INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY
Sociology 1000:007
Dr. Donna Shai
Fall 2005 MW 1:30-2:45 B 3070
OFFICE HOURS: MW 9:00-10:15 and F 1:30-2:45
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COURSE GOALS

1) To provide students with a knowledge of: a) the basic areas in sociology, and b) the basic theories and/or studies in each area, and the basic research methods of sociology, mainly qualitative.

2) To provide students with fundamental sociological skills including: a) the ability to see the common human problems and dilemmas among groups or social situations very different from one's ordinary life, b) the ability to translate sociological theory and observation to everyday experience, c) the ability to read sociological literature effectively, and d) the ability to write about sociological concepts and issues.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A basic theme in this course is that sociological ideas are not just abstract theories but have applications in our own lives and in the lives of others. We will be reading about growing up in a violent neighborhood in the South Bronx and discuss research about life in a well-to-do suburban neighborhood. We will use the sociological approach to study the tattoo subculture. We will read about and discuss college as a society, using a recent book by Sweet. After discussing some basic tools and techniques in sociology, we will explore the idea of community and business. We then turn to prison life both in the U.S. (film: “The Shawshank Redemption”) and in the “gulag” under Stalin (One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich). We examine the concept of “demoralization” and how it can be used to understand better the survivors of the Tsunami disaster. We will use theories of deviance to understand problematic behavior, including anorexia. Finally we discuss the theory of collective behavior, including riots, panics, and crazes, such as Live Strong plastic bracelets.

EXAMS

Two short papers (30 % each), final (30 %).

TEXTS TO BE PURCHASED:

Canada, Fist, Stick, Knife, Gun: a personal history of violence in America.
Knapp, Drinking: A Love Story.
Sweet, College and Society
COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Regular attendance, two short papers, final

Important Dates
Oct. 5 No class. Work on Paper One
Oct. 10 Paper due on socialization for gender
Nov. 4 No class. Work on Paper Two
Nov. 7 Paper due on obesity
Dec. 12 Study sheet for final exam distributed
Dec. 15 Final 1:30-4:00 in regular classroom (multiple-choice, cumulative)

Please note:
Except for first class, assignments should be done prior to relevant class.

SYLLABUS
Aug 24: Orientation to course; What is Sociology? Getting on webct.

Assignment:
From webct print out all handouts from “course content” and all articles from “electronic reserve” that appear on your syllabus. Print out the material for the entire semester and arrange it in time order in a folder or loose-leaf notebook. Bring the folder or notebook to class each time.

Week One: (Aug. 29, 31)
Citing sources in your papers; The language of books in sociology (webct); Making connections (webct). Some definitions (webct); Three approaches in sociology (webct); How do sociologists know what they know?; AIDS interview (webct); Interviews (webct); Questionnaires (webct); Choose the best sample (webct).

Assignment due:
Sweet, “College, society and the sociological imagination”
“Studying college and society: a field guide”
Start reading Fist, Stick, Knife, Gun.

Week Two: (Sept. 7, 12, 14)
Life histories (“I can read and I can write”) (webct). Participant-observation; Slides of Diane Arbus’s photographs of body decoration and appearance; “Community” (gemeinschaft) (webct); Gemeinschaft and gesellschaft (webct).

Assignment due:
Read “In an oral history…” and “I can read and I can write” (both in webct)
Read Villiquette and Murray, “The new tattoo subculture” (webct).

Week Three (Sept. 19, 21)
“Society” (gesellschaft); Creating a sense of community in business: the cases of Saturn of Devon and Borders in Bryn Mawr; Inalienable possessions; Discuss Fist, Stick, Knife, Gun; Values and norms; Are there norms for cell phone use?; Important definitions (webct).

Assignment due:
Finish reading Fist, Stick, Knife, Gun and reflect on questions for discussion (webct).
Answer questions on gemeinschaft and gesellschaft (webct).
Answer questions on “Inalienable possessions” (webct)
Sweet, “Gender, inequality and college society”
Week Four (Sept. 26, 28, Oct. 3, no class on October 5)
Socialization; The case of violent hazing among girls—“Girls expected game to be rough but not brutal” (webct). The sociology of emotions; Emotional labor; Discuss Paper One; Goffman’s theory of resocialization in total institutions.

Assignment due:
- Read article on violent hazing. Is this a case of socialization gone wrong?
- Write out “Emotional labor” (webct) and be prepared to discuss.

PAPER ONE, DUE IN CLASS OCTOBER 10
Write a short paper (3-4 pages typed double-spaced) about your own gender socialization as a girl/woman or boy/man. What lessons did you learn from your parents, from interacting with your peers, and from your own observations? This paper is intended as an opportunity for you to engage with the course ideas from class and from your assigned readings. Therefore you should demonstrate your familiarity with sociological concepts from the course and from the readings in your discussion. Do not include books and articles, including internet material, from outside the course. All material from your assigned readings must be cited in the style assigned (see Citation Worksheet). A Reference Page must be included.

