

## Soc 1510-30 Introduction to Sociology

Summer 2009

**Instructor:** Ms. Vivian Varela

**Contact Information:**

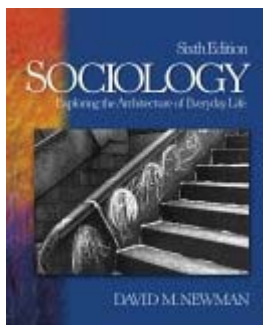
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**Course Description:** This course is an introduction to the basic concepts and principles of sociology. It includes the analysis and explanation of such topics as culture, socialization, institutions, population, and collective behavior.

**Course Objectives:** By the end of the course, a successful student should be able to:

1. understand the nature and purpose of human behavior from a sociological viewpoint,
2. demonstrate an enhancement of general social awareness,
3. use sociological vocabulary, concepts, and basic theories in the analysis of social phenomena, and
4. evaluate sociological phenomena and theories using critical thinking.



**Required Textbook:** Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life, David M. Newman ISBN: 1-4129-2814-1.

*The Giver*, Lois Lowry - a young adult award winning novel (widely available in the public library system or at any bookstore for about \$8 )

**Course Readings:** these will be available for printing in Etudes. You will need Adobe Acrobat reader to access the online files and web readings.

The required textbook, *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Every Day Life* Sixth Edition, is divided into 14 chapters on topics ranging from culture to social movements. Because this is an introductory course, understanding key terms is extremely important. You can bet that the quizzes and exams will cover these terms. The course readings will supplement the chapter readings and are designed to stimulate your sociological imagination.

**Course Content:**

**PART I THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY**

1. Taking a New Look at a Familiar World
2. Seeing and Thinking Sociologically

**PART II THE CONSTRUCTION OF SELF AND SOCIETY**

3. Building Reality: The Social Construction of Knowledge
4. Building Order: Culture and History
5. Building Identity: Socialization
6. Supporting Identity: The Presentation of Self
7. Building Social Relationships: Intimacy and Families
8. Constructing Difference: Social Deviance

### PART III SOCIAL STRUCTURE, INSTITUTIONS, AND EVERYDAY LIFE

9. The Structure of Society: Organizations, Social Institutions, and Globalization
10. The Architecture of Stratification: Social Class and Inequality
11. The Architecture of Inequality: Race and Ethnicity
12. The Architecture of Inequality: Sex and Gender
13. The Global Dynamics of Population: Demographic Trends
14. Architects of Change: Reconstructing Society

#### Course Layout:

All work for the course is posted by Week and Chapter in **MODULES**. Unless otherwise noted, ALL work assigned for the week should be submitted by Monday at 11:30 p.m. Pacific Time. If you have a problem with submitting work by the deadline, please contact me. If you are not submitting work in the Etudes course management system, your work must be turned into the Distance Learning staff at Taft College by the close of the office on Monday.

#### Exams and Grading Policy:

Your final grade will be based on written assignments, online quizzes, in-class discussions, assigned homework, two in-class exams and a final integrated paper. Each exam will be a combination of multiple choice and short essay questions based on the textbook and course readings.

4 Chapter Assignments	= 60 points (15 points each)
8 Reflection Journal Submissions	= 120 points (15 points each)
2 papers	= 60 points (30 points each)
Integrated Paper	= 50 points
2 Unit Exams	= 210 points (105 points each)

90 – 100%	A	450 – 500 points
80 – 89%	B	400 – 449 points
70 – 79%	C	350 – 399 points
60 – 69%	D	300 – 349 points
Below 60%	F	Below 300 points

#### Written Assignments

All writing for the course should use the ASA Style Guide for citation & reference format (helpful handout is linked on my course website).

Papers and assignments should be typed, double-spaced, with 12-point font (Times New Roman or Arial) and 1-1/4-inch margins.

If you quote or closely paraphrase from the textbook or other source in your work, you **MUST** cite the text and page number or the website URL in parentheses immediately after the quotation or paraphrase. Also, use quotation marks when appropriate. If you quote or paraphrase from a source other than those required by the class, then an embedded cite is still to be placed in parentheses after the pertinent material. In addition, a Reference page will be needed and is to be placed after the required content pages.

Be respectful and take pride in your work. Proof read each paper carefully, and make any necessary corrections. Do not rely upon the computer to identify every spelling or grammatical mishap. It is helpful to read your paper aloud to yourself a day or two after you have written it. This allows you to notice confusing or awkward phrasing and to have ample time to make corrections and improvements yet still meet the due date. Having someone else read your paper can be very beneficial.

