

SOC 485 (Section 01E): SENIOR SEMINAR IN SOCIOLOGY

Fall 2012 (August 27 to December 14, 2012)

Classes meet on Tues & Thurs, 9:30-10:45 in SS 312

WEB ENHANCED COURSE SYLLABUS

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Welcome to the SOC 485!

COURSE INFORMATION

I. Materials – Textbook, Readings, Supplementary Readings:

Required Textbook:

Joel M. Charon, Ten Questions: A Sociological Perspective; 8th Edition; 2013; Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning; ISBN: 13: 978-1-111-83376-3, or 10: 1-11-83376-1.

I will also be guiding you to selected materials on-line. For example, to begin with, please log in through Google to: cct@criticalthinking.org and click on Critical Thinking Concept and Tools; also log in to : www.criticalthinking.com and get ideas in understanding concepts of analytical thinking, conceptual thinking, and critical thinking.

You will also be provided copies of handouts in classes or posted on-line and a list of recommended readings to accomplish the objectives of major assignment and learning outcomes.

II. Course Description:

I am confident that we will have a productive semester in getting an overview of the discipline and profession of sociology, enabling you to summarizing/synthesizing what you have learnt in your sociology major at Texas A&M University-Commerce.

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF THE COURSE

The course content will be divided into the following topics to be covered:

PART A. SOCIOLOGY OF SOCIOLOGY

1. Unique Characteristics of Sociology as a ‘Social Science’

- ✓ Social Thought and Sociological Thought
- ✓ Holistic and Macro Outlook
- ✓ Diversion from Metaphysics to Positivism
- ✓ ‘Liberal’ and ‘Humanistic’ Aspects of Critical Thinking: An Outlook Challenging Inequalities and Injustices
- ✓ Development of Micro and Qualitative Sociology

2. Definition of Sociology and Sociological Perspective: Ideas from the Textbook:

- ❖ **How Do Sociologists Study Society? Read Chapter 1 in the textbook.**
- ❖ **What Does It Mean to Be Human? Read Chapter 2.**
- ❖ **How is Society Possible? Read Chapter 3.**
- ❖ **Why Are People Unequal in Society. Read Chapter 4.**
- ❖ **Are human Beings free/ Read Chapter 5.**
- ❖ **Why can’t Everyone Be Just Like Us? Read chapter 6.**
- ❖ **Why Is there Misery in the World? Read Chapter 7.**
- ❖ **Does the Individual Really Make a Difference? Read chapter 8.**
- ❖ **Is organized Religion Necessary for Society? Read chapter 9.**
- ❖ **Is the World Becoming One Society? Read Chapter 10.**
- ❖ **Why Study Sociology? Read chapter 11.**
- ❖ **Should We Generalize About People? Read pp. 300-318.**

3. Enhancement of Sociology: Role Played by the American Scholars

4. Sociology as a Discipline

5. Theoretical Paradigms and Conceptualization

- ✓ Conflict Theory
- ✓ Functionalism
- ✓ Exchange Theory
- ✓ Symbolic Interactionism

6. Invitation to Sociology: Relationship Between Sociology and Problem Solving

7. Sociology as a Science

- Role of Research in Science

PART B: SOCIOLOGY AS A PROFESSION

1. Teaching

- Development of Curricula
- Undergraduate and Graduate Teaching
- Evaluation of Teaching: Criteria for Evaluation and an Interest in the Outcome Assessment Process

2. Research in Sociology

- ✓ Basic and Applied Research
- ✓ Grant Writing
- ✓ Sources of Funding
- ✓ Criteria for Evaluating Grants Requests
- ✓ Peer Reviews and Scholarly Publications

3. Practice of Sociology

4. Sociology Associations, Interactions; and Collaborations

- International, National, and Regional Associations
- Specialized Association (Rural Sociological Society, SSSP, ICA)
- Goals, Activities and Meetings of Associations
- Students Joining the ASA, SWSA, and AKD