Week Five (Oct. 10, 12)
Collect papers; Film: The Shawshank Redemption; Study guide on “The Shawshank Redemption” (webct); The Soviet camp system; Discuss One Day in the Life….; Cooley on primary and secondary relations; When you need help, who will come? (webct).

Assignment due:
- Read One Day in the Life…., pp. 1-26 (webct).
- Write out “When you need help, who will come?” (webct)

Week Six (Oct 17,19)
Primary and secondary relations in the suburbs; Physicians, HMOs and patients: from primary to secondary relations; Discuss papers and socialization.

Assignment due:
- “Moral Minimalism” (webct)

Week Seven (Oct 24, 26)
Ritual and popular culture; Fraternity hazing as ritual; Demography and public health; Is smoking a public health issue?; Study guide on Arnett (webct); Environmental racism.

Assignment due:
- See Sociology and modern rituals (webct)
- Read Sweet, “Fraternity hazing…”
- Read Arnett, “Emerging Adulthood” (webct)
- Write out study guide on Arnett (webct)
- Read “Firm suspends plan to put plant in poor community” (webct).

PAPER TWO, DUE IN CLASS NOV. 7
Write a short paper (3-4 pages typed) on the topic “Is obesity a public issue or a personal choice?” Argue both sides of the question. Try to use as many sociological concepts as possible and use ideas from your assigned readings and class material (with the appropriate citations in the style assigned). Do not use references from outside the course. The paper should include a
Week Eight (Oct. 31, Nov. 2)

**Assignment due:**
- Read Goffman’s chapters in *Stigma* (webct)
- Read “The Case of Eunice M.” (webct).
- Read “The Pony Party” (webct)

Week Nine (Nov. 7, 9)
Papers collected; College athletes and exploitation; Demoralization theory; The relevance of “demoralization” to the Tsunami disaster; Deviance: an introduction

**Assignment due:**
- Read “Sinking feeling confirmed by economic data” (webct).
- Read Sweet, “College athletics, cohesion, and exploitation”
- Start reading *Drinking: a Love Story*

Week Ten (Nov. 14, 16, and 21)
Labeling, Neutralization and Strain theories

**Assignment due:**
- Read “Labeling Theory: Howard Becker” (webct)
- Read study guide on neutralization
- Read “Charge is stealing $664, 6000.” (webct)

Week Eleven (Nov. 28, 30)
Film: “City of Dreamers; Dealing with Illegal Immigration.” Identify deviance examples in the film using the three theories discussed; Introduction to collective behavior; LeBon’s theory.

**Assignment due:**
- Read McLorb and Taub, “Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia” (webct).
- Continue reading *Drinking: a Love Story*

Week Twelve (Dec. 5, 7)
Smelser’s theory of collective behavior; The case of the Rhode Island rock concert fire; Quarentelli and Dynes on “emergent norms” in looting; Discuss *Drinking: A Love Story*.

**Assignment due:**
- Read “Concertgoers in shock” (webct)

Dec. 12: Study sheet distributed.

Final Exam (see Important Dates)

COURSE POLICY

1. **Books:** It will be important for you to have your own books and to bring them to class when asked. It is best to purchase texts immediately since the bookstore may not stock them after the initial sales period.
2. **Attendance:** All students are responsible for what is covered in the classroom, for announcements made and for work assigned. It is expected that students will attend all sessions. Since examinations will include material which is neither in the text nor in the library, it is unlikely that a student would be able to do well in the course with frequent absences. Also, attendance and class participation will be taken into consideration in the assigning of grades. Excessive absences will result in lowering your grade by one full letter grade. Excessive is defined as more than 6 absences.

3. **Examinations:** There will be two short papers and a final. Notification of inability to take the final exam must be prior to the exam or within 48 hours.

4. **Grades:** Grades are based on papers, final and class participation. Participation in class may affect your grade by up to 1/2 a grade. Poor attendance will lower your grade (see Attendance). Final grades should be obtained from the Registrar's website.

**Course Guidelines for Grades**

The examinations in this course are the most important factor in determining a student's grade. The following represent the grading criteria which incorporate the official university grade definitions.

**A** is the highest academic grade possible, an honor grade which is reserved for accomplishment that is distinctive and demonstrably outstanding. On examinations, question answers reflect that the student has a superior mastery of course material and a very high degree of understanding. Questions are answered completely and thoughtfully. Not only does the answer reflect the student's thorough familiarity with the material but that he/she can discuss it intelligently, apply it, when asked, to other material, and come up with good examples of his/her own. Any errors are likely to be minor. ("A" students usually participate in class discussions and raise thoughtful questions. When they are not sure of something, they ask for clarification.)

**B** is a grade that denotes achievement considerably above the acceptable standard. Good mastery of course material is evident in examination answers. Student can answer most questions asked but some answers may be incomplete or incorrect, lacking the thorough mastery demonstrated by examinations graded "A".

