

# **Sociology 134, Section 17**

## **Introduction to Sociology**

Spring 2009

MWF 11-11:50 AM  
127 Curtiss Hall

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Welcome to Introduction to Sociology (Sociology 134, section 17), an overview of how the discipline of sociology views the social world and the people who inhabit it. This section is devoted to exploring a central sociological paradox—that people are both cause and consequence of society.

Section 17 consists of three 50-minute lectures a week. Taking a large lecture class with no discussion section is not for the faint of heart. Since success in the class depends upon mastering material from both the lectures and the textbook, students unwilling to attend lecture regularly and do the assigned readings should not take this class.

My lectures will generally not repeat the material in the textbook. Instead, I attempt to illustrate concepts from the book by discussing contemporary issues or describing interesting sociological studies. Students need to read the assigned book chapters before class so they will be familiar with the concepts underlying the lectures. The three multiple-choice exams cover material from both lecture and the book.

Sociology 134 has its own course office—Sociology Central—which is located in 120 East Hall and is staffed by top undergraduate sociology majors. They are available to help you prepare for the tests, explain your standing in the course and schedule make-up work. They can be contacted at 294-8411 or [soccentr@iastate.edu](mailto:soccentr@iastate.edu).

I also encourage you to visit me during my office hours or before or after class. My office is located in 317B East Hall. My office phone number is 294-4079 and my e-mail address is [dschwein@iastate.edu](mailto:dschwein@iastate.edu). If you need to leave a message, I prefer e-mail to voice mail.

For your convenience, this syllabus, the slides from my lectures and a variety of other course materials are posted on the course's official web page ([www.public.iastate.edu/~soc.134](http://www.public.iastate.edu/~soc.134)). The slides will be posted sometime AFTER the lectures are given.

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

Best of luck in the class.

Professor Dave Schweingruber

## Required Text

Newman, David. 2008. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life*, 7th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Students are expected to read each assigned reading before the class in which it will be discussed. The schedule of assignments (pp. 7-8 in this syllabus) lists the readings for each day.

The instructor may assign additional readings from the textbook web site at his discretion.

## Summary of the Course Material

My lectures are designed to tell the story of a central sociological paradox—people are both cause and consequence of society. This section of the syllabus summarizes this story.

Human society is paradoxical because people are both cause and consequence of society. In other words, people build society and society builds people.

Society has several mechanisms for building us. First, through **socialization** we learn who we are and what is expected of us and others in our culture. All of our identities come from society. Socialization begins in childhood and continues throughout our lives as we encounter and move through different institutions.

By defining what behavior is good, society also defines what is deviant. A second mechanism society has for building us is **social control**, which is used to re-build deviants or at least keep them from interfering with the normal operation of society. Social control ranges from gossip and ridicule to imprisonment and execution.

Society also has mechanisms for distributing valued resources. Through **stratification** society categorizes people and distributes valued resources to them based on the categories. Among the most important categories in our society are *class*, *race* and *gender*. Our class, race and gender affect how we are socialized, what type of social control we face, what opportunities we receive and what obstacles we face.

Finally, society provides us with **ideologies**, justifications for our systems of socialization, social control and stratification, and other social arrangements. When people ask questions about why things are the way they are, ideologies provide answers.

Sociologists use the term **sociological imagination** to describe the ability to see the impact of these processes on our private lives, i.e., that we are a consequence of society.

People are also the cause of society, i.e., we build it. Because of the continuous operation of the four mechanisms society uses to produce us, it is difficult for a single person to make significant societal changes. However, many important changes happen because of **social movements**, which consist of many people organized to promote social change.

Although society has many mechanisms for creating us, the operation of these mechanisms all depend upon our **everyday interactions**. In other words, we participate in socializing others, carrying out social control, reproducing the stratification system, and promoting ideologies. This is another way that we build society.

Sociologists use the term **the social construction of reality** to describe how people build the social world, especially as it is done through our everyday interactions.

## Course Web Page

The course web page ([www.public.iastate.edu/~soc.134](http://www.public.iastate.edu/~soc.134)) contains a variety of information, including up-to-date information on reading assignments, lecture topics and deadlines; the slides from lecture (posted sometime AFTER the lecture is given); and additional information on course topics, including sources for lecture materials.

The course also has a WebCT page. It should be used for: checking your grades, posting your mini-essays, and taking the course survey.

