



SOC 1301: Introduction to Sociology (Fall 2015)

Dr. Galia Cohen

Meetings: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00am-11:15am

Class Location: ECSS 2.412

Office location: GR 2.202

Phone Number 972-883-2711

Office Hours: By Appointment Only

E-mail: galia.cohen@utdallas.edu



Course Description

Introduction to the scientific study of social factors that influence human behavior. Includes analysis of culture and socialization processes, social interaction, deviance, social stratification / inequality, race relations, global interdependence, and gender.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Compare and contrast the basic theoretical perspectives of sociology. (Critical Thinking)
2. Identify the various methodological approaches to the collection and analysis of data in sociology. (Empirical and Quantitative Skills)
3. Describe key concepts in sociology. (Critical Thinking; Communication Skills; Social Responsibility)
4. Describe the empirical findings of various subfields of sociology. (Empirical and Quantitative Skills)
5. Explain the complex links between individual experiences and broader institutional forces. (Critical Thinking; Communication Skills; Empirical and Quantitative Skills; Social Responsibility)

Required Text

George Ritzer. *Introduction to Sociology*. SAGE Publications 2014. 2nd Edition.
ISBN: 978-1483302942

Kurt Finsterbusch. *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Social Issues*. 18th Edition
ISBN-13: 978-1259161124

Method of Evaluation:

The grade for this course is based on the following components:

Assignment	% of Grade
Attendance and Participation	5%
3 Exams (23 points for each exam)	69%
Debate (Group Project)	15%
Assignment: Living on Minimum Wage	11%
Total	100%

Grading Scale

99 and above A+	88 to 89.99 B+	78 to 79.99 C+	68 to 69.99 D+
95 to 98.99 A	85 to 87.99 B	75 to 77.99 C	65 to 64.99 D
90 to 94.99 A-	80 to 84.99 B-	70 to 74.99 C-	60 to 64.99 D-
			< 59.99 = F

***Tentative Schedule**

Week	Dates	Class Readings/Assignments
Week 1	Aug 25 & Aug 27	Course Introduction & Overview Signing up for debate teams
Week 2	Sep 1 & Sep 3	>Chapter 1: An Introduction to Sociology
Week 3	Sep 8 & Sep 10	> Chapter 3: Researching the Social World 9/10 Debate #1: Is it Necessary to Become Less Consumerist? (p.24)
Week 4	Sep 15 & Sep 17	9/17 Debate #2: Does Social Media Have Largely Positive Impact on Its Users? (p.36)
Week 5	Sep 22 & Sep 24	>Chapter 2: Thinking Sociologically 9/24 Debate #3: Does Capitalism Have Serious Defects? (p.148)
Week 6	Sep 29 & Oct 1	*****10/1 Exam 1 Chps 1,2,3 *****
Week 7	Oct 6 & Oct 8	>Chapter 4: Culture 10/8 Debate #4: Is America Close to Being a Post Racial Society? (p.107).
Week 8	Oct 13 & Oct 15	>Chapter 5: Socialization and Interaction 10/15 Debate #5: Can Women Have it All? (p.57)
Week 9	Oct 20 & Oct 22	> Chapter 7: Deviance and Crime
Week 10	Oct 27 & Oct 29	10/29 Debate #6: Should Laws Against Drug Use Remain Restrictive? (p.220).
Week 11	Nov 3 & Nov 5	***** 11/3 Exam 2 Chp 4,5,7 *****
Week 12	Nov 10 & Nov 12	>Chapter 8: Social Stratification ***** 11/10 Assignment: Living On Minimum Wage *****
Week 13	Nov 17 & Nov 19	>Chapter 9: Race and Ethnicity 11/19 Debate #7: Is the Gender Wage Gap Justified? (p.120)
Week 14	Nov 24 & Nov 26	FALL BREAK- NO CLASSES
Week 15	Dec 1 & Dec 3	>Chapter 15: The Body, Medicine, Health, and Health Care
Week 16	Dec 8 & Dec 10	12/10 Debate #8: Is Same-Sex Marriage Harmful to America? (p.76)
Final Exam	See Exam Schedule	***** Exam 3 Chp 8,9,15 *****

**The descriptions and timelines above are subject to change at the discretion of the professor.*

Description of Evaluation Components:

1. Attendance and Participation (5pts)

Attendance Policy

I'll start with the bottom line: Class attendance is mandatory and taken at every class!

However, I acknowledge that we are all human beings and I understand that emergencies or unpredictable events can happen. Therefore, I allow two (2) personal days during the semester. After each subsequent absence your final grade will be lowered by 2.5 points.

- **Missing 4 or more classes may automatically result in an “F” grade for this course.**

There is no such thing as an excused absence. The 2 days are for you to conduct personal business or to save for illness. DO NOT bring me any doctor's notes or other forms. The only exception is if you are gone for university business, and then you must provide the necessary documentation.

