

Online Introduction to Sociology Syllabus

Stephanie Medley-Rath

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SUGGESTED CITATION

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Abstract

This syllabus is for an online version of Introduction to Sociology. The course is taught at a community college using You May Ask Yourself (Dalton Conley) and Everyday Sociology (Sternheimer).

Details

Subject Areas: Introduction to Sociology/Social Problems

Resource Types: Syllabus

Class Levels: College 100

Class Sizes: Any

Learning Goals and Assessments

LEARNING GOALS

Students should leave this course with a basic understanding of the sociological imagination. Students will use the sociological imagination specifically in the Seeing Sociology assignment.

Students will evaluate the ways in which stratification exists within the world. Specifically, students will interpret how factors such as race, class, and gender impact life chances.

Students will examine the relationship between their individual behavior and the social groups to which they belong (i.e., structure and agency). Students will evaluate how stratification systems operate within the social structure to influence agency.

ASSESSMENTS

Multiple choice exams

Individual writing assignments

Group discussion threads

Resource Files

DOCX

DOCX

TECHNIQUE: ONLINE INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY SYLLABUS

AS USED BY: Stephanie Medley-Rath, PhD
Social Science and Education Division
Lake Land College
Mattoon, IL 61938
stephaniemedleyrath@gmail.com

COURSE: Introduction to Sociology

TEACHING/LEARNING GOAL:

1. *Goal 1:* Students should leave this course with a basic understanding of the sociological imagination. Students will use the sociological imagination specifically in the Seeing Sociology assignment.
2. *Goal 2:* Students will evaluate the ways in which stratification exists within the world. Specifically, students will interpret how factors such as race, class, and gender impact life chances.
3. *Goal 3:* Students will examine the relationship between their individual behavior and the social groups to which they belong (i.e., structure and agency). Students will evaluate how stratification systems operate within the social structure to influence agency. In particular, students will complete an assignment where they interpret a table asking them to apply concepts related to both stratification and social structure.
4. *Goal 4:* Students will describe how sociology operates as a science by completing a writing assignment where they are asked to design a study.¹
5. *Goal 5:* Students will compare the major theoretical perspectives through applying them to various sociological topics throughout the semester.

ANTICIPATED LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe how sociology operates as a science.
2. Interpret a table.
3. Compare the major theoretical perspectives.
4. Use the sociological imagination to explain social phenomena.
5. Evaluate the ways in which stratification exists within our world.
6. Examine the relationship between their individual behavior and the social groups to which they belong (i.e., structure and agency).

UNIQUENESS

This course is unique in three key ways:

1. This course is taught entirely **online** using Canvas. Online courses provide unique challenges. My primary goal in an online course is to make sure that online students are not missing out on anything they might receive in a face-to-face course. The first

¹ “Design a Study” is based on the assignment prompt found on page 69 in Conley, Dalton. 2011. *You May Ask Yourself*. 2nd ed. New York City: W. W. Norton & Company.

question I ask when including an assignment, video, activity, and so on, is how can I make this work in an online setting and a face-to-face setting?

2. This course is taught at a **community college**. My community college students are primarily rural, low-income, white, and first generation college students. Most are inadequately prepared for college. Many are taking an online course because it is an easier fit into their very full lives or because it was the only section available. I designed the course to include lots of low-stakes assignments so that students have checks along the way (i.e., scaffolding) in addition to exams.
3. This syllabus includes a section called **“Resume Items.”** I began adding this section to help students connect the specific skills and knowledge they learn in Introduction to Sociology with those things they might include on a resume. The items I include come from the American Sociological Association’s (2009) *21st Century Careers with an Undergraduate Degree in Sociology*. There is concern about catering too much to the emerging expectation that students should get a return on investment regarding their college education. Students, however, have difficulty connecting what they learn in the classroom with marketable skills that they could have on a resume. Most of my students are in college to get a job, therefore it is important that they see the connection between the classroom and employment early.

RELATED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Medley-Rath, Stephanie. 2013. “Seeing Sociology.” Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology (TRAILS). American Sociological Association.
2. “Interpret a Table” is under revision for TRAILS.

WHERE THE COURSE FITS IN THE CURRICULUM

Introduction to Sociology fulfills a Social and Behavioral general education requirement as an elective. It is also a required course for the following majors: sociology, social work, dental hygiene, early childhood care and education, and pre-nursing. The course is open to both majors and non-majors and has no pre-requisites. Most students who enroll intend to transfer to a four-year university after completing their Associate’s degree.