All papers and assignments are to be submitted by the deadlines listed in the class calendar.

### **General evaluation criteria for papers/homework**

Thoughtfulness; substantive use of evidence to support your opinions and ideas; incorporation of both textbook and readings, or an article; clarity of expression; demonstration of logical reasoning; thoroughness; staying focused; organization; fluidity of language; answering the questions asked; and the use of good grammar and spelling are the criteria by which each paper will be assessed.

### **Class Policies:**

Plagiarism is not acceptable. Plagiarism refers to using other peoples' words and ideas as your own, either verbatim or by close paraphrasing without providing necessary quotation marks and/or citations. If you quote or closely paraphrase material from the textbook, Internet or other material, you must use quotation marks if appropriate and cite the source. You may cite the source by embedding it in the text of the paper. Do this by listing, in parentheses and immediately after the quoted or paraphrased material, either the text and pertinent page number(s) or the Internet URL. If you use a different source, then it needs to be cited in the content of your paper, and you must include a works cited page at the end of your paper. **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE; PLAGIARISM MERITS AN AUTOMATIC "F" OR "o" ON THE ASSIGNMENT. CONTINUED PLAGIARISM MERITS AN "F" GRADE IN THE COURSE.** If you are not clear on what plagiarism is, I recommend this short essay with examples written by sociologist Earl Babbie, *Plagiarism*. You can find it at <http://www.csub.edu/ssric-trd/howto/plagiarism.htm>.

All assignments must be submitted by the stated deadlines listed on the class calendar. Please contact me if extenuating circumstances prevent you from meeting a deadline. Extenuating circumstances include hospitalization, death in your immediate family, or matters of a similar and serious nature—things out of your control. **I will not accept late work if you have not contacted me on or before the assignment due date.** I reserve the right to deny your late work if circumstances merit refusal.

**Make-up exams are not available.**

### **Taft College's Academic Honesty Policy**

The administration, faculty and staff at Taft College believe that students are entitled to the finest education that the college can provide. At the same time, a student's achievement must include the realization that there are standards of academic honesty that must prevail. Each student should exert every effort to maintain these standards.

Academic dishonesty is defined by this college as any illegitimate act by any student, such as plagiarism or falsifying documents, which would gain that student an advantage in grading, graduating from the college, or qualifying for entrance into any academic program. It is a serious breach of student conduct and will be treated as such by administrators, instructors, staff members, and students of the college. Penalties for such conduct, depending on its severity, may range from a simple reprimand to an action that results in expulsion from the college. All flagrant instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Vice President of Instruction and/or the Vice President of Student Services, and appropriate measures will be taken by those officers of the college to correct the problem.

**Attendance Requirements:** Because this is a distance learning course, attendance is determined by the coursework you submit. Students may choose to drop the course unless the deadline for dropping with a "W" has passed. **It is your responsibility to notify the Counseling Center if you wish to drop the course.**

### Course Calendar

NOTE: This is a tentative course outline, meaning that revisions to this schedule may occur with notice to the class.

ALL REFLECTIONS & ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE A MINIMUM OF 200 WORDS.