5. Professional Ethics in Sociology

6. Careers Relevant to Sociology Majors: The Components of the Process

7. Selected Examples of Possible Careers

- Admission in Medical, Law, and Other Professional Schools
- Teaching
- Research Work
- Administration in Education and Public/Civil Service
- Services for Special Populations Such as Seniors, Youth, and Victims of Abuse/Violence
- Public Relations
- Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement
- Counseling and Consultation

8. Successful Search for a Career

- Planning
- Researching and Assessing the Job Market

- Resume Development
- Successful Interview
- Staying Confident and Focused
- Weighing Options

PART C. ANALYZING AND ASSESSING THE CURRICULUM

- ❖ **Selected Elements and Characteristics of Our Undergraduate Curriculum in Sociology**
- ❖ **Sequence of Required Courses:**

Introduction to Sociology

Sociological Theory

Research Methods

Data Analysis and Statistics

- ❖ **Electives Representing Study Fields in Sociology**
- ❖ **Linkages Between & Among Courses**
- ❖ **Planning the Improvement in Our Curriculum**

III. Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

This capstone course is expected to be one of the last courses before you graduate with an undergraduate major in sociology. The course provides us an opportunity to review and assess what you have learnt (or not learnt) about the discipline of sociology and its perspective of studying selected aspects of human society. You will participate in a review and creative synthesis of central themes from the discipline as well as in an evaluation of your sociological skills/knowledge and personal objectives. Specific goals of the course will include:

- 1. Making sure that after completing our or transferred sociology courses that you already have (or not have) understood as thoroughly as possible the meanings of the sociological perspective in studying human actions, interactions, and relationships in groups, communities, and society in general**
- 2. Demonstrating skills in utilizing sociological principles, concepts, theories, and research methods in handling your own ideas and knowledge you already have gained;**
- 3. Identifying ways sociology can be used to improve the quality of your personal life and relationships;**

4. Providing an awareness of how/why (or how not/why not) the sociology courses you already have taken in sociology may have been inter-related and integrated in order to provide you with a meaningful understanding of and a critical thinking about the discipline and perspective of sociology;
5. Developing ideas about how we can attempt to synthesize, as much as possible, ideas we have hopefully learnt in different courses in the sociology curriculum in order to make a sense we have about the perspective, discipline and profession of sociology;
6. Critically examining the role of our required sociology courses (introduction to sociology, introduction to sociological theory, research methods, and statistics) played in putting ideas together in sociology electives;
7. Explore ideas how and in what ways our sociology major can help you pursue careers (not just 'jobs') of your choice. The course will help you clarify the tools of a liberally educated person (such as reading, comprehension and critique; clear, audience-oriented writing; analytical reasoning; creative, independent thought) and skills you have developed to use in your career and/or personal lives. It should help you identify resources (such as a well developed resume) and opportunities (such as how to succeed in an interview and in your chosen career in the current state of job/professional opportunities).

The learning outcome assessment for the goals stated above will be based on essays exams, weekly discussions, and assignments to insure:

1. That you have adequately learned basic concepts and principles of sociology, making sure they have grasped the sociological perspective in interpreting and analyzing events and behaviors in human society;
2. That you have developed critical thinking grasping various theories and research process in sociology explaining various problems and issues; and
3. That you are well informed about career opportunities in sociology related graduate education and professions.
4. That you take an overview of our undergraduate sociology curriculum and you have an understanding about inter-relations among various aspects of the curriculum.

(YOU WILL BE GIVEN A PRE-TEST & POST-TEST TO ESTIMATE OUTCOMES OF THE COURSE. YOUR SCORES IN THESE TESTS WILL NOT BE COUNTED IN YOUR COURSE GRADE.)

Your responsibilities in completing this course are stated below.

1. It will be very important that you all read regularly the syllabus and ALL Announcements posted at the home page of this course very carefully and follow all instructions about course objectives, grading procedures, etc. **Ignorance about details given in classes as well as in the course syllabus and various announcements posted on the eCollege web site cannot be accepted as excuse in any manner. I urge that you FULLY understand**

course requirements, grading procedures, and details on exams and assignments.

