

SOCIOLOGY 1000  
Introductory Sociology

Grande Prairie Regional College  
(Winter 2002)

Instructor: Alan Segal

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Office hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 14.30 - 15.30  
Tuesdays & Thursdays: 13.30 - 14.15  
Or By appointment

Course Prerequisite: None

Course Description: An examination of the theory, methods, and substance of sociology, of how societies and individuals are shaped and modified. Culture, socialization, deviance, stratification, group processes, industrialization and social movements will be covered.

Text:

Sociology: A down-to-earth approach, Second Canadian Edition - Henslin, Glenday, Duffy, and Pupo

Assignments:

**Three Focus Papers**

- These are based on the *Critical Thinking Questions* found at the end of each chapter.
- **Due dates:** The last Monday in January, February, and March.

- **All assignments must be typed and double-spaced. They cannot exceed 3 pages.**
- All Focus Papers will be graded on a 1-4 system
- **There is a lateness penalty of 1 stanine per day. A 1-stanine penalty per day will be applied, including weekends. If you do hand it in late, or on the due date, but at a time when you're uncertain if I am on campus, have another faculty member or regular employee of the college sign and date it, and indicate in which area of the College s/he is employed. Initials are not acceptable and signatures must be legible.**
- Focus Papers are not meant to have full discussion and analysis. They are for one purpose only. You must tell me what questions or types of questioning you would use or ignore if you were actually to analyze the topic you select. And you must explain your use or non-use of these questions/approaches.
- All work must clearly stipulate your name, ID number, and course and section numbers. You may hand hard copies of all assignments, or email them to me. If you email the assignment, you don't have to double-space the text. Disks are not acceptable. If you select the email approach, please write them as regular email messages, or copy and paste into your email format. Attachments are not handled well by my computer.
- Grammar is important to communicating precise meaning. Grammar will not be valued as highly as content, but it will be evaluated, and therefore can affect your mark.

### Focus Paper Questions

1. Can someone who is heterosexual study homosexuals?
2. Why would anyone want to study the personal records of dead people?
3. Is it appropriate to lie to a research subject?
4. Are all cultures equally valid?
5. Is sexual orientation simply the product of a person's cultural upbringing?
6. Why do teenagers rebel against authority?
7. Socialization is intended to turn us into conforming members of society. Using this as a beginning perspective, explain why many people deviate from social norms.
8. Do humans need verbal and non-verbal forms of communication?
9. Why do poverty and social inequality persist in Canada?
10. As some forms of work become more and more 'faceless' due to advances in technology, will gender inequality among workers be minimized?
11. Has the push toward gender equality led to women who mimic men?
12. Is ethnic or cultural assimilation of immigrants to a dominant culture the only workable public policy for North America?
13. Does computer technology offer the best promise for Canada of a wonderful

14. What is a sociological perspective? What general questions are central to this perspective?
15. What do you think the authors mean when they say a difference exists between sociological and commonsense understanding? [p. 21]
16. What theories are introduced in these chapters? Begin to think about which of the theories mentioned, if any, you are drawn to as a good basis for explaining human experience? In a future discussion we will come back to this question.
17. What is the difference between a macro and a micro perspective?
18. Which sociologists are introduced in this set of readings, and what are the primary tenets of their contributions to the field?
19. What is the difference between primary and secondary analysis?
20. If you were applying Durkheim's concept of social facts [p. 13] to your own lives, what would you identify as pertinent? Is there intellectual and sociological value in distinguishing between interpretation and fact?
21. Durkheim also wrote of the value of social integration in humans' lives. What did he mean by this, and can you imagine implications of integration not mentioned in the text?
22. The section on validity [p. 38] uses religion as an example. Prepare to discuss the question raised: how should we measure religiosity? And should we bother to ask it? What makes any question a worthwhile pursuit?
23. Should we ban research-sponsorship by think tanks? future?
24. Some sociologists believe work is important because it provides status and meaning. If this is so, what explains the eagerness of many individuals to retire as soon as possible?
25. Is sovereignty for Quebec inevitable?
26. How would participants in successful partnerships consider the division of household work?
27. Can education be a liberating social influence?
28. Might social pressure lead high school students become violent?
29. Compared to the United States a much larger percentage of Canadians report having no religious affiliation. What might account for this difference?
30. Why is social class a factor in the religious preferences of residents in Canada?
31. Canadians are not equally likely to become sick or injured. Can this difference be explained, at least partly, by referring to sex and social class?
32. If you could decrease crime in Canada, what strategy(ies) would you adopt?
33. Is early intervention into the lives of children considered 'at risk' justifiable?
34. If you were a city planner whose proposals were opposed by developers, how could you resolve the conflict of interests?
35. Are social movements a problem or a solution for our society?

