

**Department of Sociology**

**77.120 – L18**

**INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY**

**2001 - 2002**

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**Office Hours:** By appointment.

**Classroom:** Room 201 St. John's College

**Required Textbook:**

Stark, Rodney 2001 *Sociology* 8th Edition.  
Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

**Overview**

This course is designed to introduce you to the diversity of concepts, principles, procedures, and facts that comprise an introduction to the discipline of sociology. A quick perusal of the table of contents in your textbook demonstrates that during this course you shall investigate a variety of subject areas.

Learning sociology is like learning the lessons of any other discipline. For most of us, this means both fun and work. We are sure that you shall find some of the topics included in this course taxing or tedious; others, you shall find interesting and relevant. All of this is part of becoming a liberally educated person.

**Course Objectives**

This course is designed to have you learn the lessons of Introductory Sociology in two ways. These ways of knowing the course content comprise the course objectives. The two course objectives are identified below.

1. In this course there exists a body of fundamental concepts, principles, procedures, and facts that you must know. Learning this **basic information** is the fundamental educational objective of Introductory Sociology.
2. The second objective of this course builds upon the first one, and requires you to move beyond understanding the contents of the textbook. The second objective requires you to be able to **comprehend and apply** sociological concepts and principles.

## **Class Organization and Activities**

This course is designed on the principle that *learning is a social enterprise*. Accordingly, much of our classroom activity will involve **team learning**. The ideas behind team learning, and how this kind of learning will take place in our class, will be discussed during our first meeting. From the outset, however, you need to appreciate that a considerable proportion of your time in class will involve *working with other students* doing various kinds of exercises directed at the course objectives.

With occasional variations, our class time will be allocated as follows.

*First-Half of Class:* Each week you will be assigned a required reading from the textbook. The first half of our class will be devoted to testing your basic understanding of the week's reading assignment and reviewing any difficulties you encountered. This weekly testing will take the following form.

First, each student will complete a short quiz on the reading material. Next, students will gather in their teams and complete a group quiz. The group quiz will be the same as the individual quiz, except that your team will have to arrive *at a consensus* about the correct answers. After these quizzes are completed, we shall review the correct answers, grade the quizzes, and discuss any problematic issues.

By following these procedures, the first half of the class is aimed at the first course objective, mastering the basic information covered in the textbook readings. The second half of the class will be devoted to the second course objective, comprehending, and applying sociological concepts and principles.

*Second Half of the Class:* The format for second half of our class will be less standardized than the first half. Sometimes I may give a mini-lecture, other times you will be given data to interpret or case studies to analyze. In every case, however, the focus of the second half will center on **applying** sociological ideas by working with your team members. The goal is to encourage you to see the operation of abstract sociological concepts and principles in concrete situations.

On occasion, we will provide a mini-lecture on topics of interest related to the weekly readings.

## **Evaluation**

Although you will be working in groups during much of your class time, in the final analysis you will be individually responsible for mastering the contents of the course. However, since the course outcomes

(individual mastery) are tied to the learning process (team learning), it is reasonable to evaluate both individual and group performances. Specifically, your final grade in the course will be composed of your performance on the following items.

*Weekly Individual Quizzes:* Most weeks you will be completing a quiz based on the week's reading assignment. These quizzes will concentrate on identifying your understanding of the basic information contained in the week's readings. In total, your grades on these individual quizzes will account for 13 percent of your final grade in the course.

*Unit Tests:* The weekly readings are organized into units containing four chapters. After completing each unit, you shall write a unit test. The unit test will cover the contents of the readings of that unit as well as any additional materials we have introduced in class. There will be 5 unit tests during the course and each unit test will test both course objectives (i.e. basic information as well as comprehension and application). Each unit test will count for 11 percent of your final grade in the course so, in total, 55 percent of your course grade will come from your performance on these unit tests.

*Weekly Group Quizzes:* As mentioned earlier, after you have completed an individual weekly quiz, you will work with your team members to complete the same test as a group. The group score a team achieves on these quizzes will be awarded to each member of the team. The scores each person receives from these weekly group quizzes will comprise 5 percent of that person's final course grade.