Date	Assignment
Week 1 Chapters 1 & 2 6/8 – 6/15	<p><b>Reflection:</b> Read the excerpt from C. Wright Mill’s Sociological Imagination, summarize the reading and respond to his question, “What are the major issues for publics and the key troubles of private individuals in our time?”</p> <p><b>Paper:</b> Wal-Mart Paper (30 points) Directions attached.</p>
Week 2 Chapters 3 & 4 6/15 – 6/22  Last day to drop with NO NOTATION June 17	<p><b>Reflection:</b> After reading Monster Hype written by Joel Best <a href="http://www.hoover.org/publications/ednext/3366586.html">http://www.hoover.org/publications/ednext/3366586.html</a> (link opens in a new window) and People Count <a href="http://www.ucpress.edu/books/pages/10053/10053.pre.html">http://www.ucpress.edu/books/pages/10053/10053.pre.html</a> written by Joel Best, discuss your thoughts about the role of the research and statistics in creating social problems? Especially consider the social construction of statistics in your post (as mentioned in People Count).</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> After watching the Emotional Branding clip from The Persuaders <a href="http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/persuaders/view/">www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/persuaders/view/</a>, discuss how culture is created in our American society. In the video clip, Douglas Atkin said that the goal of a brand manager is to “create and maintain a whole meaning system for people.” Think about your language and values and evaluate how successful/unsuccessful the brand managers are in your life and the lives those around you. What sociological perspective do you think best describes the video clip? Explain your choice. <b>OR</b></p> <p>Read The Cheating Culture Chapter 1 “Everybody Does It” -- “Real conversation about cheating is exactly what we need right now. Widespread cheating is undermining some of the most important ideals of American society.” (2004: 24) So, do you agree with his statement? Disagree? Back your opinions with sociological language (norms, values, status, social role, role conflict, role strain etc.)</p>
Week 3 Chapters 5 & 6 6/22 – 6/29	<p><b>Reflection:</b> Chapter five mentions a study by Annette Lareau “Unequal Childhoods.” Read the published study and respond to the following question Dr. Lareau raises in her study, “Why does social class matter?” Use brief quotes from the study to support your response. Also, mention if your childhood experiences were similar to any one of the studied families and your self-identified social class. If not, what do you think were the differences in socialization?</p> <p><b>Paper:</b> Autoethnography - Goffman’s Presentation of Self. Directions attached. (30 points)</p>
Week 4 Chapter 7 6/29 – 7/6	<p><b>Reflection:</b> Take the Pop Quiz on Marriage (gif file, jot down your choices and then scroll down for the answers); THEN read Too Close for Comfort. “Everyone agrees that marriage isn't what it used to be, and everyone is quite right. But most of what "everyone knows" about what matrimony used to be and just how it has changed is wrong. How much do you really know about marriage?” (Coontz,</p>

	<p><a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/19/opinion/19coontz.html">http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/19/opinion/19coontz.html</a>) How did you do on the quiz?                  Do you agree/disagree with Dr. Coontz’s assertion that, “We should raise our expectations for, and commitment to, other relationships, especially since so many people now live so much of their lives outside marriage.”  <b>Assignment:</b> Evaluate the Hitting Home article through the lens of Functionalist and Interactionist perspectives. What would be the policy implications on domestic violence from the Functionalist perspective? The Interactionist perspective?</p>
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<p><b>First Exam Chapters 1-7 July 2 if not taken in Etudes, test must be proctored</b>                  7 short answer essay questions and 35 multiple choice questions</p>
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<p>Week 5                  Chapters 8 &amp; 9                  7/6 – 7/13</p> <p>Last day to drop with a “W”                  July 9</p>	<p><b>Reflection:</b> After reading the article “Positive Deviance” what one thing impressed you the most about positive deviance? What could you do as an active of positive deviance in your own life?</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> After reading "The Power Elite Now" critique the following quote from the article in light of current political events. What theoretical perspective best represents this article? What is your opinion of the author's argument?</p> <p><i>For Mills, politics was primarily a facade. Historically speaking, American politics had been organized on the theory of balance: each branch of government would balance the other; competitive parties would ensure adequate representation; and interest groups like labor unions would serve as a counterweight to other interests like business. But the emergence of the power elite had transformed the theory of balance into a romantic, Jeffersonian myth. So anti-democratic had America become under the rule of the power elite, according to Mills, that most decisions were made behind the scenes. As a result, neither Congress nor the political parties had much substantive work to carry out. "In the absence of policy differences of consequence between the major parties," Mills wrote, "the professional party politician must invent themes about which to talk.</i></p>
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<p>Week 6                  Chapters 10 &amp; 11                  7/13 – 7/20</p>	<p><b>Reflection:</b> “One of the central questions in discussions about poverty lines is whether they should be updated in "absolute" or "relative" fashion.” After reading Relative or Absolute, what do you think about how the poverty line is determined? What are the sociological implications for using absolute or relative?</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> read the article “Finding Words to Talk About Race” and respond to the author’s statement, “<i>What’s needed are a million personal conversations between ordinary Americans. The complexities and nuances of color and culture, the disparities of wealth and education are best understood by learning the stories of each others' lives. Ordinary people are the true experts in cross-racial, cross-ethnic dialogue, if only we would start talking.</i>” Do you think her idea of conversations would change racism? Explain your response and use at least one quote from the article.</p>
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<p>Week 7 Chapters 12 &amp; 13 7/20 – 7/27</p>	<p><b>Reflection:</b> Search for evidence in advertising, movies, and television shows that reinforce the traditional gender roles assigned to both men and women, and discuss the influence of social construction in forming gender roles. Make sure to specifically mention where you found your examples and why you think the examples reinforce traditional gender roles. What could you do to change the examples to be more egalitarian?</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> After reading the Everyday Sociology blog post, <a href="#">Statistics and Myths about Immigrants</a> (this link will open a new browser tab or window), discuss the author's assertion, "Questioning those email forwards and considering the accuracy and source of information that comes our way are crucial steps in critical thinking and forging a pathway based on accuracy rather than ignorance. Do you see any other problems in this email snippet? How would you go about finding unbiased and accurate sources to check this information?" Remember the difference between seeing the world through the Sociological Imagination and using common sense in your assignment.</p>
<p>Week 8 Chapter 14 7/27 – 7/30 Summer session ends July 30!</p>	<p><b>Reflection:</b> Explore the website of “Adbusters” <a href="http://www.adbusters.org/home/">http://www.adbusters.org/home/</a> as an example of a social movement. Read the About Us page; view either a spoof ad or video, and at least one article on the site. How does this site attempt to create a social movement? How does it use technology to further the cause? And what is the cause? What is your response to the site’s message? <b>OR</b></p> <p>Read “Sport as a Cure to Mitigate Negative Syndromes of Anomie and to Prevent Violent Conflicts” The authors ask, “What role Sport can play to mitigate negative syndromes of anomie and to prevent violent conflicts?” Do you agree with their conclusion? Can you think of other ways that sports could alleviate anomie at both the societal level and the personal level?</p>
<p><b>Integrated Paper</b> <i>The Giver</i> Lois Lowry Paper guidelines attached. Paper due 7/30.</p>	
<p><b>Second Exam Chapters 8 – 14 Thursday 7/30 if not taken in Etudes, test must be proctored</b> 7 short answer essay questions and 35 multiple choice questions</p>	