## Grades

Students have the opportunity to earn 220 points, to be distributed as follows:

Exams	150 points	3 exams @ 50 points each
Essays	50 points	10 essays at 5 points each
Course project	20 points	

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

195-220	A	175-179	B-	150-154	D+
190-194	A-	170-174	C+	145-149	D
185-189	B+	160-169	C	135-144	D-
180-184	B	155-159	C-	Below 135	F

**Important note: There are no ways to earn points in the course other than those described in this syllabus either during the course or after it ends.**

## Assignments

### 1. Exams (150 points; three exams of 50 questions each)

There will be three exams, each of which will have 50 multiple-choice questions. (Each question is worth one point.) Exams will cover both lectures and the text. The first exam (**Feb. 16**) will cover chapters 1-5. The second exam (**March 30**) will cover chapters 6-9 and 14. The third exam will cover chapters 10-13.

The first two exams will be held during the regular class time in 127 Curtiss Hall. The time and location of the final exam will be announced. Graduating seniors will be required to take all exams as scheduled, including the final exam.

### 2. Mini-essays (50 points; 10 essays @ 5 points each)

For each of the 14 chapters in the textbook, students may write a short essay (at least 250 words) 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. Your paper 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 are expected to write thoughtful essays that reflect their honest effort to grapple with class material. Essays must be written in complete, coherent sentences and use correct grammar and punctuation. Essays will be graded on a sliding scale: 5 points for essays of excellent quality; 3 points for essays that meet the assignment's requirements but are otherwise unexceptional, and for essays that fail to meet the requirements in some way; 1 point for essays that fail to meet the assignment's requirements in some significant way; and zero for completely unacceptable essays. **The top 10 scores count toward the final grade.**

Students will choose the chapters about which they want to write. Essays that receive partial credit can be replaced by full-credit essays so it is recommended that students write about all chapters until they have earned all 50 points. Due dates are listed in the schedule of assignments (pp. 7-8 in this syllabus). Late essays will not be accepted.

Your essays should be posted on the class's WebCT discussion board, where they are available for other students to read and respond to.

Students have three additional opportunities to earn mini-essay points: (1) Completing the course survey counts as one mini-essay. (2) Up to two essays can be completed by attending a university lecture/event related to sociology and writing a short essay (at least 250 words) about it. The essay should describe the event (e.g., the speaker's thesis) and what you learned from it. Appropriate events will be announced on the class web site. You are welcome to suggest events. Only approved events can be the topic of essays. Essays must be posted within 48 hours of the event.

### 3. Course project (20 points)

Each student can complete one course project. The project will be graded on a pass/fail basis and is worth 20 points if successfully completed. If you fail the project, you will not receive any credit. There are three options. (You cannot complete more than one of the projects for extra credit.) Each project contains two parts. The first part is due on **Feb. 20**. The second part is due on **April 10**. If you do not turn in part one, part two will not be accepted.

All papers submitted for these projects must be double-spaced with no extra spacing between paragraphs, using a 10- or 12-point font, with one-inch margins on all sides. The papers must be written in complete, coherent sentences and use correct grammar and punctuation.

**Course projects submitted by e-mail will not be accepted.**

#### The three projects

1. Volunteer project: This project gives you credit for volunteering at one of 13 Ames organizations for 16 total hours and writing a short paper. A list of the organizations is available on the course web page. Different organizations require different scheduling commitments so you should choose one that fits your schedule. You are required to do all of the volunteering between Jan. 12 and April 10. Part one of the assignment (**due Feb. 20**) is completion of a volunteer form, which is available on the course web site. Part two of the assignment (**due April 10**) requires you to write a short paper about how your volunteer work is connected to sociology. The paper must be at least three full pages.

Volunteers should bear in mind that they are representatives of Iowa State and should act responsibly and respectfully at all times. Any misconduct in your capacity as a volunteer will be considered a violation of the course's academic honesty policy.

2. Research paper project: This project requires you to write a library research paper (5-7 pages) on a sociological topic of interest to you. The paper will be based on three sociology journal articles, all of which address the same general topic.

For this assignment you will find three articles that address your research question, read the articles and write a paper that explains and synthesizes their findings.

You should start working on the assignment by coming up with a topic of interest to you and finding three sociological journal articles that address that topic. I suggest you spend some time browsing different sociology journals on the "Sociology Resources for ISU Students" web page, which is linked to the class home page, and searching for topics on Sociological Abstracts.

All of the articles must be in one of the journals listed on the "Sociology Resources for ISU Students" web page and/or indexed by Sociological Abstracts.

