Syllabus – Fall 2014

Department: Sociology, Social Work, and Criminal Justice
Course Number/Section: SOCI 1301, section 1
Course Title: Introduction to Sociology
Professor: Dr. Chiung-Fang Chang
Tel: 409-880-7621
Office: Maes 53
Office Hours: M/W 1:00–3:00pm, or by appointment

Course Description

This course is a fundamental course in the social and behavioral sciences, which aims to focus on the convergence of science and what makes us human. This course provides an overview of major subjects in sociology, including sociological perspective, culture, social interaction, social stratification, sex and gender, race and ethnicity, social groups, organization, deviance and crime, marriage and family, religion, and social change.

Prerequisites

There is no prerequisite for taking this course.

Required Texts and Course Materials

The required textbook is a customized book for Lamar University only. You may purchase the text at the bookstore at Lamar campus, or you can order it from the Pearson’s website only at http://www.mypearsonstore.com/index.asp.

The textbook package information is:

* Additional course materials will be provided in Blackboard.
**Course Outcomes**

**Learning Outcomes:**

The core objectives of this course are to provide students with the ability of critical thinking, communication, basic quantitative analysis, and social responsibility. Upon successful completion of this course, students are expected to –

- understand basic sociological concepts and use sociological imagination to think creatively about the connection between local events and larger society.
- objectively view social and human behaviors through sociological lens.
- distinguish between three major sociological perspectives: *Conflict Theory, Functionalism,* and *Symbolic Interactionism.*
- learn basic application of statistical concepts on social analyses.
- develop a cultural relativist perspective by using sociological tools to analyze other cultures without devaluing them.
- become critical thinkers to develop and explicate innovative perspectives on topics pertaining to race/ethnicity, gender, globalization, and social inequality.
- well communicate their thinking and arguments through class discussion, presentation, and writing.

**Core Curriculum Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course the student will achieve the following core curriculum outcomes:

1. *Critical Thinking:* Students will refine their sociological imagination and use innovative and scientific inquiry to explore a variety of different cultures. That is, think critically about the connection between local events and larger social issues, and deconstruct cultural myths and stereotypes.
2. *Communication Skill:* Students will learn to distinguish between three major sociological perspectives-- *Conflict Theory, Functionalism* and *Symbolic Interactionism,* and use effective written or oral communication to apply and interpret theoretical concepts in social settings.
3. *Empirical and Quantitative Skills:* Students will learn basic applications of statistical concepts pertaining to sociological studies and social events, and demonstrate mastery of quantitative reasoning used to applied social problems.
4. *Social Responsibility:* Students will gain insight into pressing ethical issues facing society and other cultures, such as socioeconomic inequalities, racism and intolerance, immigration, violence, and poverty, with the intent to make a better world.

These outcomes will be assessed by having the students complete exams, discussions, and write analytical essays.
Grading and Evaluation

Your final grade will be based on the performance of the following:

- 10 Reading Exams (30 points each) 300 pts
- 2 Assignments (30 points each) 60 pts
- 10 Online Discussion Topics (10 points each) 100 pts
- Participation 40 pts

Reading Exams: There will be TEN reading exams in this course. Each exam will cover one assigned topic chapter, lectures, and supplemental materials that are discussed up to the time of each exam. All exams are close-book, close-note examination, which will be given in class. Each exam is worth 30 points and in the form of multiple-choice questions.

Assignments: Students are required to complete TWO assignments (3-5 pages) in the course. In each assignment, you will need to discuss one specific social issue which related to the course topic. Each assignment has a maximum grade of 50 points. You need to complete the assignment and submit it by the due date. Assignments should be typed, double spaced with 11 or 12 point size.

Online Discussions: In this course, you will be directed to discuss TEN different social topics on Blackboard over the semester. Students are expected to participate in the discussion with at least THREE meaningful entries in Blackboard to express your views and opinions on the topic. Your grade on each topic depends on how you participate on the topic, which includes the content of your postings and the number of postings you have submitted. Your entries can be a new thread to discuss your thoughts on the assigned issue; they can also be your feedback to other students’ postings, or additional information from external materials or textbook to strengthen or support your opinions. Each topic will be due on the last day of the assigned topic week. Your entries should be posted within the given time. Each discussion topic will NOT be re-opened again after the due date.

Participation: Active ongoing participation is required throughout the duration of the entire course and may be considered when making borderline final grade decisions.

Grading Scale: Your grade is based on your performance on exams, assignments, discussions, and participation. The grading scale is as following:

- A- 360-400
- B- 320-359
- C- 280-319
- D- 240-279
- F- <240

Census Date: (Six Drop Rule does not apply)
Monday, February 4 is the Census Date/12th Class Day. Students may drop or withdraw without consulting with their Instructor, Department Chair or the Records Office. The Six Drop Rule does not apply to students who drop before 5:00p.m. on February 4.

