

Introductory Sociology [SOC A 100-001]  
Department of Sociology  
Loyola University New Orleans  
College of Social Sciences  
Spring 2014



Jaita Talukdar, Ph.D.

Office: Mercy Meadows Parking Lot 32; Office hours: T 2-330pm

Office phone: 504-865-2128

Email: [jtalukda@loyno.edu](mailto:jtalukda@loyno.edu)

Class location: Mercy 311; Class time: MWF 1130 am—1220 pm

Please make a note of the following before continuing in this course---

- Service Learning [SL]: This is a service-learning course. You are expected to serve at a non-profit of your choice for 20 hours (at least) for the entire duration of this course. Although your primary task will be to serve, you are also expected to utilize sociological concepts and theories in class to better understand and empathize with the challenges these organizations and people face in their day-to-day lives. In other words, you will move beyond an “armchair learning” and be part of sites where social facts are being actively created. Serving, and actively being engaged in service-related assignments, is an integral part of this course. So you are expected to honor these commitments to fare well in this class. Please keep in mind that the service learning office on campus is there to help you with every step of this process. For more information visit the following site:  
<http://www.loyno.edu/servicelearning.com>
- Online Participation [OP] This is a hybrid course of sorts, which means that we will have some online sessions throughout the semester (typically on Fridays). During these out-of-class sessions you will be expected to read sociological texts, complete a written assignment, and occasionally communicate with your fellow class mates using the WWW. Failure to turn in online assignments will significantly affect your grade.

## Course Description

“A major characteristic of sociology as a discipline is its remorseless pursuit of proof of what everyone knows all along (Anonymous Columnist, 1963).” If we know it all, then why do sociologists suffer from this remorseless pursuit of understanding social reality? But

what is it that we know about the social? Is there a social reality independent of the individual? If so, are human beings then merely pawns in the hands of social forces? In this course we will look into the discipline of sociology, its history, methods that sociologists use, areas of study in the field but most importantly how the social influences our understanding of life experiences and the larger social reality. Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Develop an appreciation (that may include admiration or a sense of awe) of social forces that are much larger than us but guide and shape individual behavior.
- Develop awareness that personal troubles and public issues are connected, and apply a sociological framework of analysis to understand how social institutions work and individuals behave.
- Develop an ability to critically and analytically understand not only how our own but other peoples' "culture work," and understand social hierarchies and structural inequalities that affect our lives.
- To learn the challenges facing us all to understand and change unequal institutions and settings, but also the power of "human agency" and "tools of resistance" in bringing about social change.
- To be able to do all of the above in your verbal and written assignments.

#### Course Material

Ritzer, George "Introduction to Sociology" Sage Publications  
ISBN: 9781412977708; Price: \$84.00 (\$63.00-used)

ISBN: 978-0-393-93237-9; price: \$89.00

Additional reading materials will be posted on Blackboard.

#### Description of Course Requirements

**Exams (50%):** There will be two exams in this course. The exams will not be cumulative; thus, they will cover only the immediately preceding material. The test will mean meticulous reading of the textbooks. I will be doing a thorough review so make sure you attend them. This exercise will help you in taking exams in the future.

**Online Class Participation (25%):** Monday and Wednesday sessions will meet face to face and all Friday sessions will be conducted online. Every Friday you will be required to complete a short assignment based on that day's reading. You have to use class time to read the article and answer short questions. Some Fridays you will be expected to comment on outside readings.

**Attendance (5%):** I diligently maintain attendance records of my students. You have three unexcused absences. After that you will be losing points.

[SL] Participation (10%): Your field supervisor will give you an overall grade of your participation/attendance at the site. I will take your supervisor's appraisal into account when deciding on a participation grade. You can click on the following link to access the evaluation form. [http://www.loyno.edu/servicelearning/student\\_eval\\_form.php](http://www.loyno.edu/servicelearning/student_eval_form.php)

[SL] Journal (10%): You will be submitting two journal entries (3-4 pages) to me. You will be expected to integrate ideas, concepts and theories from the class with what you observe at your site.

#### Grading Breakdown (by percentage):

93-100 A; 90-92 A-; 87-89 B+ ; 83-86 B ;80-82 B- ;77-79 C+ ;  
73-76 C ; 70-72 C-; 67-69 D+ ;63-66 D ;60-62 D-; <60 F

#### Guidelines and Policies

Emergency Statement: At times, ordinary university operations are interrupted as a result of tropical storms, hurricanes, or other emergencies that require evacuation or suspension of on-campus activities.

• *To prepare for such emergencies, all students will do the following during the first week of classes*

- 1) Practice signing on for each course through Blackboard
- 2) Provide regular and alternative e-mail address and phone contact information to each instructor.