Part one (**due Feb. 20**) is a one-page outline of the paper. It must include your research question and the three articles you are using in your paper. Your ideas will be examined and commented upon by Sociology Central to help guide you on your final paper.

Part two (**due April 10**) will follow the following format:

1. The introduction will explain your research question. You may discuss why you are interested in this question, why it is important, and how it is related to course material.

2. The main body of the paper will give an outline of each of the three journal articles. For each article, you should include its research question, its method and its findings. The summary should give the reader a clear idea of the article's highlights.

3. In the conclusion, you will summarize the findings of the articles—based on these three articles, what is the answer to your research question? You will also explain what further research you think needs to be done on this topic.

The final draft of your paper must contain a bibliography with your three sources referenced using a standardized citation format.

3. Photo essay project: This project requires you to put together a photo essay similar to those in the Newman text. Part one (**due Feb. 20**) requires you to submit a one-page summary of your project that explains how your photo essay will illustrate a sociological concept. Your ideas will be examined and commented upon by Sociology Central to help guide you on your final portfolio. Part two (**due April 10**) requires you to assemble a portfolio consisting of a short (1-2 page) introduction describing the sociological concept you will illustrate and 10-20 captioned photographs YOU HAVE TAKEN YOURSELF. Each caption should connect the photograph to the sociological concept. The portfolio may be submitted in a binder or electronically, i.e., as a web page or PowerPoint slide show on a CD-ROM.

### Research participation

Some semesters sociology faculty or graduate students need student participants for research projects. If this opportunity is offered, students who qualify may participate in a research project and write a short paper about their participation as their class project. Completing the paper will require interviewing the researcher about the project. If this opportunity becomes available, more information on the assignment will be provided.

### **Make-Up Tests**

**All tests not taken during the regular test time or during a scheduled make-up time the following day will be essay tests.** This is necessary since the regular multiple-choice exam will be discussed during the first class following the exam.

Arrangements for make-up exams must be made in Sociology Central prior to the day of the exam. They must be submitted using the form found on the course web site. Permission to take a make-up exam will be granted only under the most extenuating circumstances. Any requests based on illness or injury must be accompanied by a physician's written statement. Employment conflicts or social events are NOT valid grounds for a make-up exam. All make-up exams must be taken **within one week** of the regular exam date. It is your responsibility to schedule a make-up exam. (No make-up exams will be given before the regular exam date.)

Students who do not take the final exam during the semester because of an excused absence (e.g., family emergency, serious illness) will need to take an incomplete in the course and take an essay final exam the following semester in order to earn any points from the exam.

All make-up exams will be proctored by Sociology Central teaching assistants or other authorized Department of Sociology personnel. No exams will be given by external proctors, such as athletic department personnel.

### **Sociology Central**

Sociology Central, located in 120 East Hall, is a course office designed to provide you with assistance in Sociology 134. It employs two top sociology undergraduates who are assigned to this section: Genevieve Henricks and Dan Wittrock. They can be contacted at 294-8411 or [soccentr@iastate.edu](mailto:soccentr@iastate.edu).

Sociology Central has primary responsibility for the following duties (this means if you ask the professor about these things, he will send you there):

- Approving (or disapproving) and scheduling make-up exams
- Scheduling special needs exams (after you have provided the professor a SAAR)
- Handling paperwork for class projects
- Checking on your standing in the course

Sociology Central teaching assistants are also available to review with you concepts and information from lectures, the textbook, and your previous exams.

## **Academic Integrity**

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.

Examples of academic dishonesty include plagiarism, cheating on exams, and attempting to claim credit for work not performed (such as volunteer hours and attendance at campus lectures).

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.

## **Classroom Courtesy**

Students are expected to show courtesy to their classmates during lecture by refraining from talking or other distracting behavior, and by arriving before class begins and not leaving until class is over. The number one complaint I receive from students about the class is that other students around them are noisy.

## **Sleeping**

Sleep is an important part of a student's life. You should schedule your life so that when the class is meeting you are wide awake in class and not home asleep.

Each semester a few students in this course fail an exam by sleeping through it. Often they tell me their sleep was actually caused by their devotion to the course—they were up so late studying that they slept through their alarm or dozed off in the library. However, in American society sleep is generally considered an unacceptable excuse for missing scheduled events, such as work, school, and social occasions. In order to be a competent member of society, you must be awake at certain times.

If you are concerned about sleeping through an exam, schedule an appropriate system of alarm clocks, wake-up calls and, wake-up visits.