### Three Journals

- Each journal is due the first class of each month, beginning in January.
- Each journal is worth a maximum of 1.5 stanines. **However, all journals will be graded using a benchmark of 1.**
- Journals must be at least one page if typed, and two pages if written out. They must be double-spaced and specify the course and section numbers.
- If you email me your assignment, you don't have to double-space it. 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.

### Five Quizzes

- **All quizzes will be taken during the last class of the specified weeks. You must inform me in the next week if you are unable to meet the requirement during the specified time. If you do not disclose to me that the schedule is difficult for you (for appropriate reasons), I will not allow other arrangements to be made.**
- Chapters 1 - 4 - Week of January 21-26
- Chapters 16 - 18 - Week of February 11-16
- Chapters 5 - 9 - Week of March 11-15
- Chapters 10 - 12 - Week of March 25-29
- Chapters 13 - 15 - Last week of classes
- Each quiz will be given a percent and then converted to a stanine from 1-9. At the end of the term, all quiz grades will be averaged into a single stanine mark out of 9. This will be added to the total of your other marks.

### 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
- Discussion postings on webCT will be considered class participation
- You will be eligible for a bonus mark only if you display commitment to the course by reading and completing the required assignments. **Although attendance is not relevant to the regular assignments for the course, it is important to your eligibility for a bonus mark. If you are absent for more than 5 classes, you will not receive a bonus grade.**
- The bonus mark will have a range of 1-3. If you receive a bonus mark, it will be added to your overall grade total prior to its conversion to a percentage.

- The course has a webCT discussion forum. I will read it periodically, but I will not participate unless requested to do so. Your participation in this, as in class discussion, is not mandatory, but if you do contribute I might gain a better sense of your overall contribution to our discussions. I will treat webCT involvement of this type as I would in-class comments.

### Tabulation of marks

The total of all stanine marks available for assignments is 25.5. Your marks will be totaled out of 25.5, 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: (1) No class averaging will be done. (2) All marks will appear on webCT. If you are unfamiliar with this system, employees of the library will instruct you for access. **You are responsible for monitoring your grade input, and informing me that a mark has not appeared for which you deserve credit.**

### 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

- What kinds of questions might we label collectively a 'sociological perspective'?
- What is positivism, and what was/is its impact on sociological analysis?
- Prepare an explanation of some core details of the sociological standpoints of Weber, Marx, Durkheim, and feminist analysis.
- What is conflict theory? How would you explain postmodernism?
- What differentiates reliability from validity? How do they fit into sociological research?

3. Chapters 3 & 4

- What is culture? What do we think of when we refer to subcultures? What do we think we mean by multiculturalism? What thoughts occur to you when you read Bibby's comment on multiculturalism and identity [p. 61]?
- Of what sociological value are sections on countercultures, cultural change, cultural relativity, and global culture?
- How would you explain material and non-material culture?
- Why differentiate between ideal and real culture?
- What are folkways and mores?
- Prepare to discuss your reaction to the opening section at the top of page 72. What explains your reaction?
- What value to sociology do the authors of this book assign to Charles Cooley, George Mead, and Sigmund Freud?
- What do sociologists mean by a social product? Did Mead have a valuable idea when he said the self and the mind are social products? What did he mean by this statement?
- What sociological questions occur to you when you view the picture on page 89?
- How would you explain gender? What considerations come to mind when thinking about the focus question of page 81?
- Identify a couple of norms and mores that have powerfully influenced your life.
- What do sociologists mean by rationality? Why did Weber and Marx link rationality to alienation? What is alienation?
- Why inquire about language in a survey book on sociology?
- Is there 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 is the difference between manifest and latent functions?
- Have you ever experienced resocialization?

#### 4. Chapters 16 & 18

- How do the authors explain deviance and labeling theory?
- How might deviance and gender overlap?
- Are references to primary and secondary deviance helpful to our understanding of people?
- What linkages connect power, authority, and deviance? Are these connections smooth or rough? What social factors might affect the smoothness or the roughness of the link?
- Have you ever been considered deviant, in your own or others' eyes? Remember that this is a social category that can mean more than a single act of misbehaviour.
- What theories are cited in this chapter on deviance?
- Did you have a viewpoint on deviance when you started the course? Do the theories cited in this chapter mainly explain or challenge your previous understanding of deviance?
- Can we organize our lives without resorting to deviance as a social concept and thinking of it as a form of behaviour?
- What is social change?
- Distinguish between collective behaviour and social movements.
- What is mass society?
- What theories do the authors mention when they discuss social movements? Are they logical?
- Are all widespread movements social movements?
- Ask yourself the same questions about crowd behaviour and social change.
- What are modernization and postmodernity?

