

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

Soc 200.01 – Fall 2014

Mondays and Thursdays, 2-3:30 p.m., Elkins Auditorium

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Course Description

This course introduces you to the art of thinking like a sociologist. Just as becoming an effective lawyer, doctor, businessperson or artist takes practice, so too with developing sociological insight. We will practice thinking, talking, and acting like sociologists in this class. Sociologists use theories and research methods as tools to learn about how our society works. We will investigate sociology by doing sociology. The discipline of sociology is dynamic because its subject, society, is dynamic. We practice sociology by examining sociological theory and methods, patterns of social interaction, sociologists' understanding of social structure and social stratification, race, gender, sexuality, the family, culture, crime, and medicine. Through our investigation, we will uncover the general strategies and orientations sociologists bring to their work, and consider how these differ from other social sciences, and from the much more common, uncritical attitude that characterizes most of our interactions.

Sociology is not simply an organized set of facts, theories, or concepts. Sociology is a way of understanding and living, in the world. Everyone in this class is a social actor, engaged in interaction with me and with each other. All interactions occur within a context *not entirely of our own making*. We are all simultaneously embedded within, and responsive to, networks of friends, families, communities, and institutions like Seaver College, Pepperdine University and the state of California. These networks both enable and impose constraints on our behavior. The lessons, attitudes, and dispositions you learn in this classroom can help you navigate these networks and institutions today, and ideally, for many years to come.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Define and demonstrate the use of the “sociological imagination.” In this course, you’ll have the opportunity to try on the sociological way of thinking and asking questions in order to illuminate new and interesting perspectives on the way life is lived today.
- Summarize and raise sociologically significant questions about sociological theory, deviance, medicine, family, culture, and inequality. You will get to practice the analytic skills sociologists use in their work.
- Apply sociological concepts and perspectives at the micro- and macro-social levels. You will actually demonstrate your ability to use the analytic skills you have gained in this class.

This course fulfills a GE requirement in “Human Institutions and Behavior” and aligns with the General Education Learning Outcome: “Students identify and apply the major concepts of economics, psychology, or sociology to explain institutional and human behavior” including the application of knowledge to real-world challenges and the ability to think critically and creatively.

Program Learning Outcomes Addressed by this Course

This course contributes to the sociology program. Specifically, at the conclusion of this course, students will be *introduced* to the ability to:

- “Demonstrate the use of the sociological imagination, ‘the ability to recognize the relationship between large-scale social forces and the actions of individuals.’
- “Describe and use the major macro- and micro-level theoretical paradigms in sociology.”

By taking this course, you will engage in activities that closely match the program learning outcomes listed above. For example, in this course, I require that you conduct original sociological research that demonstrates both your use of the sociological imagination, and use one or more of the major theoretical paradigms in sociology.

Institutional Student Learning Outcomes

This course contributes to Pepperdine’s Institutional Educational Objectives. Specifically, at the conclusion of this course, students will have advanced in their ability to:

- Demonstrate expertise in an academic or professional discipline, display proficiency in the discipline, and engage in the process of academic discovery.
- Develop and enact a compelling personal and professional vision that values diversity.
- Apply knowledge to real-world challenges.
- Think critically and creatively, communicate clearly, and act with integrity.

No man is an island,
Entire of itself,
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thy friend's
Or of thine own were:
Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in mankind,
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.
-- John Donne

Readings

There is one textbook for this class, *The Sociology Project* by Manza and colleagues. ISBN: 9780205949601. The book includes both traditional textbook chapters and selections from the sociological literature. Reading is one of the most important tasks in this course. No assignment is more important than reading. You will be asked to read approximately 100 pages of material each week, which should be completed before the class period in which it will be discussed and/or referenced in lecture. It will help if you read sections of the book that I have assigned. Honest. If you want to know how to define a word used in class, search in the textbook first. Then *think* about whether or not the textbook definition makes sense. If it does, you may proceed. If it doesn't, *search* for other definitions using the web. *Talk* to your classmates, and to me, about the word. Find help if you need it. Do not assume that a word or concept is not important if you do not understand it immediately.

The textbook is available at the Pepperdine Bookstore. It is a special Pearson Custom Sociology text.

