Sociology 101

Introduction to Sociology

Instructor: Professor Tom Semm Phone: 619-594-5906

Office: NH 211 Email: psemm@mail.sdsu.edu

Course Meets:

AL 201

Lecture: MW 9 -9:50AM

Sections 1-15: See SDSU Spring 2014 Schedule

Office Hours:

W 10 AM-11 AM

Required Text:

Eitzen, D. Stanley and Maxine Baca Zinn. In Conflict and Order. New York: Pearson, 2013. Custom Edition.

Assignments

Course Description:

The study of sociology is an interesting and rewarding intellectual activity, but one with risks. The reason is that students gain a different and unique way of both viewing the world and understanding their life experience. The sociologist C.Wright Mills refers to this unique perspective as the “sociological imagination.” This can be exciting, and/or liberating, but it also can be threatening because one’s personal identity is tied to one’s view of the world. Sociology is also by its nature, a study of society, a subversive discipline. It raises questions and illuminates problems about society and its institutions. And it encourages the questioning of authority. All are reasons why it is not taught in high school.

This course is designed to introduce the student to the discipline of sociology; its basic principles of inquiry, and the sociological perspective. Sociology literally means the study of society and the object of sociological inquiry is the nature of society. This course will examine the paradigms, or sets of theories, that guide sociologists in their research. These paradigms are structural functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. The course will also introduce the students to the vocabulary (terms and categories) of the discipline of sociology. These terms and categories are the basic explanatory tools used by sociologists in their study of society.

Topics that will be discussed are divided into three areas. The first area is the sociological perspective. The focus will be on how social structure, culture, and history impact individual lives. The second area is the social construction of reality. In this area the focus will be on the mass media, advertising, and popular culture. The third area is social inequality. The focus will be on racial inequality, gender inequality and global dynamics and global inequality.

Course Goals:

By the end of the course, the student should have a basic understanding of sociological terms and categories, including an understanding of the main sociological paradigms. Also the student ought to be able to use these theoretical tools to critically interpret social phenomena. And, finally, the student ought to be able to recognize the ways in which social forces shape individual biography; his/her own life chances and opportunities.

Evaluation Process:

There will be a total of 400 points.

Exams. The exams will make up three quarters of the grade. There will be three exams each worth one hundred (100) points each for a total of three hundred (300) points. The entire class will take them together in the lecture hall. The exams will be based on lectures, in-class videos and reading and other assignments. The exams will consist of multiple choice, true/false and matching questions. Taking the exams at the time they are scheduled is mandatory. The only excuse for missing an exam is a medical or family emergency (within the immediate family). Either excuse requires written documentation. If the excuse is accepted, the exam must be made up at the convenience of the professor.

Sections. The TAs will provide a syllabus for their sections. The sections will make up one-fourth of the grade, or one hundred (100) points. The teaching assistant in each section will determine how the student will be evaluated in that section. A component of the grade in each section will be based on student participation in the section. Participation will also include attendance.

Class Structure and Behavior

Monday and Wednesday will be in-class lectures given by the professor on the topic scheduled for that class (see Class Schedule) and an outline of the lecture will be put on Blackboard (TAs will explain how to use Blackboard) prior to the lecture. Print the lecture outline and bring it to class. It will help with note taking. On the days that the exams are scheduled, the entire class will take the exams together in the large class room.

The class will begin at promptly 9:02. Be there before that time and seated or do not attend. Class will end when I say it does, never any later than 9:50. Entering late or leaving early, unless I am notified ahead of time, will be considered “intentionally disruptive behavior” which is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. The penalty can be dismissal from class, failing the class, or dismissal from the university. Private conversations and non-course related electronic activity are not allowed in this class. Cell phones must be turned off and put away unless there is a family emergency. In the case of such an emergency, I must be notified prior to the class. Any students who violate the codes of conduct in class will be penalized with significant point deductions and possibly referred to Judicial Affairs.

Grade by Per Cent\*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | 93-100 | B+ | 88-89 | B- | 80-82 | C- | 70-72 |
| A- | 90-92 | B | 83-87 | C+ | 78-79 | D+ | 68-69 |
|  |  |  |  | C | 73-76 | D | 63-66 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | D- | 60-62 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | F | 00-59 |

Class Schedule

Week Topic Assignments by Chapter Title

Week 1 January 22-24 Introduction

Week 2 January 27-31 Sociological Perspective “The Sociological Perspective”

Week 3 February 3-7 Social Structure/Culture “The Duality of Social Life”

Week 4 February 10-14 Stratification “Social Stratification” and “Class”

Week 5 February 17-21 Education “Education”

Week 6 February 24-28 **Exam #1 Monday February 24 (9AM AL 201)**

Week 7 March 3-7 Economy/Work “Economy”

Week 8 March 10-14 Political System “Power and Politics”

Week 9 March 17-21 Mass Media Assigned Reading

Week 10 March 24-28 **Exam #2 Monday March 24 (9AM AL 201)**

Week 11 March 31-April 4 **Spring Break**

Week 12 April 7-11 Mass Media Assigned Reading

Week 13 April 14-18 Social Movements “Human Agency”

Week 14 April 21-25 Race and Ethnicity “Racial Inequality”

Week 15 April 28- May 2 Gender “Gender Inequality”

Week 16 May 5-8 **Exam #3 Monday May 5 (9AM AL201)**