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Soc 1301 01W: Intro to Sociology

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Nicole Farris, Professor
Office Location: Ferguson Room 218
Office Hours: M/W 1 to 2p; Online T 9a to 12; By appt
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Office Fax: 903-886-5330
University Email Address: Nicole.Farris@tamuc.edu
Preferred Form of Communication: Email
Communication Response Time: 24-48 Hours, Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm

Teaching Assistant: Makenna Eckstein
University Email Address: meckstein@leomail.tamuc.edu
Office Location: Ferguson Room 219

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required:
Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach, 15th Edition
Jim M. Henslin
Published by Pearson (July 27, 2023) © 2024
eBook ISBN-13: 9780137875450

Software Required: Access to course website- you need to have an active email username and password. I will post your grades to the course website, as well as your powerpoints, assignments, and supplemental articles that I see fit to include in lecture.

Optional Texts and/or Materials: None

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Course Description

This course is designed to help students better understand the social world in which they live as well as provide a foundation for other courses in sociology. It provides an overview of major concepts and principles of sociology, including globalization, diversity, socialization, social control, social order, social stratification, ethnicity, social deviance, and social change. This course emphasizes global dynamics (issues, trends, processes, and systems) from a sociological perspective, and helps students view themselves as engaged citizens within an interconnected and diverse world.

Sociology is the systematic study of society and the humans that interact within that society. This course is designed as an introduction to the discipline of sociology and “thinking sociologically.” Sociology is fundamentally about rethinking our “common sense” views of society. At times sociological research confirms our perceptions about society and other times it challenges commonly held views. This course will expose you to how sociologists study society. We will cover fundamental concepts and theories in sociology and examine a number of examples of sociological research and practice. Our ongoing goal will be to assess the ways in which society structures our lives—through human and social groupings, social institutions, and ideologies.

Student Learning Outcomes:

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

1. Sociological Knowledge and Application
 - Demonstrate a sociological perspective based on critical thinking to better understand the social world.
 - Define and apply basic sociological concepts and terms to real-world examples.
 - Understand how individual thought and action are influenced by broader social, political, and economic forces.
 - Lay a strong academic foundation for further study in sociology or related fields.

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2. Social Responsibility and Global Awareness

- Demonstrate an understanding of societal and/or civic issues, including inequality, institutions, and social change.
- Exhibit awareness of the interconnectedness of global systems, processes, and trends.
- Analyze how local and global forces interact to shape individuals and societies.

3. Cognitive and Behavioral Science Area of Knowledge

- Understand conceptual, psychological, biological, behavioral, and sociological methods used to study human thought and behavior.
- Analyze the behavior of individuals within social contexts and explain patterns using major social science theories.

4. Empirical and Quantitative Reasoning

- Interpret, test, and apply sociological principles revealed in empirical data and observable facts.
- Analyze and draw conclusions from graphs, tables, statistics, and other mathematical models.
- Evaluate the limitations of quantitative models and use data to support sociological arguments.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Instructional Methods

This fully online course integrates readings, mini-lectures, interactive media, creative assignments, and more to explore course concepts. Students are encouraged to draw connections between course materials and real-world examples through applied and reflective work.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

1. Stay Organized and Plan Ahead
 - Check the course calendar and weekly modules early each week.
 - Note due dates for reflections, creative projects, and quizzes.
 - Set personal reminders or use a planner to manage time effectively.
2. Engage Consistently
 - While this course limits traditional discussion boards, engagement still matters.
 - Watch all posted lectures, complete readings thoughtfully, and take notes.
 - Participate in group work actively and respectfully.
3. Complete All Assignments Promptly
 - Submit work by the posted deadlines unless you've made prior arrangements.
 - Late work policies will be enforced as outlined in the course policies.
4. Practice Academic Integrity
 - All submitted work must be your own unless collaboration is explicitly allowed.
 - If you use AI or other tools for inspiration or organization, clearly cite how and where it was used.
5. Communicate Early and Often
 - If you encounter personal or technical challenges, reach out to the instructor as early as possible.
 - Use the preferred communication method listed in the syllabus.
6. Apply What You Learn
 - This course is designed to connect theory to the real world—use personal experiences and current events to deepen your understanding.
 - Reflect on how class, wealth, and power shape your environment and opportunities.
7. Be Creative and Curious
 - Embrace the creative assignments and final project as opportunities to express your understanding in meaningful, relevant, and accessible ways.
 - Ask questions—this is how you deepen your sociological imagination.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

Grade Components:

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

- Reflections (3 x 15 pts): 45 points
- Creative Assignments (2 x 30 pts): 60 points
- Concept Quizzes (3 x 15 pts): 45 points
- Mini Assignments: 50 points
- Final Project: 100 points