Students should read the assigned material and come to class prepared to answer questions posed. Students who are unwilling to do the reading or attend class will not perform well in the course, as your learning will be assessed based on readings and work completed in class.

The course textbook comes with access to MySocLab, which is an online learning tool. **Use Firefox or Chrome. Do NOT use Safari.** We will be using that tool in this class, so access the site and create your account ASAP. I have created a screencast that will help you understand how to log in to the system. **You will need Course ID: morrison79371 to complete your registration process. A screencast explaining how to login and register is available here: <http://screencast.com/t/QA1ptS6fubL>**

Assignments and Assessing your Learning

You will have many opportunities to demonstrate that you are meeting the learning outcomes I have selected for this course. It is not enough to simply read and recall the definition of concepts

and theories in this course. In order to adopt a sociological frame of mind, you must reflect upon and live with the material we read and discuss in class.

1. Reading: No assignment is as important for your progress in this class, therefore I expect for you to keep up and be an active critical reader. For each class I will ask you to read approximately thirty to fifty pages from a variety of sources, and I will expect you to complete them before class on the day they are assigned. The specific reading assignments and their due dates are listed below in the Course Schedule. To ensure you learn the most from the readings, take notes that help clarify a sense of the author's arguments and their relationships to that of other readings or class discussions. Take special notes on concepts that are difficult to understand, ideas that are particularly persuasive, or critiques you may have, since all will aid you in class discussions and assignments. I have added at the end of this syllabus a short reading rubric and tips that should help you to identify the most important points.

2. Complete the [Student Information Sheet](#) and return it to me via paper copy. I am requiring each student to complete this form during the first two weeks of the semester--**by September 4 in class**. Students who complete this sheet and return it to me in class will receive one bonus point added to their final grade.

3. **Optional:** Meet with Dr. Morrison. I am strongly encouraging every student to meet with me during the first four weeks of the semester. I will have at least one sign-up sheet on my office door (Appleby Center 233) listing several 15-minute time periods, mostly during my office hours, but other times will also be available. This meeting is not required, but is encouraged. I want to get to know you. I will also take any student to lunch on a Monday, Wednesday, or Friday at the Caf.

4. In-Class Quizzes: There will be thirteen in-class quizzes, comprised of multiple choice questions. I will drop your lowest quiz score. Your quiz will have a code number (example: A15) that you will write on your answer form. You must return both when you finish a quiz. The material covered by the quizzes will draw from readings, lectures, class discussions and class activities. While I do not explicitly test on prior material, each quiz assumes that you are familiar with what we previously covered. Each quiz is worth 5% of your final grade. Therefore, they constitute a total of 60% of your final grade. The dates are indicated in the schedule below.

5. Final Assessment: There will be a final assessment for this course. Wednesday, December 10 from 1:30-4 p.m. in Elkins Auditorium. It will be just like the other 13 assessments in class, and counts for 5% of your final grade. This assessment will feature questions from the previous 13 assessments plus questions about CW Mills' "The Promise." Students should plan on attending class and the final exam period. Late final exams are not given unless your absence is excused by a note from the Dean's Office. You may be given an alternate exam.

Missed Quiz Policy:

Please notify me BEFORE you miss a quiz for any reason. Students who miss any quizzes will be given make-up assessment(s) on the Wednesday before finals week. Details: Wed. Dec 3 from 8 am -9:50 am. Students should proceed to the main division office (AC 201) ten minutes prior to

the start time for the make-up exam. The make-up exams will then be administered either in Jerene's Room (AC 298) or another AC classroom (in coordination with the Religion Division).

4. Social Mission Assignment.

Due in class November 24.

Each student will complete a "social mission." The goal of this project is to bring sociological concepts alive and develop students' sociological imaginations. The available options and requirements are detailed on Courses. Students **MUST** work with at least one partner in the class. Projects are due on November 24. The project as a whole counts for 20% of the final grade. Students may form teams of up to four.

Your peers will evaluate the quality of your participation in your social mission group. This will account for approximately 20% of your project grade.

There is no "make-up" option for this assignment. You must turn it in on time. Late social mission assignments receive a zero. Missing class is not an excuse; email the assignment before class starts if you cannot be in class on time.