APPROACH TO THE COURSE AND RATIONALE

1. The course is split up into three major sections: (1) general overview of sociology, (2) stratification, and (3) social structure.
2. In general, students must complete one unit module each week. Units typically include reading one chapter from the main textbook and 1-3 supplementary articles from the course readings. I include audio recordings of the “lecture” for each unit along with “Unit Guides” (handouts to be completed while doing the readings and listening to the lectures. I include one homework assignment with each unit. These range from online group discussion threads to individual writing assignments. Seeing Sociology is assigned for each of three major sections along with an exam. These two items are given their own week in the course.
3. There are four exams. The first three exams correspond to each major section. The fourth exam is a comprehensive final. I drop the lowest exam score, which means that if students do well on the first three exams, they could opt to not take the final exam. Each exam is open book and open note. They are timed at 75 minutes, which is the length of time they would get if this were a face-to-face course. The exams are each 50 multiple choice questions. This

number was selected as it is too many questions to look up during the allotted time period, while also sufficiently covering the course material.

4. I assign discussion questions in group forums of 5-7 students. The intent is so that students may actually get to know some of their classmates, which is more challenging online than in a face-to-face course. One disadvantage of this method is that groups may have to be occasionally shuffled if a group is mostly non-participants.
5. I run my online course week from Monday –Sunday. All assignments and exams are due by Sunday at midnight. Students are always able to work ahead (so they can reserve the weekend for other things if they choose). Having everything due on Sunday night enables students who work through the week the opportunity to complete all their work on the weekends. The only exception to this policy is discussion questions. Discussion questions are due in two parts: (1) students must respond to the initial discussion prompt in approximately 200 words by Wednesday at midnight and (2) students must respond substantively to at least two of their classmates' posts by Sunday at midnight. Having two due dates means that students should have something to respond to when they are ready to finish up their week's assignments.
6. Most students only contribute the required minimum to the discussion threads I do not have a separate participation grade for the discussion threads. The trade-off of having fewer postings from students is that these postings must meet the requirements in the point above. That is, a higher proportion of postings are going to be substantive. A major disadvantage is that students rarely respond to follow-up questions posed by their classmates or the instructor.
7. I assign both discussion questions and individual writing assignments. The quality of the individual writing assignments is much higher than the discussion questions. This mixture provides a nice balance of "easy" and "hard" work for students and makes grading more manageable for the instructor.
8. My policy on academic honesty is a campus-specific policy and should be edited to reflect your own campus and instructor policies regarding academic honesty.
9. I assign both a main textbook (*You May Ask Yourself* by Dalton Conley) and a reader (*Everyday Sociology Reader* by Karen Sternheimer). I like this reader because it includes both original scholarly work such as an excerpt from C. Wright Mills ("The Promise") along with reprints of blog postings from the everydaysociologyblog.com supported by W. W. Norton. This combination of readings provides students at varying reading levels material that is more and less challenging. I think it is important for students to see what sociology looks like outside of a textbook, too. The two books cost about \$60 for students to purchase making them affordable. Moreover, the online resources for the books are open access—meaning students do not have to key in a password or create an account to use the online supplements. Overall, students report to me that they do like these books.

I selected sociology as my major at the end of my freshman year of college after declaring a social work major and taking the required Introduction to Sociology course. My teacher was very passionate about the “Battle in Seattle,” which inspired me to learn more about it and I went onto use the event in my speech class. Further, while reading my textbook, I was struck by this photo:¹



I learned that the Bellamy salute was used during the Pledge of Allegiance prior to World War II. I was absolutely struck by how the meanings of things, such as gestures could change so profoundly. Sociology also helped me answer questions about the world, such as, why was it ok to use Native American imagery for sports team mascots, when other groups were not depicted in such ways (it’s actually not ok)? Why did teenage pregnancy seem like such a popular choice among my classmates (when it is actually declining)? Why did so many of my high school classmates go directly into the workforce, while I went to college as a full-time student? The sociological imagination helped answer these questions. On the sociological imagination, C. Wright Mills² ([1959] 2000) wrote, “[n]either the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both” (p. 3). Throughout this course, we will develop our sociological imaginations and answer questions about social interaction, stratification, and structure.

