

Sociology 100J: Introduction to Sociology

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INTRODUCTION

Sociology is the study of human social relations, groups, and societies. Sociology assumes that social relationships hold the key to understanding all aspects of social life. While the other social sciences tend to focus on particular areas of social life, sociology has broader concerns and studies the social relationships that underlie disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, economics, or political science. Sociology's subject matter is vast and heterogeneous. In this survey course we will review the major areas of sociological inquiry. Possessors of the "sociological imagination" will ultimately become critical thinkers who better understand today's social problems and the means to ameliorate them.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to master the major theoretical concepts and research approaches within the field of sociology. The dominant subjects within the field will be reviewed so that students can gain a basic working knowledge of what human societies are comprised of and how they function.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Readings

There are two required books for this course that are available for purchase at the bookstore. The main text is Giddens, Duneier, and Appelbaum's Introduction to Sociology 5th Ed. (2005; WW Norton). You will also be reading a fictional novel, George R. Stewart's Earth Abides (1949; Ballantine).

The readings are the core of this course (there are no "projects" and you have only one rather short paper to write in addition to the examinations). On-time completion of the reading is critical to having a successful experience here. Many portions of many of the chapters will not be covered in lecture. It is your responsibility to come prepared with any questions you may have about material from the books that we do not discuss in lecture. I encourage you to take notes and study the chapters holistically. You want to make sure that you are able to summarize the chapters and to engage the key concepts. The reading schedule is provided below. You need to have read and be prepared to discuss and engage the readings in class on the day in which they appear in the schedule. Snow Day Policy: In the event that class is cancelled, you are still responsible for having completed the scheduled readings by the date indicated in the schedule. Any revisions to this schedule will be announced via the Blackboard web site and/or by email.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory and will be formally tracked. We will meet for class 26 times through the course of this semester. It is your responsibility to attend and to sign in on the attendance sheet. If you leave class early without prior permission, your attendance will not be counted. Be aware that much of

the material presented in class is not available elsewhere. You are responsible for all of the material covered in lecture and will be formally tested on it accordingly. Attendance comprises 10% of your final course grade. If there is an emergency or if you are seriously ill and are absolutely unable to attend class, don't worry. You are allowed to miss 2 of the 26 classes without penalty (so don't worry about notifying me if you miss class). For each additional class you miss, 1 percentage point of your final course grade will be deducted. So, if you miss 7 classes, you will lose 5% of your final course grade. If you miss 12 or more classes, you will lose all 10% of the attendance portion of your final course grade.

Films

Documentary films will play an important role in this course as they will better illustrate certain themes and will provide opportunity for application of course material. Many of these films are from my personal collection and are not available for viewing elsewhere. I will not make any alternative viewing arrangements. Material from the documentary films will appear on the examinations.

Examinations

Two midterms and one final examination will be given. These objective exams will be in multiple-choice format. Students will be provided with a bubble answer sheet and are required to bring a #2 pencil with them to class on exam days. The final examination is not strictly cumulative. While mastery of key concepts in the earlier portions of the course is critical, the final exam is based directly on only the material following the second midterm (excluding the *Earth Abides* book). Students are expected to be prompt on exam days as some will use the entire class period and no additional time will be granted. The examination dates are provided in the schedule below. No make-up examinations will be arranged (see Grading section below).

Paper

Students are required to prepare a written analytical paper based on George R. Stewart's *Earth Abides*. This book is to be interpreted and evaluated in relation to major themes from our text. This book provides a unique opportunity to consider the disintegration and re-emergence of social institutions as well as aspects of societal types, culture, and inequality.

The "Great Disaster" appears to have occurred in the U.S. during Fordism (the height of industrial capitalism). Interestingly, the story ends at approximately our current era (early twenty-first century). However, the society that evolved certainly did not become "post-industrial" as ours is today. With the vast majority of the U.S. population dead after the disaster, social institutions literally disintegrated. However, as survivors gathered, aspects of some social institutions re-emerged.

This concise analytical paper is expected to be around six type-written pages and must be formatted in the following fashion: double spaced, 1.25 inch or less margins on all sides, and Times New Roman 12 point font. You are not required to have a bibliography nor a title page and no electronic submissions will be accepted. The paper is due on Wednesday, April 26th at the beginning of class. Please feel free to turn the paper in early to me in my office or in my departmental mailbox. Late papers will absolutely not be accepted (see Grading section below).

You are free to draw from any relevant material from your textbook in your analysis, but you must address all of the following issues. I do not need a summary of the story, I've read it! *Be certain to define all key terms and cite your text so that your responses demonstrate knowledge of the material.*

(1) The five major social institutions that you are required to analyze in this paper are: the economy, the state, the family (including marriage), education, and religion. (a) For each institution briefly describe the function it serves for societies in general. (b) Provide at least one example from the story of how each institution re-emerged to some extent. (c) Describe the function that these re-emerged institutions play for “The Tribe” (why did they re-emerge)?

The economy and the state have arguably been the two most important social institutions across time since their shape determines the shape of other institutions. (2) In respect to the economy: (a) Discuss each of the main components of capitalism (Ch. 14 & corresponding lecture) in relation to the economy that followed the disaster. (b) Would you consider this economy to be non-capitalist? (c) What did work consist of? (d) Why or why wouldn't this work be considered as “alienating” to Karl Marx? (3) In respect to the state, (a) Discuss the specific instance in which “The Tribe” become “The State” and used violence to resolve a social problem? (b) Would you consider “The Tribe” to be a democracy?

