

***Foundations in Sociology***  
***Sociology 300***  
**Spring 2013**

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Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11 AM – 12 PM and by appointment

*This syllabus is a contract.* You are responsible for abiding by all policies contained within.

**COURSE OVERVIEW:**

This is a required course for sociology majors. It is designed to provide students with the necessary foundations – theory, methods, analytical skills, and scholarly writing – in preparation for upper-level sociology courses.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

1. To learn how to use your “sociological imagination”
2. To develop critical thinking skills
3. To learn how to conduct a literature review
4. To understand and apply sociological theories to contemporary social problems
5. To become familiar with basic sociological research, including qualitative and quantitative methods
6. To effectively communicate research findings via research papers and public presentations

**READINGS:**

W. Lawrence Neuman: Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, Pearson, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

Peter Kivisto: Key Ideas in Sociology, Sage/Pine Forge Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

Richard Paul & Linda Elder: The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking, Foundation for Critical Thinking, 8<sup>th</sup> edition

Sudhir Venkatesh: Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets, Penguin Press

American Sociological Association: Style Guide, 4<sup>th</sup> edition

Additional readings will be available through the course BlackBoard site.

**COURSE EXPECTATIONS:**

Teaching is a two-way street; I am only as effective as you are engaged. Thus, I have two primary expectations of my students: 1) come to class, and 2) be prepared, attentive and ready to participate.

This is a hands-on class, with little lecture and a lot of “active” learning which *requires* in-class preparation, attention and participation. **Preparation** means critically reading all assigned readings before class, checking Blackboard for any important announcements, and looking over the course schedule to know what we will be doing in class that day.

**Attention** means engaging with the material, with me, and with your fellow students; it does not mean reading the newspaper, texting, sleeping or talking with friends. **Participation** means answering questions when asked of you, raising critical comments of the material, and asking your own questions when you do not understand something.

**COURSE BLACKBOARD SITE:**

The course Blackboard site will contain important announcements, as well as updated syllabus and course schedule. These items will be modified as needed - depending on the pace of the class - so I recommend that you check it daily to make sure you stay current with the readings and topics.

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS:**

- CRITICAL READING (10 percent): Find a journal article and apply Paul and Elder's critical reading skills. **Due January 31.**
- LITERATURE REVIEW (15 percent): Conduct and write-up a review of sociology journal articles of a particular topic you have identified. **Due February 19.**
- THEORY PAPER (15 percent): Apply the theories of three sociologists to a piece of modern research, Sudhir Venkatesh's *Gang Leader for a Day*. **Due March 19.**
- FIELD WORK (15 percent): Select a field site and observe social interactions. Code and write-up your observations. **Due April 2.**
- CENSUS DATA (10 percent): Take a walking tour of your community and observe social conditions. Use American FactFinder to obtain Census data of your community. Compare and contrast these data with the data you obtained from your walking tour. **Due April 9.**
- SURVEY (15 percent): Working in groups, you will create and test a survey instrument. **Due May 2.**
- POSTER PRESENTATION (10 percent)
- ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (10 percent): Note – attendance and participation are 10% of your grade; take them seriously!

## **TOTAL POINTS: 100 points**

The grade scale is as follows:

A = 90-100%      B = 80-89%      C = 70-79%      D = 60-69%      F= below 60%

## **EXTRA CREDIT QUIZZES:**

Approximately every other week, I will post an Extra Credit Quiz on Blackboard. These quizzes will correspond to the lecture and reading material. Quizzes will be posted by 8 AM Friday and must be completed by 5 PM Friday. No exceptions.

There will be 8 quizzes total. Each quiz will be worth  $\frac{1}{4}$  percentage point for a total of 2 extra credit percentage points toward your final grade.

