SOCIODY 100 ONLINE
SUMMER 2010 (CRN 64035)
WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

This is a long document. I suggest that you print it out, read it, and then place it in a notebook.

Syllabus with Instructor Comments

Comment: These comments in italics are the things I would communicate to you verbally if we were in a regular lecture class. Read over the following course description, then I’ll have a few words to say about it.

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.

Comment: Sociology involves thinking about familiar subjects in an unfamiliar way. To be successful, one must be willing to view people and the social world in a new light, and be comfortable with different and sometimes contrary thoughts and ideas. It is useful to attempt to relate to the material, but it could actually make the course more difficult if you try to fit all of the ideas into your own experiences and views. Some may fit, but some may actually challenge and contradict your current views and your personal experience.

Course Outcomes

Explain the basic concepts and theories of the field of sociology.
Comment: Of course, any introductory or survey course of a field asks you to get a handle on the basic concepts and theories. I’m not that interested in having you memorize these things, but rather I hope you will be able to apply them to your life and the lives of others.

Distinguish between the sociological perspective and the individualistic perspective.
Comment: You will be learning in the first week about the difference between the sociological perspective and the individualistic perspective. People ordinarily use the individualistic perspective, which is why sociological thinking may take some getting used to.

Discuss the impact of social forces, and explain how these social forces influence your own life (and other lives).
Comment: Looking at the influence of social forces is the core of thinking like a sociologist.
Explore the ways in which people may influence social structures and processes.

*Comment:* People are shaped by social forces, but are also capable of shaping them. That’s one reason why societies change over time.

Question understandings of people and society based on personal experience, media portrayals, or so called “conventional wisdom.”

*Comment:* If you think about where you get most of your information about people and society, you will find that most often it comes from your own experience, from people you know, from what you learn from the media, or from what “everyone knows.” These sources may or may not provide us with useful information.

Distinguish between scientifically valid and invalid information about people and society presented in the media and over the Internet.

*Comment:* We will study how the scientific method can help us to assess whether the information we receive is worth paying attention to.

Find information to engage in critical analysis of controversies about our society and the world.

*Comment:* There are many issues that are controversial that deal with people and how our society should be organized. We make decisions about these issues based partly on values, which are not right or wrong in any scientific sense. We also need to find information that helps us to evaluate these issues.

Develop a sense of cultural relativism, and an appreciation for those who are different from ourselves.

*Comment:* When we study culture, we will be learning about the meaning of cultural relativism, and why it is important.

Build a greater awareness of how we are affected by connections to global social systems.

*Comment:* While sociologists tend to focus on the study of their own society (in our case, the U.S.A.), the theories and concepts can be useful in understanding societies around the world. We can also learn a great deal about our own society through an examination of other societies.

Develop an approach based on the sociological perspective to evaluate and constructively critique social institutions and policies.

*Comment:* Sociologists tend to be concerned with the extent to which various institutions and policies put some people at a disadvantage, while others benefit. Thus, they are critical of these types of arrangements. My hope is that there will be at least one topic among those we will look at that will interest you, and that you will use some ideas from the sociological perspective to think about how our society could be improved in that area.

Balance an interest in your own personal goals with an interest in goals related to the social systems of our community, nation, and world, and to develop the ability to see the connection between our lives and these systems.

*Comment:* Most likely, you have developed some goals for yourself and your family, and see how your situation will improve if you achieve those goals. Sociologists encourage people to
think beyond their own personal situation as well, and to envision how their situation could improve if they developed and achieved goals that affect larger numbers of people, such as people in their community, their nation, or the world.

Required Books

The textbook for the course is *Sociology: A Down to Earth Approach, Core Concepts*, by James M. Henslin, 4th Edition, published by Pearson, Allyn & Bacon, 2010. This textbook is an engaging introduction to the field of sociology and includes examples and illustrations designed to bring sociological concepts to students in a meaningful way.  

ISBN: 978-0-205-69830-1

Comment: Most of the reading for this course will be from your Henslin textbook and weekly lectures, but I will also require you to do some reading at web sites. Any reading assignments whether from the book or from the web, will be posted in Assignments for the week.

Course Content

Comment: This section gives you a feel for how we will proceed through the material. In my comments, I’ll be connecting each unit to the week we will cover it, and the readings from the text that fit with the unit. At the beginning of each week, I’ll be giving you the reading assignments, writing assignments, and discussion board assignments.

Part One: The Sociological Perspective

In this unit, we will be introduced to the course and to how sociologists do their research and view their subject. We will learn about the concepts used by sociologists to understand the interrelationships between people and their culture and society. The process of socialization and social interaction will also be covered.

Comment: This part will be covered in:

Week 1 Chapter 1,
Week 2 Chapters 2 and 3,
Week 3 Chapters 4 and 5.

Part Two: Social Groups and Social Control

In this unit, we will learn about the impact of groups in Societies and Social Networks and begin to look at the topic of people violating the expectations of others as Deviance and Social Control will be examined.

