

**SOC 101.001: INTRODUCTORY SOCIOLOGY**  
**MWF 9:00-9:50**  
**EGC Room 110**  
**Fall 2016**

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Office Hours: MF 1:00-1:50, T 12:30-1:30, R 12:30-1:30 & 3:00-4:00 and by appointment

**Course Overview**

This introductory sociology course helps us to understand the importance of social context on individual and group behavior by examining contemporary issues in society such as poverty, gender inequality, and racism. We will learn about the sociological perspective as we analyze other topics, as well, including religion, medicine, crime, and environmental problems. Classes focus on relevant, intriguing questions that we examine using sociological theories and scientific evidence. These include the following:

- What separates academic high achievers from other students?
- Why do we eat so much “fast food” in the United States?
- Are religious suicide bombers insane?
- Why do women earn so much less than men?
- Why does the U.S. spend more money than other developed countries on healthcare, but it has lower life expectancy?
- Are there so many black players in the NBA because they have a biological advantage?
- Why do the rich in America keep getting richer while the poor stay poor?
- Will the government ever do anything meaningful to address global warming?
- Why are some people willing to risk their lives for a social cause?

We will use our textbook and articles as the foundation for exploring questions such as these, while class discussion will further develop our understanding of the sociological theories and research that address concerns in today's society. Moreover, we will read two books as we more fully examine issues of gender and poverty and the influence of culture and social structure on behavior. While there is a good deal of reading required for this course, you should find the texts and articles provocative and enjoyable.

Although demanding, this course is designed to make sociology as intellectually exciting to you as it is to me. Classes include guest speakers, debates, games, and exercises that explore the relevant concepts and issues in interesting ways. Several classes involve working together in small groups. This group work includes a class

research project where we will decide upon a research question, distribute surveys, and use the data to test hypotheses.

I strongly encourage you to express your thoughts during our class discussions, even if your ideas conflict with those of your classmates or those that I present. Learning in this manner will help us meet the main challenge of the course—understanding the empowering view of human behavior reflected in the sociological perspective.

### Objectives

The items identified below reflect some of the main goals of the course.

*At the end of the course, you should be able to...*

- Define sociology and understand how it is different from other disciplines that also explain human behavior such as psychology and biology.
- Evaluate theories of individual and group behavior.
- Articulate how sociology is a science and how the social sciences compare to the the natural sciences.
- Design an empirical test of sociological hypotheses and analyze the data.
- Explain how we shape social institutions and how these institutions, in turn, influence us.
- Apply cultural explanations to issues such as gender inequality.
- Communicate how social structure causes social problems such as poverty and racial inequality.
- Demonstrate how social forces impact our own lives by limiting or creating opportunities.
- Explain the potential people have to effect social change, but also the significant challenges experienced when trying to achieve change in society.

### General Education Assessment

*The College of Liberal Arts is keenly interested in assuring the quality and integrity of its General Education Program. Every semester, randomly-selected students from each General Education course will be required to submit samples of their work to an independent and objective assessment by faculty. No personally identifiable information about any student will be used for the purposes of this assessment, and assessment results will have no bearing whatsoever on student grades.*

### Required Readings

Please purchase or rent the **paper edition** of all texts, not the electronic versions.

- Essentials of Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition by James Henslin
- The Gender Trap: Parents and the Pitfalls of Raising Boys and Girls by Emily Kane
- Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality by Elizabeth Armstrong and Laura Hamilton
- Articles available on Blackboard. Please print hardcopies of all articles by Sept 7.

### Grading

5% Attendance

5% Participation

10% Written assignments (homework must be typed)

25% Quizzes

55% Exams (15 + 20 + 20)

*I do not determine your average until after the final exams have been graded. If you would like to know your average, keep a record of your grades and apply the appropriate percentages as stated in this syllabus. I will be glad to meet with you during my office hours to review and discuss your grades.*

### Attendance

5 points (out of 5%) = 0-3 unexcused absences

3 points = 4 unexcused absences

1 point = 5 unexcused absences

0 points = 6 unexcused absences

\*1 additional point off your final average for each additional unexcused absence

2 lates / leave early = 1 absence

*If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to confirm that I recorded you as present.*

### Class Participation

Class participation involves your engagement in discussions and assignments. Please be attentive in class, ask questions to help you learn the material, and thoroughly respond to questions posed in class. Note that you can expect to be called-on during class.