TOTAL: 300 points

Total points corresponding to the final letter grades

A = 270–300 Points

B = 240–269 Points

C = 210–239 Points

D = 180–209 Points

F = 179 & below

Assessments

- Reflections (3 x 15 points = 45 points total)
Students will complete three short written reflections (300–500 words each) spaced throughout the course. These reflections ask students to apply sociological concepts to personal experience, current events, or course texts.
- Creative Assignments (2 x 30 points = 60 points total)
Students will complete two creative, applied assignments.
 - Week 6: "Mapping My Socialization" – Create a visual or multimedia map showing the key agents of socialization in your life and explain their influence using course concepts. This may include photo collages, annotated diagrams, or narrated slideshows.
 - Week 12: "Data Meets Sociology: Designing a Social Solution" –
 - Students will identify a contemporary social issue (e.g., poverty, incarceration, education inequality) and gather basic statistical data related to that issue from Pew Research
 - They will use that data to propose a sociologically informed solution or advocacy message.
 - Final product options include a digital poster, infographic, or narrated slideshow.
 - *This assignment fulfills the Quantitative Reasoning tag by requiring students to interpret, explain, and apply statistical information in context.*
- Concept Quizzes (3 x 15 points = 45 points total)
These short, open-book quizzes assess understanding of foundational course content and key terms. Each quiz includes multiple-choice and short-answer questions.
- Mini Assignments (5 x 10 points = 50 points total)
Throughout the semester, students will complete five short, low-stakes individual assignments that apply course concepts to real-world observations. These creative and reflective tasks are designed to help students explore sociological

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thinking in your daily lives. Formats include video or audio recordings, infographics, visual reflections, mini-podcasts, and brief written responses.

- Final Project (100 points)
Students will choose from three formats (written paper, visual project, or multimedia analysis) to synthesize what they've learned. Projects should demonstrate critical understanding of course materials and theories.

Communication and Support:

I prefer communication via email and I will respond to email within 24 to 48 hours, between normal business hours of 8am to 5pm. Please be sure that when you email me, you use a proper greeting (Dr. Farris, Professor Farris, Instructor Farris), an email body, and an appropriate closing. You should never send an email with just an attachment and no email body. Be sure you have an appropriate and informative subject line and include the name and section of the course you are enrolled in.

We (myself and the Teaching Assistant) will try to get assignments and exams graded and handed back in a timely manner. Should you have any questions/comments/concerns about your grades, you will need to first speak to the Teaching Assistant. If you are unable to reach a satisfactory conclusion, then you can speak with me regarding your grades. If you are unable to reach a satisfactory conclusion with me, then you can speak to the department head.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Online Communication Guidelines

To help create a respectful and engaging learning space, please keep the following in mind when interacting online (via discussion boards, email, chat, etc.):

Be respectful. Our course includes people with diverse backgrounds and perspectives—listen generously and respond thoughtfully.

Use clear, professional language. Avoid slang, excessive abbreviations, and all caps (which can seem like shouting).

Support your ideas. Develop your thoughts, evaluate sources for credibility, and cite your sources following any guidelines provided by your instructor,

Stay on topic. Focus on course content and contribute meaningfully to the conversation.

Pause before you post. Review your message before hitting “send”—tone and clarity matter, especially without nonverbal cues.

If something feels unclear or upsetting, contact your instructor privately rather than escalating in a public forum.

Late Assignments

Students who need extra time may submit assignments (excluding discussion board postings) up to one week after the assignment due date. Discussion board submissions will not be accepted for credit after the deadline except in extenuating circumstances.

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A penalty of 10 percent of the total value of the assignment will be applied to the grade achieved on the late assignment regardless of the day of the week on which the work is submitted.

Students who submit assignments more than one week late will receive a grade of zero on the assignment unless they have made prior arrangements with the instructor.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook.

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf>.

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the Attendance webpage and Procedures 13.99.99.R0.01

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03

Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

Graduate Students Academic Integrity Policy and Form

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/aboutus/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10.pdf>

AI IN DR. FARRIS' CLASSROOM

You're welcome to use AI tools (like ChatGPT), Grammarly, or similar support services in this class—as long as you're using them the way you'd use me: as a resource to support your learning, not as a shortcut to avoid doing the work.

Think of it like this:

Would you ask me to write your discussion post for you?

Would you ask me to complete your final project or reflection?

Probably not—and if you did, I'd (kindly) say no!

But would you ask me to help brainstorm ideas, explain a sociological concept, give feedback on a rough draft, or suggest ways to structure your response?

Absolutely. That's using support in a way that still keeps the work (and the learning) yours.

If you do use any AI tools (including Grammarly or ChatGPT), you must note it at the bottom of your assignment.

Just a short line is fine—for example:

- "I used Grammarly to check grammar and clarity."
- "ChatGPT helped me outline my initial ideas for this post."
- "I asked ChatGPT to explain symbolic interactionism in simpler terms."

Being transparent helps build trust and keeps our academic work ethical and clear.

If you're ever unsure whether you're using AI appropriately, just ask yourself: *Is this something I would ask my professor to do for me?*

If the answer is yes, you're probably on the right track.

