Introduction to Sociology  
SOC 1100-02

Sociology is literally “the study of society,” but in practice sociologists study many things. Society is vast—full of diverse individuals, groups, institutions, interactions, and problems. This course will introduce you to this large field by focusing on a select number of social issues, giving you a sample of the different kinds of theoretical perspectives sociologists bring to their research. There will be four parts to the course, centered on four texts that have been chosen for their clarity and their provocative arguments. In each section of the course, the main objective will be to encourage you to think more critically and deeply about yourself and the world around you.

In the first part of the course we will read Harris’s Invitation to the Sociology of Emotions. We will explore the many social dimensions of emotions, including how we identify, experience, manipulate, and express them in social interaction. As we’ll see, emotions are much more than the personal or biological phenomena they are sometimes portrayed as. In particular, Harris highlights the importance of emotional labor as an implicit part of our jobs.

Second, we will focus on what Ritzer calls the “McDonaldization of Society,” the idea that more and more aspects of our lives are being organized by principles oddly reminiscent of the fast food restaurant. You may be surprised at the extent to which these principles permeate your life—such as your education, healthcare, and recreational activities.

In the third part of the course we will turn to a central theme of sociology: inequality. Many sociologists study the causes and consequences of the disparities (e.g., income and wealth) that exist in the U.S. and globally. In their tightly argued book, The Meritocracy Myth, McNamee and Miller challenge the idea that economic success is due primarily to talent and hard work. Instead, they highlight those social factors that are largely out of our control.

Finally, we will conclude with a discussion of religion, an important social force and source of meaning in people’s lives. Sociologists focus on the human rather than divine or supernatural dimensions of this topic. In Invitation to the Sociology of Religion, Zuckerman provides a succinct overview of sociology and then analyzes the beliefs and practices of various religions in the U.S. and globally.

Course Requirements

Assigned readings should be completed before class meetings in order to facilitate your own education as well as your classmates’. Students will be expected to actively participate in class and to take careful notes. A positive attitude and an inquisitive mind are also highly recommended. I will follow a traditional grading scale (90-100% = A, 80-89% = B, 70-79% = C, 60-69 = D, 0-59 = F), with “minus” and “plus” grades assigned to those within 3% of the borders (e.g., 87-89.9 = B+). Exams will consist of multiple choice and short essay questions. The written assignments and class participation will be explained in class (and on the course website, if necessary). Scores will be weighted as follows:
Four exams 90%
Written assignments and class participation 10%

Readings

There are four main texts for this course. Each can be obtained through the SLU bookstore or checked out (for three hours at a time) from the Reserve Room in Pius Library. Royalties (if any) from course sales of my book will be donated back to SLU.

*Invitation to the Sociology of Emotions*, by Scott Harris
*The McDonaldization of Society (8th Edition)*, by George Ritzer
*The Meritocracy Myth (3rd Edition)*, by McNamee and Miller
*Invitation to the Sociology of Religion*, by Phil Zuckerman

Course Website (e-reserves)

Some documents (such as instructions for short assignments) will be placed online via Pius Library. Go to [http://libraries.slu.edu/](http://libraries.slu.edu/) and then click on “course reserves,” and then “electronic reserves.” Search for my name; then enter the password (“Intro”) for our course.

