



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

Fall 2013

WEB ENHANCED COURSE SYLLABUS

Professor: R.N. Singh, Ph. D., Regents Professor of Sociology & CJ

Classes meet on Tues & Thurs, 2: to 3:15 PM in SS 304

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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 Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

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

***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) accomplishing the program goals of sociology major at Texas A&M University-Commerce.**

***Specific goals of the course will include:**

- 1. Making sure that after completing our or transferred sociology courses you already 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. Develop 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 (SOC 1301: Introduction to Sociology; SOC 436: Introduction to sociological theory; SOC 331: Introduction to Social Research; and SOC 332: Methods of Statistical Analysis) played in putting ideas together in sociology electives; and**
- 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 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 weekly discussions and three exams, including a comprehensive final, aimed at assessing learning outcomes (LOR's):**

1. Critique basic concepts/principles of sociology and the sociological perspective in interpreting and analyzing events/issues in human society;
2. Describe various aspects of critical thinking in understanding the major theories and research methods (including data analysis) in sociology explaining various social problems/issues;
3. Identify opportunities for application of the sociological perspective in addressing/solving social problems as well as seeking higher education and careers.

III. Course Description

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF THE COURSE

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

PART A. ANALYZING AND ASSESSING THE CURRICULUM

- ❖ **OUTCOME ASSESSMENT OF OUR SOCIOLOGY MAJOR PROGRAM AT THE UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL**
- ❖ **GOALS OF OUR SOCIOLOGY MAJOR PROGRAM**

- ❖ **Selected Elements and Characteristics of Our Undergraduate Curriculum in Sociology**
- ❖ **Sequence of Required Courses**
- ❖ **Electives Representing Study Fields in Sociology**

- ❖ **Linkages Between & Among Courses**
- ❖ **Planning the Improvement in Our Curriculum**

PART B. 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
 - Metaphysics & Reality
 - Science: Its Scope & Limits
- ✓ 'Liberal' and 'Humanistic' Aspects of Critical Thinking: An Outlook Challenging Inequalities and Injustices
- ✓ Development of Micro and Qualitative Sociology
- ✓ Theoretical Paradigms and Conceptualization
 - ❖ Conflict Theory
 - ❖ Functionalism
 - ❖ Exchange Theory
 - ❖ Symbolic Interactionism

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. Sociology as a Discipline

4. Invitation to Sociology: Relationship between Sociology and Problem Solving

PART C: SOCIOLOGY AS A PROFESSION

A. Teaching

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

B. Research in Sociology

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

C. Practice of Sociology

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

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

Successful Search for a Career

- Planning
- Researching and Assessing the Job Market
- Resume Development
- Successful Interview

STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

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. As this is not an online course, you must ask whatever questions you have in the class. I am looking forward to our interactions in this seminar course.

IV. Course Requirements

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):

I will give three exams in the course as scheduled under the course calendar. Take any 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 and second exams will be given online and final-comprehensive-exam will be given in class on dates given in the calendar at the end of this syllabus. I will be giving you specific study guide for each exam in my classes.

Exams will be closed-book and will consist of essays questions. Class discussions will play a significant role in your performance in exams. So avoid missing classes and take class notes regularly. No make-up exams will be given. 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 (6) 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 (60 Points):

Weekly Discussions On-Line:

I will post 10 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 10 weeks. You will be able to earn up to 5 points (a total of 50 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.

C. Class Attendance and Participation

I will use **50 points** for rewarding class attendance and participation. Procedures and criteria for providing points will be announced in class. A seminar course is not meaningful if students come to class late or miss classes not utilizing opportunities for involvement.

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.

❖ **Special Needs:** 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, TAMU-C, Gee Library 132;
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835; Fax (903) 468-8148.

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.)

Week 1: Monday, 8/26 to Sunday, 9/1: Read Chapters 1 & 2 and work on Discussion 1.

Week 2: Monday, 9/2 to Sunday, 9/8. Read Chapter 3 & work on Discussion 2.

Week 3: Monday, 9/9 to Sunday, 9/15: Read Chapter 4 & work on Discussion 3.

Week 4: Monday, 9/16 to Sunday, 9/22: Read Chapter 5 & work on Discussion 4.

Week 5: Monday, 9/23 to Sunday, 9/29: Read Chapters 6 & 7 & work on Discussion 5.

Week 6: Monday, 9/30 to Sunday, 10/6: Read Chapter 8 & work on Discussion 6.

Take EXAM 1, covering chapters 1 to 8, online on Monday, October 7.

Week 7: Monday, 10/7 to Sunday, 10/13: Read Chapter 9 & work on Discussion 7.

Week 8: Monday, 10/14 to Sunday, 10/20: Read Chapter 10 & work on Discussion 8. Take practice Quiz 6 on Chapter 10.

Week 9: Monday, 10/21 to Sunday, 10/27: Read Chapters 11 and AFTERWORD & work on Discussion 9.

Week 10: Monday, 10/28 to Sunday, 11/3: Topics to be announced. Work on Discussion 10.

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

Week 12: Monday, 11/11 to Sunday, 11/17: Topics to be announced. Work on Discussion 12.

Take EXAM 2, covering chapters 9 to 11 and topics discussed in class, on Monday, November 18.

Week 13: 11/18 to 11/24: To be announced.

Thanksgiving

Week 14: Monday, 12/8 to Sunday, 12/8: Topics to be announced.

Take FINAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAM, covering selected topics announced in classes on Monday, December 9

(Final Grade available to you on December 10)