Spring 2012
Meeting times: MWF 1:10 to 2 p.m. in G-402
Office at the Sociology and Anthropology Departments’ trailer: Betances, #7.
Office Hours M+W 2:00 to 4:00 P.M. or by appointment.
Phone 6299; email: ebetance@gettysburg.edu

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY (SOC 101)
SPRING 2012

COURSE DESCRIPTION.

The course seeks to introduce students to the sociological perspective and to develop analytical skills in critical thinking and research.

WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY?

Sociology is essentially a coherent approach to the study of social life. It enables us to understand human societies and to look beyond individuals to the larger social context. The sociological perspective suggests that to comprehend any aspect of social life we must put it in the appropriate social, historical, economic, political and cultural context. The sociological perspective is broad in scope and generally seeks to provide a comparative view on social life and change.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND METHODS.

The sociological perspective requires imagination to understand the inner works of social life. Sociologists have developed a series of concepts and tools that enable us to capture social realities in their complexities. This course will introduce students to the main social scientific tools - concepts, theories, methods and findings - to help them understand what is behind the social scene and to comprehend what social forces and patterns move that which otherwise looks
random.

This course is not an introduction to American society, but it will draw examples from it to illustrate sociological concepts. Similarly, it will draw examples from different developed and developing societies to explain the usages of sociological concepts and tools to examine social life. Finally, the course will emphasize the need to add a global perspective to understand the process of social change in contemporary societies.

GOALS FOR THE STUDENTS

The students will learn how to use the sociological perspective to obtain a better understanding of their places in society. Concepts, theories, and research methods will be taught in a way that helps students appreciate how these social scientific tools can enable them to grasp social reality. Other goals for the students include:

---. Know that sociology is a social science based on empirical research as well as theoretical interpretations.

---. Be familiar with research designs, such as experiment, survey, ethnographic interviews, and participant observation.

---. Recognize that understanding empirical research requires a familiarity with variables, hypotheses, measurement, relationship between variables, and sampling.

---. Comprehend that the organization of society is related to the economic base.

---. Identify the effects of the transition from agrarian to industrial societies.

---. Appreciate the elements of culture and social structure such as norms, role, sanctions, groups, power, values, culture, and socialization.

---. Understand the dynamics of race, gender, ethnicity, and migration.
---. Be familiar with the changing nature of work in contemporary society and how it affects our lives.

GOALS OF THE COURSE

---. Recognize that sociology is a multi-paradigm discipline.

---. Learn about the dynamics of social and cultural change in a global perspective.

---. Understand that the lived experience of individuals as a social construction arises from social context and social location.

---. Appreciate that the role of sociologists as public intellectuals.

REQUIREMENTS: ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS:

Students will be expected to complete two papers. The first paper asks them to observe a social pattern systematically. This could be in their social environment or outside it. The second paper asks them to review a sociological book. Detailed instructions for these assignments will be handed out to them in class. Students will also be expected to make short presentations based on assigned readings and will receive a grade for such presentations. This means that the presentation must be meaningful.

EXAMINATIONS:

Students will have three examinations. The first examination covers topics and concepts up to the examination’s date. The second covers materials since the first examination. The final is comprehensive. The essay portion of the final is more substantive and seeks to test students’ cumulative knowledge. Examinations may include multiple choice, matching exercises, and testing their knowledge of key sociological concepts. **ALL EXAMINATIONS MUST BE TAKEN AS**
SCHEDULED. Make-up examinations may be provided for students with an official excuse. Should a student know that she/he will be absent on the day of an examination, she/he must discuss this with the instructor as soon as possible. In case of unforeseen absences (illness or other emergencies), students must notify the instructor as soon as possible, preferably before or on the day the examination is scheduled.

CLASS PARTICIPATION, ATTENDANCE, AND READINGS.

This course is taught in a seminar format. This means that students must come prepared to speak in every class. Class participation is an integral part of this course and it is crucial for its successful completion. The instructor will ask questions about the readings in class and students who do not come prepared to class will probably be embarrassed. ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY. Students who miss classes must find out what went on in class. Students will be allowed one unexcused absence. Additional absences will have a negative impact on final grades. Students must buy a memory stick to save their work. Excuses such as a computer failure the night before a paper is due will not be acceptable. All cell phones must be off during class time. Students caught texting will be excused the first time. Subsequently, for each time a student is caught texting he/she will lose half a letter grade.

IMPORTANT DUE DATES:

Handout instructions for observational paper – 2/3
Observational Paper is due – 2/13
Hand out instructions for Critical Review – 2/17
Examination 1 – 2/20
Examination II: 3/23
Critical Review: 4/13
Final comprehensive examination – May 7, from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. in G-402

GRADING POLICY

Examination 1: 15%
Examination 2: 15%
Final Examination 25%
Observational Paper: 15%
Critical Review: 20%
Homework and Class Participation: 10%

READING REQUIREMENTS:

SCHEDULE OF READING ASSIGNMENTS

I. THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE


II. CORE CONCEPTS: CULTURE, SOCIAL STRUCTURE, AND INEQUALITY.

Week 3: 2/6 – 2/10: CULTURE AND SOCIETY (Giddens et al., part II, chapter 3.) Readings in Sociology: “The Basic Elements of Culture” by Leslie White and “India’s Sacred Cow” by Marvin Harris. See chapters 9 and 12 in Seeing Ourselves.

Week 4: 2/13 - 2/17: STRUCTURES OF POWER AND INEQUALITY (Giddens et al.,

Observation Paper is due 2/13. Hand out Instructions for Critical Review 2/17

**EXAMINATION 1: 2/20**


**III. SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS: THE FAMILY, THE ECONOMY, AND SOCIAL CHANGE**


**SPRING BREAK: Begins Friday, March 9 at 5 p.m. and ends Monday, March 19 at 8 a.m.**


**Examination II: 3/23**

UNDERSTANDING U.S. SOCIETY AND POLITICS