¹Wikipedia. 2013. “File:Students pledging allegiance to the American flag with the Bellamy salute.jpg.” Retrieved August 19, 2013 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Students_pledging_allegiance_to_the_American_flag_with_the_Bellamy_salute.jpg).

² C. Wright Mills. [1959] 2000. *The Sociological Imagination*. New York City: Oxford University Press.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Study of human interaction focusing on social influences shaping personality, structure and dynamics of human society. Topics include: sociological perspective, culture, society, social interaction, social change in global perspective, socialization, social class, social stratification, race and ethnicity, and deviance.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the completion of the course, the student will be able to

- Describe how sociology operates as a science.
- Interpret a table.
- Compare the major theoretical perspectives.
- Use the sociological imagination to explain social phenomena.
- Evaluate the ways in which stratification exists within our world.
- Examine the relationship between their individual behavior and the social groups to which they belong (i.e., structure and agency).

RESUME ITEMS

Upon successful completion of this course and all course requirements, you should be able to include the following items on a resume:³

1. Critical thinking and analytic reasoning
2. Knowledge of U.S. cultural values and traditions
3. Written communication
4. Discuss percentages in a two variable table
5. Teamwork skills in diverse groups

I suggest opening a word document with the above items noted and begin keeping a record of the ways in which you practice these skills during this course (and others). At the end of the semester, you will be the best judge as to whether you can demonstrate these skills and talk about them in a job interview. You might also specify your degree of skill: beginner, intermediate, advanced, expert, and so on.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Conley, Dalton. *You May Ask Yourself*. 2nd edition.
2. Sternheimer, Karen. *Everyday Sociology*

CANVAS

This course will be taught entirely on Canvas. I have organized the course into Modules. You should complete all material under each Module. You will find links to assignments, audio recordings, and additional readings that are not listed in the Course Schedule of this syllabus. I have created Unit Guides for each unit that will provide an outline of the unit's materials.

³ American Sociological Association. 2009. *21st Century Careers with an Undergraduate Degree in Sociology*. Washington DC.

GRADING POLICY

- 1. Activities (70% of final grade):** There are a variety of activities you will complete each week over the course of the semester. These activities include an Introduction, three Seeing Sociology assignments, group discussions, and short individual writing assignments. Complete requirements can be found in the “Sociology Activity Guide.”
- 2. Exams (30% of final grade):** There are four exams in this course. Your lowest exam score is dropped from your final grade. Exam 4 is a cumulative final exam. Exam 1 covers *You May Ask Yourself* chapters 1-6, all related readings in *Everyday Sociology*, and all information covered in units 1-5. Exam 2 covers *You May Ask Yourself* chapters 7-11, all related readings in *Everyday Sociology*, and all information covered in units 7-10. Exam 3 covers *You May Ask Yourself* chapters 12-16 and all related readings in *Everyday Sociology*. Exam 4 is a comprehensive final exam and covers all course material. Further guidelines:
 - Each exam includes 50 multiple choice questions. Any material we cover in class or is assigned is fair game for an exam.
 - There will not be study guides for your exams. If you keep up with the course readings and stay engaged in the classroom, you will have no need for a study guide.
 - Each exam is open-book and open-note.
 - Each exam is timed. For Exams 1-3, you will have 75 minutes to complete your exam once it is opened. You will have 120 minutes to complete Exam 4 once it is opened.
 - Your lowest exam score will be dropped from your final grade.
 - Late exams will not be allowed.
 - Collaboration on the exams is not allowed and will result in a failing grade in the course. You should direct any questions about the exam to me, your instructor. You should not discuss the exam with any of your classmates until the exam due date has passed. You are to take the exam on your own without help from any other person.

The mechanics of all written work:

- All written work must be typed, include page numbers, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1 or 1.5 inch margins.
- Please spell-check and read over your work before turning it in. No more than two spelling or grammatical errors per page.
- Written work should conform to APA format.
- Keep a back-up copy of your work so you do not lose it.
- No late work will be accepted or accepted elsewhere.
- Each submission will be submitted onto Canvas by the due date.

Grading Scale:

A	90-100%
B	80-89.9%
C	70-79.9%
D	60-69.9%
F	0-59.9%

**Do not count on your grade being rounded up. **

GENERAL POLICIES

Email: You need to use your Lake Land email account to communicate with me. Your Lake Land email address uses the same prefix as your IRIS and Canvas login. Make sure that you include your course name and section number in the subject of your email. This way, I know the email is from a student and I will respond to you first. I will not discuss grades via email. I will discuss your grade in Canvas or in-person only. I will respond to your email between 24-48 hours M-F.