Web Environment and Technical Issue. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure the web environment is stable and your computer setting is adaptable to the Blackboard use. To avoid the possible technical adjustment, the course will give students enough time to complete the discussion.
Each test allows you to attempt twice within a period of 7 days so in case if you encounter any technical difficulties. Therefore, any excuses (including technical problems) will NOT be accepted for make-up test. For technical assistance, please contact the Blackboard Support Line 409-880-7849 at the Center of Distance Learning.

**Lateness and Make-Up Policy:** Students should make every effort to take all exams as scheduled on the syllabus. Make-ups for missed exams are granted only for excused (official university) absences. Unofficial absence from exams should occur only due to unusual and unavoidable circumstances and notification in advance is required (some documentation from authorities may be requested by instructor’s discretion). Make-ups due to a valid excuse may at the discretion of the instructor be penalized up to 25% or no higher than C.

**Classroom Management Policies**

**Disability Accommodation.** It is the policy of Lamar University to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law and to the University’s commitment to equal educational opportunities. Students with a documented disability should contact the Services For Students with Disabilities (SFSWD) which is located at Communication Building, Rm. 105. Students may write to P.O. Box 10087, Beaumont, Texas 77710, call 409.880.8347, fax 409.880.2225 or e-mail SFSWD@lamar.edu. The Director will arrange to meet with the student to determine reasonable academic adjustments and/or accommodations. Additional information is available at http://dept.lamar.edu/sfswd.

**Academic Honesty.** Students are specifically warned against all forms of cheating and plagiarism. The *Lamar University Student Handbook* states: “Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. Punishable offenses include, but are not limited to, cheating on an examination or academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials.” One aspect of the handbook’s definition of cheating is, “purchasing, or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one’s own work any research paper or other writing assignment prepared by an individual or firm.” Plagiarism is defined as, “the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another’s work or ideas into one’s own offered for credit”. Students seeking to avoid plagiarism should consult with the course instructor or recent handbooks, such as the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (6th edition). Faculty members in the College of Arts and Sciences investigate all cases of suspected plagiarism.

**Drop:** It is your responsibility to make sure that you are officially enrolled in this course. If, at any point, you decide to not participate in this course, it is your responsibility to officially drop or withdraw from enrollment. Failure to do so may result in a filing grade. Drops after the course begins may carry financial penalty in that full reimbursement may not be possible.

**Attendance and Classroom Policy:** Regular attendance is mandatory for all students in this class. Roll will be taken at the beginning of each class. Students who are not present after roll is taken will be counted absent. The first week of classes, as well as holiday and exam days, will not be counted for attendance. Starting from the second week of the class, I will evaluate your attendance seriously. Students who maintain perfect attendance (0-2 absences) will receive a 10-point increase on the final grade. Starting from the 3rd absence, students will receive a 3-point reduction for every additional absence. **Students who miss 8 or more classes will fail the class.** It is NOT required to provide any explanations for your
absences. However, if you want your absent records to be dropped, official documentation is required in order to withdraw the record of absence.

Punctuality is highly appreciated. Students are expected to make it to class on time so as not to interrupt the class. Disruptive behaviors (such as chatting, eating, napping, etc.) are not welcome. Students who are late or leave before the end of the class without earlier notice and explanations will be considered absence. Any type of electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, pagers), personal digital assistants, and tape recorders are NOT ALLOWED to use during the class time. Students who disrupt the class will be asked to leave the class.

**Course Evaluation:** Instruction as well as student performance is subject to evaluation. Procedures for evaluation will be provided near the end of this course.

**myLamar Portal.** Students are asked to obtain a Lamar Electronic Account username and password so they can log into the myLamar Web site. Students may get information on how to get into the myLamar Web site from the University’s homepage (http://www.lamar.edu) by clicking on the myLamar link on the left top corner of the screen. Follow the steps to secure your myLamar username and password. Access to library resources is described on the Academic Partnership page, also available through the http://www.lamar.edu.

