**Unit Two  
Building Blocks: The Self in Society**

**Topic 1: Culture**

**Readings:**

1. Ch. 2 – Culture and Society in *Sociology* by Barkan (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)
2. Read article *Body Ritual Among the Nacirema* by Horace Miner at: <https://www.msu.edu/~jdowell/miner.html> (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

**Video:**

Watch Ted Talk video on endangered cultures at:  
 <http://www.ted.com/talks/wade_davis_on_endangered_cultures.html> (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

**Discussion:**

Respond to at least two of the following discussion topics, and reply to at least two other student responses, following the assessment guidelines posted in the Course Orientation module.

**Topic 1**: After reading “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema,” discuss what we can learn about ethnocentrism and cultural relativity from this article. Possible directions you could take in your comments include: How did the article lead you to feel about your own culture? How did the author’s approach help you to be less ethnocentric? Are there other aspects of our culture that we could examine in a similar way? Are there elements of our culture that might strike an outsider as positive, negative, baffling, or odd, and why? How could the article help you when you encounter cultures other than your own? Does the article reinforce the importance of cultural relativism? (Keep in mind that culture consists of such elements as language, beliefs, values, norms, and behaviors.)  (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

**Topic 2:** I’d like you to discuss cultural diversity and the elements of culture. Have you ever visited another culture (this could be another country, or a subculture within your native country)? How did the values, norms, rituals, language, beliefs, symbols and artifacts differ from your own? How were they similar? If you have never visited another culture, answer the previous questions based on any experience you’ve had in meeting someone from another culture. How did you feel about these differences? Refer to textbook material on the elements of culture and cultural diversity. (If you’ve had no experience visiting another culture or meeting people from another culture, you can respond by theorizing about how the lack of exposure to diversity might have impacted you, and discussing what you learned about cultural elements and diversity from the textbook.) (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

**Topic 3:** Discuss your reactions to the video on endangered culture, and draw connections to the concepts and theories presented in Chapter 2. (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

**Topic 2: Socialization**

**Readings:**

Ch. 3, Sections 1-4 – Socialization in *Sociology* by Barkan (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

**Video:**

Watch *Secrets of the Wild Child* in six parts at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEnkY2iaKis>  
 -OR-  
Read transcript of *Secrets of the Wild Child* at: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/transcripts/2112gchild.html> (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

**Discussion:**

Respond to the following discussion topics, and reply to at least two other students, following the assessment guidelines posted in the Course Orientation module.

**Topic 1**: How has your own socialization contributed to who you are? Demonstrate an understanding of the theories of socialization described in the text.  (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

**Topic 2:** What did you observe about the importance of socialization in making us human from reading the transcript or watching the video about Genie? How does this relate to the textbook and other course material on the importance of socialization? (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

**Topic 3: Social Structure and Social Interaction**

**Reading:**

Ch. 3, Section 5 – Social Interaction in *Sociology* by Barkan (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

**Website:**

Visit the website about the Zimbardo prison experiment at: <http://prisonexp.org/> (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

**Discussion:**

Respond to at least two of the following discussion topics, and reply to at least two other students, following the assessment guidelines posted in the Course Orientation module.

**Topic 1:** What are the types of role conflict or strain you experience, and what does the conflict involve? Is there anything you could do to decrease the amount of role conflict and strain in your life? In your response, be sure to make connections to concepts, terminology, and examples presented in the lecture and textbook.  (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)  
  
**Topic 2:** Have you ever violated one of the everyday rules of social interaction? (I’m not asking you to confess to committing crimes – the everyday rules are the kind that dramaturgy and ethnomethodology study.). If so, what were the results? If not, why do you think you haven’t violated any rules? in your response, be sure to make connections to concepts, terminology, and examples presented in the lecture and textbook.  (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

**Topic 3**: What did you observe about the impact of occupying a status and playing a role from visiting the website about the Zimbardo prison experiment? How does this relate to the sociological and individualistic perspectives that we studied in Week 1? Incorporate lecture and textbook material. (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

**Topic 4: Groups**

**Reading:**

Ch. 4 – Groups and Organizations in *Sociology* by Barkan (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

**Discussion:**

Respond to at least two of the following discussion topics, and reply to at least two other students, following the assessment guidelines posted in the Course Orientation module.

