**Introduction to Sociology**

**Number of credits**

**Quarter**

Instructor:

Office Hours:

Office Phone:

Email:

**COMMUNICATION:**

  Of course, it is very important that you learn how to communicate with the instructor.  This includes sending messages or emails with questions and comments, as well as submitting assignments.    [Instructors provide information for emails and messages based on addresses and the LMS being used. Expectations for timing of responses should also be specified.]

**PREREQUISITES:**

There are no prerequisites in terms of courses that you have taken prior to this one. However, strong reading and writing skills, good time management and motivation, and adequate computer skills will be important to your success.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Sociology is the study of social groups, structures, processes, institutions, and events. This course will focus on understanding and applying the sociological perspective, which stresses the importance of the impact of social forces external to the individual in shaping people’s lives and experiences. This idea that we are all profoundly affected by the society in which we live is the guiding light of sociology. Sociologists also study the ways in which people, as they interact, shape their social systems. Topics studied will include socialization, social interaction, culture, groups, social structure, deviance, social inequality, social class, race, gender, institutions (political, economic, educational, family, and religious), collective behavior and social change. Students will be asked to learn the basic concepts, theories, and perspectives of sociology, to see how these operate in terms of social processes, structures, and events, and to apply this knowledge to better understand the social world.

**GLOBAL OBJECTIVES:**

* Demonstrate a culturally relative approach
* Explore approaches used to respond to people’s experiences in a variety of cultures
* Compare and contrast solutions to social problems employed in your own society to those used in other societies

**COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

* Explain the basic concepts and theories of the field of sociology, and apply them to yourself and other people.
* Distinguish between the sociological perspective and the individualistic perspective, and specify the different ways in which you understand people and society based on the perspective you are using.
* Identify, explain, and apply the major sociological theoretical perspectives – conflict, functionalist, symbolic interactionist.
* Discuss the impact of a variety of social forces (including culture, socialization, groups, inequality, institutions, deviance, and social change), and explain how your own life and the lives of others are influenced by them.
* Question the usefulness of understandings of people and society based on your own personal experience, media portrayals, or “conventional wisdom,” and locate valid information about people and society.
* Develop an approach based on the sociological perspective to evaluate and constructively critique social institutions and policies, and explore solutions.

**REQUIRED TEXTS/MATERIALS:**

The title of the required textbook is ***Sociology: Understanding and Changing the Social World***, by Steven Barkan, brief edition, version 1.1. The text is available at Flatworldknowledge.com, with many low-cost options for students.

The book is easy to find, but before you do anything else, I suggest that you go to <http://www.flatworldknowledge.com/student-faqs> to get all the information you need about how to find the book, how to register (you just need an email address and a password), and what your options are.

After you register at the site [http://www.flatworldknowledge.com](http://www.flatworldknowledge.com/) , you can find our class by typing your instructor’s name in the Find Your Class box, clicking on Enter, then clicking on the class name.

We will also be reading *There Are No Children Here*, by Alex Kotlowitz, published by Anchor Books in 1991. This is not a textbook, and it is not written by a sociologist. Instead, it is a true account, written by a journalist, of the lives of two boys growing up in a Chicago housing project. As we learn about their lives, and the lives of their family and friends, we have the opportunity to apply sociological concepts and theories to real people, as well as to learn to care about people and places that may be unfamiliar to us.  This book is readily available, both used and new, at Amazon.com and other booksellers.  You won't need to get it until about 4 weeks into the course.

**MINIMUM TECHNICAL SKILLS REQUIRED:**

**Technical**

* Access to a computer (at home, school, or work) which you can use for extended periods of time.
* Broadband internet access (cable modem, DSL, or other high speed).
* Firefox 3.0 or later or Internet Explorer 7 or later. Safari and Chrome are not compatible with Angel.
* Permissions/ability to install plug-ins or class software (e.g. Adobe Reader or Flash)
* Highly recommended: up-to-date anti-virus software
* Highly recommended: review the System Check nugget on the Angel home page.