• *In the event of an interruption to our course due to the result of an emergency requiring an evacuation or suspension of campus activities, students will:*

- 3) Pack textbooks, assignments, syllabi and any other needed materials for each course and bring during an evacuation/suspension

- 4) Keep up with course work during the evacuation/suspension as specified on course syllabi and on-line Blackboard courses.

- 5) Complete any reading and/or writing assignments given by professors before emergency began.

• *Assuming a power source is available,*

- 6) Log on to university Web site within 48 hours of an evacuation/suspension.

- 7) Monitor the main university site ([www.loyno.edu](http://www.loyno.edu)) for general information.

- 8) Log on to each course through Blackboard or e-mail within 48 hours of an evacuation/suspension to receive further information regarding contacting course instructors for assignments, etc.

- 9) Complete Blackboard and/or other online assignments posted by professors (students are required to turn in assignments on time during the evacuation/suspension period and once the university campus has reopened.)

- 10) Contact professors during an evacuation/suspension (or as soon as classes resume on campus) to explain any emergency circumstances that may have prevented them from completing expected work.

**Disability Statement:** If you have a disability that qualifies you for accommodations, please contact Sarah Mead Smith, Director of Disability Services at 865-2990. If you wish to receive test accommodations like extended time you should provide me with an official Accommodation Form from the Disability Services at the beginning of the semester.

**Policy on Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's labor, another person's ideas, or another person's words. Normally, all work done for courses -- papers, examinations, homework exercises, laboratory reports, oral presentations -- is expected to be the individual effort of the student presenting the work. Any assistance must be reported to me. If the work has entailed consulting other resources -- journals, books, or other media -- these resources must be cited in a manner appropriate to the course. Failure to cite borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Undocumented use of materials from the World Wide Web is plagiarism.

**Cell phones/Laptops:** Cell phones, pagers and beepers must be turned off during class. Please do not read "outside" material (newspaper, magazines), listen to music or have personal conversations in the class. Please do not use your laptops in class. I prefer that you write down class notes.

**Controversial Subject Matter:** In this class we will be discussing subject matter or watching films/DVDs that some students may consider controversial. For both fictional and non-fictional accounts covered in the films, I expect you to show respect and sensitivity towards the matter. Our task is to explore the subject matter in-depth and consider multiple perspectives and arguments. Students are expected to listen to the instructor and to one another respectfully, but are free to disagree.

**Attendance Policy:** If you have a valid excuse like a medical emergency, death in the family or an automobile accident, please make sure you have documents to validate your case. If you leave class before it is time, you will be marked absent for the whole week. It is disrespectful towards your instructor and lowers the interest of others present in the class.

**Late Papers:** Essays/Papers (except for online assignments) handed in late will result in points being deducted. You have a week (from the day the paper was due) to submit your paper, but 35% of points will be deducted from the grade for this paper. After a week, you will NOT get any credit for this assignment. Please make a note that I will not accept online assignments after the due date and time has passed.

In addition please note: Students must assume that all graded assignments, quizzes, and tests are to be completed individually unless otherwise noted in writing in this syllabus. I reserve the right to refer any cases of suspected plagiarism or cheating to the Disciplinary Committee; I also reserve the right to assign a grade of "F" for the given paper, quiz or test. Finally, please save all your work till the end of semester in case of a missing paper or a quiz.

## Reading Schedule

### Week 1/JAN

- [M] 6<sup>th</sup> Introductions
- [W] 8<sup>th</sup> Read Ritzer, Read Chapter 2 (pgs.39-51), “Early Theorists” (in class). Also, read BB Durkheim, “Organic and Contractual Solidarity” (excerpts from the book Division of Labor)
- [F] 10<sup>th</sup> Class visit: Kelly Brotzman (Director of the Office of Service Learning) will give us detailed information and tips on how to successfully complete service learning requirements for this class. It is absolutely necessary for you to attend this session. If you have to miss class on this day, please follow up with her or her office staff to sign the required paperwork. Her office is in Bobet Hall, room 113.

### Week 2/JAN

- [M] 13<sup>th</sup> Read Ritzer, Read Chapter I, “What is Sociological Imagination”? (pgs. 19—23) Read BB: Wright Mills, “Sociological Imagination”
- [W] 15<sup>th</sup> Class lecture: Macro-level Analysis and Durkheim’s thesis of suicide
- [F] 17<sup>th</sup> Start online assignment: (link becomes active at 1130am every Friday) on “Suicide in varied social settings” Read articles posted on BB and complete assignment by 5pm the following day (link expires at 5pm). This is the format that we will follow for online assignments you do for this class.

