Social Structure and Social Inequality (TP 82)

Course will meet: 1:00-3:00

Readings: Readings: -Max Weber, “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,” Classic Readings in Sociology, 2007, pp. 84-89.

-Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party, Classic Readings in Sociology,2007 pp. 10-17.

-® Sut Jhally, “Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse,” in Paula S. Rothenberg, (ed.), Race, Class, and Gender in the United States (7th Ed.)(RCG). 2007, Pp.621-629.

-Michael Zweig, “Introduction,” and “The Class Structure of the United States,” in The Working Class Majority.

Second Tuesday: Social Stratification and Social Inequality and Family Life (TP 90)

Course will meet: 9:00-l2:00 and 1:00-3:00

Readings: -Michael Zweig, What We Think about When We Think about Class,” and “Why is Class Important?” in The Working Class Majority.

-® Lillian Rubin, “Mother Goes to Work,” “The Transformation of Family Life,” “When You Get Laid Off...,”and “Shattered Dreams,” in Families on the Faultline. pp. 69-l40

**Video: Making it in Good Times and Two American Families---Making it in Good Times**

Second Wednesday: Social Stratification (TP=30)

Course will meet: 9:00-ll:00 and 1:00-3:00 (3:00-5:00 groups m may meet with me to discuss presentations)

Readings: -Michael Zweig, “Looking at the Underclass.” in The Working Class Majority.

Continue to discuss Tuesday’s readings and illustrate them through use of the movies. We will try to begin “Looking at the Underclass” although this discussion will continue Thursday morning.

Second Thursday: Poverty versus Upper Class Benefits and Culture (TP 26)

Course will meet: 9:00-11:30 and 12:00-3:00

Readings: Readings: - Herbert Gans, “Uses of Poverty, The Poor Pay All,” in Wadsworth Classic Readings in Sociology. 2000. pp. 47-52

-® Barbara Ehrenreich, “Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America,” in Garth Massey, (ed.). Readings for Sociology. (4th Ed.), Pp. 179-l98.

**Assignment: Each group’s low-cost budget analysis paper/folder will be due at the beginning of morning class at 9:00 a.m. Each individual’s low-cost budget paper will be due at the beginning of the morning class at 9:00 a.m. Each group’s Low-cost budget material will be discussed in the afternoon class, beginning at 12:00 p.m.**

**Assignment: Take-home examination distributed.**

Second Friday: **Take-home Examination due at noon via word attachment to email addressed to:** [**molson@cornellcollege.edu**](mailto:molson@cornellcollege.edu)**.**

## SECTION THREE: THE NATURE OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Third Monday: Social Change: Globalism and Food/Globalization and Job Movement/Globalization and the Global Exchange of Labor (TP=64)

Course will meet: 9:00-11:30 and 12:30-3:00

Readings: ® G. William Domhoff, “Who Rules America?” in Susan J. Ferguson, (ed.), Mapping the Social Landscape. (5th Ed.), Pp. 266-279. (Sets the stage for discussion of who is in control of the process of globalization.)

-® F. Lappe and J. Collins, “Why Can’t People Feed Themselves?” in Dennis Vnenchak and Ernest Kilker, Readings in Social Science, 1988 Ed. pp. 251-262.

-® William M. Adler, “Job on the Line,” in Garth Massey, (ed.), Readings for Sociology.(4th Ed.)

\*\*-® ® Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Hochschild, “Introduction,” and Arlie Hochschild, “Love and Gold.” in Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Hochschild, (eds.). Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy. Pp. l-30.

**Videos: Hungry for Profit/Possibly-Maquiladores (City of Factories)/ Maid in America**

Third Tuesday: Is there a Development Alternative?/Producing Social Change—What are Social Movements and How are they Done? (43)

Course will meet: 9:00-ll:00 and 12:00-3:00

Readings: -® Bill McKibben,” An Alternative to Globalization,” in Garth Massey, (ed.), Readings for Sociology, (4th Ed) pp. 473-480.

-® Sally Belfrage, “Freedom Summer,” in Dennis Vnenchak and Ernest Kilker, Readings in Social Science, 1988 Ed, pp,. 195-232.

**Videos:** Freedom Summer

Third Wednesday: Social Change: Racism and Culture in Conflict: Native Americans in the United States (TP 79)

Course will meet: 9:00-11:30 and 12:30-3:00.

Readings: -Mary Crow Dog, Lakota Woman. pp. 3-72.

\*-Joseph Marshall, III, “When the Grasses Talk,” The Dance House: Stories from the Rosebud, l998. **Video:** The Teachings of the Tree People

Third Thursday: Activism and Social Movements –Producing Changes in the Lived Conditions of Native Americans (97)

Course will meet: 9:00-l2:00

Readings: -Mary Crow Dog, Lakota Woman. Pp 73-169.

**Videos:** We Shall Remain-Wounded Knee

**Assignment: Social Change Project Distributed**

Third Friday: **Group Work on Social Change Project**

You should plan to meet, as a group, at least three hours on Friday to plan and begin working on your social change project presentation and paper. You should also plan to meet again, as a group, on both Saturday and Sunday to work on your social change project group presentation. In addition, you will need to do both individual and group work on writing your social change project paper.

Fourth Monday: Activism and Social Movements-Children Organize in India (TP=0)

Course will meet: 12:00-3:00.

Readings: -None

**Videos** The Revolutionary Optimists

Fourth Tuesday: Social Change Project Presentations (TP=0)

Course will meet: 9:00-ll:00 and 12:00-3:00

Readings:-None

**Assignment: Presentations**

Fourth Wednesday: Social Change Project Presentations (TP=0)

Course will meet: 9:00-l2:00

Readings:-None

**Assignment: Presentations and written component of all Social Change Project due at beginning of class.**