5. In-class writing and participation: Class participation is absolutely essential if you are to achieve the kind of deep and sustained learning that is the goal of this course. Reading, hearing, and speaking are equally important factors in learning sociology. The course will be more productive and enjoyable if students attend class, ask questions, and contribute their own sociological insights during discussion. For these reasons, I explicitly take participation into consideration when I calculate final grades. No late in-class writing assignments are accepted.

Like learning a new language, I believe that reading, hearing, and speaking are equally important factors in learning sociology. Furthermore, I assure you that the course will be more productive and enjoyable if students ask questions and share their own insights during discussion. For these reasons, your participation will count for 5% of your final grade, which will include your contributions to class discussion, group exercises, and take-home assignments.

6. MySocLab assignments: As part of your participation grade, and in order to help you prepare for your in-class assessments, I am assigning one Media Assignment per textbook chapter. **Do use Firefox or Chrome. DO NOT USE SAFARI.** Firefox and Chrome are easy, quick downloads. Each one has a quiz attached. You should watch the video, then complete the quiz. If you don't complete the quiz by 5 p.m. on the day these are due, you will not receive credit. I recommend that you explore the many resources available on MySocLab. The study plans and media assignments will provide you with important insights that expand on the text and offer more context to your study of sociology. 10% of your final grade.

7. Extra Special Extra Credit: You may choose to complete the Chapter Exams on our MySocLab.com site for one or more of the chapters that are assigned in this course. You will receive no extra credit if you complete the Chapter Exams for other chapters in the text. If your score is at or above 85% on a given exam, I will increase your final grade by .5%. You may earn up to 3% of your final grade using this method. You may take up to 12 chapter exams; you

receive the credit only for the exams you score at or above 85%. For example, if you score 85% or higher on the first six Chapter Exams you take, then you may do the rest simply as a review.

The Grading Philosophy:

- “A” 90%+ - exceptional performance—the class and I have learned from your thinking;
- “B” 80-89%- honorable performance—you have more to learn and have made a strong effort to do so;
- “C” 70-79% - adequate performance—you have more to learn, and have some work to do;
- “D” 60-69% - you were “shadow boxing” (you were swinging, but not connecting);
- “F” Below 60% - it appears that you will have to re-experience this class.

Specifically, the grading scale will be:

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|------------|------------|------------|
| 100-93 = A | 82-80 = B- | 69-66 = D+ |
| 92-90 = A- | 79-76 = C+ | 65-63 = D |
| 89-86 = B+ | 75-73 = C | 62-60 = D- |
| 85-83 = B | 72-70 = C- | 59— = F |

Calculate your final course grade using the worksheet attached below.

Final grades are final. Unless there has been a miscalculation, I will not change your grade once it is posted. If you are concerned about your grade at any point in the semester, I urge you to meet with me so that we can address the problem before the end of the semester.

Final Exam: We will meet on the day of the final exam, Wednesday, December 10, 1:30-4 pm in Elkins Auditorium. The last day to submit a Change of Final Exam form is December 1, 2014.

Relationship to the Pepperdine and Seaver Missions

This course promotes the mission of both Pepperdine University and Seaver College by introducing students to the social scientific perspective shared by sociologists. The course goals, assessments and activities develop students’ leadership potential and service-orientation through an understanding of how US society is formed and sustained, the source and value of diversity, and the nature of social change. This course also engages students' emotional and social development by encouraging empathetic understanding of the lives of others.

Course Evaluations: The evaluation period opens on November 21 and continues for 17 days. Evaluations are online. I take these evaluations seriously and will do my best to improve my teaching and your learning on the basis of a mid-semester evaluation.

Disability Services: Any student with a documented disability (physical, learning, or psychological) needing academic accommodations should contact the Disability Services Office (Main Campus, Tyler Campus Center 264, x6500) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit <http://www.pepperdine.edu/disabilityservices/> for

additional information.

Academic Integrity: Academic Integrity is the expression of intellectual virtue in human beings as a result of their creation in God's image. It represents the convergence of the best of the human spirit and God's spirit, which requires personal, private and community virtue. As a Christian institution, Pepperdine University affirms that integrity begins in our very created being and is lived out in our academic work.

