SUMMER 2012

SOCIOLOGY COURSE DESCRIPTIONS (SOC)

| Campus: BL – Bloomington |
| Career: UGRD – Undergraduate |
| Term: Summer 2012 |
| School: COLL – College of Arts & Sciences |
| Subject: SOC - Sociology |
INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

Who are you? Why? To what extent are your personality, your lifestyle, your friends, your education, your relationships and your decisions products of social structure and social forces? How much are due to your agency in the world? In this course, we will examine the ways in which people shape and are shaped by their social surroundings.

We will look at many aspects of social life, examining where and whether a line can be drawn between public and private domains in gender, religion, the family, the economy, educational institutions, business, politics and governance, health, international relations, the environment, food, death, inequality and entertainment, among others.

You will leave this course with a developed “sociological imagination”: an ability to think critically and analytically about your life and the world, which will be useful to you in any career.

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

This course is designed to provide a broad overview and introduction to the discipline of sociology. We will begin by discussing what sociology is, how sociologists do research, and the theories that guide the discipline. We will then substantively cover: socialization, culture, deviance, inequality, race, class, gender, sexuality, education, politics, the economy and work. The class format will be a combination of lecture, discussion, and multimedia presentations.

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

How do sociologists look at the social worlds we all inhabit? In this course we'll learn that sociologists have a unique point of view—the sociological perspective. Through this lens we'll look at everyday rituals of deference and domination, solidarity and boundary-marking, conformity and resistance. The sociological perspective can help us to understand connections between self and society, private troubles and public issues, deviance and normality, order and conflict, and continuity and change. We can use the perspective that sociology provides us to explore how meanings are negotiated, races constructed, genders forged, sexuality policed, work defined, underclasses contained, deviants shamed and families shaped. We can also use the sociological perspective to become aware of how our culture, institutions, families and friends shaped our lives and to explore what our responsibility is to change society for the better.

The overall aim of the course is to introduce you to a way of looking at the world—a sociological perspective or framework with which to ask meaningful questions about societies and their organization.

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

Given the broad scope of sociological inquiry, in this course we will focus on several selected areas of social life, which include matters of class, race, gender, sexuality, and age. Through a number of readings, class discussions, and writing assignments, we will critically examine how these elements manifest themselves in everyday life of both
groups and individuals. At the conclusion of this course, you will be able to critically look at the social world around you both as it plays outs in your immediate surroundings as well as on broader national and global stages.

**INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY**

This course is designed to introduce students to the field of sociology, a discipline devoted to the scientific study of social interaction and social organization. In this course, students will be introduced to the sociological perspective using C. Wright Mills’ conceptualization of the Sociological Imagination. We will also discuss major theoretical perspectives, basic sociological principles, and empirical methods used in the discipline. Finally, students will learn to analyze various social problems from a sociological perspective. Specific topics that will be considered include socialization, social organization, social inequality, and culture.

**SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND POLICIES: SEXISM, RACISM, AND CLASSISM IN U.S. SOCIETY**

Gender, social class, and race/ethnicity are central to how we think of ourselves, though we often take these identities for granted. What broader significance do these identities have in society? How do they impact life chances and experiences?

We can learn a lot about how society works by examining its inequalities. Therefore, sexism, classism, and racism will be the lens through which we explore the importance of gender, social class, and race. With the use of scholarly articles and mainstream media, we will explore theories that sociologists have put forth to explain inequality in society. These perspectives will help us understand the persistence and impact of social issues such as poverty, discrimination in the workplace, health disparities, and educational inequality. We will focus on the contemporary United States, though we will sometimes touch on broader global issues as well.

**SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND POLICIES**

**Topic: Growing Up and Growing Old: An Introduction to the Life Course**

This course is designed to provide students with an overview of the major concepts related to the life course. This course will focus on examining life from birth to death; as a result, the aging process will be a main focus of the class. We will talk about age as more than a biological process; instead our focus will be on age as a social phenomenon. You will learn how your individual life is structured by the historical period in which you live, the birth cohort in which you are part, and the culture in which you are embedded. By the semester’s end, you will discover how life trajectories are influenced by one’s gender, race, and social class. The overarching theme for this course is a focus on social problems. Because this is the theme of the class we will examine how life events and experiences over the life course such as birth, childhood, adolescence, and dying are accompanied by struggles, obstacles, and barriers.

**CHARTS, GRAPHS, & TABLES**

Our daily lives are filled with statistics about the society in which we live. "Half of all new marriages end in divorce," "the US will reduce oil imports by one third over the next decade," "the federal budget deficit topped ten
percent of GDP in 2010." Because social statistics like these can be very persuasive, journalists, pundits, politicians, and others often cite them in order to strengthen their arguments. This course will focus on providing students a better understanding of how social statistics are produced, interpreted, and presented. In doing so, this course will help students distinguish between reliable, valid knowledge and junk science as it appears in the charts, graphs, and tables that we encounter in our everyday lives.