Please also be prepared with the appropriate materials for class and fully engage in class assignments and exercises. Your participation grade is on a five point scale corresponding to the following rubric:

5 Points (5%)	3 Points (3%)	0 Points (0%)
Regularly provides meaningful contributions to class discussions without being called upon. Often asks questions about the reading assignments and class discussions. Fully attentive in almost all classes. Always prepared for class with appropriate materials. Always fully engages in classwork. No issues regarding distractions (e.g. talking to neighbors, texting, cell phone/laptop/tablet use).	Sometimes provides meaningful contributions to class discussions without being called upon. Occasionally asks questions about the reading assignments and class discussions. Fully attentive in most classes. Almost always prepared for class with appropriate materials. Almost always fully engages in classwork. Very few issues regarding distractions.	Does not provide meaningful contributions to class discussions. Does not ask questions about the reading assignments and class discussions. Often inattentive. Often unprepared for class (does not have appropriate texts or other materials). Does not fully engage in classwork. Repeated issues regarding distractions (e.g. talking to neighbors, texting, and cell phone/laptop/tablet use).

### Lateness

Late homework or in-class assignments will be penalized 3.3% of the total possible grade for each class the assignment is overdue without proper documentation excusing the lateness (e.g. an A becomes an A-, a 90 becomes an 87, etc.). It is **much better** to submit a late assignment and lose some credit than receive a zero. Zeros for assignments not submitted will seriously impair your overall average for the class. In addition, you are less likely to do well on exams without completing them. Assignments due for each unit will not be accepted after the unit exam.

### Absences

If you have an excused absence from class, you must supply proper documentation at the first class meeting you are able to attend or you will not receive credit. Some required reading assignments not listed in the syllabus are distributed in class. It is your responsibility to get the reading if you are absent from class. All assignments distributed in class are available on Blackboard. Even if you are absent from class it is your responsibility to get any assignment questions so you can submit your work on time. It is a good idea to get the telephone number/e-mail address of a classmate so you may remain up-to-date in case you are absent. If you are absent for a pop quiz, no make-up test is given unless you have an officially excused absence (e.g. through the athletics department) **and** you ask if you missed a quiz at the beginning of the first class you attend after your excused absence. You will have the opportunity for extra credit to improve a zero recorded for not taking a quiz. It is in your best interest to not miss any classes so that you can take all of the quizzes. Moreover, material we cover in class is not necessarily in your texts. You will need to fully understand this material, though, in order to do well on the exams.

### Missing an Exam

Students are expected to arrange their schedule to attend all exams on the dates listed below. A make-up exam will only be given if you have an officially excused absence **and** (if possible) inform me about your upcoming absence before you miss the test.

### Students with Disabilities

Students requiring accommodations for a disability should inform the instructor at the close of the first class meeting or as soon as possible. The instructor will refer you to the ACCESS and Accommodation Office to document your disability, determine eligibility for accommodations under the ADAAA/Section 504 and to request a Faculty Accommodation Form. Disability accommodations or status will not be indicated on academic transcripts. In order to receive accommodations in a class, students with sensory, learning, psychological, physical or medical disabilities must provide their instructor with a Faculty Accommodation Form to sign. Students must return the signed form to the ACCESS Coordinator. A new form must be requested each semester. Students with a history of a disability, perceived as having a disability or with a current disability who do not wish to use academic accommodations are also strongly encouraged to register with the ACCESS and Accommodation Office and request a Faculty Accommodation Form each semester. For further information, please contact

Carole Burrowbridge, Director and ADA/504 Coordinator, at 301-2778 or visit the ACCESS and Accommodation Office website at [www.mercer.edu/disabilityservices](http://www.mercer.edu/disabilityservices).

### Honor Code

Students are expected to have read the University Honor Code and comply with its requirements. Any violations of the code including, but not limited to, cheating on examinations or quizzes, plagiarizing written materials, or copying of computerized materials, will be referred to the Honor Council for their investigation and adjudication. A student who cheats on an exam or assignment will receive a zero for that grade.

### Class Expectations

- Please do not disrupt the learning of classmates by talking out of turn, allowing cell phones to ring, using the internet, accessing emails, or text messaging. Smart phones, laptops, tablets and similar devices are not to be used during class, unless I announce otherwise for a particular assignment.
- Purchase or rent the paper edition of all texts, not the electronic versions.
- Print hardcopies of articles available on Blackboard.
- Bring the text(s) and/or articles we are currently using to class.
- Be on time and remain until the end of class. If you must be late or leave early, please do so very quietly.
- Do not submit assignments via email- only hardcopies are accepted.
- Please staple assignments of more than one page.
- Regularly check your Mercer student email account for announcements and Blackboard for assignments.
- Please be respectful of the comments, questions, and opinions of your classmates.

### How to Learn a Great Deal of Sociology (and get an A)!

- You are responsible for **all** the material we go over in class. Take **lots** of notes. Be aware that your exam grades will reflect the quality and quantity of your notes. I will gladly review your notes with you and address any questions or gaps.
- Attend all classes—arrive on time and don't leave early. If you are unable to attend class, be sure to get the notes from a classmate.
- Participate in class discussions and ask questions. You will learn more by being an active student and earn credit.
- Carefully read all assignments and write down questions to think about or discuss in class.
- Come to office hours or make an appointment to meet with me to ask questions, clarify the material, and discuss the subjects in greater depth. Any student who receives a failing grade is strongly encouraged to meet with me to discuss his/her progress.

