

SOCIOLOGY 1000

Grande Prairie Regional College
(FALL 1999)

Instructor: Alan Segal

Office: C410, 539-2011

Office hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 11.45-12.45

Course Prerequisite: None

Texts:

Sociology, 3rd Canadian Edition - John Macionis & Linda Gerber

Sociology Study Guide, 3rd Edition

Assignment:

One Essay or Project

- due date is November 15th
- Marked on a 9-point stanine scale
- Lateness penalty is 1 stanine, per day
- More details on the assignment can be found below

Three Journals

- One journal is due the first class of each month beginning in October
- Each journal is worth a maximum of 2 stanines
- More details on the journals may be found below

Tabulation of marks

The total of all stanine marks available for assignments is 24. Your marks will be totaled out of 24, a percentage will be obtained, and the percentage will be reconverted to a final stanine grade according to the following table.

Stanine Grade	Percentage Equivalent
9	90 - 100
8	80 - 89
7	72 - 79
6	65 - 71
5	57 - 64
4	50 - 56
3	45 - 49
2	26 - 44
1	0 - 25

NOTE: No class averaging will be done.

NOTE: Because class discussion is a vital aspect of this course, everyone may (but not necessarily will) receive a bonus mark for the **QUALITY** of your class discussion, based on a combination of the frequency and quality of the participation. You will be eligible only if you display commitment to the course by reading and completing the required assignments. The bonus mark will have a range of 1-3. If you receive a bonus mark, it will added to your overall grade total prior to its conversion to a percentage.

Essay and Project Detail

You may choose whatever topic that interests you that is relevant to sociology. Critically analyze the topic, using your own and others' ideas. You must utilize sociological thought in some form or other. Do not write a descriptive report; think about the ideas you express. Try to explain why these ideas persuade you. The expected standard is 1200 words. Your mark will be reduced by a half-stanine for inadequate or excessive length. Type and double-space the essay unless you prefer to hand in a disk with your essay on it. All disks or hard copies must clearly stipulate your name, ID number, date of submission of the essay, and the title of the essay or project. You can work individually or in groups. Any project can be selected on any topic, and if you're uncertain about your choice, please speak with me about it. While your own thinking is the most important requirement,

research is valuable and obligatory. References must appear in the main text of your assignment, and in a **Works Cited** section at the end of the paper. Both are required. If either is omitted, your assignment will be reduced by one stanine per section. All documentation [referencing] must be consistent with the MLA style. Remember that not all disciplines accept the same approach to writing up reference.

If your assignment is late, a 1-stanine penalty per day will be applied, including weekends. If you do hand it in late, have another faculty member or regular employee of the college sign and date it. Initials are not acceptable.

Journals

Each journal must be one page if typed, and two pages if written out. All journals must be double-spaced. Ignore the last stipulation if you hand in a disk. Anything pertaining to sociology, class discussions or lectures, class interaction, or course observations and suggestions, is a suitable topic. No research is necessary or expected. The purpose is to allow informal communication with the instructor.

DISCUSSION SEQUENCE

As you consider the questions below for class discussion, keep in mind that quick judgments, or a quick expression of agreement or disagreement, is not what I expect of you. Think comprehensively and insightfully about these questions. All classes will begin with an overview discussion of the reading, and move on to consideration of specific issues.

1. Introduction to course
2. Chapters 1 & 2, Cyber.scope, p. 54-57

What is a sociological perspective? What general questions are central to this perspective? What is a paradigm? What paradigms are introduced in these readings? (Don't forget to include feminist perspectives in this.) How might we interpret the Figure 1-1 on page 7? Science as a form of truth - what do we mean by truth, knowledge, and being knowledgeable?

Group Discussion: Which of the theories mentioned, if any, are you

drawn to as a good basis for explaining human experience?

Project Possibilities: Numbers 1 & 2 on page 25

3. Chapters 3 & 4

What is culture? Explain the relationship of culture, nation, state, and society. From your own experience, identify a couple of powerful norms and mores that have influenced your life. What is society? What do sociologists mean by rationality? Why did Weber and Marx link rationality to alienation? What is alienation? What is class consciousness?

Group Discussion: If there is such a thing as authentic culture, is virtual culture a less authentic form of it? How can we evaluate 'authenticity' to begin with? Are there universal standards that can help us in this? What are some of those mentioned by people who do believe in universal standards?

Consider the second Critical Thinking Question on page 85. Is it reasonable to think a spelling bee can embody national values? What does 'embody' mean?

How do you assess the quote attributed to Durkheim on page 103?

4. Chapter 5

What is socialization? In what ways do we socialize? What do we mean by the self? When we socialize people, are we dealing with selfhood? Are identity and self interchangeable?

Group Discussion: Discuss the quote on nature versus nurture, at the top of page 112, second column.

Do you concur with Freud's view of the tension between the ego and the id? The authors suggest that identity confusion is possible. Do you agree that we such confusion exists?