(4) Two more miscellaneous questions: (a) What was the “Secondary Kill” and why did it come about? (b) Thinking about the different societal types (Ch. 3 & corresponding lecture), how would you characterize the society in the story?

Grading

Incomplete grades will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. Each examination and the paper are equally weighted in the determination of the final course grade. The lowest of the four grades will be dropped. Your final course grade will be based upon attendance (10%) and only your highest three grades (weighted at 30% each). If there is an emergency or if you are seriously ill and are absolutely unable to attend an examination or complete the paper by the due date, that missed grade will be the one that is dropped. However, I strongly urge you to complete all three exams and the paper. My expectations for the paper are very straightforward and you have plenty of time to craft an “A” paper. The examinations cover much material and in the past, students’ lowest grade is nearly always an exam one.

Blackboard

An online Blackboard course web page exists at: <http://www.courses.maine.edu/>. At this web page you will be able to check your grades and send messages to your fellow classmates. Course announcements and any supplemental materials will be posted at this site and/or emailed directly to you. Please be certain that if you do not regularly use your university provided email address that you update the Blackboard system with the email that you do regularly use. There is a toll-free assistance line and online tutorials to provide help should you experience any difficulties with the system.

Accommodation Needs

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. At any point in the semester, if you encounter difficulty with the course or feel you could be performing at a higher level, please meet with me. There are a number of academic support services available on campus including Academic Support Center (242 Luther Bonney, 780-4470, for help with writing, time management, or general study skills), Office of Academic Support for Students with Disabilities (237 Luther Bonney, 780-4706) and the Counseling Center (106 Payson Smith, Portland, 780-4050 or 110 Upton Hall, Gorham, 780-5411).

SCHEDULE (readings are underlined; films are *italicized* – and subject to change)

<p>Wednesday 1/18</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p><u>No Readings</u></p>	<p>Monday 1/23</p> <p>Sociological Theory</p> <p><u>Chapter 1</u></p>	<p>Wednesday 1/25</p> <p>Sociological Research</p> <p><u>Chapter 2</u></p>	<p>Monday 1/30</p> <p>Culture</p> <p><u>Chapter 3</u></p>
<p>Wednesday 2/1</p> <p>Socialization <i>Merchants of Cool</i></p> <p><u>Chapter 4</u></p>	<p>Monday 2/6</p> <p>Social Interaction</p> <p><u>Chapter 5</u></p>	<p>Wednesday 2/8</p> <p>Crime & Deviance</p> <p><u>Chapter 7</u></p>	<p>Monday 2/13</p> <p>Midterm I</p>
<p>Wednesday 2/15</p> <p>CLASS CANCELED!</p> <p><u>No Readings</u></p>	<p>Monday 2/27</p> <p>Work & the Economy</p> <p><u>Chapter 14</u></p>	<p>Wednesday 3/1</p> <p>Organizations</p> <p><u>Chapter 6</u></p>	<p>Monday 3/6</p> <p>Capitalism & Class Pt. 1</p> <p><u>Chapter 8</u></p>
<p>Wednesday 3/8</p> <p>Capitalism & Class Pt. 2 <i>People Like Us</i></p> <p><u>Chapter 9</u></p>	<p>Monday 3/13</p> <p>Gender</p> <p><u>Chapter 10</u></p>	<p>Wednesday 3/15</p> <p>Race</p> <p><u>Chapter 11</u></p>	<p>Monday 3/20</p> <p>Midterm II</p>
<p>Wednesday 3/22</p> <p>The State Pt. 1 <i>Commanding Heights</i></p> <p><u>No Readings</u></p>	<p>Monday 4/3</p> <p>The State Pt. 2</p> <p><u>Ch. 13 Pt. 1</u> (up to pg. 391)</p>	<p>Wednesday 4/5</p> <p>Marriage & Family</p> <p><u>Chapter 15</u></p>	<p>Monday 4/10</p> <p>Education</p> <p><u>Chapter 16</u></p>
<p>Wednesday 4/12</p> <p>Media <i>Media Films</i></p> <p><u>Chapter 17</u></p>	<p>Monday 4/17</p> <p>Religion</p> <p><u>Earth Abides</u></p>	<p>Wednesday 4/19</p> <p>Institutions</p> <p><u>Earth Abides</u></p>	<p>Monday 4/24</p> <p>Development <i>Earth & Amer. Dream</i></p> <p><u>Earth Abides</u></p>
<p>Wednesday 4/26</p> <p>Urbanization/Envnt.</p> <p>Paper Due</p> <p><u>No Readings</u></p>	<p>Monday 5/1</p> <p>Social Movements Pt. 1 <i>Eyes on the Prize</i></p> <p><u>Chapter 19</u></p>	<p>Wednesday 5/3</p> <p>Social Movements Pt. 2 & Social Change</p> <p><u>Ch 13 Pt. 2 (pg. 391 to end) & Chapter 20</u></p>	<p>Wednesday 5/10</p> <p>Final Exam 10:45am</p>