

SOCIOLOGY 1000

Grande Prairie Regional College
(WINTER 2000)

Instructor: Alan Segal

Office: C410, 539-2011

Office hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 2:30pm - 3:30
Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:30pm - 3:30

Course Prerequisite: None

Texts:

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

Sociology Study Guide, 3rd Edition

Assignment:

One Discussion Essay

- Due date is the last class before winter break.
- The essay is marked on a 5-point scale
- There is a lateness penalty of 1 stanine per day. If your assignment is late, a 1-stanine penalty per day will be applied, including weekends.
- If you do hand in the assignment late, or on the due date, but at a time when I do not seem to be on campus, have another faculty member or regular employee of the college sign and date it. Initials are not acceptable and signatures must be legible.
- You must choose a topic from among the discussion questions listed in your course outline.
- 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.
- Research is not required. However, while your own thinking is the most important requirement, research can be valuable.

- You may use first person words like 'I', but the paper is not a large opinion piece. It's meant to be a concise analytical statement, based on thought and ideas, not quickly-generated opinions.
- The length of each essay will be 800 words. Your mark will be reduced by a half-stanine for inadequate or excessive length. All papers must be typed and double-spaced.
- All work must clearly stipulate your name, ID number, and course and section numbers.
- Grammar is important to communicating precise meaning. Grammar will not be valued as highly as content, but it will be evaluated.

Three Journals

- Each journal is due the first class of each month, beginning in February
- Each journal is worth a maximum of 2 stanines. **However, all journals will be graded on a standard of 1.**
- Journals must be one page if typed, and two pages if written out. They must be double-spaced and specify the course and section numbers.
- Unlike the essay, you can submit the journal on 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.

Snap Quizzes

- This course is based mainly on discussion. Such an approach is workable only if people read the text and prepare for discussion. Therefore, I reserve the right to assign a snap quiz at any time through the semester.

Discussion Bonus

- 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.

Tabulation of marks

The total of all stanine marks available for assignments is 11. Your marks will be

totalled out of 11, 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.

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.)**
 - **What do we mean by truth, knowledge, and being knowledgeable? Is science a form of truth?**
 - **What is the difference between a macro and a micro perspective?**
 - **Prepare to explain the principles of Max Weber's ideas.**

- What is the difference between primary and secondary analysis?

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? What is society?
- 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 do sociologists mean by rationality? Why did Weber and Marx link rationality to alienation?
- What is alienation? What is class consciousness?
- Explain the difference between material and non-material culture.
- What is a subculture? What is a counterculture?
- What is meant by post-industrialism?
- What are social institutions?
- What is meant by rational social organization? Can you imagine irrational social organizations? If so, what would make them irrational?

Group Discussion: If there is such a thing as authentic culture, and 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?

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?
- If you were appointed Chief Socializer, would you think the ideas of Piaget, Erikson, Kohlberg, Gilligan, Mead, and Freud mainly dissimilar?

- **If you were a structural functionalist CS, how would you develop a socializing environment?**

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?**
- **What differentiates monogamy, polygamy, polygyny, and polyandry?**
- **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 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 explanations of patriarchy, gender identity, and gender, do the authors provide?
- Prepare a series of perspectives on gender based on the sociological theories we have already discussed.

Group Discussion: Kinsey's study of 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.

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.

7. Chapter 13

- What is race?
- What is ethnicity?
- Why are these politically volatile concepts?
- What are stereotypes? What is a scapegoat?
- What is assimilation? What do sociologists mean by 'pluralism'?
- Identify some theories used by sociologists to analyze and explain prejudice.

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

8. Chapter 15

- What social products are cited in the general reference to economy?
- What are capitalism and socialism?
- What is regional disparity?
- What is a monopoly, a conglomerate, an oligopoly?

- Think of the various forms of industrialization, and consider the effects of each of them on social life.
- What aspects of the economy are described by primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors?
- What are conglomerates, monopolies, and oligopolies?

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

9. Chapter 16

- Explain the similarities or dissimilarities of power, authoritarianism, and authority.
- What kinds of authority are mentioned in your text?
- How does sociological theory benefit from sociologists who research and write about, ideology?
- What is political socialization?
- What theories of power are mentioned in your text?

Group Discussion: How would you 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?

10. 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?

11. 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 a bureaucracy? How does rationality apply to bureaucracies?**
- **What is an oligarchy?**
- **What is deviance? What is labeling theory? How do deviance and gender coincide?**

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.

Are police forces social institutions in the same sense that schools or religion are?

Develop a response to the second 'Critical thinking Question' on page 215.

12. Chapters 9-11

- **What is social stratification? What is caste? What is meant by a class system? How does it connect to social stratification?**
- **What are social and global 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 try to explain inequality?**
- **What are dependence and modernization theory?**
- **Prepare an explanation of Wallerstein's understanding of capitalism.**

Group Discussion: There is a section called Computers and Social Class in your text. Can you apply the idea[s] of this section to commodities and social class in your own experience?

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, and demographic transition theory?**
- **What political conditions have pushed urbanization in this country?**
- **What sociological theories are presented to explain urbanization?**
- **What is meant by the "urban political economy?"**
- **What is the difference between gemeinschaft and gesellschaft?**

- What did Durkheim intend to explain by his distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity?

14. Chapters 22 & 23

- What is social change?
- How would you 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

- Why are sociologists interested in 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.