### Schedule

The reading assignment is due **before** class on the date listed.

## UNIT I: GROUPS, INSTITUTIONS & THE SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

24<sup>th</sup> August The Sociological Perspective

26<sup>th</sup> August The Sociological Perspective: Academic Achievement  
Read: Text pages. 403-419

*(Last Day to Drop Course)*

29<sup>th</sup> August Theoretical Orientations  
Read: Text pages. 2-19

31<sup>st</sup> August Theoretical Orientations  
Read: Text ch.4

2<sup>nd</sup> September Designing Sociological Research  
Read: Text pages. 20-36

5<sup>th</sup> September No Class: Labor Day

7<sup>th</sup> September Research Project  
Develop research questions & identify sources  
*Hardcopies of all articles on Blackboard due. Please bring them all to class.*

9<sup>th</sup> September Societies and Their Transformations  
Read: Text pages.349-350

12<sup>th</sup> September Social Groups and Formal Organizations  
Read: Text pages.136-142 & 144-154

14<sup>th</sup> September Social Groups and Formal Organizations  
Department of Sociology Guest Lecture  
Roy Miller, J.D., Lecturer, Fort Valley State University  
7:00 p.m., Location TBA  
\*Attendance Required

16<sup>th</sup> September Sociology of Religion  
Read: Text pages. 418 & 420-434  
Video: *The Amish: Back Roads to Heaven*

19<sup>th</sup> September Sociology of Religion

21<sup>st</sup> September Medicine & Health

Read: “Professionalization, Monopoly and the Structure of Medical Practice”  
and “Doctoring as a Business: Money, Markets, and Managed Care”

*Both articles available on Blackboard.*

23<sup>rd</sup> September Medicine & Health

26<sup>th</sup> September Wrap-up & Review

28<sup>th</sup> September EXAM I

## UNIT II: CULTURE, GENDER & RACE

30<sup>th</sup> September Research Project

Develop hypotheses & design survey

3<sup>rd</sup> October Culture

Read: Text ch.2

5<sup>th</sup> October No Class: Make-up for evening lecture

7<sup>th</sup> October No Class: Fall Break

10<sup>th</sup> October Agents of Socialization

Read: Text ch.3 & pps.129-136  
Inequality Read:  
The Gender Trap: ch.4  
Text pps.302-315

18<sup>th</sup> October “Sociology at the Movies” 6:00 p.m. Stetson 251

Read: The Gender Trap: Conclusion

24<sup>th</sup> October Race and Ethnicity

Read: Text ch.9

26<sup>th</sup> October Race and Ethnicity

28<sup>th</sup> October Wrap-up & Review

*(Last Day to Withdraw from Course)*

31<sup>st</sup> October EXAM II

### UNIT III: SOCIAL STRUCTURE- UNDERSTANDING ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

2<sup>nd</sup> November Research Project  
Analyze Data

4<sup>th</sup> November Social Class  
Read: Text pps.190-202 & ch.8  
Game: Star power

7<sup>th</sup> November Social Class  
Read: Text pps.352-363

9<sup>th</sup> November Poverty  
Read: Paying for the Party: Preface & Introduction & ch.1

11<sup>th</sup> November Poverty  
Read: Paying for the Party: ch.2 & 3

14<sup>th</sup> November Economic Systems  
Read: Paying for the Party: ch.4 & 5

16<sup>th</sup> November College & Inequality  
Read: Paying for the Party: ch.6

16<sup>th</sup> November “Sociology at the Movies” 6:00 p.m. Stetson 251

18<sup>th</sup> November College & Inequality  
Read: Paying for the Party: ch.7

21<sup>st</sup> November College & Inequality  
Read: Paying for the Party: ch.8 & 9

23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> November  
No Class: Happy Thanksgiving!

### UNIT IV: POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY, ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS & SOCIAL CHANGE

28<sup>th</sup> November The Other Me Assignment  
Read: *The Sociological Imagination* pps.6-7  
*Selection available on Blackboard.*



30<sup>th</sup> November Environmental Sociology

Read: Text pps.490-497

Read: "Grass-Root Consumer Protests and Toxic Wastes"

*Article available on Blackboard.*

2<sup>nd</sup> December Systems of Government

Read: Text pps.332-348

5<sup>th</sup> December Social Movements and Social Change

Read: "Understanding 'Occupy'"

*Article available on Blackboard.*

7<sup>th</sup> December Social Movements and Social Change

9<sup>th</sup> December Wrap-up & Review

17<sup>th</sup> December EXAM III 9:00-10:00