COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:

Required Readings (given as handout):


McKinney, Kathleen & Laura Reed. 2007. “Profile of an engaged sociology major.” Teaching Sociology 35: 77-84.


Suggested Readings:

(Students are encouraged to obtain copies of books in the following subject areas – introduction to sociology, sociological theory, and social research)

Course Description:

This course will be conducted predominately by discussions, group activities, and involve explorations of what one can do with a sociology degree. Through readings, discussions and class participation this class will engage in bringing all that has been learned (or that which students were expected to learn) about sociology together, and to cement a foundation of sociological knowledge possessed by each student. Students will be expected to be engaging and
to demonstrate their level of sociological knowledge by using the jargon and displaying a degree of sociological professionalism.

This description of the course represents the desire of the professor. Perhaps Thomas Schmid said it best when he pinned these words: "In an ideal, fully integrated sociological curriculum, a capstone would bring to fruition years of disciplined study and practice, offering every student the opportunities to synthesize prior knowledge, [and] engage in free-flowing sociological discourse" (1993:219).

Course Goals:
This class is structured to be the last class sociology majors will take or is taking. It has been said that a major should have “…a beginning, middle, and an end – each contributing in a different way to the overall aim of the major” (Association of America Colleges, 1990:9). This course exist so that a student’s growth may be assessed in reference to the level of accrued sociological knowledge, ability to perform critical thinking, the skills of writing across the discipline, and the capability of communicating orally using sociological jargon. Throughout this course and because of its design the student will be expected to “…integrate, synthesize, critique, and apply the concepts, theories, and methods articulated in the sociology curriculum” (W. Smith, Teaching Sociology, 1993, 21(3):250).

This course will assist the student in considering or developing a plan for professional employment. A portion of our class time will be spent investigating what one can do with a sociology degree? An introduction of possible levels of employment in the private or public sectors will be reviewed.

In a unique way this course is seen as a capstone, “the end.” “This course endeavors to crystallize students’ knowledge and appreciation of the discipline. [It] provides closure to students’ undergraduate sociology experience, and [it will] assess their understanding of the discipline” (W. Smith, Teaching Sociology, 1993, 21(3):250). This class will be an integrative tool to assist students in framing all they have learned and experienced into what some may call sociology of sociology.

Stated in another manner, this seminar will highlight the historical and early development of the discipline (sociology). It will be an investigation and review of the dominant theoretical paradigms and their connections to the explanations of today's society (ies) in operations. The overarching aim of this seminar or capstone (as is addressed in many departments) class is to draw all that has been presented in various sociology classes into some semblance of order and to introduce the student to the professional realm in which sociology will be applied. Thomas Schmid (1993:219) has stated this idea in this manner: "... 'talking and doing sociology' remain appropriate course guidelines, much of the talk may be about how to talk sociologically, and a typical product of the course may be closer to an awkward sociological assemblage than to an elegant masterpiece. [I]ntegrating students' earlier coursework remains a fundamental mandate, fostering their continuing affiliation with the discipline becomes equally important."

Course Objectives:
The course objectives are constructed based on the course goals, and the techniques employed in the learning outcomes assessment are to assist the student in the formulation of an overall
sociological perspective, and to detect how the student anticipate using his/her degree in sociology.

The course objectives relate or connect to several course goals:

1. Students are to possess at least an intermediate (average) amount of sociological knowledge. Thus the student should be familiar with the majority of the sociological concepts that exist in most introductory textbooks.
   a. To measure this objective students will be expected to use the sociological concepts and jargon during class discussions
   b. To measure this objective students will be expected to perform at least in an average manner (70 points or better) on a multiple choice exam to be administered during this course

2. Students should be able to describe the historical social development of sociology; to be familiar enough with the sociological paradigms to the point that they can participate in a class discussion about them; to be able to differentiate between sociology and other social sciences; to be able to present either in written or oral form how (why) he/she knows that sociology is a science.
   a. During the class there will be graded discussions on various sociological concepts and the theoretical paradigms in sociology
   b. There will be in-class writing assignments that will allow students to express their thoughts and demonstrate their skills concerning what sociology is or is not and how it differs from the other social sciences
   c. Students will maintain a journal which will contain an assortment of assignments developed to facilitate the measurement of the students’ knowledge of why sociology is viewed as a science

3. The level of students’ appreciation for the research done by sociologists will be examined; in this process students will be expected to have a working knowledge of the relationship between theoretical and methodological issues confronted by the sociologist; students are expected to be able to formulate a research project from beginning to end
   a. Students will engage in reading several research articles and will be graded on how well they can interpret the findings and how well they can explain the various parts of a research article
   b. Students will be grouped and be responsible for formulating a research project, describing all the parts of the project before the class (this will be a group project thus a group grade), this project must incorporate appropriate theory and method; there will also be an individual grade
   c. Each student will write a research paper and present it to the class, there will be a grade for the research paper and grade for the presentation; this paper must be written using the American Sociological Association (ASA) style of writing
4. Students will become familiar and investigate what professional employment exists for sociology majors
   a. Students will participate in reading assigned research articles pertaining to sociology majors and careers; after reading designated material students will be graded on their level of participation in class discussion pertaining to the assigned readings
   b. Each students will contribute to the development of a list of professional positions or occupations which are occupied by people with a sociology degree

5. Acquaint students with the real world of securing professional employment with a sociology degree
   a. Students will develop/compose a resume which will be graded
   b. Students will review and discuss information about interviewing, writing letters of reference, and dressing for success; assignment and activities will exist to measure how well students handle or determine how well students perform these tasks

**Student Learning Outcomes:**
Student Learning Outcomes reflect what the student ought to accomplish or be able to perform after completing this course. The student learning outcomes reflect the course goals and course objectives.