A Note on AI/ChatGPT Use

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

For this course, the use of AI is NOT allowed. The use of AI will result in a grade of 0 for the assignment for the first offense. The second offense will result in a grade of F for the course and submission to the academic dishonesty committee.

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: Student Disability Services

<https://www.tamuc.edu/student-disability-services/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a

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Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.

<http://telusproduction.com/app/5108.html>

AI use policy [Draft 2, May 25, 2023]

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13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Everything is open Monday at 12:01 and due Sunday at 11:59pm,
unless otherwise noted.

Week 1: The Sociological Perspective

1/12 to 1/18

- Read: Course Syllabus + Chapter 1 + Lecture
- Watch: [CrashCourse: What is Sociology?](#)
- Discussion: Introduce yourself + reflect on a moment you used a sociological perspective
- Mini Assignment #1: *Sociological Imagination in Everyday Life* (Written or audio)

Week 2: Culture & Social Structure

1/19 to 1/25

- Read: Chapter 2 + Lecture
- Watch: [What Is Culture? | Kahn Academy](#)
- Quiz #1: Concepts in Culture, Values, Norms, and Institutions
- Mini Assignment #2: *Symbolism in Your Environment* (Photo collage or written)

Week 3: Socialization

1/26 to 2/1

- Read: Chapter 3 + Lecture
- Watch: [Agents of Socialization | CrashCourse](#)
- For Thought: What influenced who you are today?

Week 4: Social Interaction & the Self

2/2 to 2/8

- Read: Chapter 4 + Lecture
- Watch: [Goffman and Dramaturgy | The School of Life](#)
- Reflection #1: *The Self in Society* (300–500 words)

Week 5: Norms, Deviance & Control

2/9 to 2/15

- Read: Chapter 8 + Lecture

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

- Watch: [Deviance: CrashCourse Sociology](#)
- Mini Assignment #3: *Breaking (or Witnessing) a Norm* (Written or video)

Week 6: Gender & Socialization
2/16 to 2/22

- Read: Chapter 11 + Lecture
- Launch: Creative Assignment #1 Due Sunday: *Mapping My Socialization*
- Watch: [The Genderbread Person Explained](#)
- For Thought: Gender roles and expectations in daily life
- Creative Assignment #1: *Mapping My Gender Socialization Due*

Week 7: Gender Inequality & Intersectionality
2/23 to 3/1

- Watch: [Kimberlé Crenshaw on Intersectionality](#)
- Mini Assignment #4: *Gender in the Workplace or Media* (Infographic or written)

Week 8: Marriage & Family
3/2 to 3/8

- Read: Chapter 16 + Lecture
- Reading: Excerpt from *The Second Shift* by Arlie Hochschild
- Reflection #2: *Family Roles and Inequality*

WEEK 9: 3/9 TO 3/15 SPRING BREAK

Week 10: Research Methods in Sociology
3/16 to 3/22

- Read: Chapter 5 + Lecture
- Watch: [What is the Scientific Method in Sociology?](#)
- Quiz #2: Research Concepts and Methodologies
- Discussion: Ethics in Sociological Research

Week 11: Global Stratification
3/23 to 3/29

- Read: Chapter 9 + Lecture
- Watch: [Global Stratification | CrashCourse](#)
- Explore: Oxfam Report: Inequality Kills
- Mini Assignment #5: *Global Inequality Snapshot*
Choose a country other than the U.S. and research one form of inequality it faces (economic, health, education, etc.). Using course concepts, explain how global stratification contributes to or maintains this inequality. Submit a brief written analysis (300–500 words) or a short narrated slideshow (3–5 slides).

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Week 12: Race, Ethnicity & Inequality
3/30 to 4/5

- Read: Chapter 12 + Lecture
- Watch: [Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#)
- Discussion: Privilege and colorblindness

Week 13: Social Issues & Quantitative Reasoning
4/6 to 4/12

- Creative Assignment #2: *Data Meets Sociology: Designing a Social Solution* (Due Sunday)
- Use Pew Research Center to find and analyze relevant statistics
- Watch: [How to Use Data Effectively](#)

Week 14: Social Stratification
4/13 to 4/19

- Read: Chapter 10 + Lecture
- Watch: [Class in America: People Like Us \(excerpt\)](#)
- Reflection #3: *Class and the American Dream*

Week 15: Social Institutions & Power
4/20 to 4/26

- Read: Chapter 17 + Lecture
- For Thought: How institutions shape opportunity

Week 15: Social Change & Globalization
4/27 to 5/3

- Read: Chapter 22+ Lecture
- Watch: [The Treadmill of Production](#)
- Quiz #3: Globalization and Social Change

Week 16: Final Project Due
5/4 to 5/8 (SHORT WEEK)

- Submit: Final Project (written, multimedia, or visual format)
- Optional Final Check-In Zoom + Class Wrap-Up