

SOC 1301 – Introduction to Sociology

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Texas Tech University

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Society and the social groups to which we belong influence a great deal of our lives - how we feel, how we act, and what we believe. Overall, sociology is the study of diversity: diverse cultures, diverse societies, and diverse social experiences. This course uses the sociological perspective to uncover hidden social forces, social institutions, and social problems. It is my aim that you will leave this course with an appreciation for and the ability to identify those social forces in the media and your daily life. Specifically, we will focus on the link between societal and individual circumstances, and how individuals are affected and constrained by their environments.

Sociologists research matters relating to the origin, persistence, and change of social norms, the makeup of diverse populations, and the meanings attached to the social construction of race, gender, and class. Introductory courses in this subject explore how people are ordered into societies, order themselves into groups, make and break rules of social order, and develop systems of reward and punishment. Basic theories are applied to a study of diversity within real-life pieces of the society such as the family, educational systems, government, the church, healthcare systems, and the economy. Sociology also explores the persistence of, and change in, social processes of empowerment and oppression that separate individuals by race, gender, age, and social class.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

This class helps to fulfill the requirement of “Social and Behavioral Sciences” in the core curriculum in “Individual and Group Behavior.” The objective of a social and behavioral science component of a core curriculum is to increase the student’s knowledge of how social and behavioral scientists discover, describe, and explain the behaviors and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, events, and ideas. Such knowledge will better equip students to understand themselves and the roles they play in addressing the issues facing humanity. This class is also in the multicultural core. The objective of this core curriculum course is as follows: students graduating from Texas Tech University should be able to demonstrate the ability to assess critically claims about social issues, human behavior, and diversity in human experiences.

Core Curriculum Learning Outcomes:	Assessed By:
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Students graduating from Texas Tech University should be able to demonstrate awareness and knowledge of distinctive cultures or subcultures, including but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, class, political systems, religions, sexual orientation, languages, or human geography.	<p>a) Student responses to exam questions that test their knowledge of the diversity of human experiences, as well as their ability to evaluate arguments about social issues through a sociological lens and</p> <p>b) Student responses to exam questions about the nature of human behavior and the social norms that shape that behavior</p>
Course Specific Learning Outcomes:	Assessed By:
Students will be able to identify and critique alternative explanations for claims about social issues and human behavior.	Student responses to exam questions and class discussion
Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the appropriate ethical methods, technologies, and data that social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition.	Student responses to exam questions and class discussion
Critical Thinking Skills: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information	Student responses to exam questions and class discussion
Communication Skills: to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication	Student responses to exam questions and class discussion
Empirical and Quantitative Skills: to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions	Student responses to exam questions and class discussion
Social Responsibility: to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities	Student responses to exam questions and class discussion
Multicultural Graduation Requirement Learning Outcomes:¹	Assessed By:
Students will demonstrate intercultural awareness, knowledge and skills in written, verbal, and behavioral activities (e.g., service-learning, co-curricular and similar experiences).	Students will be able to correctly answer exam and quiz questions that focus on the differences between different cultures both domestically and globally. Special emphasis will be placed on written responses to questions about awareness of differing norms and mores.
Students will exhibit the ability to engage constructively with individuals and groups, across diverse social contexts.	Students will correctly answer exam questions testing their knowledge of the impact of organized religion, politics, education, and literacy on life-chances of diverse social groups and individuals.
Students will appraise privilege	Students will correctly answer exam

¹ Thanks to Dr. Jerome Koch for the language on the multicultural requirement in this table and throughout the syllabus.

relationships at different levels (interpersonal, local, regional, national, and international) and explain how these relationships affect the socioeconomic and cultural status of individuals and groups.	questions testing their knowledge of the effects of population growth and distribution (demography) on the structures and future of a given society
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The following details the logistics and requirements of the course

This document is a contract. You agree to abide by the conditions and regulations listed below by continuing the course beyond the first day.

MATERIALS NEEDED

You *do not* need a textbook – assigned readings will be in corresponding topic folders on Blackboard.

You *do* need internet access – readings, assignments, and exams are all distributed via Blackboard. As a TTU student, you have access to on-campus computers in the University library, and free Wi-Fi with your eRaider log-in credentials.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Your grade is determined by accumulating points throughout the course via exams and engagement points. There are 225 points possible – 200 from exams (50 points each), 20 from engagement point assignments (5 points each), and 5 from the syllabus quiz. The grading scale below shows the point ranges corresponding to each letter grade. There will be no “rounding up” or “curving” your score. The point value assigned for each letter grade will stand (yes, I have already accounted for rounding up).