Attendance: Attendance is not figured as a separate grade in this course. You are expected to contribute periodically to group discussions as part of your grade. You should plan to log into our classroom 2-3 times a week. You should expect to spend 9-12 hours each week on this course. Block off time on 4-7 days to devote to this class.

Late Work and Exams: All assignments are due by midnight Central Standard Time on their due date. Late work is not accepted. All exams will be taken during the scheduled time unless other arrangements have been made ahead of time.

Policy on Academic Honesty: Response to student cheating on coursework shall be per school policy with the following instructor options:

- No credit given for the plagiarized work
- Reduced credit in the form of a lower grade for plagiarized work
- Instructor notifies the Division's Chair of the incident
- Cheating incidents of a serious nature may result in dropping the student from the course, which could result in failure in the course

If in doubt, ask. If quoting material, any repetition of three or more words should be included in quotations and citations should be used.

Lake Land College's Student Handbook Conduct Code with more details can be found at <http://www.lakeland.cc.il.us/studenthandbook/detail.cfm?id=30>.

Withdrawals: A student may drop a course through Dec. 5, 2013. A grade of "W" will be recorded for the dropped course.

Disabilities: Students with some special reason for modified testing procedures or note-taking procedures should contact me as soon as possible so appropriate arrangements can be made. See Jordan Hicks in Student Services Building #24 if you think you have learning, physical, or emotional issues.

Religious Holidays: If after reading the syllabus, you discover that I have assigned a test or assignment due date for a holy day of your faith, please let me know by the end of Week 2. Furthermore, if you will be missing any class because of holy days this semester, please inform me in writing by the end of Week 2.

Student Athletes: If your coach anticipates that you will need to miss class this semester due to athletic participation, you need to provide me with written documentation from your coach by the end of Week 2.

Technical Assistance: I am not tech support. Please contact The Center at (217) 234-5439 or ctpd@lakeland.cc.il.us. You can also use the Help feature in Canvas to answer many of your technical questions.

GROUND RULES

1. We will not accept any discrimination, intimidation, or harassment of fellow students.
2. Remember, just because something does not apply to you, does not make it any less true. Keep an open mind.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR THIS COURSE

- Each week you will complete a Module in Canvas. You should complete all materials under that unit by the due date listed below, which is usually on a Wednesday. You should not wait until Wednesday to complete your work.
- There are 3-5 audio recordings for each unit that you are expected to listen to. These audio files guide you through any additional links, homework, or ungraded assignments in the module. Each recording is between 5-20 minutes in length.
- You are more than welcome to work ahead, but once a due date has passed, you can not go back and submit the graded work for credit.
- You must complete the units in order. If you miss a unit, you will have to complete it (i.e., listen to the audio recordings and open up the unit guides) before the next unit opens in Canvas.
- Readings are listed in Canvas as assignments. These are ungraded and serve as a reminder to you to do them before completing the rest of the activities in the module unit.

COURSE SCHEDULE

YMAY: *You May Ask Yourself*

ES: *Everyday Sociology*

Module Unit	Due Date	What's Due?	Upon completion of this unit, students will be able to:
A General Overview of Sociology			
1	Aug. 28	Activity #1 Due: Introduction [Group Discussion]	1. Explain what sociology is
		Activity #2 Due: Background Knowledge Probe Pre-Test [Individual]	2. Describe the sociological imagination and distinguish between private troubles and public issues
		Read YMAY Chapter 1 and ES: p. 1-6	3. Differentiate theories in sociology