#### A Closing Thought...

“People who feel no temptation before closed doors, who have no curiosity about human beings, who are content to admire scenery without wondering about the people who live in those houses on the other side of that river, should probably also stay away from sociology.” --Peter Berger, sociologist in Invitation to Sociology

I hope your sociological imagination has been stimulated throughout this class and that you will continue to expand your curiosity and quest for learning about our social world.  
Thank you for taking this class with me!

**Assignment Wk 2 Ch 2: (30 points possible):**

You will be attaching this paper as a document in TT&S or submitting it to the Distance Learning staff. For this assignment, you will be asking and answering theoretically driven questions about a familiar social institution: Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart, the highest-grossing company in the United States (Fortune, 4-15-02), is part of a widespread retail phenomenon called the – "big box." Big-box stores are huge, warehouse-like buildings that feature just about every imaginable commodity under one roof. The Wal-Mart Super Center in East Peoria, Illinois, is an excellent example: in its vast, cavernous interior, you can buy groceries, guns, gardening equipment, books, clothes, appliances, furniture, pharmaceuticals, and greeting cards, all while waiting for your photos to be developed and your tires to be rotated. Wal-Mart seeks to be all things to all people—and judging by its position at the top of the Fortune 500 list, it seems to have succeeded.

Wal-Mart's success, though, has driven out of business thousands of local – mom and pop stores, which just can't compete with the low prices and huge selection of the big box. When Wal-Mart moves into a town, independently owned businesses soon go under. Also, the company has been accused of underpaying and exploiting its low-wage workers (Ehrenreich 2001), union busting, and engaging in sex discrimination in hiring and promoting. There are at any given time multiple lawsuits pending against this corporate giant for their labor practices.

Think about your own shopping experiences (if not at Wal-Mart, at another big-box retailer). You might even want to visit your local store. Walk up and down the aisles and observe the other shoppers. Note how and where the goods are displayed. How do the shoppers and staffers interact with the products and with each other? If you get a chance, try to view several of Wal-Mart's television commercials as well. Then sit down with the following questions and write out your answers. They should help you see how making different theoretical assumptions can allow us to analyze the same object but come up with different interpretations.

**Submit/Attach a 2 (full) - 3 page paper that addresses the theoretical questions below. Use either ASA (American Sociological Association) style (see RESOURCES link to the left for handout and examples) or APA American Psychological Association) style for your paper. This includes 1-1/4" margins, Times New Roman or Arial fonts at 12pt., double spacing, a title page, bibliography page, and citations for any material that is not your own work. Save your paper in RTF (rich text format). See RESOURCES for directions on how to save your document in RTF.**

**1. Functionalist questions**

- What are the functions of Wal-Mart for society?
- Are they the same or different from the functions of Wal-Mart in our individual lives? How do the two types of functions connect?
- Does Wal-Mart have both manifest and latent functions? What are they?
- Are there any dysfunctions of Wal-Mart for society? If so, what are they? How might these dysfunctions serve as incentives or catalysts for social change?