Timetable for Topics, Readings, and Exams

**Part I. Emotions and Social Interaction — Read Harris**

8/24 Introduction to Course

8/26 What Are Emotions?
Read ch. 1

8/28 Emotion Norms
Read ch. 2, pages 16-29

8/31 Emotional Deviance
Read ch. 2, pages 29-34

9/2 Dramaturgy and Social Interaction
No new readings

9/4 Emotion Management
Read ch. 3

9/7 **No class — MLK Holiday**

9/9 Exchange Theory and Emotions
Read ch. 4

9/11 Emotional Labor
Read ch. 5, pages 74-84

9/14 Emotional Labor (continued)
Read ch. 5, pages 85-95

9/16 Identifying Feelings
Read ch. 6, pages 98-105

9/18 Identifying Feelings (continued)
Read ch. 6, pages 105-114

9/21 Review

9/23 First Exam

Part II. McDonaldization — Read Ritzer

9/25 Introduction to McDonaldization
Read ch. 1

9/28 Theoretical Background and Precursors
Read ch. 2

9/30 Efficiency
Read pp. 57-73 and 101-105

10/2 Calculability
Read pp. 73-78 and 105-114

10/5 Predictability
Read pp. 79-89 and 115-120

10/7 Control
Read pp. 89-100 and 120-131

10/9 Irrationality of Rationality
Read ch. 7

10/12 Dealing with McD
Read ch. 8

10/14 Review

10/16 Second Exam

10/19 Fall break

Part III. Inequality — Read McNamee and Miller

10/21 Introduction to the Meritocracy Myth
Read ch. 1
10/23  The Case for Merit  
Read ch. 2

10/26  Inheritance  
Read ch. 3

10/28  Social and Cultural Capital  
Read ch. 4

10/30  Education  
Read ch. 5

11/2  Luck (Right Time, Right Place)  
Read ch. 6

11/4  Racism  
Read ch. 8 (pp. 179-191)

11/6  Sexism and Other Forms of Discrimination  
Read ch. 8 (pp. 191-211)

11/9  Growing Inequality (and what to do about it)  
Read ch. 9

11/11  Review

11/13  Third Exam

Part IV.  Religion — Read Zuckerman

11/16  Sociological Motifs  
Skim Introduction and read ch. 1

11/18  Time and Place  
Read ch. 2

11/20  Religion Is Socially Learned  
Read ch. 3

11/23  Cults vs. Religions  
Read ch. 4

11/25-27  Thanksgiving

11/30  Social Life Affects Religion  
Read ch. 5
Religion Affects Social Life
Read ch. 6

The Matter of Belief; The Promise and Perils of Sociology
Read ch. 7

Course overview; Review for exam

Fourth exam — 12:00-1:00pm
This exam is the same length as the first three. Sixty minutes is the limit.

Other Course Policies

Make-up Exams, Late Work, and Extra Credit. Students should make every effort to take exams with the rest of the class; exceptions will be made only in extreme situations. Similarly, assignments should be turned in on time except in circumstances beyond the student’s control; unexcused late assignments will be marked down. Extra credit may be offered to the entire class; however, to be fair it cannot be offered to a single student who wishes to improve his or her grade.

Cell Phones, Laptop Computers, and Related Devices. Please do not use cell phones in the classroom. Make sure all ringing, beeping, and similarly distracting devices are turned off or are on silent mode before entering class. Laptop computers may be used in class but only for taking notes (and not for games, surfing the web, or chatting). Please be respectful of your classmates and instructor, and assist our combined efforts to create a positive learning environment.

Syllabus Changes. This syllabus may need to be changed throughout the semester to accommodate unanticipated events. If this occurs, the instructor will make every effort to give students reasonable notice of the changes.

Academic Integrity. Academic integrity is honest, truthful, and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. Acts of falsehhood, deceit, and dishonesty undermine SLU’s mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern. The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy was adopted in Spring 2015, and can be accessed on the Provost’s Office website at: http://www.slu.edu/Documents/provost/academic_affairs/University-wide%20Academic%20Integrity%20Policy%20FINAL%205-26-15.pdf. Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has adopted its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites. All SLU students are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions, and appeals. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program, or the Dean/Director of the College, School or Center in which your program is housed.

Student Success Center. In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center, a one-stop shop, which assists students with academic and career related services, is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331) and the School of Nursing (Suite, 114). Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about (a) course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor, (b) university-level support (e.g., tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, academic coaching, career services, and/or facets of curriculum planning) by visiting the Student Success Center or by going to http://www.slu.edu/student-success-center.

Disability Services Academic Accommodations. Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services, located within the Student Success Center, at Disability_services@slu.edu or 314.977.3484 to schedule an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email and Banner.

Title IX. Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU’s Title IX coordinator, Anna R. Kratky (DuBourg Hall, room 36; akratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886) and share the basic fact of your experience with her. The Title IX coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus. If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK. To view SLU’s sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web address: http://www.slu.edu/general-counsel-home/office-of-institutional-equity-and-diversity/sexual-misconduct-policy www.slu.edu/here4you