Also, punctual attendance is expected from all students. If you come into class and the class has started, **you are late/tardy**. Two (2) tardies equals one absence (This goes the same for early Departure).

Perfect attendance will be rewarded with 2.5 points!

Other Related Classroom Policies:

- **Laptops are not allowed during class.** In order to maintain an optimal learning environment in the classroom I do not allow the use of laptops or any other tablets during class. While this may be a bit uncomfortable (or strange, considering the topic of this course...), I have learned that it is the only way to maximize your participation in class and to avoid the disruption of your classmates' learning experience.

Keep in mind that it is **NOT a sit-back-and-take-notes type of class**. For your convenience, I will post the lecture powerpoints for each week on blackboard and I suggest that you print them out and bring it to class with you. However, you should expect to actively participate in this class.

- **The use of smart phones is completely forbidden during class.** Please keep all cell phones, on silent or vibrate. I understand that sometimes you may encounter with issues that will require you to make an urgent call (or text). In such case, you may step out of the classroom to take care of that issue.
- **TEXTING** during class (or using ones electronic device without permission) will not be tolerated and will be sanctioned.

Participation Policy

Class participation enhances the learning experience and demonstrates to the instructor your interest in the course and the extent to which you comprehend the subject matter. All students are expected to participate in constructive ways and contribute to class discussions. I am less concerned with “right” or “wrong” answers than I am with thoughtful contributions which follow the discussion and either add to the debate or move it in a new direction. You will be evaluated on the quality, rather than quantity, of your contributions and insights. **The bottom line-** I measure class participation based on the following criteria: paying attention during lectures; attentive watching and listening to screenings of films; respectful listening when I, your peers, or guest lectures are speaking; active participation in class exercises; active demonstration of your understanding of the readings; and most importantly, **your ability to be fully engaged in your learning without texting, checking your phone, or FALLING ASLEEP**. Failure to meet the above criteria will result in the loss of attendance/participation points.

An important factor to take into account is that your participation will be a crucial factor in managing borderline grades (aka “the bump”).

For a significant contribution in class you will be rewarded with 2.5 points (no participation means **no** 2.5 points)

2. Exams x 3 (23pts each—69 points total)

There will be 3 in class (closed books). The exams may consist of multiple-choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank types of questions and will cover material from **both** the text **and** the in-class lectures and discussions. **There will be no make-up** exams except under exceptional documented circumstances and at the sole discretion of the instructor. Students are required to bring scantrons and pencils.

Exam Schedule:

Exam	Date	Chapters
Exam #1	10/1	1,2,3
Exam #2	11/3	4,5,7
Exam #3	**See UTD’s Exam Schedule**	8,9,15

3. Debate (15pts)

In groups of 5, students will prepare a debate on a given topic. A separate handout will be given in class.

A note about working in groups: When working in groups, students are expected to contribute fully to the production of competent and complete work. If problems arise with the contribution(s) of one or more group members, students should first try to resolve the issue within the group. Group members should involve the professor in instances of negligence when necessary. **Free riders will not be tolerated!**

4. Assignment: Living On Minimum Wage (11pts)

Non-poor people often assume three things.

1. Poor people are lazy
2. Living on minimum wage would be easy and
3. People on welfare could live without it if they tried hard enough.

In this doing sociology activity you will test all three of these ideas by trying to see if you could make it on minimum wage without any form of government assistance.

Your Hypothetical Situation

You are a single parent of two children; a seven year-old and a 9 year-old. The mother/father of your children is not in the picture for a host of reasons.

The mother/father also does not pay child support and you do not have the financial resources to hire a lawyer to force her or him to pay.

You work at a large retail store as a cashier and make minimum wage.

Luckily you are able to work 40 hours a week. At \$7.25 an hour you make approximately **\$1,256.67** a month, which after taxes is roughly **\$838** a month for you and your two kids.¹

Review Your Budget Spreadsheet that will serve as your family's budget (you will find the excel chart under assignment #3's link on blackboard)

Now Create a Real Budget

For this activity you'll need to create a budget for your hypothetical family of three. You will live off campus, but you must stay in town for this assignment.

Below are the directions for each of the budget line items on the Excel spreadsheet.

- **Housing Costs**
Search online for a rental property that has at least 2 bedrooms. Remember you'll live off campus, but you must live in town. Once you find a listing, copy the URL (i.e. web address) and paste it into your family budget spreadsheet. Finally, enter the cost of monthly rent.
- **Utilities**
Using the Internet, generally assess the utilities costs in the area of your hypothetical residence. However, if the rental property you selected has all utilities paid, you can put a zero in the budget.
- **Groceries**
This is up to you to determine, but keep in mind that you need to feed three people.
- **Phone/Cell**

¹ For this activity taxes were approximated at 33%, which is lower than most people pay. Meaning in reality you would more likely have less money in your budget.

If you can afford to have a home or cell phone, go online and find a website advertising the cost of the phone and plan you will purchase. Copy the URL (i.e. website address) and paste it into your family budget excel spreadsheet.