**Sexual Harassment.** In accordance with administrative policy, sexual harassment is reprehensible and will not be tolerated by the university. Behavior in the course must conform to the university policy. **Syllabus Subject to Change.** While information and assurances are provided in this course syllabus, it should be understood that content may change in keeping with new research and literature and events beyond the control of the instructor. Students will be informed of any substantive occurrences that will produce syllabus changes.
**Tentative Course Schedule, Activities, and Assignments**

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<tr>
<th>Schedule</th>
<th>Course Activities and Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1-2</td>
<td><strong>Topic: The Sociological Perspective</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Student Learning Outcomes:</strong>&lt;br&gt;The student will be able to—&lt;br&gt;• Identify the major theoretical perspectives in sociology and describe the particular level of analysis, characteristics, viewpoints, and concerns associated with each.&lt;br&gt;• Explain why there is a need for sociological research and list the eight basic steps for conducting scientific research.&lt;br&gt;• Know and discuss the seven research methods that sociologists use, the tools that they employ, and the strengths and limitations of each.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Core Curriculum Outcomes:</strong>&lt;br&gt;The student will be able to achieve—&lt;br&gt;• Communication Skill&lt;br&gt;• Empirical and Quantitative Skills&lt;br&gt;<strong>Required Readings:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• James M. Henslin. 2012. <em>Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach</em>. Chapter 1, p. 1-39.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Discussions:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Discussing Weber’s Theory and Capitalism Today&lt;br&gt;<strong>Assessment:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Exam 1 (Henslin, Chapter 1)</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td><strong>Topic: Culture</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Student Learning Outcomes:</strong>&lt;br&gt;The student will be able to—&lt;br&gt;• Define culture, discuss its effects, and differentiate between major concepts of culture.&lt;br&gt;• Define &quot;ethnocentrism&quot; and &quot;cultural relativism,&quot; and list the positive and negative consequences.&lt;br&gt;• Explain why language is the basis of culture, including why it is critical to human life and essential for cultural development.&lt;br&gt;• List some current new technologies, and talk about how they are changing social behaviors and relationships in the United States and around the world.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Core Curriculum Outcomes:</strong>&lt;br&gt;The student will be able to achieve—&lt;br&gt;• Critical Thinking&lt;br&gt;• Communication Skill&lt;br&gt;• Social Responsibility&lt;br&gt;<strong>Required Readings:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• James M. Henslin. 2012. <em>Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach</em>. Chapter 2, p. 39-66.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Discussions:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Raising Children Amish Style—Discussing Amish subculture and How it encounter difficulty in the American Society.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Assessment:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Exam 2 (Henslin, Chapter 2)</td>
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Week 4  
**Topic: Socialization**

**Student Learning Outcomes:**
The student will be able to –

- Understand, distinguish between, and state the respective strengths and limitations of the major theorists' insights into human development.
- Discuss how socialization is not only critical to the internalization of cultural norms and the development of cognitive activity, but also to the development of emotions.
- List the major agents of socialization in American society, and discuss about how each of these teaches and influences people's attitudes, behaviors, and other orientations toward life.
- Understand why socialization is a lifelong process, and summarize the needs, expectations, and responsibilities that typically accompany different stages of life.

**Core Curriculum Outcomes:**
The student will be able to achieve–

- Critical Thinking
- Communication Skill
- Empirical and Quantitative Skills

**Required Readings:**

**Discussions:**
- *Socialization of Gender Role*— Discuss how gender roles are reinforced in media.

**Assessment:**
- Exam 3 (Henslin, Chapter 3)

Week 5  
**Topic: Social Structure & Social Interaction**

**Student Learning Outcomes:**
The student will be able to –

- Differentiate between the macrosociological and microsociological approaches.
- Differentiate between Emile Durkheim's concepts of mechanical and organic solidarity and Ferdinand Tönnies' constructs of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft.
- Differentiate between role conflict and role strain, providing examples of each.
- Understand how and why ethnomethodologists examine different ways people use background assumptions to make sense out of everyday life.

**Core Curriculum Outcomes:**
The student will be able to achieve–

- Critical Thinking
- Communication Skill

**Required Readings:**

**Discussions:**
- *Why People Want to Be Popular?*— Exploring the culture of popularity and social interaction.

**Assessment:**
- Exam 4 (Henslin, Chapter 4)
### Week 6

**Topic:** Societies to Social Networks

**Student Learning Outcomes:**
The student will be able to –
- Identify the five types of societies that have developed in the course of human history; and understand their distinct forms of social division, social labor, and social inequality.
- Name the four technological innovations most responsible for the social transformations of society, and discuss their respective roles in those transformations.
- Know what the term "group dynamics" means and how group dynamics are affected by group size, types of leaders, and leadership styles.
- Discuss the methodology, findings, and implications of the Milgram experiment as they relate, respectively, to peer pressure and obedience to authority.