- Quiz 1: January 18
- Quiz 2: February 1
- Quiz 3: February 15
- Quiz 4: March 1
- Quiz 5: March 22
- Quiz 6: April 5
- Quiz 7: April 19
- Quiz 8: May 2

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Some professors do not care if you attend class. I do! This is an intensive class. I will record attendance randomly throughout the semester. Anyone who arrives 15 or more minutes late will be recorded as absent. If you know ahead of time that you have to be late or leave early, notify me the class period before. There are no excused absences. If you are not in class, and I take attendance, you will be marked as absent.

If a student will be absent from classes for a week or more because of an accident, illness, or other emergency, instructors will be notified of the absence only if students or their parents request it through the Division of Student Affairs. [Health Services](#) will not release information about students unless they provide a written request.

Leaves of absence will be granted for volunteer services related to disaster relief in accordance with applicable Illinois statutes or executive orders issued by the State of Illinois in response to emergency situations. To initiate a leave of absence, students should contact their College Dean's office, or the vice provost (or the vice provost's delegate) for any student who has no college affiliation. Following the period of volunteer service, Registration and Records will facilitate reenrollment of the student.

In the case of an absence due to required attendance at a university-sponsored event such as a department trip, performing arts activity, ROTC function, or athletic competition, reasonable attempts shall be made by faculty members to allow the student to make up missed work. Both the sponsoring unit and the student should inform the faculty member as soon as possible in the semester in order for arrangements to be made for completing missed assignments, examinations or other required course work. The student is required to provide each instructor with an official notification in advance of the absence (e.g., a letter from the chair of the sponsoring department, the head of the sponsoring unit, or the coach). Please note that **you** are responsible for obtaining notes and/or completing the work assigned and/or due on the days you are absent.

#### **OFFICE HOURS:**

I encourage office visits to discuss course material, assignments, or anything else you would like to talk about. Please stop by during regular office hours or contact me by email to set up an appointment; I can usually be available within one day of you contacting me. Please be advised, I will not discuss assignment material via email. Such matters must be discussed in person.

#### **MAKE-UP AND LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY:**

Exams and papers are due in class on the due date, **period**. I do not accept any assignments via email. Make-up exams may be granted only in the case of a *university-excused* absence (generally more than 5 days); please consult the Student Affairs website for further information: [http://www.niu.edu/stuaff/StudentResources/student\\_absences.shtml](http://www.niu.edu/stuaff/StudentResources/student_absences.shtml)

#### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Students are considered to have cheated if they copy the work of another during an examination or turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Students are responsible for plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them. Students responsible for, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university.

In short, any form of cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated.

*If you attempt to take credit for someone else's work, without giving that person due credit, you are guilty of plagiarism and will face the consequences described above. If you have questions about how to properly cite someone else's work, simply ask!*

A faculty member has original jurisdiction over any instances of academic misconduct that occur in a course which the faculty member is teaching. The student shall be given the opportunity to resolve the matter in meetings with the faculty member and the department chair. If the facts of the incident are not disputed by the student, the faculty member may elect to resolve the matter at that level by levying a sanction no greater than an F for that course. The faculty member shall notify the student in writing whenever such action is taken, and the [Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct](#) shall receive a copy of the Academic Misconduct Incident Report indicating final disposition of the case, which will be placed in the student's judicial file. In all matters where the charge of academic misconduct is disputed by the student or if the faculty member feels a sanction greater than an F in the course is appropriate (such as repeated offenses or flagrant violations), the faculty member shall refer the matter to the Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct making use of the Academic Misconduct Incident Report. Additional sanctions greater than an F in a course can be levied only through the University Judicial System. With regards to finding the student either responsible or not responsible for his or her action, the ruling of the Judicial Hearing Board shall be binding. In cases where there is either a finding of responsibility or an admission of responsibility by the student, any recommendations by the hearing board regarding the course grade are non-binding on the instructor, who remains solely responsible for assigning a course grade, consistent with the policies set forth in the course syllabus.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY:**

Electronic devices are distracting to me and your fellow students. Just as important, they are distracting to **you**; your brain cannot multi-task as well as you think it can. If you are texting or surfing, you are not listening to valuable course material.

