

Principles of Sociology

SOC 200, Spring 2012

Instructor: David Lind

Meeting Place: SC 106

Meeting Time: MWF 1:00 – 1:50 (pm)

Moodle: <https://moodle.goshen.edu/>

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Course Description

This course is a general survey of key principles in the discipline of sociology and an invitation to explore the sociological imagination. It will familiarize students with the big ideas and perspectives that frame sociological inquiry. In doing so, the course will encourage students to develop a deeper understanding of their own social world and to ask sociologically meaningful questions about it.

The course is organized into three units. The first unit introduces the sociological perspective through a consideration of some of the basic concepts in sociology and how they are applied. In terms of application, we focus in particular on various issues related to food and society. A central idea of this section concerns how we understand the relationship between individuals and social systems. The second unit is focused on identity and social inequalities. We explore the social construction of race, class, and gender and how these dimensions of identity intersect in individual and group life. The third unit is organized around the idea of human ecology and explores the question of sustainability.

I have committed a good deal of time this semester to individual and small group activities, what the literature calls “active learning.” Some of this activity will be directed toward producing a quality group project. Other activities will focus on connecting class content to current social issues. It is my hope that these exercises will not only be productive, but that they will also inspire you to be rigorous, compassionate, and inquisitive social thinkers, writers, and doers. Success (and enjoyment), then, will depend as much on you as on me, which is, of course, the nature of social things.

This semester is an unusual one because I am scheduled to lead the SST unit in Senegal this summer. Consequently, I am planning to end the semester early on March 23. There are a variety of ways we will try to make up this missed time including the special event reflections outlined below. If you have concerns about this shortened semester, please come and talk to me about them.

Course Objectives

- To introduce key sociological concepts, theories and methods.
- To practice the skill of applying abstract concepts to concrete and complex social questions.
- To critically evaluate social issues by identifying assumptions and considering the validity of evidence.
- To develop an understanding of and appreciation for differences and complexities in social experience and an ability to participate effectively in dialogue with diverse worldviews.

Texts

Readings will be assigned throughout the semester and made available on Moodle.

Learning Experiences

Attendance (10%)

Attendance is an important part of your grade. I allow for two absences over the course of the semester. These two absences include everything from, "I didn't hear my alarm," to "I have to have major surgery," to "I have a soccer match." If you need to miss a class beyond these two built-in absences, I must receive a third party written excuse from a doctor, therapist, coach, professor, etc. I will then determine whether the absence is excused or unexcused. Each unexcused absences beyond the two built-in absences will result in a two-percentage point reduction in your final grade.

The Life of Social Things Wiki (LSTW) (20%)

This project is an important part of your grade and we will work at it in stages over the course of the semester. In groups of five, you will identify a sociological question and/or social issue related to food or the environment. Then, over the course of the semester you will develop a collection of wiki pages describing key sociological dimensions of that inquiry or issue.

Exams (35%)

There will be three exams. Each will cover the class sessions and readings assigned in that section and will assume that you are familiar with earlier content as well. The exams are taken in the classroom and are composed of multiple choice, true/false, matching, and short answer questions.

Participation (35%)

My subjective impression. Do you read the texts and other assigned materials *before* class, ask questions, participate in discussions etc.

Glossary Terms (GT). The glossary assignment requires that you submit two sociological terms and their definitions to the Moodle glossary for the course. Your definitions must meet my approval. They must reference at least one other key sociological term. They must include at least one external link. They must include at least one citation of a current research paper that addresses something related to the term you have chosen to address. The two terms cannot repeat terms already submitted to the glossary. (5%)

Reading Questions (RQs). Reading questions are meant to help you focus on important aspects of the reading for any given day. Occasionally I will assign reading questions and expect you to turn in a typed response on the day the readings are due, but usually the RQs are simply there to help you interpret the readings. RQs are also a good way to prepare for quizzes. I try to provide reading questions for most of the readings, but I do not promise that each reading will include reading questions. (5%)

Quizzes (Qs). There will be occasional, unannounced reading quizzes that will count toward your participation points. These are taken in class on the day they are assigned and cannot be made up. (10%)

Active Learning Exercises (ALs). On a regular basis we will use in-class writing and discussion to engage the course material. These exercises will contribute to your participation grade. They are due the day assigned and cannot be made up. (20%)

Inquiry and Research Exercises (IRs). Inquiry and research assignments ask you to answer a question and/or complete research beyond the material required within the class. The main objective of IR's is to be inquisitive and to apply the sociological perspective in looking for answers. These exercises will contribute to your participation grade. (20%)

Labs (Ls). Each of our three units this semester will end with a two day lab that requires you to work in groups of five to develop a short Power Point analyzing a current issue. There will be three labs during the course of the semester and they will count toward your participation grade. (20%)

Special Event Reflections (SERs). Special event reflections are short writings of 400-500 words that ask you to attend a campus event and reflect on how sociology applies to the content of that event. These are requirements for the course and help to make up for some of the class time we will be missing at the end of the semester due to my early departure for SST. You must attend at least four events and submit at least four SERs by Friday, March 16. I have outlined some options for these special events in the schedule for the semester including several events scheduled for Martin Luther King, Jr. Study Day and several events planned by the Latino/a Student Union. (20%)

Grading

Assignments	Percentage
Attendance	10%
Group Project	20%
Exams	35%
Participation	35%
	100%

Final letter grades are assigned based on the following scale.

93-100%	A	87-89%	B+	77-79%	C+	67-69%	D+
90-92%	A-	83-86%	B	73-76%	C	63-66%	D
		80-82%	B-	70-72%	C-	Below 63%	F

Policies

Moodle:

This course will use Moodle as its primary course management system. Reading assignments and other course materials will be primarily available through Moodle. In addition, some written assignments will be submitted electronically through the Moodle management system. I recommend that you check our Moodle course page on a regular basis.

Academic Integrity:

Papers you submit in this course will be checked for plagiarized material copied from the web, other student papers, and selected on-line databases. Cases of plagiarism are reported to the Associate Dean. Penalties for plagiarism are listed in the college catalog and range from redoing the assignment to dismissal from the college.

Statement Regarding Disability Accommodations:

Goshen College wants to help all students be as academically successful as possible. If you have a disability and require accommodations, please contact Lois Martin, the Director of the Academic Resource & Writing Center early in the semester. In order to receive accommodations, documentation concerning your disability must be on file with the Academic Resource & Writing Center, Good Library 113, x7576, lmartin@goshen.edu. All information will be held in the strictest confidence. The Academic Resource & Writing Center offers tutoring and writing assistance for all students. For further information please see <http://www.goshen.edu/studentlife/arwc>.

Laptops in the Classroom:

Laptops can be brought to class but must remain *closed* whenever someone is speaking to the class as a whole.