Sociology 1A      Spring 2004                      Harry J. Mersmann, Ph.D.
Introduction to Sociology                          Phone: 954-5417
Tu/Th 8:00-9:30                                        E-mail:hmersmann@sjdccd.cc.ca.us
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Office Hours:   Mon  10-11
                Tues  9:30-10:30
                Wed   10-11
                Thurs 9:30-10:30
                Fri   10-11

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

This course examines how social forces affect human behavior. Students classify, discuss, and analyze the major social forces such as: socialization, culture, class inequality and differences, ethnic and racial relations, economic and political institutions, education, family, religion, and social change. (UC, CSU, CAN Soc 2)

PREREQUISITES

Reading level II.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course provides students with an introduction to the "sociological imagination". Diverse and important contributions of sociology to the understanding of complex social issues will be presented and discussed. Students will gain an understanding of the relationship between large social institutions and their personal lives as well as a sociological understanding of more "micro" level interactions between people. Emphasis will be placed on theory, sociological research methods, and learning how to critically write and think in a sociological manner.

COURSE OUTLINE

I. The Foundations of Sociology
   A. The Sociological Perspective
   B. Sociological Investigation

II. The Foundations of Society
   A. Culture
   B. Society
   C. Socialization
   D. Everyday Interaction
   E. Groups and Organizations
   F. Deviance
III. Social Inequality
   A. Social Stratification
   B. Social Class
   C. Race and Ethnicity
   D. Sex and Gender
   E. Sexual Orientation

IV. Social Institutions
   A. Family
   B. Education
   C. Sexual Assault

TEXTBOOKS


OBLIGATIONS OF THE STUDENT

1. Students are responsible for attending all lectures, taking notes, and reading all assigned materials. The tests will cover material from readings, lectures, and other classroom activities. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get notes on the material that you missed.

2. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of all of the conditions and expectations of this course. This includes any syllabus or administrative changes that are announced in class. If you miss a class you assume the consequences of being uninformed about any changes.

3. This course “requires a minimum of three hours of work per week for each unit of credit, including class time.” (California State Education Code: Title V, Section 55022). Students who wish to do better than a passing grade will most likely need to spend more time.

4. This course is like a prize drawing: You must be present to win. Regular attendance and preparation is the key to success. You are strongly urged to have the material read and prepared by the date it is listed on the course schedule.

5. After the fourth week of classes, it is your responsibility to drop courses.
METHOD OF EVALUATION

Midterm 2/10      30 points  
Midterm 3/16      40 points  
Final Exam 5/18           60 points  
Three 2 page papers     45 points  
Due 2/17, 3/23, 4/29    ___________________

175 points possible

EXAMS

Exams will contain both multiple choice and essay questions. Exam material will come from readings, lectures, discussions, films and class exercises. Exams are not specifically cumulative, although the course does build on material presented earlier in the term.

PAPER ASSIGNMENTS

Although I would like to believe that you will remember all, or most, of what we discuss in this course, the reality is that most of you will have forgotten a good deal of the course material by the middle of June. The one skill you will take with you is your ability to write well. This ability will come in handy when you apply for jobs and for writing the personal statements when you are applying to four year colleges, graduate schools, and professional schools. No matter what career you find yourself in, writing will be important. In fact, with the growth of the Internet and e-mail, writing well is probably more important today than it was twenty or thirty years ago. Therefore...

You are required to write three 2 page papers (750 words max.) for this course. Each paper must be typed, double spaced, and may not exceed the two page limit. Leave a margin of at least one inch all the way around so that I can give you comments. Put your name on the back of each paper. Each paper is worth 15 points (10 points for content and 5 points for grammar, punctuation, and spelling) and grading will be strict (-1 points for every two errors).
expected that you will write a number of drafts before handing in the papers. All papers must be your own work.

If you have a major religious, moral, or personal objection to any of the assignments, please see the instructor during office hours at least two weeks prior to the due date.