**Topic 1**: Think of a bureaucracy that you have dealt with recently. State the nature of your business or goal (why did you deal with it?), describe the outcome, and indicate whether or not you were satisfied with the end result. Using the terminology and concepts from the text describing the characteristics of a bureaucracy, discuss the characteristics of the bureaucracy that were most helpful in getting something done, what characteristics made it more difficult, and how it could change its rules or policies to make it easier for you or others to accomplish goals. (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

**Topic 2**: Barkan, on p. 82-83, Section 2.3 of Ch. 4, describes an experiment conducted by Milgram. This experiment is very well known among social scientists, both for its disturbing results, and for the way in which many of the subjects were traumatized by their experience. The following are two questions related to the Milgram study that you might want to consider (you may choose one or both to discuss): a) How do you think you would have responded if you had been a subject in this research, and why do you feel that way? Rather than focusing on your internal characteristics, think about external social forces that might influence you to respond one way or another. b) Milgram conducted his research in the early 1960s. Do you believe the results would be different today? What social forces have changed or stayed the same that might influence the results?  (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

**Topic 3:** Choose a secondary group that you belong to. Describe the group, and what makes it a secondary group. Discuss the leadership in the group, and relate your discussion to the concepts about leadership presented in the textbook.(CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

**Application Essay:**

Submit an essay on the following topic, following the assessment guidelines posted in the Course Orientation module. The essay should include an introduction, a well-developed body paragraph for each part, and a conclusion. (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

Five important agents of socialization are family, school, religion, peers, and media. In this course we have also studied the impact of social structure, concepts related to social structure, and groups. This is a three part assignment. Complete **ALL THREE** parts as follows:

1. Choose one of the agents of socialization, and analyze the impact of this agent on your own life. Be specific about the ways in which who you are, what you do, what you believe, and what you value may have been influenced by this agent. Explain and illustrate material from the text and lecture.
2. Choose one of the social structures of which you are a part (for example, family, school, job, etc.), and discuss the impact of belonging to this structure on your behavior. Be sure to refer to the statuses you occupy and the accompanying roles that you play, and how these specifically influence you as you go through your day. Explain and illustrate material from the text and lecture.
3. Discuss how groups (for example, primary groups, secondary groups, reference groups, social networks, electronic communities, bureaucracies) have had an impact on your life. Describe and illustrate material from the text and lecture.

**Topic 5: Deviance**

**Reading:**

Ch. 5 – Deviance, Crime, and Social Control in *Sociology* by Barkan (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

**Websites:**

Visit the following two websites and look around at the topics that you find interesting (try to spend about an hour at each site): (CO1, CO4, MO4, MO5)

Uniform Crime Reports: <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr>

Bureau of Justice Statistics: <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/>

**Discussion:**

Respond to at least two of the following discussion topics, and reply to at least two other students, following the assessment guidelines posted in the Course Orientation module.

**Topic 1:** Share with the class something that you learned while visiting the assigned websites. Discuss what you found interesting about the information, and relate what you learned to the textbook and/or lecture. (CO1, CO4, CO5,MO3, MO4, MO5)

**Topic 2:** According to sociologists, what problems in society need to be addressed in order to reduce crime? Which approaches do you agree with, which do you disagree with, and why? Refer to text and lecture material.  (CO1, CO4, CO5, MO5, MO19)

**Topic 3**: In the lecture, four prominent theories explaining deviant behavior were presented. Think about the people you’ve known or observed engaging in deviant behavior, and discuss how each of the theories might help you to understand their behavior. Which theory do you believe best explains the behavior, and why? (CO1, CO4, MO5)

**Exam**:

Take exam over Unit 2, following the assessment guidelines posted in the Course Orientation module. (CO1, CO4, CO5, MO4, MO5, MO19)