- Transportation

You are fortunate to own a car, but unfortunately it is very old and needs to be fixed. A friend of yours is a mechanic, but he said it would cost you at least \$200 to fix. Plus you would need to renew your car insurance, which is \$63 a month. If you don't fix your car you need to figure out how you will drop your children off at school and get to work in the morning.

- All the rest of the items in the budget- it is up to you to determine.

Note: You may not use any local, state, or federal welfare programs. Also, you must pretend you don't own any of your current possessions.

Finally, you may not rely on family members for assistance. You are alone, but this is America, so if you work hard you'll be fine, right?

Final Note: You may find it's very difficult to afford all of the things your family needs within the budget. You may even find it's impossible. However, you must make every effort to come in under budget.

If you blow the budget by hundreds of dollars or appear to not have made a good faith effort to come in under budget you will not receive points for the activity.

Review Your Budget

Now that you have completed your budget answer the following questions:

1. Were you able to come in under budget? Describe your experiences putting the budget together; where did you struggle? Where will your family struggle to stay within the budget you set? What social class would this family need to belong in order to meet these expenses?
2. If someone told you that people who are poor are lazy and that living off of minimum wage without government assistance is easy, what would you say to them after putting this budget together?
3. Now imagine that you were in an accident and can't work for 3 months. What would happen to your family?
4. There are many federal and state programs that assist the poor. Choose one program to learn more about from the list below. Find out what the requirements are to be eligible, the benefits of the program, the time limits to receive benefits, and whether you think that they are beneficial or of little consequence for people living in poverty. Your report should be at least one page. Be sure to cite your references.
 - Food Stamps

- Head Start
- Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly section 8)
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Temporary Assistance of Needy Families (TANF)
- Women, infants, and children (WIC)

Submit your assignment (including the budget) through the correct assignment link on Blackboard (word or pdf only)

Grading Rubric:

- 2 pt. Budget completion
- 1 pts. Question #1
- 1 pt. Question #2
- 1 pt. Question #3
- 4 pts. Question #4
- 2 pt. Grammar, language and style of overall paper

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS!
(READ CAREFULLY)

I expect you to **Submit College Level Work!** *This means...*

- You are expected to **follow assignment descriptions carefully!** It sounds simple enough, but students often lose valuable points on assignments because they do not read and follow directions carefully. Your work will be graded also on how well you fulfill assignment criteria and follow directions.
- You are expected to use academic language and college-level vocabulary (this means no slang, jargon, colloquialisms or **any other words that belong in a text message**).
- You should include and cite text whenever necessary, using MLA or APA citation format.
- You are expected to apply learned material from the course to your papers. This pertains to theories, concepts, key issues or examples - whatever is relevant. The goal of academic writing is not to show off everything that you know, or think you know, about a topic, but rather to show that you understand and can think critically about it. You should connect the course content to your writing, Demonstrate what you learned. **NO FILLERS!**
- Please PROOFREAD work before submitting it to ensure that it is free of grammatical and structural errors. Proper grammar and spelling will be taken into account when assessing a grade.
- Your written assignment should be typed, double spaced, 12 point font and at the required length (length requirement is different for each assignment).
- Assignments are to be submitted through Blackboard only. **ASSIGNMENTS VIA EMAIL WILL NOT RECEIVE CREDIT**

- Late assignments will NOT be graded except under exceptional documented circumstances and at the sole discretion of the instructor. **So plan ahead!**

Additional Course Policies

Class Decorum. No cell phones on or text messaging; no notebook computers on

Make-up Exams. None

Extra Credit . None

Late Work . 10% of assignment value is lost for each day overdue. After 48 hours assignments will no longer be accepted.

Class Attendance. Obligatory. Attendance will be taken every class.

Classroom Citizenship. Civility and politeness are appreciated

UTD Policy on Cheating

Policy on Cheating: Students are expected to be above reproach in all scholastic activities. Students who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and dismissal from the university. "Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts." Regents' Rules and Regulations, Part One, Chapter VI, Section 3, Subsection 3.2, Subdivision 3.22.

A very useful statement on plagiarism (with good definitions, etc.) is available at <http://www.rbs2.com/plag.htm>

Classroom Behavior

- All students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the highest behavioral standards.
- Students are expected to arrive on time for class. Attendance will be taken every class.
- Electronic devices during the class meeting should be turned off.
- Classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor's ability to conduct class or (b) the ability of students to benefit from the instruction is unacceptable. Examples include routinely leaving the classroom early, using cellular phones, reading non-class related material, repeated talking in class without being recognized, talking while others are speaking, or arguing in any way that is perceived as "crossing the civility line." If the instructor feels that a behavior is disruptive, the student will be asked to leave the classroom for the day. If classroom behavior is determined to be inappropriate and cannot be resolved between the instructor and the student, the behavior may be referred for academic or disciplinary review.

ADDITIONAL UNIVERSITY DISCLAIMERS

<http://provost.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/>