**2. Conflict questions**

- Does Wal-Mart affect every group in society in the same way?
- If not, what are the differences?
- How does Wal-Mart perpetuate the inequalities (of gender, race, class, religion, age, sexual orientation, etc.) in our society?
- How does Wal-Mart contribute to conflict between unequal groups in our society?
- How might Wal-Mart contribute to social change, or the amelioration of inequalities in society?

### 3. Interactionist questions

- What kind of symbolic world are you likely to encounter inside a Wal-Mart store, and how does that affect the shopper's experience?
- How does Wal-Mart influence our interpersonal interactions?
- How do interpersonal interactions shape the Wal-Mart experience for shoppers? for workers?
- How does Wal-Mart contribute to our socially constructed reality?

***Autoethnography Paper Week 3:*** Submit your response in the appropriate Tasks, Tests and Surveys (TT&S) link to the following assignment OR turn it to Taft College Distance Learning staff.

NOTE: paper is worth 30 points.

**Submit a 2 (full) - 3 page paper. Use either ASA (American Sociological Association) style (see RESOURCES link to the left for handout and examples) or APA (American Psychological Association) style for your paper. This includes 1-1/4" margins, Times New Roman or Arial fonts at 12pt., double spacing, a title page, bibliography page, and citations for any material that is not your own work. Save your paper in RTF (rich text format). See the Syllabus for directions on how to save your document in RTF.**

After reading the Cyberface article and the excerpt from Goffman's Presentation of Self write an autoethnography to make your own impression management visible—and to help you see how integral it is to your everyday life. You will observe yourself acting and interacting in two different social situations, and will then do a comparative analysis of your presentation of self in each setting. Make sure to use Goffman's terms in your paper!

Choose two different situations that you will encounter this week in everyday life, and commit to observing yourself for thirty minutes as you participate in each. For example, you may observe yourself at work, at a family birthday celebration, at lunch with friends, in your math class, riding on the bus or train, or watching a football game. The two situations you choose don't need to be extraordinary in any way; in fact, the more mundane, the better. But they should be markedly different from one another.

After observing yourself in the two situations, consider the following questions.

- What kinds of things do you say ("expressions given") in each situation?
- How are your facial expressions, style of dress, body language, etc. ("expressions given off"), different in each situation?
- How do you modify what you do and say in each situation? Are there things you say or do in one that would be inappropriate, strange, or even absurd in the other?
- What type of "front" do you encounter when you enter each situation? And what type of "personal front" do you bring to each?
- How does the "region" or setting affect your presentation of self there? Can you identify "backstage regions" and "frontstage regions" for each situation?
- Who are you in each situation? Do you present a slightly different version of yourself in each? Why?

As you observe the minutest of your interactions, you will probably discover that you perform somewhat different versions of yourself in the two situations. "Doing student," for instance, might be very different from "doing boyfriend."

Your final paragraph should respond to this final Goffman-inspired question: does engaging in impression management mean that we have no basic, unchanging self? If we bring different selves to different situations, what does that say about the idea of a “true self”?

### ***The Giver* – Integrated Paper**

Read the Newbery Award winning (1994) young adult novel, *The Giver*, by Lois Lowry. This book is widely available in public libraries and the Taft College library has several copies. It is also available at most bookstores for about \$8.

The paper is due at the end of week 8, attached in the appropriate area of Tasks, Tests and Surveys or turned into the Distance Learning staff.

Using your sociological imagination, evaluate the society presented in *The Giver* on the basis of the following sociological terms and concepts. Use examples from the book (with appropriate citations) to support your cultural evaluations.

The suggested structure for this paper is to set up your responses using our main textbook’s major unit titles (i.e., The Construction of Self and Society) and write at least a paragraph about your observations of the society of *The Giver*. The paper should use ASA format, be three to five pages in length, and include all of the required terms and concepts (clearly labeled). Each of the ten required components is worth up to five points for a possible total of 50 points.

5 points = outstanding example of concept with appropriate citation

4 points = outstanding example of concept with no citation

3 points = example of concept with citation

2 points = example of concept without citation

1. the social structure and social institutions of *The Giver’s* society
2. the mores, folkways, and institutionalized norms
3. the material and nonmaterial culture
4. family formation and the role of the family
5. deviance
6. division of labor
7. race, ethnicity, and social class
8. gender roles
9. role of social change
10. the sociological perspective that best describes the society (remember to justify your choice with examples from the book)