1. Students will participate in class discussions where they will be able to demonstrate their level of sociological jargon usage and understanding of the sociological concepts.
2. Students will be able to demonstrate their level of sociological knowledge/information by successfully achieving more than 80% of the possible scoring on an objective and essay type exams.
3. Students will become familiar with possible/available positions of employment for their degree by collecting professional employment announcements for which a person with their degree/major may qualify.
4. Students will develop a professional looking resume, cover letter, and letter of reference for this course which may also be used outside of this course.
5. Students will demonstrate their level of developing, constructing, and conducting a research project by doing so for this class. This learning outcome will be achieved through a group format which will also introduce and familiarize the students with how to accomplish task while working in a group.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments**
**Course Requirements & Assignments**

(1) Discussion:
During this course students will be encouraged to practice their speaking, sharing and demonstrating their gained knowledge of sociology. One way this will be accomplished is through graded discussions. Students will be expected to share comments on all reading assignments discussed in class.

- Every graded discussion will be worth seven (7) points
- There will be fifteen (17) graded discussions
- It will be possible for a student to make one hundred five (119) points from participating in graded discussions
- Absence or missing graded discussions for any reasons cannot be made-up

(2) Writing:
Students will engage in a number of writing exercises, this too will permit them to demonstrate their knowledge of sociology and to practice their skills of writing clear ideas and developing content. Writing will be done in many forms and the points or grades achievable will vary as described.

- Several in-class writing exercises will occur
- Each writing exercise connected to a discussion will be worth fifteen (15) points
- There will be four (4) in-class writings connected to four class discussions
- It will be possible to earn sixty (60) points from in-class writings
- Missed writing exercise cannot be made up

(3) Testing:
There will be one graded test which will be composed of multiple choice and essay. This test will be over the review of sociological material covered from the three books that students are required to secure for the duration of this class.

- The multiple choice test will be composed of one hundred items/questions; the test will be worth 100 points
- The essay test will be composed of at least 5 questions (the number of essay questions may vary); the essay must be written in a Blue Book; this test will be worth 100 points

(4) Group Research Project:
Students will be organized into several groups. Each group will develop a research project (the research project will not be conducted, but it must cover details or portray every aspect of a research project). The description of this assignment will be explained later before its due date.

- This assignment will be worth seventy (100) points

(5) Resume, Cover Letter, & Letter of Reference:
Each student will develop a resume, cover letter and letter of reference so that they will have a rather well organized and useable resume upon graduation. Students will obtain some practice in the development of a resume and the other items that usually accompany it. Each student will develop a draft of each of these items to be reviewed by the professor, afterward they will be returned to students for corrections and suggested changes. Students will make changes then turn in this corrected assignment a second time. It is at that point which the assignment will be graded.

- This assignment will be worth 50 points as identified here
(6) Research Paper:
This assignment will allow students to continue demonstrating their ability to construct a senior quality research paper. Students will demonstrate their skills in conceiving a thought and following it through to completion. Each student must use the ASA style of writing and citation. The format for this assignment will be presented by the professor before the assignment is initiated.
- The research paper assignment will be worth 70 points.

(7) Job/Position Journal:
It is essential that students become familiar with what types of professional employment they can anticipate obtaining. Students will use this assignment to gather an idea of possible employment venues after graduation.
- Each student must post at least 10 position announcements in their journal
- Each posting will be worth 10 points; this assignment will be worth 100 total points
- The description of the needed information to be gained will be given out by the professor before the due date of this assignment.

Grading
Course Possible Points:
1. Class graded discussion 17 @ 7 pts. each 119pts.
2. In-class writing connected to grade discussion 4 @ 15 pts. each 60pts.
3. Test (150pts)
   - Multiple choice test over introductory sociology, theory, and research methods 100pts.
   - Essay Test (over same information) 100pts.
4. Group Research Project 100pts.
5. Resume, Cover Letter, & Letter of Reference (50pts)
   - Resume 30pts.
   - Cover letter 10pts.
   - Letter of reference 10pts.
7. Job/Position Journal 100pts.

Total Possible Points 699pts.

The following grade scale will be used:
A = 699 – 625 pts.
B = 624 – 574 pts.
C = 573 – 524 pts.
D = 523 – 473 pts.
F = 472 and below
COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement:

**Contact of Professor:**
Student wishing to contact the Professor should visit his office during the stated office hours or make an appointment. Students may also contact the Professor using the office telephone number or the email, both are provided on the first page of this class syllabus.