In order for the code to be effective, the community must maintain its health and vitality. This requires a genuine sense of maturity, responsibility, and sensitivity on the part of every member. In particular, each member of the Seaver College community is expected to pursue his or her academic work with honesty and integrity.

Academic integrity is a core value for this university, and for our classroom. Any and all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, cheating, or deception, will earn the student a zero on the assignment, and possibly removal from the course and referral to the Academic Ethics Committee. If you have any questions regarding what constitutes academic dishonesty, please ask. I will provide you with guidelines on correct citations. It's really upsetting and depressing for everyone involved when this kind of dishonesty occurs; it's especially embarrassing for the student, and it results in a very bad grade. Plagiarism is stealing, so cite, do not steal.

This Course is Intellectual Property: Course materials prepared by the instructor, together with the content of all lectures and review sessions presented by the instructor, are the property of the instructor. Video and audio recording of lectures and review sessions without the consent of the instructor is prohibited. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, recordings of lectures and review sessions may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person. Electronic devices other than DSO-approved laptops (for example: cell phones, PDAs, calculators, recording devices) are not to be used during lectures or exams without prior permission of the instructor.

Withdrawing from the Course: The last day to withdraw with a "W" on your transcript is October 20. The last day to withdraw with a grade of Withdraw-Pass (WP) or Withdraw-Fail (WF) is by 5 p.m. on November 21.

The last day to change from Credit to No-Credit status is September 8.

What You Can Expect From Me

- I will be transparent and honest about my grading policies, teaching philosophy, and thoughts on the course. If anything is unclear, please let me know!
- I am available to meet with students outside of class during office hours, by appointment, or whenever I am in my office. Feel free to stop by with any questions or to just say hi!
- I will arrive to class on time, organized and prepared, and will not keep you past the time allotted.
- I strive to grade and return coursework within two weeks and to keep your grades updated online.

- I have high expectations of students, confident that they are intelligent, hard-working, and deserve to be treated as adults. I also aim to show my respect for your diversity, your beliefs and interests, and the other demands on your lives, both personal and academic.
- I am interested in getting to know you. From my perspective, caring about your progress in my class is intimately tied to caring about you as a person and the issues that are relevant to your life.

What I Expect From You

- Please be respectful in class. This includes: turning off your cell phone; not sleeping, doing crosswords, or reading unrelated materials; and not being disruptive to those around you.
- Students should arrive before class is scheduled to start. Tardiness is disruptive to both the professor and your peers. Likewise, please do not begin packing up your materials until class has ended.
- **Laptops, tablets, cell-phones (except as part of a class activity) are not permitted. Basically, if it uses electricity to function, it's not permitted in class.** Exception: Students with documented disabilities. We will cover this on day one, but research has demonstrated that we don't learn well with these devices.
- Please be courteous in your participation, as both a speaker and a listener. I encourage you to focus your discussion on broader society, social theory, and course concepts, and to show consideration for all perspectives.
- A college degree signifies both mastery of course material and the ability to express that knowledge eloquently. Therefore, students should devote time to the mechanics of their written work, paying specific attention to structure, word choice, grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Students should regularly check their Pepperdine email accounts and Courses for updates, changes, or reminders. These will be my primary means of communicating with students outside of class.

Course Policies

- If you will miss a due date or assessment for a *legitimate* reason, you must notify me beforehand.
- I reserve the right to modify the syllabus, including the schedule, grading, and requirements, as deemed necessary. Students can expect that I will announce such changes in class and post the information on Courses.
- I make a careful effort to grade fairly; however, I am human and might make mistakes. If you suspect an error has been made, please submit a written explanation of your concern to me by the following class session. I will happily correct the grade as appropriate. Note that I will not consider disputes over the meaning of a question or instruction, as these should be clarified before the work is originally submitted.
- Should you wish to dispute your final grade, please know and follow the official Seaver College policies here:
<http://www.pepperdine.edu/registrar/grades/seaver/gradedisputes.htm>

Research Study on Student Course Engagement

Students in this class, as well as in a course in the Humanities, are invited to participate in a research study on student course engagement in large general education courses at Seaver College. You will be asked to complete three surveys on course engagement. Random students will be asked to participate in a focus group. The goal of the study is to determine ways to make large lecture classes more engaging, increasing student learning. Participation in the survey and focus groups is optional. No names or identifying information will be released. The professor will not know who did or did not participate until the semester is over.

