

# **Sociology 134, Section XW**

## **Introduction to Sociology**

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### **Welcome**

Welcome to Sociology 134XW, the distance learning version of Iowa State's Introduction to Sociology course.

I created this course in cooperation with Prof. Dan Krier. Prof. Krier and I each teach one of the mass lecture sections of Introduction to Sociology. While these sections serve many students well, we realized that others might benefit from an on-line version of the course.

This version of the course offers several benefits over the traditional version. Students can work at a more flexible pace than they could in the traditional version and the course is available to students living outside of Ames.

However, this class is not for everyone. Many students are better off taking the traditional lecture version since regular classes help students with course material and provide structure to the course. If you don't consider yourself a self-motivated person, you should consider taking the traditional version instead of the on-line one.

The components of the course are summarized for you in this syllabus. Please read it carefully.

Best of luck in the class.

Dave Schweingruber

### **Course Objectives**

Sociology 134, section XW, is the distance learning version of Iowa State University's Introduction to Sociology Course. It has three objectives:

1. Introduce students to the discipline of sociology.
2. Illustrate the sociological perspective through application of it to contemporary social life.
3. Educate students about major processes and institutions in contemporary social life.

## **Textbook and Course Content**

The required textbook is *Sociology: Your Compass for a New World*, 3rd edition, by Robert J. Brym and John Lie. Exams and quizzes will test students' comprehension of material in the book.

The course WebCT site contains WebTutor study aids prepared by Thompson/Wadsworth, the book's publisher. These can be found on the Course Content page. These study aids are prepared to help students learn material from the textbook. These materials are optional; students may use them as they see fit.

In order to use the WebCT site, students need to enter an access code that can be purchased with your textbook or separately from Thompson/Wadsworth. After you enter this password once, you will be able to enter the WebCT site all semester.

In addition to course material in the textbook, students will also watch 12 PBS videos that are available on-line. Questions about these videos will appear on exams (but not quizzes).

## **Contacting Course Personnel**

Students are encouraged to seek help from course personnel. In addition to Professor Schweingruber, the course is staffed by undergraduate teaching assistants from Sociology Central, the course office for Iowa State's Introduction to Sociology courses. Three TAs, Genevieve Henricks, Jessica Romaine and Dan Wittrock, are assigned to this course.

You can reach the TAs by e-mailing [soccentr@iastate.edu](mailto:soccentr@iastate.edu) or e-mailing them within WebCT. The best way to reach Professor Schweingruber is by e-mailing [dschwein@iastate.edu](mailto:dschwein@iastate.edu).

Questions about the course or about course material that may be of interest to other students may be posted on the discussion board. Questions that relate only to you or questions about quiz questions should be communicated using e-mail.

Students who are on-campus can meet with the course instructor or with Sociology Central teaching assistants for assistance understanding course material.

Professor Schweingruber holds office hours in East Hall 317B from 2:10-3 p.m. Monday and 2:10-3 p.m. Wednesdays or by appointment.

Sociology Central office hours will be announced.

## Grades

Students have the opportunity to earn 3000 points from their course work, to be distributed as follows:

Quizzes	550 points	22@25 points each
Exams	1500 points	3@500 points each
Mini-essays	440 points	11@40 points each
Video essays	480 points	12@40 points each
Class feedback	30 points	30 points

Final grades will be determined according to the following grade scale:

2700-3000	A	2300-2399	B-	1900-1999	D+
2600-2699	A-	2200-2299	C+	1800-1899	D
2500-2599	B+	2100-2199	C	1700-1799	D-
2400-2499	B	2000-2099	C-	Below 1700	F

Students are guaranteed the grade they achieve according to this grade scale. However, grades may be adjusted up (in the students' favor) based on the final grade distribution.

## Assignments

### 1. Quizzes (550 points; 22 quizzes at 25 points each)

For each chapter in the textbook, students will take a 25-question quiz on the WebCT site. The questions are multiple choice. Students will have an hour to complete each quiz and can use their book and notes. However, they cannot get help from other people during the quiz. You can only take each quiz once so be sure you are ready before doing so.

If students discover questions that are problematic, they should report these to course personnel (via e-mail). If we agree that the question has more than one possible answer or doesn't make sense, the student will get credit for the question and a bonus point.

Each quiz will be released to you after you have taken the previous quiz. You will be unable to take them out of order.

### 2. Exams (1500 points; three exams of 100 questions at 5 points per question)

There will be three exams, each of which will have 100 multiple-choice questions, each worth five points. The first exam will cover chapters 1-7, the second will cover chapters 8-15, and the third will cover chapters 16-22.