Grading Scale

A	202 – 225
B	178 – 201
C	156 – 177
D	134 – 155
F	0 – 133

GRADE INQUIRY & MISSED ASSIGNMENTS POLICY

To discuss or contest a specific grade received for an assignment or exam, you must set an appointment with me via Zoom or in person. FERPA regulations prohibit discussion of grade specifics over email.

Engagement point grades will be available on Blackboard within two weeks of the due date – exam grades are available at the scheduled exam closing time. **If you believe your grade is inaccurate or you deserve a different grade, you must contact me within three days after we post your grade on Blackboard. If you do not contact me about a grade change within the specified time frame, the original grade will stand – NO EXCEPTIONS.**

I only accept missed assignments or exams for three reasons:

1. **Illness.** In this case, you must provide a doctor's note that indicates you were sick for the entire time the exam was available.
2. **University excused absence.** In this case, you must inform me at least 48 hours in advance of due dates and provide me with proper documentation.
3. **Death in the family.** In this case, you need to get in touch with me as soon as possible to determine a course of action based on your specific situation.

If you miss an assignment or an exam for any of the reasons listed above, you must contact me via email within 24 hours of the due date for a possible make-up opportunity. The only exception to this rule is a doctor's note stating you were too sick to contact me within the allotted time frame.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course is divided into four units. Each will include an engagement point assignment and conclude with an exam. Topic folders for each unit will include lecture slides, assigned readings, optional readings/resources, and lecture audio in the event you cannot make it to class.

Exam Details:

There are **four exams**, including the final. Each exam is worth 50 points, approximating nearly 90% of your final grade.

Exams will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the days they are scheduled (see course schedule at the end of this syllabus). **You DO NOT need to attend class in person on exam days.**

The **link to access exams on Blackboard will be in the folder for the corresponding unit** (e.g., link to Exam 1 in the Unit 1 folder). **You will have 1 hour to complete the exam once you begin** – after which, your exam will automatically save and submit.

Exams cover the material presented in the associated unit (e.g., Exam 1 covers Unit 1), including lectures, class discussions, and assigned readings.

There are **50 multiple-choice and true/false questions** on each exam worth one point per question. The questions will appear on your screen one at a time.

I understand that **Blackboard problems and technical issues** may arise. If they do, **I will reopen your exam only once**. If you continue to have the same problem on the same or subsequent exams, I cannot guarantee that I will reopen the exam for you.

Disclaimer: Each exam is unique to this semester's material and copyrighted as the instructor's intellectual property.

Engagement Point Details:

Engagement points are short-answer assignments designed to encourage you to think critically about the course material. There are **four** engagement points throughout the course worth 5 points each, approximating 10% of your final grade. To receive full credit (5/5), you must respond thoughtfully and use proper grammar and sentence structure.

I will assign Engagement Point assignments on random days throughout the semester. To access these assignments, you will need a password that I provide during class on the day they are assigned.

Once an engagement point is assigned, it is due at 5:00 p.m. the following week (e.g., an engagement assigned in class on a Wednesday is due the following Wednesday at 5:00 p.m.)

Engagement points will be graded and available in Blackboard at most two weeks after the due date. If you do not see a grade posted after two weeks, please contact me.

READINGS

When you have assigned reading for a particular topic, it will be in a folder labeled “Assigned Readings” within that topic. **Assigned readings are fair game for engagement points and exam questions.**

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Illness-Based Absence Policy: If you feel ill during this semester, in the interest of your health and safety as well as the health and safety of your instructors and classmates, you are encouraged not to attend face-to-face class meetings or events. Please review the steps outlined below that you should follow to ensure the instructor will excuse your absence for illness. These steps also apply to not participating in synchronous online class meetings if you feel too ill to do so and missing specified assignment due dates in asynchronous online classes because of illness.

1. If you are ill and think the symptoms might be COVID-19-related:
 - a. Call Student Health Services at 806.743.2848 or your health care provider.
 - b. Self-report using the Office of the Dean of Students website as soon as possible. This website has specific directions about how to upload documentation from a medical provider and what will happen if your illness renders you unable to participate in classes for more than one week.
 - c. Suppose your illness is determined to be COVID-19 related. In that case, the Office of the Dean of Students will handle all remaining documentation and communication, including notification of your instructors of the period you may be absent from and may return to classes.
 - d. If your illness is determined not to be COVID-19-related, please follow steps 2. a-d below.
2. If you are ill and can attribute your symptoms to something other than COVID-19:
 - a. If your illness renders you unable to attend face-to-face classes, participate in synchronous online courses, or meet the specified assignment due dates in asynchronous online courses, you are encouraged to visit either Student Health Services at 806.743.2848 or your health care provider. Note that Student Health Services and your own and other health care providers may arrange virtual visits.
 - b. During the health provider visit, request a “return to school” note;
 - c. Email the instructor a picture of that note;
 - d. Return to class by the next class period after the date indicated on your note.