*Sociological Journals:* The second course objective noted that a fundamental goal of this course is to encourage you to apply sociological concepts and principles to concrete situations in the real world. One way of demonstrating comprehension and application skills comes from completing a sociological journal. The details of the sociological journal will be presented in a separate handout. For now, the basic point is to understand that your group will be creating and submitting a sociological journal that identifies the operation of sociological concepts and principles in real world situations. Your team's sociological journal will be graded and the journal's score will be awarded to each member of the team. Your completed sociological journal will account for 10 percent of your final grade in the course.

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*Analyzing A Case Study:* A second way of demonstrating comprehension and application skills involves analyzing a complex social situation. In this analysis, you will be viewing a videotape that documents the experience of a lower class, urban, poor family. Your team's task in the exercise involves identifying how sociological forces are operating on this family. The details of this exercise are described in a separate handout that will be distributed to you about the middle of the course.

For now, you need to appreciate that your group will be performing a sociological analysis of a documented case study. Your team's sociological analysis will be graded and the project's score will be awarded to each member of the team. Your completed case study will account for 10 percent of your final grade in the course.

*Group Assessment:* As noted, your mastery of the course material and achievement of the course

objectives is facilitated through teamwork. In a real way, your learning will be dependent upon the support and encouragement of the other members on your team. Likewise, their educational experience will be affected in important ways by your support of them. Since team members are dependent upon one another in these ways it is appropriate that members' contribution to the group be evaluated. In this course, 7 percent of your final grade will be based on evaluations of your contributions to the group throughout the course. The details of how these group assessments will be made are discussed in a separate handout.

To summarize, your final grade in this course will be composed of your performance on the following individual and group activities:

**Individual Performance:**

Weekly Quizzes --  
13 percent

Unit Tests -- 55  
percent

**Group Performance:**

Weekly Quizzes --  
5 percent

Sociological  
Journal -- 10  
percent

Case Study  
Analysis -- 10  
percent

Group  
Assessment -- 7  
percent

**Critical Dates**

In addition to the regular weekly individual and group quizzes, the following are important dates and deadlines.

**Unit Tests:**

Unit Test 1 -- October 17

Unit Test 2 -- November 21

Unit Test 3 -- January 23

Unit Test 4 -- March 6

Unit Test 5 -- April 10

Sociological Journal Submissions:

1st Submission -- December 5

2nd Submission -- April 10

Case Study Analysis Submission: April 10

## **Some Final Notes**

1) The weekly quizzes are so frequent that there is no reasonable way to permit students to rewrite quizzes they miss for justifiable reasons. Accordingly, of the 20 weekly quizzes that are administered, only the best 18 grades will be included in computing a student's overall quiz performance. This procedure is intended to make accommodation for students who are unable to complete a test or simply have a poor performance day.

2) Only documented reasons will be accepted as justifications for missing unit tests. In cases where a make-up test is permitted, the "objective questions" component(s) of the test may be replaced by essay questions. Late assignments will not be accepted.

3) Students always ask how the percentage grades you receive on the tests and the assignments are translated into the letter grades awarded at the end of the year. The procedure is straightforward. Each course component is weighted according to what it's worth toward your final grade and these weighted products are added together. Then the following key is applied:

**Total Percentage Letter Grade**

90+ A+

80-89 A

75-79 B+

70-74 B

65-69 C+

60-64 C

50-59 D

0-49 F

*Note: Senate Policy #1307 requires "A post-examination review of final grades in multi-sectioned courses that will encourage equitable correspondence between grades and level of performance in all sections". Accordingly, the final grade distribution in this course may be raised or lowered to achieve such equity and, therefore, your final grade may be changed.*

3) Class will not be held on the following date:

February 13 -- Mid-Term Break

4) As a cautionary note, please acquaint yourself with the university's policies on *academic dishonesty* (i.e. plagiarism and cheating and *class attendance*), as described in the General Calendar