Comment: This part will be covered in:

Week 4 Chapter 6,
Week 5 Chapter 7.

Part Three: Social Inequality

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

Comment: This unit will be covered in:

Week 6 Chapter 9.
Assessment and Grading

Comment: In this section, I'll be describing in general the assignments you will be expected to complete in addition to the readings. For the specific assignments for each week, open the message in the Assignments area for that week after it is posted.

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 minimum of four other comments on the material or in response to the comments of others each week. Both the quality and quantity of these comments will be assessed, with a maximum of 20 points available each week. For more information about how to participate in discussion and how they are grades, see the message in the Instructions for Discussion folder in the Resources area.

Comment: Participation in discussion is a very important part of this class, just like it would be for a “regular” class. I’ve occasionally had students tell me that they don’t like class discussion, because they take a class to hear words of wisdom from the “expert,” not comments from students. Although I’m the “expert” in this case, I couldn’t agree less with this sentiment. I see three major benefits of student discussion. First, participation in discussion encourages active learning, which is much more beneficial than passive learning. When students think about comments they will make, they are engaging in higher level analysis than merely taking in information. Second, discussion exposes students to a greater diversity of ideas. Third, discussion helps the instructor to know what is going on in the students’ heads. To encourage discussion, I’m connecting points to it.

2. Weekly Quizzes

At the end of weeks 1, 2, 4, and 6 a multiple choice quiz will be posted. Each quiz will include 20 questions that will cover material from the textbook and the lectures. Each question will be worth one point, so each quiz will be worth 20 points. There will be four quizzes for a total of 80 points available for the quarter. For instructions on how to take these quizzes, read the message in the Preparing for and Taking Quizzes folder, which can be found in the Resources area.

Comment: These quizzes will be timed; you will have 50 minutes to complete each quiz. Of course, you will have access to your textbook and lecture notes, but due to the time constraints; you will not be likely to have time to look up answers if you are not familiar with the material. I suggest that you study for these quizzes in the same way that you would for an in-class quiz for which you do not have access to the textbook or lecture notes.

2. Application Essays

Application questions, asking for a written response of about two standard, single-spaced, typewritten pages, will be posted for some of the units we will be covering this quarter. You will submit your responses to the instructor’s email address or the drop-box, following the instructions provided. Your
two application essays will occur during weeks 3 and 5. The number of points available for each application will be 30, with a total of 60 points available for the quarter. For more information on what I’m looking for in these assignments, read the message in the Instructions for Application Essays folder in the Resources area.

Comment: These will be your major writing assignments, which will ask you to synthesize what you have learned. You will find the assignments, due dates, and grading criteria in the assignments message for that week.

Grades

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>6 x 20</td>
<td>120 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>4 x 20</td>
<td>80 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essays</td>
<td>2 x 30</td>
<td>60 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your bio</td>
<td>1 x 5</td>
<td>5 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice quiz</td>
<td>1 x 5</td>
<td>5 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Evaluation</td>
<td>1 x 5</td>
<td>5 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>275 points</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: 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.

Comment: To determine your final grades, I will add up your points, divide by the number of points possible (275), and arrive at a percentage. You are welcome to check the online gradebook, or send me a message at any time for an update on your grade. The most difficult scale I will use is the one below.

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Decimal</th>
<th>Letter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-79</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-75</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66-69</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63-65</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57-59</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 57</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading Policies:

Application papers will be accepted a few days later than the deadlines if it helps you turn a good paper into a better paper, for credit without penalty. Credit for discussions will not be given for late work.
Quizzes must be taken during the posted time period. Do not miss a quiz. Your grade will be based on your performance on the assignments, quizzes, and discussions, and no extra credit will be available. If you are concerned about your performance, please contact me earlier rather than later so that we can work on any problems. The penalty for cheating (including plagiarism) will be zero points for the assignment in question. A repeat offense of cheating or plagiarism will result in failure of the course (F grade) and student disciplinary proceedings through Windward Community College. Any penalties incurred will be at the instructor’s discretion. Your grade will be an A thru F with few other options available.

Comment: You made it through the syllabus! Be sure that you read the rest of the messages in the Resources area, and spend some time in Laulima, so that you get comfortable with this environment. You should post your Autobiography, take the practice quiz when it is available, and post a discussion message to familiarize yourself with these areas. Also be sure that you have your textbooks. On the first day of class you will need to open the Assignments area then open the Week 1 folder. All of the instructions for what you need to accomplish before the end of Week 1 will be there. If you want to get a head start, and you have your book, start reading Chapter 1. Remember, if you have questions about working with Laulima, contact their help people. If you have questions about this course, contact me by sending me an E-mail. Type something that makes sense for the subject line. My email address for this course is bculwell@comcast.net (home). As a backup and secondary address, you can also reach me at work at bculwell@whatcom.ctc.edu Yes, I live in Washington State and work at Whatcom Community College. You can call it the other WCC. Good luck and I hope you enjoy sociology as much as I do!