**C** is a grade which indicates a satisfactory degree of attainment. It is the average grade that may be expected of a student of average ability who gives to the work a reasonable amount of time and effort. This grade implies familiarity with the content of the course and acceptable mastery of course material as evidenced by examination answers. In exams there may be gaps in the student's explanation. He/she may not be completely familiar with all course material but shows an overall comprehension. Sometimes a "C" grade results from a number of careless errors. Major questions may be answered in a way as to imply lack of thorough preparation or mastery.

**D** is a grade given when examinations show a limited understanding of course materials, meeting only the minimum requirements for passing the course. It signifies a quality of
achievement which falls below the average acceptable standard for the course. Student makes serious errors in discussing sociological research. Explanation may be over-generalized, suggesting hasty or careless preparation. The student may have poor attendance resulting in lack of important information needed in exam. The student may not have taken adequate notes or may have borrowed notes which were inadequate in themselves. Important sociological terms may be used incorrectly or student may be unfamiliar with them. While in most cases the student is aware of lack of preparation, occasionally a student is truly surprised that cursory minimum effort or careless work is not sufficient for an average or above-average grade.

F  

Student's examination work does not come up to the minimal standards for the course. Many questions may be left unanswered or are incorrectly answered due to lack of familiarity with material. Student may not have read assigned work, may have read it quickly and not reviewed it sufficiently before examination or may have read and reviewed it but failed to convey that impression. Answers may be disjointed, confused, and/or include irrelevant material. Theory may be totally misunderstood or severely distorted. Parts of ideas may be "made-up" by student to cover lack of familiarity.

**Helpful Hints on Exams**

1. Attend classes regularly. You are responsible for all material presented in class.

2. Read all assignments. Questions will be specific. You will not be able to answer from general knowledge.

3. Answer all questions. Follow directions. Do not assume that there is a choice of question unless that is specifically stated. If there is a choice offered, answer only the question(s) required.

4. Read the question carefully. There may be introductory material. Answer what is specifically asked. Answer all parts of the question. Be as clear, precise and detailed as you can.

5. If you are asked to discuss a concept or to write an essay on a subject, do not be too brief or over-generalize. Never assume that you can leave out crucial information "because the professor knows the article."

6. If you are asked to refer to a concept in an essay, be sure to mention it specifically by name in your discussion.

7. Write legibly. Sometimes a question cannot be graded unless every word can be read. Under these circumstances, your exam will not be graded. An "incomplete" will be given until the exam can be read. The student will be responsible for rectifying the situation before the incomplete period expires and the "N" becomes a "F".

**Guide to Writing Papers**
1. Always follow directions for a written assignment. Complete all parts of the assignment as stated. If you have any questions about it or have problems in carrying it out, do not hesitate to consult with me.

2. Try not to confuse fact and opinion. In order to support your opinions, choose your facts carefully.

3. Be sure your generalizations are sufficiently supported.

4. To avoid accidental plagiarism, you must acknowledge the source of any idea that is not yours. When you find a passage that you want to use, take it down in quotes verbatim (copy every word, every capital letter, and every mark of punctuation exactly as in the original.) You may also paraphrase another’s ideas by changing the words completely and leaving out quotation marks. You still must give a citation. Social science style uses an in-text citation, e.g. (Smith, 1997:33), with a full alphabetical listing at the end of the work entitled References.

5. Do not assume that you can leave out crucial information "because the professor knows the article." You must always give the name of the author whose works you are discussing, and the name of the book from which you are drawing your ideas.

6. If you are asked to discuss concepts, always define them in general. Giving a few examples is usually insufficient.

7. Write in paragraphs. A paragraph is a unit of thought made up of related sentences. The first sentence is indented about five spaces. A new paragraph signals a change in the direction of thought. It is impossible to say how long a paragraph should be, since personal style is important. A very rough rule of thumb would be about 120-150 words. Scholarly essays tend to have longer paragraphs than journalistic ones.

8. Avoid sentence fragments. A fragment is a part of a sentence which cannot stand alone but which begins with a capital letter and ends with a period. The following are some examples: "When the party broke up." "Everyone else going home." "All Americans whether they live in the city or the countryside."

9. Do not use fused sentences or the comma splice (also called "run-on"). Fused sentences are two or more sentences run together without any punctuation. An example is "It was late we went home." Comma splice is the careless linking of two sentences with a comma: "The current was swift, he could not swim to shore."

10. Use the apostrophe to indicate possession, e.g., "Gloria's brother". Use an apostrophe to mark omissions in contracted words: it's, didn't, you're, there's. Do not use the apostrophe with pronouns such as its, ours, or theirs.

11. Proofread your paper and correct mistakes before handing it in. Check for spelling mistakes and "typos". Read each line carefully to check for missing words or unclear references.