

# PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLOGY

SOC 101, SECTION

Spring 2019  
TR 10:35am – 11:50am  
Room 194

Department of Sociology and Social Work  
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point at Wausau



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## COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

*In any political or military conflict it is of advantage to capture the information used by the intelligence organs of the opposing side. But this is so only because good intelligence consists of information free of bias. If a spy does his reporting in terms of the ideology and ambitions of his superiors, his reports are useless not only to the enemy, if the latter should capture them, but also to the spy's own side. It has been claimed that one of the weaknesses of the espionage apparatus of totalitarian states is that spies report not what they find but what their superiors want to hear. This, quite evidently, is bad espionage. The good spy reports what is there. Others decide what should be done as a result of this information. The sociologist is a spy in very much the same way. His job is to report as accurately as he can about a certain social terrain. Others, or he himself in a role other than that of sociologists, will have to decide what moves ought to be made in that terrain.*

Peter Berger, *Invitation to Sociology*

*That, in brief, is why it is by means of the sociological imagination that men [or women] now hope to grasp what is going on in the world, and to understand what is happening in themselves as minute points of the intersections of biography and history within society.*

C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*

What do we mean by a *social world*? How do we operate within it; what *roles* do we have and how do these roles influence the way we think, the way we act, and what we believe? How does our perspective of the social world change over time, across different societies and cultures, or even within the same nation or culture? What does the kind of society we live in say about ourselves? Do we treat some groups differently than others? Do we have shared goals, expectations, rules and ideas about what normal members of society should look and act like? Where do these expectations come from?

Largely, the discipline of sociology has been developed to answer these questions. And, like any scientific discipline, sociology has tested theories and methodologies aimed at explaining social phenomena. The goal, for any sociological pursuit, is to understand what is there – using Berger’s metaphor – without bias. Throughout this semester we will explore these questions, and others, in order to establish a better understanding of how to perceive and scientifically explore the social world.

To do this, this course has two main goals to help guide us. First, an introduction to the discipline of sociology and its’ main areas of research is presented and discussed. This will be accomplished by first exploring the core principles of sociology. These core principles are outlined in the first few chapters of your textbook and cover the following preliminary questions:

- *What is sociology and what do sociologists do?*
- *What does it mean to view the world sociologically, to use a sociological perspective?*
- *What is social theory and how is it used to examine society?*

Initially, we will begin by answering these questions using both historical and contemporary examples set in a variety of social and cultural contexts. Next, and for the bulk of this semester, we will focus our attention on specific areas and topics within the discipline of sociology. Such areas include the sociological analysis of crime, religion, education, gender, health and medicine, economics, politics, poverty, the family and others.

The second goal for this course is to provide you with a set of valuable analytical tools necessary for navigating in today’s world. This includes both analytical reading and writing skills. What does this mean? Throughout this course you will learn how to read text, data tables, and basic statistics and be able to critically assess their content. In addition, you will learn how to produce an academic paper by researching and critically forming an argument around a social issue of your choice. These skills are invaluable not only in the field of sociology, but in any area you end up pursuing. In addition to these two goals, we will also explore the occupational opportunities a degree in sociology can offer.

In sum, this course is designed to meet the following learning outcomes:

*Students will be able to:*

1. Apply the sociological imagination to understand, investigate and analyze social life at the micro and macro level.
2. Hypothesize relationships between theoretically derived concepts and evaluate the suitability of different social scientific methods (to test our understandings of social behavior).

3. Distinguish between common theoretical frameworks (functionalism, conflict, interactionist, critical/feminist) and employ them to examine various social institutions (economy, religion, family, media, etc.).
4. Describe and deconstruct elements of culture, including socialization, ideas, interactions, identity, deviance, and material culture.
5. Explain the historical development of sociology and how it is still relevant for understanding contemporary society.
6. Recognize patterns of social inequality, stratification and power – including gender, social class, race – and their implications.
7. Utilize knowledge of concepts of social structure and levels of social interaction to more consciously live and work within a variety of social groupings from primary social groups to social networks, from informal organizations to bureaucracies to complex and integrated social systems.

### REQUIRED TEXT

All students enrolled in this class are required to have a copy of **Syed Ali and Philip N. Cohen (Eds.) *The Contexts Reader***. Supplementary material will also be used throughout the course to provide additional information.

### COURSE FORMAT AND EXPECTATIONS

#### **Format**

The format of each class will vary throughout the semester. Since we all learn differently, I will utilize a variety of teaching methods to present the material. These methods will include lectures, in-class activities, video presentations, and class discussions. It is vital that you come to class prepared (i.e., read what you are asked to have read!) and ask questions and make comments when you have them. Not only will the material make more sense, but you will get a lot more out of the class as well.

#### **Academic Integrity**

To ensure that the highest level of academic and personal integrity is upheld, it is important that you understand your rights and responsibilities as a student. For more details, please visit: <https://uwmc.uwc.edu/academics/resources>

#### **Disability Services**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about specific policies and any student who feels that an accommodation may be needed based on the impact of a disability should contact Solution Center. For more, please visit: <https://uwmc.uwc.edu/campus/resources/students>

#### **Technology Policy**

My expectations regarding technology are simple and, hopefully, not unrealistic. I do not expect students to be without their phones, tablets, and/or computers. I completely

understand that the schedule for most students may even necessitate this. In fact, our class will even utilize this as a resource at times during the semester; for instance, in-class activities that prompt students to do a quick search online. I also understand that some students prefer to take notes electronically, on a tablet or laptop. (Be warned: [research shows that students retain more information when notes are hand-written.](#)) But, *unless specified otherwise or a circumstantial agreement with me is made, phones should be silent (e.g., airplane mode), and out of sight.* As soon as a device becomes a distraction to the class, I will revoke technology privileges all together.