Paper 1 Due 2/17. Sociological Perspective and Culture. I want you to attend a church or worship service different from the one you usually attend. If you do not usually attend a worship service, you can choose any one. I would like you to explore a different setting from the one with which you are familiar. If you are Methodist for example, do not just go to another Methodist Church. Instead, consider attending a Jewish, Buddhist, Unitarian, or Greek Orthodox worship service. Try to push past your ethnocentrism. Write up a two page paper of your experience explicitly discussing the cultural concepts of symbols, language, norms, values, and material artifacts. Also include a paragraph answering the following questions: What do you think about this other place of worship and belief system? How do you think someone of this other faith would perceive your religious services and beliefs?

Paper 2 Due 3/23. Deviance. I want you to spend a little time exploring the idea of norms in a participatory manner. To do this you will have to go to a public setting (or settings) and violate a folkway. Do not do anything which might cause physical or emotional harm to you or any other person. Do not break any laws. If you have chosen a small act of deviance, you may have to perform it a number of times. Consider violating the folkway in a variety of settings. Try to keep your mind free of expectations and just explore the social world. Do a two page write-up of your experience. What happened? How did people react? Did anyone try to exert social control and get you to change your behavior? What were your feelings while being deviant?

Paper 3 Due 4/29. Discrimination and Oppression. Assignment to be distributed later in class.

GRADES

I will do my best to return exams and papers within two weeks.

Grades will be assigned on a curve based on the highest total of points earned by a student in the course:
90-100% of highest score = A
80-89% of highest score = B
70-79% of highest score = C
60-69% of highest score = D
0-59% of highest score = F

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS

Note: Assigned readings are given for each week. It is strongly suggested that you complete the readings by the first day listed on the syllabus. This will make you more prepared for the lectures and exercises in class, allow you to ask questions on material that is unclear, be better prepared for the exams, and get a higher grade in the course

1/13 Introductions
1/15 (Macionis) Preface & Chapter 1: The Sociological Perspective
(Dancer’s Gift) Introduction and Chapter 1: People like Us
1/20, 22 (M) Chapter 2: Sociological Investigation
1/27, 29 (M) Chapter 3: Culture
(DG) Chapter 2: Weirdness in the World
2/3, 5 (M) Chapter 4: Society
(DG) Chapter 3: Through the Window
2/10 FIRST EXAM
2/12, 17 FIRST PAPER DUE 2/17
(M) Chapter 5: Socialization
2/19, 24 (M) Chapter 6: Social Interaction in Everyday Life
(DG) Chapter 4: The Raindrop
2/24, 26 (M) Chapter 7: Groups and Organizations
3/2, 4 (M) Chapter 8: Deviance
(DG) Chapter 5: Seventeen After Two
3/9, 11 (M) Chapter 10: Social Stratification
(DG) Chapter 6: Yes We Have No Papayas
3/16  SECOND EXAM

3/18  (M)  Chapter 11: Social Class in the United States

3/23  Class Exercise/No Readings
SECOND PAPER DUE 3/23

3/25, 27  (M)  Chapter 14: Race and Ethnicity
(DG)  Chapter 7: Snowflakes

3/30, 4/1  (M)  Chapter 13: Gender Stratification
(DG)  Chapter 8: Kingdom of Love

Note: Spring Break 4/5-4/9

4/13, 15  Sexual Orientation/ Handouts and readings distributed in class
(DG)  Chapter 9: The Mahogany Bird

4/20, 22  (M)  Chapter 18: Family
(DG)  Chapter 10: Writing on the Wall

4/27, 29  THIRD PAPER DUE 4/29
(M)  Chapter 20: Education

5/4, 6  Sexual Assault
(DG)  Chapter 11: On the Uncontrolled Growth of Body Hair

5/11, 13  Applying Sociology to Popular Culture
(DG)  Chapter 12: The Dancer’s Gift

5/18  FINAL EXAM
8:30 A.M.