### Week 3/JAN

- [M] 20<sup>th</sup> **MLK Holiday**
- [W] 22<sup>nd</sup> Class lecture: Macro vs. Micro
- [F] 24<sup>th</sup> Complete online assignment on “Using Durkheim’s thesis to understand suicide in varied social settings” Read articles posted on BB and complete assignment by 5pm the following day.

### Week 4/JAN

- [M] 27<sup>th</sup> Read Ritzer, Chapter 2 (51-70) “Contemporary Sociological Theory: Functionalism”
- [W] 29<sup>th</sup> Read Ritzer, Chapter 2 (51-70) “Contemporary Sociological Theory: Conflict/Critical Theories ” and Read BB: Mills, “The Power Elites”

[F] 31<sup>st</sup> Start online assignment on “Muslim women and wearing of the head veil: Competing perspectives.”

#### Week 5/FEB

[M] 3<sup>rd</sup> Read Ritzer, Chapter 2 (51-70) “Contemporary Sociological Theory: Interactionist Theories”

[W] 5<sup>th</sup> Read Ritzer, Chapter 3, “Sociological Research”

[F] 7<sup>th</sup> Continue online assignment on “Muslim women and wearing of the head veil: Competing perspectives.”

#### Week 6/FEB

[M] 10<sup>th</sup> Read Ritzer, Chapter 4, “Culture” and “Cultural Differences”

[W] 12<sup>th</sup> Read Ritzer, Chapter 4, “Cultural Difference” (Contd.)

[F] 14<sup>th</sup> Complete online assignment on “Muslim women and wearing of the head veil: Competing perspectives.”

#### Week 7/ FEB

[M] 17<sup>th</sup> Read Ritzer, Chapter 5, “Socialization” and Re-read “Williams and Vashi, “Creating the Space for Autonomous Selves.”

[W] 19<sup>th</sup> Read Ritzer Chapter 6, “Organizations and Societies” and BB: Read Ritzer, “From Iron- Cage to the Fast-Food Factory.”

[F] 21<sup>st</sup> Complete online assignment on sample questions for the mid-term exam

#### Week 8/FEB

[M] 24<sup>th</sup> Mid-term Exam

[W] 26<sup>th</sup> Journal 1 Due

[F] 28<sup>th</sup> <sup>1</sup> Start online assignment on “Do caste and class systems work in similar ways?”

#### **Week 9/MAR (3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>): Mardi Gras Break**

---

<sup>1</sup> Mid-Term Deadline for posting Grades Midnight

Week 10/MAR

- [M] 10<sup>th</sup> Read Ritzer, Chapter 8, "Social Stratification"
- [W] 12<sup>th</sup> Read Ritzer, Chapter 8, "Class in America" (contd.)
- [F] 14<sup>th</sup> Complete online assignment on "Do caste and class systems work in similar ways?"

Week 11/MAR

- [M] 17<sup>th</sup> 📺 People like Us: Social Class in America
- [W] 19<sup>th</sup> 📺 People like Us: Social Class in America (contd.)
- [F] 21<sup>st</sup> Complete online assignment on "Do caste and class systems work in similar ways?"

Week 12 /MAR

- [M] 24<sup>th</sup> Read Ritzer, Chapter 9, "Race and Ethnicity"
- [W] 26<sup>th</sup> "Race and Ethnicity" (contd.) and [Video] A Class Divided
- [F] 28<sup>th</sup> Start online assignment on Feagin's article on "The Continuing Significance of Race" and Wingfield's "Invisibility Blues."

Week 13/MAR-APR

- [M] 31<sup>st</sup> 📺 By Invitation Only
- [W] 2<sup>nd</sup> Journal 2 Due
- [F] 4<sup>th</sup> Start online assignment on "Sociological factors that help explain the wage-gap between women and men."

Week 14/APR

- [M] 7<sup>th</sup> Read Ritzer, Chapter 10, "Sex and Gender"
- [W] 9<sup>th</sup> Read BB: Read Lorber, "The Social Construction of Gender"
- [F] 11<sup>th</sup> Complete online assignment on "Sociological factors that help explain the wage-gap between women and men."

**Week 15/APR (14<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>): Easter Break**

Week 16/APR

[W] 23<sup>rd</sup> [📖] Codes of Gender

[F] 25<sup>th</sup> Complete online assignment on sample questions for final exam

Week 17 /APR-MAY

28<sup>th</sup> [M] Service Learning Reflections

30<sup>th</sup> [W] Service Learning Reflections

7<sup>th</sup> May: Final Exam at 1130 a.m.  
Summer Break !!!!!