**Skills**

To succeed in an online class, you should have the ability to:

* Navigate web sites, including downloading and reading files from web sites
* Download and install software or plug-ins such as Adobe Reader or Flash
* Use email, including attaching and downloading documents/files from emails
* Save files in commonly used word processing formats (.doc, .docx, .rtf)
* Copy and paste text and other items on a computer
* Save and retrieve documents and files on your computer
* Locate information on the internet using search engines

**DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS/ASSESSMENTS:**

**Course Content**

**Unit One: Introduction**

In this unit, we will be introduced to the course and to how sociologists do their research and view their subject.

**Unit Two: Building Blocks**

In this unit, we will learn about the concepts used by sociologists to understand the interrelationships between people and their culture and society.

**Unit Three: Inequality**

In this unit, we will explore the impact of inequalities of social class, race, and gender on individuals, our society, and the global system.

**Unit Four: Institutions**

In this unit, we will study the structure, impact, and operation of, and problems with, some of our society’s major institutions.

**Unit Five: Social Change**

In this unit, we will focus on change in terms of population and urbanization, and the reasons for, mechanisms of, and impacts of social change.  We will take a close look at urban poverty.

**Unit Six: Putting it all Together**

In this concluding unit, we will study the topic of deviance, and draw upon what we have learned in this course to help us to understand our society, our own lives, and the lives of others.

**Assessment and Grading**

Your work in this course will be assessed based on the following:

**1. Learning through Discussion**

Discussion among course members will be assessed weekly. You will be required to post comments in response to discussion topics that will be posted at the beginning of each week, as well as to post a replies to the comments of others. Both the quantity and quality of these comments will be assessed, with a maximum of 20 points available each week. For more information about how to participate in discussion, see the Instructions for Discussion document in the Course Orientation module.

**2. Application assignments**

Application paper assignments will be posted for three of the units we will be covering this quarter. The number of points available for the first two applications will be 25 points each, with 50 points available for the third application, for a total of 100 points available for the quarter. For more information on these assignments, read the document Instructions for Application Essays in the Course Orientation module. These will be your major writing assignments, which will ask you to synthesize and apply what you have learned. You will find the assignments, due dates, and grading criteria in the Course Module document for that week.

**3. Exams**

At the end of each unit, there will be a proctored essay exam. Each exam will consist of three questions that are broad in scope. The answers should be fully developed and demonstrate an understanding of the textbook and other relevant course material. Each question will have 15 points possible, for a total of 45 points possible for each exam.

**Grades**

Your grade in the course is based on the following point distribution\*:

Discussion 220 points  
Application essays 100 points  
Exams 225 points  
---------------------------------------------------------  
Total 545 points

\* The distribution of points for the quarter should be close to that listed above, but may be changed at the instructor's discretion if time constraints and course goals warrant.

To determine your final grades the points earned will be totaled and divided by the number of points possible to arrive at a percentage. The most difficult scale I will use is the one below:

**Grading Scale**

**% GPA % GPA % GPA**

100 4.0 A 85 3.3 B + 70 2.0 C

99 4.0 A 84 3.2 B+ 69 1.9 C-

98 3.9 A 83 3.2 B+ 68 1.8 C-

97 3.9 A 82 3.1 B 67 1.7 C-

96 3.8 A 81 3.1 B 66 1.6 C-

95 3.8 A 80 3.0 B 65 1.5 D+

94 3.7 A- 79 2.9 B 64 1.4 D+

93 3.7 A- 78 2.8 B- 63 1.3 D

92 3.6 A- 77 2.7 B- 62 1.2 D

91 3.6 A- 76 2.6 B- 61 1.1 D

90 3.5 A- 75 2.5 C+ 60 1.0 D

89 3.5 A- 74 2.4 C+ Below 60 F

88 3.4 B+ 73 2.3 C+

87 3.4 B+ 72 2.2 C

86 3.3 B+ 71 2.1 C

**Grading Policies:**

[Instructors will post policies about late work, make-up exams, and extra credit here.]

**Course Resources:**

[Instructors will post phone numbers and web links to technical support, disability support services, writing labs and tutors, library services, and other available campus resources.]