## **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.

### Schedule of Lectures and Assignments

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Possible Topic</b>	<b>Assigned reading</b>	<b>Essay</b>
(1)	Mon., Jan 12	Course overview		
(2)	Wed., Jan. 14	The sociological paradox	Chap. 1, pp. 1-7	
(3)	Fri., Jan. 16	The sociological imagination	Chap. 1, pp. 8-16	<b>(1)</b>
	Mon., Jan. 19	NO CLASS		
(4)	Wed., Jan. 21	Obedience to authority	Chap. 2, pp. 17-23	
(5)	Fri, Jan. 23	Panic!	Chap. 2, pp. 24-43	
(6)	Mon., Jan. 26	Three perspectives of sociology	Chap. 2, pp. 44-49	<b>(2)</b>
(7)	Wed., Jan. 28	The social construction of reality	Chap. 3, pp. 51-67	
(8)	Fri., Jan. 30	The nature of social research	Chap. 3, pp. 67-90	<b>(3)</b>
(9)	Mon., Feb. 2	The sociology of monuments	Chap. 4, pp. 91-99	
(10)	Wed., Feb. 4	The sociology of emotions	Chap. 4, pp. 99-110	
(11)	Fri., Feb. 6	The social construction of sex	Chap. 4, pp. 110-124	<b>(4)</b>
(12)	Mon., Feb. 9	Introduction to socialization	Chap. 5, pp. 125-135	
(13)	Wed., Feb. 11	Gender socialization	Chap. 5, pp. 135-156	<b>(5)</b>
(14)	Fri., Feb. 13	Review for test #1		
(15)	Mon., Feb. 16	EXAM #1		
(16)	Wed., Feb. 18	The social construction of beauty	Chap. 6, pp. 157-163	
(17)	Fri., Feb. 20	The dramaturgical perspective	Chap. 6, pp. 163-174	
		*Part 1 due for class projects*		
(18)	Mon., Feb. 23	Mismanaging impressions	Chap. 6, pp. 174-182	<b>(6)</b>
(19)	Wed., Feb. 25	The American family	Chap. 7, pp. 183-217	
(20)	Fri., Feb. 27	The social organization of sex		<b>(7)</b>
(21)	Mon., March 2	Measuring and labeling deviance	Chap. 8, pp. 218-232	
(22)	Wed., March 4	Explaining deviance	Chap. 8, pp. 232-238	
(23)	Fri., March 6	Power and deviance	Chap. 8, pp. 238-253	<b>(8)</b>
(24)	Mon., March 9	Social dilemmas/bureaucracy	Chap. 9, pp. 255-274	
(25)	Wed., March 11	McDonaldization of society	Chap. 9, pp. 274-290	<b>(9)</b>
(26)	Fri., March 13	Religious conversions		

**\*\*\* Spring Break (March 16-20) \*\*\***

(27)	Mon., March 23	Social movements	Chap. 14, pp. 436-468	
(28)	Wed., March 25	Social movements, continued		<b>(14)</b>
(29)	Fri., March 27	Review for exam #2		
(30)	Mon., March 30	EXAM #2		
(31)	Wed., April 1	Stratification from cradle to grave	Chap. 10, pp. 291-295	
(32)	Fri., April 3	Explanations of stratification	Chap. 10, pp. 295-300	
(33)	Mon., April 6	Distribution of economic resources	Chap. 10, pp. 300-314	
(34)	Wed., April 8	Poverty & homelessness	Chap. 10, pp. 314-330	<b>(10)</b>
(35)	Fri., April 10	Campus riots		
*Part 2 due for class projects*				
(36)	Mon., April 13	The social construction of race	Chap. 11, pp. 331-347	
(37)	Wed., April 15	White privilege	Chap. 11, pp. 347-371	
(38)	Fri., April 17	The black-white income gap	Chap. 11, pp. 371-375	<b>(11)</b>
(39)	Mon., April 20	Gender in everyday interactions	Chap. 12, pp. 376-386	
(40)	Wed., April 22	The second shift	Chap. 12, pp. 386-400	
(41)	Fri., April 24	The male-female pay gap	Chap. 12, pp. 400-404	<b>(12)</b>
(42)	Mon., April 27	Birth cohorts	Chap. 13, pp. 405-418	
(43)	Wed., April 29	Demographic trends	Chap. 13, pp. 418-435	<b>(13)</b>
(44)	Fri., May 1	Review for final exam		

**The final exam time and location will be announced.**