In this course, we will be critical consumers and producers of quantitative social scientific knowledge. The first half of the course examines some of the most common statistical techniques used to analyze social science data. The second half of the course examines how social scientists use these techniques to study classical sociological concepts like race and ethnicity, gender, and inequality. Students will be introduced to the production of social science statistics through a survey research project, where students will work in groups to collect, organize, analyze and interpret original survey data. In short, the goal of this course is to provide a behind-the-scenes glimpse at the production of social scientific knowledge.

**Catalog Number:** **S**110  
**Class:** SOC-S 110 (14022)  
**Instructor:** O’Brien, T.

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**Catalog Number:** **S**201  
**Class:** SOC-S 201 (14023)  
**Instructor:** Backstrom, L.

**SOCIAL PROBLEMS - TOPIC: Gender and the Body**  
This course is an introduction to social problems related to gender and the body. After an overview of prominent gender and social problem theories, students will critically analyze controversial social issues and evaluate the political, social, and economic interests of proposed solutions. Topics include sex and gender identities, reproduction and the family, disability, eating disorders and obesity, and technology.

**Catalog Number:** **S**230  
**Class:** SOC-S 230 (14024)  
**Instructor:** Powers, A.

**SOCIETY & THE INDIVIDUAL**  
This course is designed to introduce students to the concepts, theories, and practice of sociological social psychology. We will consider how societal forces and social interaction shape the individual as well as how individuals in interaction shape society. We will use three perspectives (symbolic interactionism, social structure and personality, and group processes) to investigate topics such as the social nature of the self, how interactions are ordered, cognition and perception, emotions, deviance, conformity, and how the groups we belong to influence our behavior.
**GLOBAL SOCIETY**

This course adopts a comparative perspective to investigate key sociological concepts in a number of different societies around the world. The course will be built around an in depth look at five core, geographically dispersed societies: Japan, Mexico, Egypt, Germany, and Namibia. We will explore the social dynamics in each of these societies by considering topics like culture, social structure, group life, socialization, deviance, social institutions, social stratification, and social change.

Going beyond the nation-state, the course will also examine the development of the global institutions that make up the international community, such as the United Nations. This section of the course will focus on the period after World War II, when representatives from nations around the world called for legally defined and institutionalized human rights. During this time, we will discuss the emergent legal norms that eventually came to be known as the international human rights regime.

The main objectives of this course are as follows: to introduce students to and reinforce important sociological concepts using comparisons, to familiarize students with societies outside of the United States, and to better understand the workings of the international system. Specific overarching themes include cultural difference, universality and human rights, national sovereignty, and international law.

**THE FAMILY**

What is a family? Families have different meanings for different groups and across cultures. We have all had personal experiences with families, but we might not have thought about the family in a broader social context. In this course, we will explore the family as a dynamic social institution from a sociological perspective. We will look at the history of the family and the changing contemporary family. We will study diverse family types across race, ethnicity, class, and gender. We will investigate the cultural, political, and economic origins of practices and beliefs about the family. Students will develop the skills necessary to read, write, and think critically and analytically about family issues.

**DEVIANTE BEHAVIOR AND SOCIAL CONTROL**

This course uses a sociological lens to explore the way society defines, constructs, and produces deviance. We will begin with sociological theories of deviance, social order, and social power. Then, we will explore a variety of deviant behaviors, paying attention to how different groups gain control over social definitions of deviance, and the consequences that these definitions have in the form of norms, laws, and informal social sanctions. We will also consider the ways these definitions impact the individual—namely, how people construct and manage deviant identities.
This class is an upper-level sociology course on sexuality. We will explore sexual attitudes, behavior, and identity, as well as the diversity of sexual expression across dimensions of age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, and class. The course will be divided into three parts. First, we will focus on the cultural history of sexuality in the United States from 1600-present. Second, we will look at sexuality across the life course from childhood socialization through sex in later life. The final portion of the course will be dedicated to discussing current hot topics in sexuality. We will cover a wide range of topics throughout the semester including media, religion, political sex scandals, sex education, attractiveness, romantic relationships, and atypical sexual expression, among others. This course will give you a basic understanding of the sociological implications of sexuality in the United States.

Catalog Number: **S 324
Class: SOC-S 324 (5334)
Instructor: Redmond, D.

MENTAL ILLNESS
This course will review the social aspects of mental health and illness. We will discuss various issues in the sociology of mental health and illness, such as incidence and prevalence, studying and treating mental illness, theories of mental disorder, social correlates, and mental health policy. Students will be expected to carry out research, to participate in weekly discussions, and to present research findings towards the end of the semester.

Catalog Number: **S 325
Class: SOC-S 325 (6491)
Instructor: Knight, S.