On-campus students will take exams in a proctored computer lab. Off-campus students must obtain a proctor. You must use Iowa State's official proctor form. Please arrange the proctor during the first week of class.

After you have completed all the work required to take an exam (see Class Schedule, p. 5), you need to send an e-mail notifying us that you are ready to take the exam. This must be done 24 hours before you intend to take it. This should ensure that the exam is released to you on time.

### **3. Mini-essays (440 points; 11 essays at 40 points each)**

For 11 of the 22 chapters in the textbook, students will write a short essay at least 250 words in length in which they apply a sociological concept or idea from the chapter to an aspect of contemporary life. For example, you could use the concept to analyze a personal experience, an interaction you observe, a news story, a movie, a book or a web page. You may also write a thoughtful, constructive essay in response to another student's essay. Your essay should demonstrate your understanding of the concept by explaining how your topic illustrates the concept, and/or using the concept to make sense of the topic. Students should post each essay to the class discussion list where can be read by other students.

Students can choose for which 11 chapters they want to write essays.

Students are expected to write thoughtful essays that reflect their honest effort to grapple with class material. Essays will be graded on a sliding scale: 40 points for essays of excellent quality, 30 for essays that meet the assignment's requirements but are otherwise unexceptional, 20 for essays that fail to meet the assignment's requirements in some way, 10 for essays that fail to meet the assignment's requirements in some significant way, and zero for completely unacceptable essays.

Students who wish to improve their essay scores may complete up to three additional essays to replace lower scores. The top 11 scores will count toward you final grade.

Do NOT copy text from the web or anywhere else without proper attribution (quotation marks and citation.) The penalty for plagiarism is failing the course.

### **4. Video essays (480 points; 12 essays at 40 points each)**

For each of the 12 PBS videos, students will write a short essay, at least 250 words in length. The essay may (1) show how the video demonstrates a concept or idea from the book, (2) explain how the video illuminated your understanding of social life, or (3) critique some aspect of the video from a sociological perspective.

Students are expected to write thoughtful essays that reflect their honest effort to grapple with class material. Essays will be graded on the same sliding scale as the mini-essays

Links to the PBS videos can be found on the class WebCT site. Each one is associated with a textbook chapter.

### **5. Class feedback (30 points)**

At several times during the class, the instructors will seek information from you to help us evaluate and improve the course. Please provide this information to help us create a better class.

## **Class Schedule**

Students can do assignments at as fast a pace as they want within the following constraints:

In order to take exam #1, students must complete the quizzes for chapters 1-7, the video essays associated with those chapters, and at least three mini-essays. Students must take exam #1 by Friday, Oct. 17.

In order to take exam #2, students must complete the quizzes for chapters 8-15, the video essays associated with those chapters, and at least six total mini-essays. Students must take exam #2 by Friday, Nov. 14.

In order to take exam #3, students must complete the quizzes for chapters 16-22, the video essays associated with those chapters, and at least 11 total mini-essays.

All class work, excepting exam #3, must be completed by Friday, Dec. 12.

Students must take exam #3 by Friday, Dec. 19.

The class is designed so that students can finish the class early if they want to work quickly. However, we have set deadlines for taking exams to encourage you to keep up with the material. If you have special circumstances this semester and want to request an adjustment of your schedule, make your request during the first week of class.

## **Academic Honesty**

Speaking and acting truthfully are skills acquired through practice. These skills are indispensable for successfully living and working with other people. If you practice dishonesty, you will endanger all of your relationships. You will be a bad spouse, a bad parent, a bad employee and a bad citizen.

Participating in academic life is an important opportunity to practice truthfulness since dishonesty is incompatible with and abhorrent to the purposes of the university. Therefore, students in this course are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty.

The standard punishment for academic dishonesty is failure in the course and referral to the Dean of Students. Students who are expelled from Iowa State or otherwise punished for academic dishonesty are encouraged to see their punishment as an opportunity to reflect upon their failure to practice truthfulness and to commit themselves to a new life of integrity.

Students in the course are allowed to work together to study. However, they must take their quizzes without assistance. In addition, although students will have access to questions from the quizzes and exams they have taken, they are not allowed to share these with other students.

## **Special Accommodations**

Students should address any need for special accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you believe you need them. Accommodations will be provided to students with a Student Academic Accommodation Request (SAAR) from the Disability Resources (DR) office (294-6624). DR is located in Room 1076 of the Student Services Building.

## **Sociology Code of Ethics for Human Relations**

The Department of Sociology is committed to providing a professional and educational environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. The department's Code of Ethics for Human Relations and the Procedures for Filing Complaints of Discrimination or Harassment are posted on the bulletin boards on all five floors of East Hall.