Laptop computers and other electronic devices are not permitted in class unless you have prior approval from me or the Disabilities Resource Center.

Please **turn-off** your electronic devices such cell phones, iPhones, Blackberries or iPads before class starts. Accordingly, you should never engage in any of the following during class time: reading or writing text/email messages; surfing the web; placing or receiving a voice call.

If you are caught engaging in text messaging, any **subsequent** violations of this electronic device policy will result in a 1 percentage point reduction in your final grade; you will not necessarily be given advanced notice of that outcome. Repeated violations of this policy may also result in the student being asked to leave the classroom or being forwarded to the Office of Community Standards & Student Conduct.

**DISABILITIES RESOURCE CENTER:**

A student who believes that reasonable accommodations with respect to course work or other academic requirements may be appropriate in consideration of a disability must (1) provide the required verification of the disability to the Disabilities Resource Center, (2) meet with the Disabilities Resource Center to determine appropriate accommodations, and (3) inform the faculty in charge of the academic activity of the need for accommodation. Students are encouraged to inform the faculty of their requests for accommodations as early as possible in the semester, but must make the requests in a timely enough manner for accommodations to be appropriately considered and reviewed by the university. If contacted by the faculty member, the staff of the Disabilities Resource Center will provide advice about accommodations that may be indicated in the particular case. Students who make requests for reasonable accommodations are expected to follow the policies and procedures of the Disabilities Resource Center in this process, including but not limited to the Student Handbook.

A wide range of services can be obtained by students with disabilities, including housing, transportation, adaptation of printed materials, and advocacy with faculty and staff. Students with disabilities who need such services or want more information should contact the Disabilities Resource Center at 815-753-1303 or visit their website at

<http://niu.edu/disability/>

**COURSE FEE**

There is a nominal course fee in this class. The fee is used to support material stored on SOCQRL computer systems. The Sociology lab (DuSable 222) is available for students in to download and print lecture notes, reserve readings, conduct research for projects, etc. In general, the size of the fee represents the amount of lab use anticipated.

**Schedule of Topics and Readings (subject to change)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments/Notes</b>
<b>Thinking Sociologically</b>			
January 15	Course Introduction	Neuman, Chapter 1	
January 17	Why Sociology?		
January 22	Developing a Sociological Imagination		
January 24-29	Developing Critical Thinking Skills	Paul & Elder, entire guide Via BLACKBOARD: Pager, 2003	Take-home Critical Reading Assignment: <i>Due January 31</i>
<b>Writing Sociologically and Reviewing the Literature</b>			
January 31	Developing a Research Question	Neuman, Chapter 4	
February 5	Reviewing the Literature	Neuman, Chapter 4	Meet in Graham 235
February 7	Writing the Literature Review	Neuman, Chapter 14	Literature Review: <i>Due February 19</i>
<b>Theoretical Foundations</b>			
February 12	Why Theory?	Kivisto, Chapter 1	
February 14-19	Marx and Industrial Society	Kivisto, Chapter 2	
February 21-26	Weber and Democracy	Kivisto, Chapter 3	
February 28 – March 5	Durkheim and Individualism	Kivisto, Chapter 4	Theory Paper: <i>Due March 19</i>
March 7	Film		
<b>Doing Sociological Research</b>			
March 19-21	Qualitative Research I	Neuman, Chapter 11	
March 26	Qualitative Research II	Neuman, Chapter 13	Field work assignment: <i>Due April 2</i>
March 28 – April 2	Quantitative Research I	Neuman, Chapter 9	Census data assignment: <i>Due April 9</i>
April 4-9	Quantitative Research II	Neuman, Chapter 7	
April 11-23	Quantitative Research III	Neuman, Chapter 10	Survey assignment: <i>Due May 2</i>
April 25 – May 2	Survey Presentations		