CRIMINOLOGY
Few aspects of social life invoke the range of emotional responses from the American public that crime does. However, our ideas about crime, criminals, and corrections are often shaped more by dramatization and pervasive cultural messages than social science. In this course, students will be introduced to sociological perspectives regarding crime, criminality, and the criminal justice system. We will survey a variety of theories of crime causation, examine crime and incarceration trends, and explore controversial issues within the field. One of the main goals of the course is to learn to think critically about crime, what we know about it, what we think we know, and why certain approaches to crime win out in both academic and public debates over others.

Catalog Number: **S 335
Class: SOC-S 335 (4282)
Instructor: Prewitt, D.

RACE AND ETHNIC RELATIONS
Race is a dynamic process that continues to influence life in the United States. Incredibly complex in nature, race/ethnicity shapes our perceptions of ourselves and others, our interactions, and impacts our life chances. In this course, we will begin by discussing the biological myth of race through focusing on the key historical figures and events that have shaped our contemporary ideas about race. We will then move to a more contemporary discussion about what race/ethnicity “means” for us in the 21st century. Through articles, books, and television/movies, we will explore not only our assumptions about what we think race is, but also the ways in which people form and experience racial identities, the impact of race on life chances, and the state of current race relations in the United States.

Catalog Number: **S 338
Class: SOC-S 338 (4961)
Instructor: Puentes, J.

GENDER ROLES
What is gender? How do we come to be “gendered”? This course focuses on gender in society by analyzing the impact of the social construction of gender and what it means to how we live our everyday lives. By examining the ways in which gender influences our attitudes, behaviors, customs, and interactions we will develop a better understanding of how and why society prescribes different gender roles to females and males. We will also explore how social institutions shape our assumptions about gender roles. We will discuss how gender roles affect the expectations, experiences, and opportunities of men, women, girls, and boys. In doing so, we will examine what "feminine" and "masculine" mean and how these concepts can be used in understanding gender roles. While exploring and applying a variety of perspectives to gender, we will also discuss the intersection of gender with race, social class, and sexuality.

Catalog Number: **S 370
Class: SOC-S 370 (3162)
Instructor: La Touche, R.

LECTURE: RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIOLOGY
In this course, research methods are our subject matter. We will learn about the many varied techniques employed to conduct sociological research, including their relative strengths and weaknesses, when the use of one method is more or less appropriate for our research question, and how to design research accordingly. In other words, the goal for this course is to familiarize you with how and why social research is done, enabling you to evaluate the quality of social science studies. You will come to understand the importance of theories and hypotheses, learn different ways of collecting data, and practice the fundamentals of elementary data analysis using Excel.

Note: No previous statistics classes or statistical experience is necessary for this course, although if you have taken or are presently taking statistics, this will be useful to you during the semester.

Catalog Number: **S 370
Class: SOC-S 370 (14025)
Instructor: La Touche, R.

LAB: RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIOLOGY
In this course, research methods are our subject matter. We will learn about the many varied techniques employed to conduct sociological research, including their relative strengths and weaknesses, when the use of one method is more or less appropriate for our research question, and how to design research accordingly. In other words, the goal for this course is to familiarize you with how and why social research is done, enabling you to evaluate the quality of social science studies. You will come to understand the importance of theories and hypotheses, learn different ways of collecting data, and practice the fundamentals of elementary data analysis using Excel.

Note: No previous statistics classes or statistical experience is necessary for this course, although if you have taken or are presently taking statistics, this will be useful to you during the semester.

Catalog Number: **S 371
Class: SOC-S 371 (3163)
Instructor: DiGrazia, J.

LECTURE: STATISTICS FOR SOCIOLOGY
Quantitative analysis is an important component of social science research and allows researchers to answer questions about single variables (e.g. how unequally are incomes distributed across a population?) and about the relationships between two or more variables (e.g. how does income change as people age?). This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to statistical reasoning and computation as a social research method. The course covers both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the properties of sets of numbers. Inferential statistics make use sampling to estimate unknown characteristics of large populations. Inferential statistics are at the heart of social science research and are used when it is impractical or impossible to obtain data on an entire population. Although the course is not particularly mathematically intensive, a working understanding of basic algebra is required.

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Instructor: DiGrazia, J.

LAB: STATISTICS FOR SOCIOLOGY

Quantitative analysis is an important component of social science research and allows researchers to answer questions about single variables (e.g. how unequally are incomes distributed across a population?) and about the relationships between two or more variables (e.g. how does income change as people age?). This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to statistical reasoning and computation as a social research method. The course covers both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the properties of sets of numbers. Inferential statistics make use sampling to estimate unknown characteristics of large populations. Inferential statistics are at the heart of social science research and are used when it is impractical or impossible to obtain data on an entire population. Although the course is not particularly mathematically intensive, a working understanding of basic algebra is required.