**Core Curriculum Outcomes:**
The student will be able to achieve—
- Critical Thinking
- Communication Skill
- Social Responsibility

**Required Readings:**

**Discussions:**
- Why Follow Orders? Discussing the Obedience and the Ethics of Milgram’s Experiment.

**Assessment:**
- Exam 5 (Henslin, Chapter 5)

### Week 7

**Topic:** Deviance & Social Control

**Student Learning Outcomes:**
The student will be able to –
- Discuss deviance from the symbolic interactionist perspective, describing and applying the various components of differential association theory, control theory, and labeling theory.
- Discuss the role power plays in defining and punishing deviance while discussing, from the conflict perspective, how the criminal justice system legitimates and perpetuates social inequality.
- Address the ramifications of the growing prison population in the United States; examine how the way society addresses crime is related to the conflict perspective.
- Discuss gender, social class, and racial-ethnic biases with regard to the death penalty.
- Explain why crime statistics may be misleading and should be interpreted with caution.

**Core Curriculum Outcomes:**
The student will be able to achieve—
- Critical Thinking
- Communication Skill
- Empirical and Quantitative Skills

**Required Readings:**

**Discussions:**
- Violence in the Schools—Discuss how school violence happened and issues on school safety and gun control policy.

**Assessment:**
- Exam 6 (Henslin, Chapter 6)
### Week 8-9
**Topic:** Social Stratification

**Student Learning Outcomes:**
The student will be able to—
- Define social stratification and explain why it is sociologically significant by using examples.
- Discuss the relationship between gender, race, and social stratification.
- Explain different theories on how the world's nations became stratified.
- Identify the major characteristics of the poor in the United States. Compare structural explanations of poverty to individual explanations of poverty.

**Core Curriculum Outcomes:**
The student will be able to achieve—
- Critical Thinking
- Communication Skill
- Empirical and Quantitative Skills
- Social Responsibility

**Required Readings:**

**Assignment:**
- Measure of Social Class.

**Discussions:**
- *Stratification in the U.S. and the World*—Discuss the social class and social inequality in the U.S. and around the world.

**Assessment:**
- Exam 7 (Henslin, Chapter 7)

### Week 10-11
**Topic:** Sex and Gender

**Student Learning Outcomes:**
The student will be able to—
- Define gender stratification and distinguish between sex and gender.
- Define feminism and evaluate the different theories on the origins of patriarchy.
- Discuss different forms of gender inequality in the U.S. and the world.
- Discuss gender relations in the workplace and future scenarios of gender definitions and relations in the U.S.

**Core Curriculum Outcomes:**
The student will be able to achieve—
- Critical Thinking
- Communication Skill
- Empirical and Quantitative Skills
- Social Responsibility

**Required Readings:**

**Discussions:**
- *Don’t Judge Me by My Tights*—Discussing gender stereotype and social inequality between men and women.

**Assessment:**
- Exam 8 (Henslin, Chapter 8)
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<tr>
<th>Week 12-13</th>
<th>Topic: Race &amp; Ethnicity</th>
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<td><strong>Student Learning Outcomes:</strong></td>
<td>The student will be able to –</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Distinguish between race and ethnicity and the concept of what it means to be a member of an ethnic group.</td>
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<td>• Understand the concept of multicultural identity and its importance to many Americans.</td>
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<td>• Understand the psychological and sociological theories of prejudice.</td>
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<td>• Discuss the six patterns of intergroup relations that develop between minority and dominant groups, providing examples for each.</td>
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<td>• Social Responsibility</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment:</strong></td>
<td>• Lookism.</td>
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<td><strong>Discussions:</strong></td>
<td>• <em>Racial Perception in America</em>—Discuss the general racial perception in the U.S. and how the increasing multiracial population will affect our society in the future.</td>
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<td><strong>Assessment:</strong></td>
<td>• Exam 9 (Henslin, Chapter 9)</td>
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<th>Week 14-15</th>
<th>Topic: Marriage &amp; Family</th>
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<td><strong>Student Learning Outcomes:</strong></td>
<td>The student will be able to –</td>
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<td>• Explain why it is difficult to precisely define the term &quot;family&quot;?</td>
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<td>• Contrast the functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist perspectives regarding marriage and family. Provide examples that illustrate each of the perspectives.</td>
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<td>• Discuss about the characteristics and concerns of one-parent, childless, blended, and gay and lesbian families in the United States.</td>
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<td>• Discuss about the different measures of divorce rates, the adverse effects of divorce on children, and the factors that most help children adjust to divorce in the United States.</td>
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<td><strong>Core Curriculum Outcomes:</strong></td>
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<td>• Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>• Communication Skill</td>
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<td>• Empirical and Quantitative Skills</td>
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<td><strong>Discussions:</strong></td>
<td>• <em>Marriage, Cohabitation, and Wedding</em>—Discussing the changing of American society and how cohabitation has become acceptable? And why many people choose to remain single?</td>
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<td><strong>Assessment:</strong></td>
<td>• Exam 10 (Henslin, Chapter 10)</td>
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