CLASS SCHEDULE

*The course should proceed as outlined below. However, I reserve the right to employ the technique of **improvisation** as the students, the class, and the course demand. Such revisions may involve an extra (short) reading. This is the nature of the academic enterprise—you may not know in advance what you need to know in order to do your work well.*

| Wk | Date | Themes; Questions | Read | Tasks |
|----|------|--|---|--|
| 1 | 8/25 | <p>Themes: Learning Strategies, Introduction to the course</p> <p>Consider: Metacognition. What it is, how it can work for you. What does a successful college student know? What does a successful college student do? How does a successful college student approach coursework?</p> | <p>Chambliss, “The Mundanity of Excellence” Courses</p> <p>Watch videos here: http://www.samford.edu/how-to-study/default.aspx</p> <p>How should students study? http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/publications/observer/2011/april-11/how-should-students-study-tips-advice-and-pitfalls.html</p> | <p>Come to class Monday prepared to discuss the videos and article.</p> |
| | 8/28 | <p>Consider: What is sociology? What do sociologists do? What will it take to succeed in this class?</p> | <p>Manza, Haney, and Arum, “The Sociological Imagination” Textbook Chapter 1</p> | <p>Assessment 1 in class. This will be a quiz on the syllabus, Chambliss, and metacognition.</p> <p>Think: How might I achieve excellence this semester? What do I need to be</p> |

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| | | | | successful? Ch. 1 Media Assignment on MySocLab moved to Sept. 1 @ 5 p.m. |
| 2 | 9/1 | NO CLASS--LABOR DAY. | | Due: Chapter 1 Media Assignment on MySocLab, 5 p.m. Pacific Time. |
| | 9/4 | What unique perspective do sociologists bring to the world? | Berger, "Invitation to Sociology." Courses | Assessment 2 in class |
| 3 | 9/8 | Themes: How do sociologists study the social world? What tools do they use in their work? | Haney, "Studying the Social World." Textbook Chapter 2 | Due: Chapter 2 Media Assignment on MySocLab |
| | 9/11 | Themes: Sociological Theory & Method Consider: How do sociologists discover truths about society and its members? | Best, "Promoting Bad Statistics." Courses, in the Resources folder, within the "Read these Articles" folder. | |
| 4 | 9/15 | Consider: The practice of everyday life. | Molotch, "Social Interaction." Textbook Chapter 3 | Assessment 3 in class Due: Chapter |

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| | | | | 3 Media Assignment on MySocLab. |
| | 9/18 | | Goffman, "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life." Courses | |
| 5 | 9/22 | | Hochschild, "Feeling Management: From Private to Commercial Uses." Courses | Visit Dr. Morrison Wednesday Sept. 24 from 10-11 a.m. in Elkins for exam review and/or Social Mission Project help |
| | 9/25 | Theme: Social Structure. How is society built? | Manza, "Social Structure." Textbook Chapter 4 | Assessment 4 in class on Ch. 3, Goffman & Hochschild Due: Chapter 4 media assignment on MySocLab. |
| 6 | 9/29 | | Lareau, "Social Structure and Daily Life." Courses | |
| | 10/2 | Consider: What is social stratification? How does this system work, and who benefits? | Torche, Arum, and Manza, "Social Stratification, Inequality, and Poverty." Textbook Chapter 9 | Assessment 5 in class on Ch. 4 and Lareau Due: Chapter |

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| | | | | 9 Media Assignment on MySocLab. |
| 7 | 10/6 | | Marx, "Manifesto of the Communist Party." Courses & Gans, "Positive Functions of the Undeserving Poor..." Courses | |
| | 10/9 | Consider: Racial Inequality | Morning, Dill, Garver, and Halushka, "Race and Ethnicity." Textbook Chapter 10 | Assessment 6 in class on Ch. 9, Marx, & Gans Due: Chapter 10 Media Assignment on MySocLab. |
| 8 | 10/13 | | DuBois, "The Souls of Black Folk." Courses | |
| | 10/16 | Consider: Gender Inequality, Sexuality | England, "Gender and Sexuality." Textbook Chapter 11 | Assessment 7 in class Due: Chapter 11 Media Assignment on MySocLab |
| 9 | 10/20 | Themes: Gender-related violence. Guest speaker: Sean Susan Baker, M.A., MFT. Consider: Does inequality between men and women lead to violence? What social processes lead to physical violence? | Armstrong Hamilton and Sweeney "Sexual Assault on Campus: A Multilevel, Integrative Approach to Party Rape." Courses | |

