

SOCIOLOGY 110
Introduction to Sociology
Winter 2013

Instructor: Anthony S. Chen
Lecture Times: Mon., Wed., Fri., 4 – 4:50pm
Classroom: Technological Institute Auditorium
Office: Room 105, 1808 Chicago Avenue, Evanston
Office Hours: Thursdays, 9am – 12 noon

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology is one of the most intellectually and methodologically diverse branches of the social sciences. It originally arose at the end of the nineteenth century as part of a broad inquiry into the fall of traditional societies and the rise of modernity. Today, it is a discipline that is firmly institutionalized in the academy. Every respectable university in the United States has a sociology department. There are scores of journals that publish sociological research about a massive array of topics—many more topics than the nineteenth-century founders of the discipline could have possibly imagined. Sociologists study everything from the way perceptions of social status affect the quality of our judgment about the prices of goods and services to the causes and consequences of residential segregation in metropolitan areas throughout the United States.

But sociology is not only an academic pursuit. In fact, sociology is a whole way of seeing and thinking about the world. A sociological insight is not something that only a sociologist can formulate or appreciate. It is a thought or idea that stems from a broad and coherent sensibility about the *sine qua non* of human life. In the eyes of sociologists, people are not simply atomistic individuals who always and everywhere act to maximize their individual utility or promote their individual self-interest. Nor are they merely following their genetic blueprints or acting out the underlying tendencies of their individual psyches. What defines a sociological intuition about human behavior is the belief that human beings are social creatures who act in myriad ways that reflect their belonging and commitment to social groups, variously defined. Sociologists think of human life as a collective phenomenon—as a product of our group affiliations—and not just the aggregation of individual responses to the supply and demand of scarce resources.

This course is hence meant to introduce you to sociology as a *field of scholarship* and a *mode of inquiry*. It is designed not only to acquaint you with a specialized body of academic knowledge but also to cultivate your ability to reason sociologically. Unit I offers a brief overview of sociological theory and sociological methods. We will begin with a survey of classic works in social theory, familiarizing ourselves with the kinds of questions that have historically motivated sociological research. Next, we will review the methods commonly used by sociologists to gather and analyze data

for answering the kinds of questions they have tended to pose in more recent times. Unit II goes on to examine core areas of empirical research in sociology. We will consider well-known or important examples of sociological research on such topics as education, stratification and inequality, gender, and urban poverty.

READINGS

This course has no textbook. The readings consist instead of original texts, whether they are theoretical tracts, journal articles, or book chapters. This makes things more challenging for you, but it will also give you a more realistic sense of the sociological enterprise than just reading a textbook would. All of the readings are posted on Blackboard. A coursepack with the assigned readings is available for purchase at Quartet Digital Printing (825 Clark Street, Evanston).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

The course requirements are straightforward. Three *non-cumulative* exams will be administered in class. Each exam will consist of a combination of true/false, multiple choice, identification, short answer, and essay questions; you will be responsible for material from the lectures, readings, and class discussions. To do well in the course, students will need to complete the readings in a timely fashion, attend lectures consistently, participate in section actively, and take notes clearly. Each of the three exams counts for 25 percent of your overall grade. The remaining 25 percent is your section grade, which is to be wholly determined by your GSI.

GENERAL POLICIES

- Lectures begin at 4 pm.
- The use of cell phones in class is not permitted.
- Every reasonable allowance will be made to enable students to carry out their religious observances without academic penalty; students are responsible notifying their professor or teaching assistant in advance of any conflicts that may arise.
- All students are expected to adhere to the standards of academic integrity outlined in *Academic Integrity: A Basic Guide* (2012), published by Northwestern's Office of the Provost. An online copy may be readily found by using the search engine on Northwestern's home page. Please contact the instructor if you are having difficulty locating it. Suspected violations of academic integrity will be referred to the administration of Weinberg College for appropriate action.

