

SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIETY
(Sociology 125)

Spring 2005
Meets: MWF 1:30 – 2:20 p.m.
Room: King 337

Instructor: Prof. Clovis L. White
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Office hrs: Tuesday and Thursday 900-1100a.m.
and 130-230p.m. or by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is a survey course designed to introduce you to the sociological way of looking at our world. This entails an examination of the many concepts, theories and research findings related to the study of social life. As in any introductory subject a number of areas of sociological inquiry will be examined: (1) sociological perspectives and research; (2) notions of culture and social stratification; (3) social institutions such as the family, education; (4) socialization and sex role development; (5) gender, race and ethnic inequalities; (6) deviance and social control; (7) social change and social movements.

COURSE GOALS:

- Goal 1: *Developing a Sociological Imagination:*** In contrast to our personal view of the social world, the course seeks to broaden our understanding of the dynamics associated with society. In doing so, students will be challenged to develop a “sociological perspective” to explain and analyze social relations.
- Goal 2: *Understanding and Utilizing Theoretical Approaches:*** The objective here is for students to explore and gain an understanding and appreciation of the various sociological theories (explanations) developed around societies operations and their applications in social research.
- Goal 3: *Accessing and Interpreting Empirical Data:*** Just as students must engage in the explanations for societies and social behavior, students must develop minimal skills for gathering, analyzing and interpreting data on social phenomena and its relationship to other requisite social characteristics.
- Goal 4: *Developing Information Literacy:*** Students will develop knowledge of the available resources important to the examination of social phenomenon .
- Goal 5: *Developing Skills to Write Critically:*** In this course students will be encouraged to develop techniques to think and write critically.
- Goal 6: *Developing Community Awareness:*** To gain a greater appreciation and understanding of society and social behavior and its impact on social lives students will explore the local community.

COURSE FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Class Format:** At least once a week, class sessions will be devoted to lectures on topics for the given week. In general, we shall begin a new unit or topic area each week (e.g., socialization). You will benefit most from the lectures if you do the readings early in the week as they are assigned. Each lecture is centered on a single statement or item presented at the beginning of each class. The theme for the day might be the definition of a key concept or a theoretical explanation or simply a puzzling fact about the social world.

2. **Class Participation/Group Discussions:** As part of this requirement our attendance to class is necessary. Attendance will be taken every class. You allowed two unexcused absences. More absences will lower your participation grade. At times during the semester we will be discussing issues or topics related to the unit under study. Students are expected to participate in the discussion to meet this requirement. On the given day of discussion, students will be divided up into several discussion groups. Although the professor will determine specific points of discussion, some discussions will be based the following:
 - on the readings assigned (e.g., on Blackboard or from Susan Ferguson’s book, *Mapping the Social Landscape*) or may include some issue that has emerged recently in our social world.
 - a film/video viewed and related to the issues at hand.
 - each of the books *Savage Inequalities*, *Ain’t No Makin It*, and *The Second Shift*.

3. **Reading assignments:** Readings are assigned for each week from the books listed below and readings on Blackboard (BB). Readings for the specific section/week are listed in the lecture/topic section of the syllabus (see pp. 4-7). Each member of the class is expected to read the material and be prepared to discuss it in class.

List of required books to be purchased:

1. David M. Newman, *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life*, California: Pine Forge Press, 2004 (5th Edition).
2. Arlie Hochschild, *The Second Shift*, New York, Penguin, 2003 (2nd Edition).
3. Susan Ferguson, *Mapping the Social Landscape*. California: Mayfield Publishers, Fourth Edition, 2005.
4. Jonathon Kozol, *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*, New York: Crown, 1991.
5. Jay MacLeod, *Ain’t No Makin It: Aspirations and Attainment in a Low-Income Neighborhood*, San Francisco: Westview Press, 1995

4. **Exams:** There will be **TWO take home exams**. Each exam will consist of short answer questions and essay questions requiring the integration of materials covered in the readings, lectures, discussion and film presentations. Each exam is worth 25% of your final grade. **Exam 2 is NOT cumulative**. The exam dates are as follows:

FIRST EXAM: Due Friday, March 18th at 4 pm
SECOND EXAM: Due Wednesday, May 18th at 11 am

5. **Exercises:** Each student will be responsible for completing FOUR exercises throughout the semester. For the most part each of these exercises will involve the application of experiential activities and library research within the sociological realm. Students will be asked to write a 2-5 page paper as it relates to the specific exercise. All the exercises must be completed. This is 40% of your final grade.