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| | | *Last day to withdraw with a grade of W* | | |
| | 10/23 | Theme: What is a Family? | Gerson with Torres, "Families and Family Life." Textbook Chapter 13 | Assessment 8 in class Due: Chapter 13 Media Assignment on MySocLab |
| 10 | 10/27 | | "Unmarried with Children"; "How History and Sociology Can Help Today's Families"; "The Way We Weren't: The Myth and Reality of the 'Traditional' Family" MySocLibrary. MySocLibrary is available under the "Student Resources" Tab in MySocLab. These readings are also available in the "Read these Articles" tab under the title "Family Readings." | Visit Dr. Morrison Wednesday Oct. 29 from 9-11 a.m. in Elkins for exam review and/or Social Mission Project help |
| | 10/30 | Theme: Culture | Klinenberg, "Culture, Media, and Communication." Textbook Chapter 5 | Assessment 9 in class Due: Chapter 5 Media Assignment on MySocLab. |
| 11 | 11/3 | | Anderson, "The Code of the Streets." Courses | |
| | 11/6 | Theme: Crime | Duster and Manza, "Crime, Deviance, and Social Control." Textbook Chapter 16 | Assessment 10 in class Due: Chapter 16 Media |

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| | | | | Assignment on MySocLab. |
| 12 | 11/10 | | Chambliss, "Saints and Roughnecks" Courses & Rosenhan, "On Being Sane in Insane Places." Courses | |
| | 11/13 | Consider: Why are people religious? | Marwell and Murphree, "Sociology of Religion." Textbook Chapter 14 | Assessment 11 in class Due: Chapter 14 Media Assignment on MySocLab. |
| 13 | 11/17 | | Perrin, "What Makes a Church Strong?..." Courses AND Chaves, "Abiding Faith." MySocLibrary | Visit Dr. Morrison and TAs Wednesday Nov. 19 from 9-11 a.m. in Elkins for exam review and/or Social Mission Project help |
| | 11/20 | Theme: Health, Medicine, Population *Course Evaluation period starts tomorrow.* *Last day to receive a WP/WF is tomorrow.* | Wu and Jennings, "Population, Aging, and Health." Textbook Chapter 19. Read sections "Big Questions" 2, 3, and 4 | Assessment 12 in class Due: Chapter 19 Media Assignment on MySocLab. |
| 14 | 11/24 | Health, continued. | Conrad, "The Discovery of | Due: Social |

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| | | | Hyperkinesis..." Courses | Mission Project |
| | 11/27 | NO CLASS--THANKSGIVING BREAK | | |
| 15 | 12/1 | Health, continued. *Last day to submit Change of Final Exam form* | Loe, "The Prescription of a New Generation." Courses | |
| | 12/4 | Conclusion | Mills, "The Promise." Courses | Assessment 13 in class |
| | | Final Exam-Assessment 14: Wednesday Dec. 10, 1:30-4 p.m. in Elkins Auditorium | | |

Please remember to complete online course evaluation forms

Reading Rubric

Today's date: _____

Article/Chapter Name: _____

Author(s): _____

Year Published: _____ Publisher: _____

The main claim (also known as the "thesis") of the reading is:

The author(s) support their thesis using data from:

The authors analyze this data using this/these method(s):

This study is important because it helps to answer our questions about:

This study is/is not convincing, because:

(on the back) Write a paragraph summarizing the text, and another describing how this relates to your life.