That will be the key to doing well in the course. Also, please feel free to ask me questions about the course requirements through e-mails as well.

- 2. Read instructions under each week carefully**, guiding you for succeeding in fulfilling the requirements given in your syllabus as well as under weeks 1 to 14.
3. It is important that you log into each week and use the study guide to complete work regularly.
4. In addition to meeting each others in the class, you may introduce yourself to other students in the [Student Lounge](#) accessible to you at the home page of the course. Share with them any challenges and opportunities you are having in the course.
- 5. You can post your questions at VIRTUAL OFFICE in the Home Page of this course.** The virtual office will serve our learning needs of being in touch with not only me but with all persons in the class whenever you have questions or comments about the course (for example, about exams, study guides given in classes, and other aspects of the syllabus).
6. You can also e-mail me whenever you have challenges or questions, particularly those that you don't want to share with your class mates. Please specify the following in your e-mail: your full name and the course # you are enrolled in so that I check your record before responding to your need or question. You can also come by my office during my office hours given above in this syllabus.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:

Grading will be based upon a total of 300 total points accumulated from test scores, weekly discussions, attendance, and class projects. Details on all requirements and grading procedures are stated below:

At the end of the course an "A" will be equal to 90+%, a "B" will be equal to 80-89%, a "C" 70-79% and a "D" 60-69% of the total points accumulated on these items.

A. Exams (200 points):

There will be three exams, including the final. You will be required to take ant TWO out of THREE exams (if you take all of them, I will drop the lowest score). By having an opportunity to drop one exam, you will have an opportunity to make up.

The first exam, second exam, and final-comprehensive-make-up exam will be given on dates given in the calendar at the end of this syllabus. All exams will be given in classes as scheduled. I will be giving you specific study guide for each exam in my classes.

Exams will be closed-book and will consist of short essays questions. Class discussions will play a significant role in your performance in exams. **So avoid missing classes and take class notes regularly.**

No other make-up exams will be given. Specific instructions for each exam will be provided in classes FOR various times. I will also go over ideas about how to do well in exams.

Overall, if you lose some points in essay questions, reasons for that could include: 1) you may not have answered a question correctly (2) you may not have answered all parts of each question; (3) you may have been too brief in your answer and might not have elaborated on your answer demonstrating your understanding; (3) you may have included irrelevant materials in your answers; (4) you may have lacked clarity (5) you may not have provided examples illustrating your points where needed;. or class discussions may not have been adequately reflected in your answers

I want you to know that the essay questions may not only help you to improve your performance in the course but also that they represent critical and analytical thinking on your part on serious questions.

B. On-Line Discussions, Class Projects and Attendance (100 Points):

Weekly Discussions On-Line:

I will post 12 discussion questions on a number of issues at least once a week. Be sure you log into discussions at the home page of the course and respond to questions during each of the first 12 weeks. You will be able to earn up to 5 points (a total of 60 points) for your participation in EACH discussion depending on how meaningful you are through your reading of materials assigned that week in your comments, and how much critical thinking you demonstrate in your discussion comments based on logical arguments. I expect you read other students comments in their postings and respond to them showing courtesy and professionalism. Remember, in higher education, we agree to disagree. The discussion questions can be seen as debatable issues. I will like to promote in you a spirit of expressing and sharing ideas on sociological concepts and issues.

I will provide detailed instructions on weekly discussions during our first class meeting on August 28th.

REMEMBER THAT EACH WEEKLY DISCUSSION CAN ONLY BE RESPONDED TO BY YOU DURING SPECIFIC DATES OF EACH WEEK IN ORDER TO EARN POINTS.

I will be able to find out through eCollege which one of you spent how much time on discussions and were meaningful and relevant in your comments. Elaborate in your discussion so that every one of you in class can understand what you are talking about. If someone in your class gives some arguments in discussions that you agree or disagree, be sure to be courteous and state your views accordingly. This is meant to be a debate to promote critical thinking. I will give you credit for your discussions accordingly. Please take weekly discussions seriously as this will help you relate to our important issues and express views on them.