Exercise 1: Reflection exercise on sociological imagination:

In this exercise you explore the concept of “sociological imagination”. Sociological imagination is a term coined by the sociologist C Wright Mills about the perspective we must engage in when conducting or exploring social science research and understanding our social world. Such examination will be done in the context of two articles written by Wright and a former Oberlin student respectively.

Exercise 2: Finding research topic and developing hypothesis: Annotated Bibliography.

In this exercise we want you to explore the issue of developing a research topic and constructing a hypothesis as it relates to the topic in sociology. You will be expected to describe a research topic (e.g., What is the relationship between social class and education?) and propose a hypothesis on the relationship between these social phenomenon (e.g., the higher your level of education the higher your social class.) Once you have developed the hypothesis, you are expected to identify research, which may or may not support your hypothesis in the form of an annotated bibliography

Exercise 3: Reflection on Oberlin community experience and data analysis:

You will be asked to take a walking tour of the Oberlin community and reflect upon what you discovered in this community. More specifically, you should reflect on these questions: What is the condition of the housing in the area? What type of a neighborhood is the area (e.g., retail, homes, etc.)? What “clues” do you observe that indicate social class? In this exercise each student is to access an online census data resource [*American FactFinder* (<http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsServlet>)] and locate such demographic indicators as racial/ethnic distributions, home ownership rates, average family size, median family income, in Lorain County, Oberlin and your home town. You will be asked to compare and contrast the data and draw some inferences about these communities.

Exercise 4: Reflection on experience in own schools.

Here you will be asked to reflect a bit about your experience in school and the schools in your area. In doing so you will be asked to consider such questions as: Describe your school and its location. Do you consider your school a “good” school to attend? Are all schools the same in their quality of education? What data would you examine to compare schools, especially in Lorain County or in your local community? Are you familiar with schools like those described in the book *Savage Inequalities*?

6. **Honor Code:** On all exams and exercises, you are expected to follow the guidelines as established by the Oberlin College Honor System.

(http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html)

As such, you are required to follow the letter of that code and write and sign at the end of each academic exercise submitted for credit the following: “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this exam/assignment”. The default of this statement is that you are required to do your own work without the help from others not explicitly authorized by me (You may, however, use campus resources, such as the library, composition instructors, or writing tutors).

6. **Grading:** Final grades will be assessed as follows:

2 Exams (2 @ 25%)	50%
Class/Group Participation	10%
Exercise (4 @ 10%)	40%

Total	100%

TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS

("BB" = indicates reading is on Blackboard)*

- * If you have not accessed Blackboard before, please follow these steps:
1. Go to the Oberlin On-Line homepage: <http://www.oberlin.edu/>
 2. Locate "QuickLinks" on right hand side of your screen.
 3. Click on "QuickLinks" and select "Blackboard?" from list of link options.
 4. In Blackboard, on left side of screen, select "Login".
 5. Your login name is the same as the one you use to login for email -- enter your login name and proceed to the next section.
 6. To create your password, click on the link below login section marked "Forgot your password?" and follow instructions.
 7. To access the class readings and other materials, you will be presented with a "Course Catalog" page.
 8. Scroll down to the section for "Sociology" and left click on this.
 9. On the next screen scroll down to the course "Sociological Analysis of Society" and left click on this.
 10. To the left of your screen a number of options will appear. Left click "Documents"; this will take you to the list of readings for the course. Select as needed.

If you have trouble using the Blackboard site, please email octet@oberlin.edu or call Albert Borroni at x58345.

SOCIOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

WEEK 1: FEBRUARY 7,9,11 **INTRODUCTION: Sociology and the Sociological Imagination.**

Readings:

1. David M. Newman, *Sociology*, Chapters 1,2
2. Sue Ferguson's, *Mapping the Social Landscape*, Chapt's 1, 2. ("The Promise" and "Teenage Wasteland")
3. James Henslin, "Sociology and the Social Sciences" (BB)
4. Monica Bielski, "My Hidden Class-Consciousness" (BB)

WEEK 2: FEBRUARY 14,16, 18 **PERSPECTIVES AND BASIC CONSTRUCT OF SOCIOLOGY**

Readings:

1. David M. Newman, *Sociology*, Chapter 3, "Building Reality" (BB)
2. James Henslin, "How Sociologists Do Research" (BB)
3. Diana Scully and Joseph Marolla, "Riding the Bull at Gilley's: Convicted Rapists Describe the Rewards of Rape" (BB)

EXERCISE 1 DUE FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18TH

WEEK 3: FEBRUARY 21,23, 25 **CULTURE**

Readings:

1. D. Newman, *Sociology*, chapter 4, "Culture and History" (BB)
2. W. Kephart and W. Zellner, "The Old Order Amish", pp. 5-44 (BB)
3. Sue Ferguson, Chapt's. 7, 9, "The Tattoo Subculture", "Opening Faces"