Some Tips on Reading for Class[1]

Students have often given me feedback that they have difficulties in getting their reading done for all of their classes. In an effort to help you get things read for this class I provide you with the following tips for reading:

1. Ask “Why am I reading this article”

Before you begin reading an article, think about why you are reading it:

s *Are you reading to get ideas for your research project?* If so, read the abstract and/or introduction to see what has been done and the discussion/conclusion to see what questions remain.

s *Are you looking for information related to supporting your own ideas?* Pay particular attention to how the author did her or his research. Take notes.

s *Are you reading it to increase your general knowledge?* Consider how the article fits into your own understanding and how, if at all, it changes your ideas.

s *Are you reading it just because it was assigned to you?* Consider what you think the instructor wants you to get out of it and how it fits with the particular section of the course. In addition, keep in mind the total amount of readings assigned. If there are 10 readings assigned, don't spend all of your time on the first few and skip the remaining readings. Distribute your time evenly. Also, don't assume short readings will take less time! Finally, the assignment of a large amount of readings is an opportunity to learn to efficiently extract information.

2. Don't just read the article

Many students approach academic reading assignments as they would reading a novel; trying to read and understand each word. As a result, they often get frustrated, confused, or just plain bored. Keeping in mind why you are reading the article, focus on the relevant sections. Skim the article, looking for key points or interesting ideas.

3. Put the article in context

Think about who the author is, why s/he wrote the article, when it was written, how it contributes to other articles of similar topics, how it is useful, etc.

4. Read actively

Don't read lying down. If the article is putting you to sleep, you won't get anything out of it. Rather, read in a place where you can think about what you are reading. Be prepared to take notes (see below).

5. Don't highlight

Using a highlighter encourages passive reading. Rather than using a highlighter, try using a pen or marker (in a color that stands out) to underline key phrases, make notations in the margins, and to note any questions or ideas that come to you.

6. Summarize

Finally, after finishing an article take a few moments to summarize the article. Using a single sheet of paper, write on the top half of the paper what the author said. Use the bottom half of the paper to write what you think about what the author said, including any questions or ideas that came to mind.

[1]

The material in this handout was adapted from the following articles: Stephen P. Borgatti, U. of South Carolina, "How to Read (a Journal Article)" [http://www.analytictech.com/mb870/How_to_read.htm], Christian H. Jordan and Mark P. Zanna, U. of Waterloo, "How to Read a Journal Article in Social Psychology" [<http://acsu.buffalo.edu/~jtj3/howto.html>], & "How to Read a Journal Article" [http://defiant.ssc.uwo.ca/Jody_web/Culham_Lab_Docs/Advice/how_to_read_a_journal_article.htm] and from Dr. Tracy Ore's Introduction to sociology and social psychology syllabus.

Calculating your final course grade

Generic formula

Percentage score (0%-100%) * Percent that assignment counts in your final grade = final points out of 100.

Hypothetical Example:

| Item | Percent Score | Multiplier (i.e. how much this item "counts" for in the final grade) | Total Points |
|---|---------------|--|--------------|
| Avg. in-class assessment scores except lowest score | 80% | .60 (aka 60%) | 48 |
| Final Exam | 90% | .05 | 4.5 |
| Participation | 90% | .05 | 4.5 |
| Social Mission Proj. | 85% | .20 | 17 |
| Avg. MySocLab Media Assignments/ Assignments | 90% | .1 | 9 |
| Totals | | 1 | 83 |

Total Points/Percentage Score for the class: 83%

Remember to drop your lowest quiz score from the calculations below.

Your Scores:

| Item | Your Percent Score | Multiplier | Total |
|--------------|--------------------|------------|-------|
| Assessment 1 | | .05 | |
| Assessment 2 | | .05 | |
| Assessment 3 | | .05 | |
| Assessment 4 | | .05 | |
| Assessment 5 | | .05 | |
| Assessment 6 | | .05 | |
| Assessment 7 | | .05 | |

| | | | |
|------------------|--|-----|---|
| Assessment 8 | | .05 | |
| Assessment 9 | | .05 | |
| Assessment 10 | | .05 | |
| Assessment 11 | | .05 | |
| Assessment 12 | | .05 | |
| Assessment 13 | | .05 | |
| Final Exam | | .05 | |
| Social Mission | | .2 | |
| MySocLab Average | | .1 | |
| Participation | | .05 | |
| Totals | | 1 | <hr style="width: 100px; margin-left: 0;"/> % |

Remember this is now a total score out of 100, thus you can use the chart above to determine your final letter grade in the course.