Class Attendance:

I will use 20 points for rewarding class attendance. Procedures and criteria for providing points for attendance will be announced in class. A seminar course is not meaningful if students come to class late or miss classes and do not utilize opportunities for involvement.

Class Projects:

I will use 20 points for class projects and their deadlines to be announced later. One project may involve developing your resume to be submitted in the class, finalized by the end of the semester. Deadline for it specified in class. 5 points allocated for the quality of your resume.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

- ❖ “All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.” (See Student’s Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct).
- ❖ **A Note on Academic Honesty:** Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must work to provide an environment in which each student has the opportunity to be evaluated fairly on the basis of his/her own performance. University regulations regarding academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. At a minimum, any student found to be in violation of university rules will receive a failing grade on the exam or assignment involved. ALL instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to both the Department Head as well as the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. These offices may also wish to evaluate the case and decide punishment independent of this professor’s actions. I will use the technology to scan your answers and discussions to determine if anyone has copied contents from other students, on-line sources, and from published works. No credit will be given to anyone for giving or taking help toward any form of plagiarism beside punitive action in serious cases. While I trust my students, precautions are needed to protect those who genuinely work on the course.

As an example of academic honesty and professionalism, I will trust you but a few students who are unethical spoil reputation of all of us. It is my experience that students who cheat do not succeed in doing well in school and in developing meaningful careers.

- ❖ **Special Needs:** ADA Statement

❖ **ADA Statement**

- ❖ The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

- ❖
❖ **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**
❖ **Texas A&M University-Commerce**
❖ **Gee Library 132**
❖ **Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835**
❖ **Fax (903) 468-8148**
❖ StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu
❖

CALENDAR CONTAINING DATES FOR DISCUSSIONS, REQUIRED EXAMS & ASSIGNMENTS

(Please be sure to put all dates and deadlines in your monthly calendars as I may be quite firm on our schedules. Changes will only be made through a consensus in class.)

Week 1: Monday, 8/27 to Sunday, 9/2: Read Chapters 1 & 2 and work on Discussion 1. Take Pre-Test

Week 2: Monday, 9/3 to Sunday, 9/9. Read Chapter 3 & work on Discussion 2.

Week 3: Monday, 9/10 to Sunday, 9/16: Read Chapter 4 & work on Discussion 3.

Week 4: Monday, 9/17 to Sunday, 9/23: Read Chapter 5 & work on Discussion 4.

Week 5: 9/24 to Sunday, 9/30: Read Chapters 6 & 7 & work on Discussion 5.

Week 6: Monday, 10/1 to Monday, 10/8: Read Chapter 8 & work on Discussion 6.

Take EXAM 1, covering chapters 1 to 8, on Monday, October 8.

Week 7: Tuesday, 10/9 to Sunday, 10/14: Read Chapter 9 & work on Discussion.7.

Week 8: Monday, 10/15 to Sunday, 10/21: Read Chapter 10 & work on Discussion 8. Take practice Quiz 6 on Chapter 10.

Week 9: Monday, 10/22 to Sunday, 10/28: Read Chapters 11 and AFTERWORD & work on Discussion 9.

Week 10: Monday, 10/29 to Sunday, 11/4: Topics to be announced. Work on Discussion 10.

Week 11: Monday, 11/5 to Sunday, 11/11: Topics to be announced. Work on Discussion 11.

Week 12: Monday, 11/12 to Monday, 11/19: Topics to be announced. Work on Discussion 12.

Take EXAM 2, covering chapters 9 to 11 and topics discussed in class, on November 19.

Thanksgiving Break: 11/21-11/25

Week 13: Monday, 11/26 to Sunday, 12/2: Topics to be announced.

Week 14: Monday, 12/3 to Sunday, 12/9: Topics to be announced.

Take Post-Test for Outcome Assessment.

Take FINAL COMPREHENSIVE-Make-Up EXAM, covering chapters and topics covered by exams 1 & 2, on December 10 (Final Grade available to you on December 13)