Following the steps outlined above helps keep your instructors informed about your absences and ensures your absence or missing an assignment due date because of illness will be marked excused. You will still be responsible for completing within a week of returning to class any assignments, quizzes, or exams you miss because of illness.

Students with Disabilities: Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note that instructors cannot provide classroom accommodations to students until SDS provides proper verification. For additional information, please get in touch with SDS in West Hall or call 806-742-2405.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Plagiarism, or academic theft, passes off someone else's work as your own. Please note: plagiarism means *using someone else's ideas without acknowledging them* (whether you use that person's actual words or not).

Regardless of your background, while you attend this class, you are responsible for following the university rules regarding academic integrity.

Religious Holy Days (O.P. 34.19): "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Texas Tax Code §11.20.

A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known **in writing** to the instructor **before the absence**. I prefer email notifications. A student absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.

TTU Resources for Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Violence

Texas Tech University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from gender and sex discrimination of any kind. The University does not tolerate sexual assault, discrimination, harassment, and other Title IX violations. Report any incidents to the *Office for Student Rights & Resolution* at (806)-742-SAFE (7233), or file a report online at titleix.ttu.edu/students. Faculty and staff members at TTU are committed to connecting you to resources on campus. Some of these available resources are:

TTU Student Counseling Center, 806-742-3674, <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/scc/> (*Provides confidential support on campus.*)

TTU Student Counseling Center, 24-hour helpline, 806-742-5555, (*Assists students experiencing mental health or interpersonal violence crisis. If you call the helpline, you will speak with a mental health counselor.*)

Voice of Hope Lubbock Rape Crisis Center, 806-763-7273, voiceofhopelubbock.org (*24-hour hotline that provides support for survivors of sexual violence.*)

The Risk, Intervention, Safety, and Education (RISE) Office, 806-742-2110, rise.ttu.edu (*Provides a range of resources and support options focused on prevention education and student wellness.*)

Texas Tech Police Department, 806-742 3931, <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/tttd/> (*To report criminal activity that occurs on or near Texas Tech campus.*)

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Lecture Topics and Exams*
		*Topics dates may vary – exam dates will not
1	8/25	Introduction & Logistics // <u>Syllabus Quiz due Monday, 8/29 at 5:00 p.m.</u>
		UNIT 1
2	8/29 - 9/2	What is Sociology? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Sociological Imagination, Origins, & Theorists - Levels of Analysis & Theoretical Perspectives
3	9/5	No classes – Labor Day
	9/7 - 9/9	Social Research Methods & Ethics
4	9/12 – 9/16	Culture & Social Structure
5	<u>9/19</u>	<u>Exam 1 (opens at 7:00 a.m.; closes at 5:00 p.m.)</u>
		UNIT 2
	9/21 – 9/23	Social Interaction
6	9/26 – 9/30	Socialization & the Self Social Groups & Bureaucracy
7	10/3 – 10/7	Political & Economic Systems: Power, Politics, and the Economy
8	10/10 – 10/12	Population Diversity: Demographics
	<u>10/14</u>	<u>Exam 2 (opens at 7:00 a.m.; closes at 5:00 p.m.)</u>
		UNIT 4
9	10/17 -10/21	Crime & Deviance Social Stratification
10	10/24 – 10/26	Social Class
	10/28	Class Canceled :)
11	10/31 – 11/4	Race & Ethnicity
12	11/7 – 11/9	Sex & Gender
	<u>11/11</u>	<u>Exam 3 (opens at 7:00 a.m.; closes at 5:00 p.m.)</u>
		UNIT 4
13	11/14 – 11/18	Education Health & Medicine

14	11/21 – 11/25	No Classes – Thanksgiving Break
15	11/28 – 12/2	Family Religion
16-17	12/5	Course Wrap-Up
	<u>12/8 – 12/13</u>	<i><u>Exam 4 (final exam) opens Thurs. 12/8 at 7:00 a.m. and closes Tues. 12/13 at 5:00 p.m.*</u></i>