COURSE SCHEDULE

[1] January 7 Course Overview

Unit I: Theory and Method

Classical Traditions in Sociological Thought: Marx and Weber

- [2] January 9 Karl Marx, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1970), 35-46; skim remainder.
- [3] January 11 Albert Soboul, "The French Revolution in the History of the Contemporary World," in *The French Revolution: Recent Debates and New Controversies*, edited by Gary Kates (New York: Routledge, 1998), 23-43.
- [4] January 14 Abigail Hauslohner, "Is Egypt About to Have a Facebook Revolution?" *Time*, January 24, 2011; Juan Cole, "Labor Movement Drives Egypt, Tunisia Protests," *Detroit News*, February 10, 2011; Ned Parker, "Revolution in the Age of Internet," *Los Angeles Times*, February 11, 2011; David D. Kirkpatrick and David E. Sanger, "A Tunisian-Egyptian Link That Shook Arab History," *New York Times*, February 13, 2011; Saba Mahmood, "The Architects of the Egyptian Revolution," *The Nation*, February 14, 2011; Gideon Rachman, "Reflections on the Revolution in Egypt," *Financial Times*, February 14, 2011; Mark Fisher, "In Tunisia, Act of One Fruit Vendor Unleashes Wave of Revolution through the Arab World," *Washington Post*, March 26, 2011.
- [5] January 16 Max Weber, "The Religious Foundations of Worldly Asceticism," *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 95-128, 153-4.
- [6] January 18 Max Weber, "Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism," *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 155-83.
- [7] January 23 Robert Bellah, "Shingaku and Its Founder, Ishida Baigan," in *Tokugawa Religion: The Values of Pre-Industrial Japan* by Robert Bellah (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1957), 133-177.

< January 25: First In-Class Exam >

Sociological Methods and Evidence

- [8] January 28 **Statistical Evidence**. Kenneth Andrews. 2002. "Movement-Counter-movement Dynamics and the Emergence of New Institutions: The Case of 'White Flight' Schools in Mississippi," *Social Forces* Vol. 80, No. 3 (March 2002): 911-936.
- [9] January 30 **Fieldwork Evidence**: Teresa Gowan, "The Nexus: Homelessness and Incarceration in Two American Cities." *Ethnography* Vol. 3, No. 4 (December 2002): 500-534.
- [10] February 1 **Comparative-Historical Evidence**: Jason Kaufman and Orlando Patterson, "Cross-National Diffusion: The Global Spread of Cricket," *American Sociological Review* Vol. 70 No. 1 (February 2005): 82-100.

Unit II: Empirical Research in Sociology

Education

- [11] February 4 Jonathan Kozol, "Introduction," "Dishonoring the Dead," "Hitting Them Hardest When They're Small," and "Per-Pupil Spending in Public Schools of Six Metropolitan Areas," *The Shame of the Nation* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2005), 1-62, 321-5. [This assignment is long but non-technical.]
- [12] February 6 Peter W. Cookson, Jr. and Caroline Hodges Persell, "The Chosen Ones" and "The Vital Link: Prep Schools and Higher Education," *Preparing for Power: America's Elite Boarding Schools* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 49-69, 167-189.
- [13] February 8 Karolyn Tyson, William Darity, Jr., Domini R. Castellino, "It's Not a 'Black Thing': Understanding the Burden of Acting White and Other Dilemmas of High Achievement," *American Sociological Review* Vol. 70, No. 4 (August 2005): 582-605.

The Bell Curve Controversy

- [14] February 11 Charles Murray and Richard J. Herrnstein, "Poverty," *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 127-42.
- [15] February 13 Fischer, Claude, et al, "Who Wins? Who Loses?" *Inequality by Design* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 70-101.
- [16] February 15 Fisher, "How Unequal? America's Invisible Policy Choices," *Inequality by Design*, 129-157.

< February 18: Second In-Class Midterm >

Sociology of Gender

- [17] February 20 Arlie Hochschild, "A Speed-Up in the Family" and "Joey's Problem: Nancy and Evan Holt," *The Second Shift* (New York: Avon Books, 1989), 1-10, 33-58.
- [18] February 22 Hochschild, "Beneath the Cover-up: Strategies and Strains" and "Stepping into Old Biographies or Making History Happen?" *The Second Shift*, 188-203, 257-270.
- [19] February 25 Louise Marie Roth, "Selling Women Short: A Research Note on Gender Differences in Compensation on Wall Street," *Social Forces*, Vol. 82, No. 2 (December 2003): 783-802.
- [20] February 27 Shelley J. Correll, Steven Benard, and In Paik, "Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?" *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 112, No. 5 (March 2007): 1297-1338.

Urban Poverty

- [21] March 1 William Julius Wilson, "From Institutional to Jobless Ghettos" and "Societal Changes and Vulnerable Neighborhoods," *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 3-24, 34-42.
- [22] March 4 Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, "The Creation of Underclass Communities," *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Harvard University Press, 1993), 115-147.

[23] March 6 Devah Pager, "The Mark of a Criminal Record," *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 108, No. 5 (March 2003): 937-75.

[24] March 8 Course Summary

< March 11: Third In-Class Exam >