2	Sept. 4	Read YMAY Chapter 2 and ES p. 10-22	1. Distinguish between qualitative and quantitative methods
		Activity #3 Due: Design a Study [Individual]	2. Describe the population of the United States
		Activity #4 Due: Reading Rating Sheet #1 [Individual]	
3	Sept. 11	Read YMAY Chapter 3 and ES p. 31-44	1. Explain what culture is
		Activity #5 Due: Would You Eat? [Group Discussion]	2. Differentiate between material and nonmaterial culture
			3. Compare culture shock and cultural relativism
			4. Describe cultural change
4	Sept. 18	Read YMAY Chapter 4 and 5 and ES p. 47-49, 82-102	1. Compare the different theories of socialization
		Activity #6 Due: Grow Your Social Network [Group Discussion]	2. Distinguish status and roles
		Activity #7 Due: Reading Rating Sheet #2 [Individual]	3. Explain what is meant by the social construction of reality and apply it to social phenomena
			4. Contrast group types, including organizations
			5. Evaluate the role of social capital in social networks
5	Sept. 25	Read YMAY Chapter 6 and ES p. 105-130	1. Describe what is meant by deviance
		Activity #8 Due: The Glue of Society [Group Discussion]	2. Compare the different sociological explanations for deviance
			3. Explain how inequality produces deviance
			4. Contrast criminal and non-criminal actions
6	Oct. 2	Activity #9 Due: Seeing Sociology #1 [Individual]	
		Exam 1 (A General Overview of Sociology)	

Stratification			
7	Oct. 9	Read YMAY Chapter 7 and 10 and ES p. 133-156	1. Describe social class stratification
		Activity #10 Due: Social Service Agencies [Individual]	2. Explain the implications (or consequences) of social class
			3. Compare Marx and Weber's theories on the development of capitalism on social class
			4. Describe the role socialization plays in reproducing social class across generations
			5. Evaluate the poverty line and what it means for people and families below the poverty line
			6. Describe how poverty varies based on geography, race and ethnicity, gender, and age
8	Oct. 16	Read YMAY Chapter 8 and ES p. 173-182; 197-206	1. Differentiate between sex and gender
		Activity #11 Due: Reading Rating Sheet #3 [Individual]	2. Evaluate the consequences of patriarchy on men and women
			3. Describe gender stratification and evaluate the ways in which it is maintained
			4. Examine the ways in which sexuality is socially constructed
9	Oct. 23	Read YMAY Chapter 9 and ES p. 209-240	1. Distinguish between race and ethnicity
			2. Demonstrate an understanding of white privilege
			3. Evaluate minority and majority group relations
		Activity #12 Due: Interpret a Table [Individual]	4. Compare the different types of racism

10	Oct. 30	Read YMAY Chapter 11	1. Differentiate between health and illness
		Activity #13 Due: Motivating People to Eat Healthier [Group Discussion]	2. Examine how health and illness are correlated with inequality
			3. Appraise the explanations for why health care is expensive
			4. Evaluate how disability is both biological and social
11	Nov. 6	Activity #14 Due: Seeing Sociology #2 [Individual]	
		Exam 2 (Stratification)	
Social Structure			
12	Nov. 13	Read YMAY Chapter 12 and ES p. 243-256	1. Evaluate how family and marriage have changed historically and how these two concepts are socially constructed
		Activity #15 Due: The Pecking Order [Group Discussion]	2. Critically examine family and marriage social policies
			3. Examine how inequality is structured within families
13	Nov. 20	Read YMAY Chapter 13 and ES p. 262-273	1. Describe and evaluate the functions of education
		Activity #16 Due: Is America a Meritocracy [Group Discussion]	2. Contrast how education both reduces and reproduces inequality
		Activity #17 Due: Reading Rating Sheet #4 [Individual]	3. Examine how social phenomena, such as teacher's expectations, influence education outcomes
14	Nov. 27	Read YMAY Chapter 14 and 15 and ES p. 257-261	1. Contrast capitalism with other economic systems
		Activity #18 Due: How Much Unemployment is Out There? [Individual]	2. Describe the development of capitalism
			3. Critically examine monopolies and oligopolies
			4. Contrast the different types of authority
			5. Evaluate how power is distributed in society
			6. Describe the features of bureaucracy

		7. Evaluate rationality
		8. Describe McDonaldization

15	Dec. 4	Read YMA Y Chapter 16 and ES p. 292-293	1. Distinguish between the sacred and the profane
		Activity #19 Due: Marx and Weber on Religion and the Economy [Group Discussion]	2. Identify and describe the functions and dysfunctions of religion
			3. Contrast Marx and Weber's theoretical explanations of religion's relationship with capitalism
			4. Differentiate between the types of religious organizations
16	Dec. 11	Activity #20 Due: Seeing Sociology #3 [Individual]	
		Activity #21 Due: Background Knowledge Probe Post-Test [Individual]	
		Exam 3 (Social Structure)	
Final	Dec. 16	Exam 4 (Comprehensive Final)	

The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.