

PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLOGY

SOC 101, SECTION 3

Fall 2022
(online)

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



Society as stagnate...

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...or change.

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 **Lisa Wade's 'Terrible Magnificent Sociology' (2022)** (ISBN 978-0-393-26530-0). 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 CANVAS. 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 CANVAS dropbox. I will not accept assignments after this.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

Application Reflections

Throughout each of the thematic units you will complete Application Reflections that ask you to apply concepts from a content module.

There are 11 reflections, each worth 2-3points, In total, Application Reflections make up 35 points.

Discussion Posts

You will complete four unit-based Discussion Posts. This allows you to take material from a unit, apply it to a specific problem, and share that application with the class via an online discussion forum. When commenting on other entries, be productive and constructive but also remember to be respectful and considerate. Think of the goal of your comments as continuing a conversation and/or expanding on an idea – not an attempt of conversion or personal attack.

Each Discussion Post is worth 10 points. In total Discussion Posts are worth 40 points.

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.

The three main unit papers are worth 75 points each. In total, unit papers are worth 225 points.

'My Utopia' Project

This is a semester long project that incorporates in-class activities, a popular story of fiction, and continual reflection of your own beliefs and ideas about society.

In total, this project is worth 100 points

Evaluation

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

Course Evaluation:

Application Reflections =	35
Discussion Posts =	40
Unit Paper =	225
My Utopia =	100
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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

Assignment Schedule

This is a breakdown of all the respective assignments, point values, and relevant deadlines. Feel free to use the Checklist to organize your progress in completing the assignments.

Topic	Assignment	Points	Hard Deadlines	Check-list
Module 1 Study of Society	Information Literacy activity (UP0)	3	9/18	
<i>Unit 1 Framing Society</i>				
Module 1 Culture	Application Reflection	2	9/25	
Module 2 Socialization				
Module 3 Social identity	Application Reflection	3	10/2	
Module 4 Social interaction				
Module 5 Crime/Deviance	Application Reflection	2	10/9	
	Discussion Post	10	10/9	
	Unit Paper 1	75	10/14	
<i>Unit 2 Social Inequality</i>				
Module 1 Social Class	Application Reflection	3	10/16	
Module 2 Sex and Gender	Application Reflection	2	10/16	
Module 3 Race and Ethnicity	Application Reflection	3	10/23	
Module 4 Global Inequality	Application Reflection	2	10/23	
	Discussion Post	10	10/30	
	Unit Paper 2	75	11/4	
<i>Unit 3 Social Institutions</i>				
Module 1 Social Institutions				
Module 2 Political-Economy	Application Reflection	4	11/6	
Module 3 Health	Application Reflection	3	11/6	
Module 4 Education	Application Reflection	3	11/13	
Module 5 Religion				
	Discussion Post	10	11/20	
	Unit Paper 3	75	11/25	
<i>Unit 4 Demography and Change</i>				
Module 1 Population/Environ.	Application Reflection	3	12/4	
Module 2 Social Change	Application Reflection	2	12/4	
	Discussion Post	10	12/11	
	My Utopia Project	100	12/22	

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
<i>Introduction and Background</i>			
6-Sep	Introductions and getting started		
12-Sep	Sociological perspective	Introduction	
	Scientific study of society	Chapter 1 and Supp. (Berger)	
<i>Unit 1. Framing our Social World</i>			
19-Sep	Culture	Chapter 2	
	Socialization	Supp. (Geertz and Charon/Vigilant)	UP0 (Friday)
26-Sep	Social identity	Chapter 3	
	Social interaction	Chapter 4	
3-Oct	Crime and deviance	Chapter 5	
	<i>Fieldwork</i>		
<i>Unit 2. Social Stratification</i>			
10-Oct	Social class	Chapter 7	
	Sex, gender, and sexuality	Chapter 9	UP1 (Friday)
17-Oct	Race, ethnicity, and nationality	Chapter 8	
	Global inequality	Chapter 12	
24-Oct	Social tolerance		
	<i>Fieldwork</i>		
<i>Unit 3. Social Institutions</i>			
31-Oct	Social institutions	Chapter 6	
	Political Economy	Chapter 10	UP2 (Friday)
7-Nov	Health	Supp. (Health)	
	Education	Supp. (Education)	
14-Nov	Religion	Supp. (PEW Report)	
	<i>Fieldwork</i>		
<i>Unit 4. Social Demography and Change</i>			
21-Nov	Book Club		UP3 (Friday)
	<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>		
28-Nov	Population and migration	Supp. (Population)	
	Environment and food	Supp. (Society and Environment)	
5-Dec	Social change	Chapter 11	
	Social movements		
12-Dec	Careers in Sociology	Supp. (Public Sociology)	
	Book Club and review		
22-Dec	<i>Final Exam Period</i>		
11:59pm			My Utopia paper