### **Attendance Policy**

Your attendance and participation will be recorded and calculated as part of your final evaluation. However, I understand ‘participation’ inclusively. This can include the conventional (i.e., talking in class) as well as other forms of interaction in and outside of class (e.g., office hour visits, email discussions, in-class activities). In short, I am looking for students to be engaged in the material, however or wherever that might be.

### **Assignment Submission and Late Policy**

All assignments (unless specified otherwise) should be submitted by the respective deadline electronically via Dropbox on D2L. Turnitin (originality checking software) is activated with results viewable to you and me. Please use this as a tool for writing. Late work is accepted up to one week after the specified deadline (5-point reduction), also via the appropriate D2L dropbox. I will not accept assignments after this.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

### **Unit Papers**

You will be expected to complete three, unit-based, papers. These will be exercises completed outside of class that review the content we are covering. In addition, a ‘mock’ unit paper will be assigned in the beginning of the semester that is connected with a library informational session. I will provide specific directions for these assignments as the course progresses.

*The preliminary ‘mock’ unit paper is worth 15 points. The three main unit papers are worth 75 points each. In total, unit papers are worth 240 points.*

### **‘My Utopia’ Project**

This is a semester long project that incorporates in-class activities, a popular book of fiction, and continual reflection of your own beliefs and ideas about society. Points are earned via the 20 topical worksheets, in-class book clubs, etc. More detail pertaining to the project objectives and instructions will be discussed in class.

*In total, this project is worth 140 points*

## **Attendance/Participation**

Attendance is crucial to succeed in this class. Keeping up on your reading in order to actively participate in class will ensure that you are adequately prepared for the unit papers and, especially, the ‘My Utopia Project.’ My teaching philosophy is based on a cultivation of *active learning*. This means that I aim to provide an environment whereby students are able to ‘experience’ the material. However, this is a dual relationship. Students must also be willing to learn in order to make this happen. By *being* in class regularly (not just present), an active and invigorating culture of learning can be developed. This being said, I understand that life is full of unexpected events and emergencies. If you think you will miss a class, please let me know as soon as possible so we can make other arrangements.

There are three main components for attendance/participation. First, you will be required to have at least one in-person meeting with me to discuss your ‘My Utopia’ project. Second, points are earned by attending and participating in the traditional sense: coming to class, asking/answering questions, commenting during and outside of class. Indirectly, and third, is the completion of 20 in-class exercises that are used for your final ‘My Utopia’ project. The ONLY way to complete these assignments is to be in class. *(These exercises are ONLY handed out in-class and submitted via D2L Dropbox.) In short, if you’re here and engaged, you get the full points.*  
*Participation = 20 points*

## Evaluation

Evaluation of this course is based on the standard grading scale.

### Course Evaluation:

Unit Paper =	240
My Utopia =	140
<u>Participation =</u>	<u>20</u>
Total =	400

Grading Scale		
Letter Grade	Percent	Points
A	92-100	366<
A-	90-91	358-365
B+	87-89	346-357
B	83-86	330-345
B-	80-82	318-329
C+	77-79	306-317
C	73-76	290-305
C-	70-72	278-289
D+	67-69	266-277
D	60-66	238-265
F	<60	<238

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
<b><i>Introduction and Background</i></b>			
29-Jan	Class canceled		
31-Jan	Class canceled		
5-Feb	Introductions and Sociological perspective	Ch.1 and Supp. (Berger)	
7-Feb	Scientific study of society	Ch.2 and 3	
<b><i>Unit 1. Framing our Social World</i></b>			
12-Feb	Culture	Ch.10 and Supp. (Geertz)	
14-Feb	Socialization	Ch.8 Supp. (Charon and Vigilant)	<b>UP0 (Friday)</b>
19-Feb	Social interaction	Ch.9 & 45	
21-Feb	Social units	Ch.60 & 61	
26-Feb	Crime and deviance	Ch.11 & 13	
28-Feb	<i>Fieldwork</i>		
<b><i>Unit 2. Social Stratification</i></b>			
5-Mar	Social class	Ch.57, 58, 59	
7-Mar	Sex, gender, and sexuality	Ch.23, 25, 26	<b>UP1 (Friday)</b>
12-Mar	Race, ethnicity, and nationality	Ch.19, 20	
14-Mar	Global inequality	Ch. 63 and Supp. (Global Inequality)	
19-Mar	Social tolerance	Ch. 39	
21-Mar	<i>Fieldwork</i>		
26-Mar	<i>Spring Break</i>		
28-Mar	<i>Spring Break</i>		
<b><i>Unit 3. Social Institutions</i></b>			
2-Apr	Political Economy	Ch.32 and 55	
4-Apr	Science	Ch. 46 and 48	<b>UP2 (Friday)</b>
9-Apr	Health	Ch. 44	
11-Apr	Education	Ch. 35	
16-Apr	Religion	Supp. (PEW Report)	
18-Apr	<i>Fieldwork</i>		
<b><i>Unit 4. Social Demography and Change</i></b>			
23-Apr	Book Club		<b>UP3 (Friday)</b>
25-Apr	Population and migration	Supp. (Population)	
30-Apr	Environment and food	Supp. (Society and Environment)	
2-May	Social change	Ch. 53	
7-May	Social movements	Ch. 34	
9-May	Careers in Sociology	Supp. (Public Sociology)	
14-May	Book Club and review		
<b><i>Final Exam Period</i></b>			<b>My Utopia paper</b>