**Research Assistance:**
For research assistance, students should contact: Ms. Emily Witsell Reference Librarian at James G. Gee Library Room 218; 903-886-5719 emily.witsell@tamuc.edu; http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/library

*Extra Credit Points:*
Extra credit points may be earned by student participating in a number of events offered by the Career Development Office. A special handout will be distributed to students. Students are encouraged to take advantage of some of the offerings or services provided by the Career Development Office.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

**Course Specific Procedures:**

**Class Policy:**
Class attendance and participation are expected, especially for this class, senior seminar. I do not plan to build attendance into the class requirements at this point, and hope no need will arise to so. Students are expected to be present and ready to contribute when the class is in session.

Tardiness is reacted to in an unfavorably manner. Students will not be permitted to enter the class after the professor has initiated the focus for that class period. This goes for both classes, whether the professor is at Navarro or Commerce. Early departure from the classroom will be dealt with accordingly.

Telephone and pagers must be turned off unless you work for some type of emergency agency (medical or law enforcement, etc.).

This department has a strong policy and a low tolerance for cheating. Plagiarism is disliked and treated very seriously. Texas A&M University-Commerce does not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Conduct that violates generally accepted standards of academic honesty is defined as academic dishonesty. “Academic dishonesty” includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation of stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one’s own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material. Sites that address plagiarism and how to avoid it: http://www.plagiarism.org or http://www.unc.edu/depts/scweb/handouts/plagiarism.html.

Students should be doing everything within their power to become better equipped to secure employment within the field, and therefore should maintain a good attitude and desire to learn as much as possible as they prepare to graduate from this university.

**The professor will communicate with students through using the individual email address through the MyLeo system. Students should make sure they frequently check this email address.**

A student may drop a course by logging into their MyLeo account and clicking on the hyperlink labeled ‘Drop a Class’ from among those choices found under the MyLeo section of the Web page.
It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of the rules or policies relating to withdrawal or “X.” You are encouraged to follow the appropriate procedures of the university as they relate to this matter. I will be as helpful and understanding where possible, but please be aware that this professor does not like to give an incomplete as a grade.

**University Specific Procedures:**

**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

**Student Conduct**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

**COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 14, 2014</td>
<td>Introduction of Class Requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review of Class Syllabus</td>
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<td>&quot;Writing Exercise &amp; Discussion on Definition &amp; Focus of Sociology&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 16, 2014</td>
<td>Administer Sociology Survey Examination</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 21, 2014</td>
<td>Assigned Research Articles to be Discussed</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 23, 2014</td>
<td>Assigned Research Article to be Discussed</td>
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<td>Comment on the Position Journal Assignment</td>
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January 28, 2014  Assigned Research Articles to be Discussed

January 30, 2014  Assigned Research Articles to be Discussed
McKinney, Kathleen & Laura Reed. 2007. “Profile of an engaged sociology major.” *Teaching Sociology* 35:77-84.

February 4, 2014  Writing and Discussion Assignments over the three books
(introductory text, discussion grade)

February 6, 2014  Continuation of focus on Core courses and information gained
(introductory text, writing/discussion grade)

February 11, 2014  Continuation of focus on Core courses and information gained
(theory, discussion grade)

February 13, 2014  Continuation of focus on Core courses and information gained
(theory, writing/discussion grade)

February 18, 2014  Discuss Group Project, Formation of Groups

February 20, 2014  No Class

February 25, 2014  Continuation of focus on Core courses and information gained
(research methods, discussion grade)

February 27, 2014  Conclusion of focus on Core courses and information gained
(research methods, writing/discussion grade)

March 4, 2014  Graded Test over Introductory, Theory, Research Methods areas
(Objective Exam)

March 6, 2014  Graded Test over Introductory, Theory, Research Methods areas
(Essay Exam)

March 10-14, 2014  Spring Break – No Classes

March 18, 2014  Comment the Group Assignment for formulating a Research Project
Comment on Research conducted by Sociologists
Basic, Applied & Evaluative Research
Peer Reviewed & Scholarly Publications
March 20, 2014  Students will have an open class to work on their Research Project

March 25, 2014  Students present Group Research Project

March 27, 2014  Students present Group Research Project

April 1, 2014  Students present Group Research Project

April 3, 2014  Students present Group Research Project

Comment on Socialization of the Profession
Sociological Associations
Professional Ethics

April 8, 2014  Discuss the following Reading Assignments:

April 10, 2014  Discuss the following Reading Assignments:

April 15, 2014  First draft of Resume, Cover Letter, & Letter of Reference Due
Address Interviewing & Dressing for Success

April 17, 2014  No Class

April 22, 2014  Research Paper Due
Return Reviewed Resume, Cover Letter, & Letter of Reference

April 24, 2014  Open

April 29, 2014  Job/Position Journal due (student share, discuss with class)
Final copy of Resume due for grading

May 1, 2014  Administer Sociology Survey Exam

May 6, 2014  Open