#### 5. Chapter 5

- What are social institutions? What is socialization? How are they linked?
- In what ways are marriage, religion, and education, examples of social institutions?
- What is society?



- **What is social structure? Do the authors needlessly dramatize its effects?**
- **What is a status symbol? Following the points on p.101, what symbols do you employ to communicate your status(es)?**
- **Do you accept the description of leadership styles and their differing value to society? Do you gravitate toward one type, or combination of, leadership more than another?**
- **Is morality just another form of group think?**
- **Do you detect in your own lives evidence of role conflict or role strain?**
- **Is there a primary reference group in your life?**
- **Develop a critique of the chart on page 97. Would you amend it in any way?**

5. Chapter 6

- **What is social stratification? Do you agree with one position, outlined on page 139, that it is inevitable?**
- **What is caste?**
- **What is a class system? How does it connect to social stratification?**
- **What is social mobility and what influences it sociologically?**
- **What is meritocracy?**
- **What do sociologists mean by social inequality, and what contributes to or reduces it? What theories attempt to explain inequality?**
- **What do sociologists mean by status consistency?**
- **What is ideology?**
- **What is dependency theory?**
- **What do the authors mean by the “dynamics of poverty”?**
- **Answer the question under the picture on page 134.**

6. Chapters 7 - 9

- **How do the authors explain patriarchy and gender? Why incorporate a discussion of gender, race, ethnicity, and age with an exploration of inequality? What general understanding of inequality do you have after reading this set of chapters?**
- **What is gender stratification?**
- **Have you seen or personally experienced gender differences in**



sports?

- What is race? What is ethnicity?
- Why are these politically volatile concepts?
- What are assimilation, and its relationship to minorities?
- What sociological explanations do the authors provide for 'minority, ethnicity, and racism'?
- Why should sociologists look at aging?
- What is gerontocracy?
- Do you think about aging? If so, what are your perceptions, hopes, or fears about growing old?
- Have you ever had a close tie with an elderly person? If so, has this influenced your perceptions of that period of people's lives?
- Do you think you will understand differently what health is when you are old, compared to what you think it is today?

7. Chapter 10

- What are the characteristics of bureaucracy?
- Are the characteristics different in an ideal, compared to a real bureaucracy?
- How can a bureaucracy be dysfunctional? Is the very idea of dysfunction helpful to us in any way?

8. Chapter 11

- What are capitalism and socialism? Within each there are categories and degrees of difference. Prepare an explanation of them.
- How would you describe a corporation, an oligopoly, corporate capitalism, and medium of exchange?
- What meanings does 'economy' have?
- Why should sociologists study corporations? What do we refer to when we speak of corporate culture?

9. Chapter 12

- Contrast power, authoritarianism, and authority. What kinds of authority are mentioned in your text?
- How would you apply the concepts of power and authority to

- the social institutions we have discussed?
- Is our society more inclined toward one type of authority than another?
- What is a scapegoat? Does our society create scapegoats?
- What is conformity?

10. Chapters 13 & 14

- What is a family? There are many varieties of groupings that people refer to as families. Do you see your family in the depictions offered in the chapter on the family?
- Speculate about whether romantic marriage is a more or less reliable basis for an enduring marriage, than is arranged marriage.
- Assess the logic and reasoning of the list of reasons why people divorce.
- What do the authors have in mind when they mention "patterns of descent"?
- What is the hidden curriculum in education? Do you think it exists only in formal schooling experience?
- Before reading these chapters, did you think religion had a sociological function? If so, how does it compare to the authors' statements?
- Explain the types of religious organizations addressed in chapter 14.
- Was Marx accurate when he wrote the quote on page 350?
- Consider some of the differences between schooling and educating.
- What functions of schooling do the authors consider important?
- Why is academic tracking sociologically interesting?
- Can you foresee a day when all schooling will be accomplished through cyber connections?
- What is meant by an 'incomplete institution', mentioned on page 324?

11. Chapter 15

- Explain health.
- What concepts of medicine compete for our allegiance?
- Why talk about a medical establishment?

- Recently, writings have appeared that purport to connect our beliefs about and practises of, masculinity, to our state of health. Do you think masculinity is a threat to health?
- What do the authors mean by a disabling environment?

12. Chapters 17

- What are demography, and demographic transition?
- What is urbanization?
- What political conditions have 'pushed' urbanization in this country? What sociological theories are presented to explain urbanization?
- What ideas would come to your minds if I asked you to plan for a sustainable environment? How might we contemplate the meanings of "sustainable"?