WEEK 4: FEBRUARY 28, MARCH 2, 4 **CULTURE CONT'D**

Readings:

1. D. Newman, *Sociology*, chapter 4

WEEK 5: MARCH 7, 9, 11 **SOCIALIZATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE SELF**

Readings:

1. D. Newman, *Sociology*, chapter 5 & 6 “Building Identity”, “Building Image” (BB)
2. Kingsley Davis, “Extreme Isolation” (BB)
4. Sue Ferguson, Chaps. 11, 12 (“Night to His Day: The Social Construction of Gender”, “Boyhood, Organized Sports, and the Construction of Masculinities”)

EXERCISE 2 DUE FRIDAY MARCH 11TH

WEEK 6: MARCH 14,16, 18 **DEVIANCE AND SOCIAL CONTROL**

Readings:

1. D. Newman, *Sociology*, chapter 8, “Constructing Difference: Social Deviance” (BB)
2. William J. Chambliss, “The Saints and the Roughnecks” (BB)
3. Sue. Ferguson, Chaps. 16, 20, 21 (“Gang Business”, “Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia” and “In Search of Respect”)

**EXAMINATION 1 DUE: FRIDAY, MARCH 18TH AT 4PM
TO KING 305**

SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

WEEK 7: MARCH 21, 23, 25 **SOCIAL INEQUALITY, STRATIFICATION AND SOCIAL CLASS**

Readings:

1. D. Newman, *Sociology*, chapter 10, “The Architecture of Inequality: Social Class and Inequality” (BB)
2. Sue Ferguson, Chaps. 23, 24, 26 (“Who Rules America?”, “Some Principles of Stratification”, “Nickel-and-Dimed”)
3. Jay MacLeod, *Ain't No Makin It*, (all)

WEEK 8: MARCH 26-APRIL 3: **SPRING RECESS**

WEEK 9: APRIL 4, 6, 8 **IMMIGRATION AND INEQUALITIES BY RACE AND ETHNICITY**

Readings:

1. D. Newman, *Sociology*, chapter 11, “The Architecture of Inequality: Race and Ethnicity”
2. Sue Ferguson, Chaps. 25, 32, 33, “Black Wealth/White Wealth”, “Is This a White Country or What?”, “Racial Formations in the U.S.”
3. L. Steinhorn and Barbara Diggs-Brown, “The Integration Illusion” (BB)

WEEK 10: APRIL 11, 13, 15 **GENDER INEQUALITY /EXAM 2**

Readings:

1. D. Newman, *Sociology*, chapter 12, “The Architecture of Inequality: Sex and Gender”
2. Sue Ferguson, Chaps 27, 28, 30, “The Glass Escalator”, “Failing at Fairness”, “Gender as Structure”

EXERCISE 3 DUE FRIDAY APRIL 15

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

WEEK 11: APRIL 18, 20, 22 **SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS: MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY**

Readings:

1. D. Newman, *Sociology*, Chapter 7, 9, “The Structure of Society: Organizations, Social Institutions, and Globalization”, “Building Social Relationship: Intimacy and Families” (BB)
2. Sue Ferguson, Chaps. 53, 55, “Gay and Lesbian Families are Here”, “The Time Bind”
3. Arlie Hochschild, *The Second Shift* (all)

WEEK 12: APRIL 25, 27, 29 **EDUCATION**

Reading:

1. Jonathon Kozol’s, *Savage Inequalities* (all)
2. Sue Ferguson, Chapter 51 “Preparing for Power”

WEEK 14: MAY 2, 4, 6 **ECONOMICS AND WORK & POLITICAL SYSTEMS**

Readings:

1. Diana Kendall, "Politics and the Economy in Global Perspective", pp.366-398 (BB)
2. Sue Ferguson, Chaps. 35, 36, 42, 43, "The Power Elite", Dollars and Votes", When Work Disappears", "Over the Counter"

EXERCISE 4 DUE: FRIDAY MAY 6TH

WEEK 15: MAY 9, 11, 13 **DEMOGRAPHY SOCIAL CHANGE AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS/WRAP-UP**

Readings:

1. D. Newman, *Sociology*, Chaps. 13, 14, "Demographic Trends", "Architects of Change: Reconstructing Society"
2. Sue Ferguson, Chaps. 57, 60 "How will the Internet Change Society?", "What Can We Do?"

WEEK 15: MAY 14-17 READING PERIOD

**TAKE HOME EXAMINATION 2 DUE:
WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, AT 11 AM IN ROOM 305
KING BUILDING**