5. Chapters 17-19

What is a social institution? In what ways are marriage, religion, and

education, examples of social institutions? What is a family? Do you agree with how it is described in chapter 17? There are many varieties of groupings that people refer to as families. Do you consider this a reasonable analysis of human cohabitation? Speculate about whether romantic marriage is a more or less reliable basis for an enduring marriage, than is arranged marriage. Does the list of reasons why people divorce ring true in your ears? What is the hidden curriculum in education? Do you think it exists only in formal schooling experience?

Group Discussion: Do you see your family in the depictions offered in the chapter on the family?

Is the statement on social-exchange analysis [page 437] consistent with your own experience?

What are your thoughts on the opening section of chapter 18? Do you see any merit in Marx's statement on religion, presented at the bottom of page 460? Ask yourself the same question about Daly's comment at the end of the 'Religion and Patriarchy...' section. How important a place, if any, does religion have in your life? Do you agree with the description of fundamentalism found on page 474?

Answer the questions in #3 of the 'Controversy and Debate' section on page 501.

6. Chapter 15

What social products are contained in the general reference to economy? What are capitalism and socialism? What is regional disparity? What is a monopoly, a conglomerate, an oligopoly? Prepare to discuss #3 on page 389.

Project Possibilities: Consider #4 in the 'Sociology Applied' section on page 398.

7. Chapter 16

Explain power, authoritarianism, and authority. What kinds of authority are mentioned in your text?

Group Discussion: How would apply the concepts of power and authority to the social institutions we have discussed previously? Is our society more inclined toward one type of authority than another?

What is a scapegoat? Have you seen evidence showing our society creating a scapegoat?

8. Chapter 6

What is the difference between ascribed and achieved status? What is a master status? What are role, role conflict, and role strain? Does the Thomas Theorem apply to virtual reality? What did Goffman mean by the presentation of self? Can you offer examples from your own experience that support or challenge his analysis?

Group Discussion: What are your thoughts on Table 6-1, on page 153?

9. Chapters 7 & 8, and Cyber.scope [pages 216-217]

What is a social group? What is a crowd? What are the subcategories of each? What is conformity? What are the characteristics of bureaucracy? What is an oligarchy? What is deviance? What is labeling theory? How do deviance and gender meet?

Group Discussion: Have you ever been deviant? Was this your self-appraisal or something others saw in you?

Evaluate the logic and reasoning of the list of myths in the Date rape section on page 202.

Answer the second 'Critical thinking Question' on page 215.

10. Chapter 12, & Cyber.scope [page 370-1]

Are there psychological and physical parallels in our society, to what is described in the opening section of this chapter? What is patriarchy? What is gender?

Group Discussion: Kinsey's study of sexual same-sex sexual behaviour gave some prominence to orgasms. Was this a reasonable basis for analysis? Can you think of other factors you would consider using if you were a researcher studying the same work?

Respond to the bottom paragraphs on page 300.

What is sex? (....continued)

Prepare a discussion on the 'Social Diversity' section on page 304. Have you seen or personally experienced gender differences in sports? Should we bother trying to define or control pornography?

Project Possibilities: (1) The second 'Critical Thinking Question'. (2) Assessing attitudes of males and females in schools. (3) Assessing attitudes among people in school, perhaps according to gender, on gay issues. (4) Evaluate the accuracy of the caption under the bottom picture on page 371.

11. Chapter 13

What is race? What is ethnicity? Why are these politically volatile concepts? What are stereotypes? What is assimilation?

Group Discussion: Are you located anywhere in the chart on page 330?

Project Possibilities: The first item in 'Sociology Applied' on page 345.

12. Chapters 9-11

What is social stratification? What is caste? What is a class system? How does it connect to social stratification? What is social mobility and what affects it? What is meritocracy? What do sociologists mean by social inequality, and what contributes to or reduces it? What theories explain inequality?

Project Possibilities: The first item in 'Sociology Applied' on page 239. The third item on page 264. The second item on page 291.

13. Chapter 21

What are demography, sex ratios, demographic transition theory? What political conditions have pushed urbanization in this country? What sociological theories are presented to explain urbanization? What is meant by "urban political economy?"

14. Chapters 22 & 23

What is social change? Distinguish between collective behaviour and social movements. What is mass behaviour? What theories do the authors mention when they discuss social movements? Are they logically justifiable? Are all widespread movements social movements? What are modernity, modernization, and postmodernity? Can you say how each of these impacts individuals' lives?

Group Discussion: 'Are you willing to take a stand?' on page 576.

Project Possibilities: The first item in 'Sociology Applied', page 601.

15. Chapters 14 & 20

Given all that we have discussed in the course so far, explain why sociologists look at aging? What is gerontocracy? What is an eating disorder?

Group Discussion: Do you think about aging? If so, what are your perceptions, hopes or fears about growing old? Have you now or have ever had a close tie with an elderly person? If so, has this influenced your perceptions of that period of our lives? What do you think of the ideas in the 'Death on Demand..' section on page 365? Do you think you will understand differently what health is when you are old, compared to what you think it is today? What is health? Do you agree with the "Health and Society" list on page 506?

Do you think masculinity is a threat to health, as is stated on page 510?

Prepare to express your ideas after reading the 'Controversy and Debate' section on page 525.