

Fall 2015

SOC 1051

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University of New Orleans

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Introduction to Sociology

Dr. Lisa Wade, PhD

Fall 2015 at the University of New Orleans

TR 11:00-12:15, Miln 179

Office: Miln 192

Office hours: TR 12:15-1:15 or by appointment

Welcome to Introduction to Sociology!

“...without firm parental guidance, teenagers make all sorts of irrevocable decisions before they’re old enough to appreciate the consequences—they drop out of school, they get pregnant, they major in sociology.”

– Jonathan Franzen, *How To Be Alone*

CLASS DESCRIPTION

Sociology involves rethinking “common sense”; it involves a re-examination of our society and a reconsideration of our assumptions about basic social dynamics. During the semester, we will examine the ways in which society and social processes shape our lives. To do so, we will explore the structure of ideas that contextualize our lives, the ways in which these ideas are institutionalized in formal and informal social organizations, and how this institutionalization forms a social structure that constrains and enables change. To develop a sociological imagination you will need to think honestly and critically about the information you are receiving, examine your own experiences and observations, and be receptive to sociological data and analyses that challenge your assumptions.

Learning outcomes: To be able to ask sociological questions and propose sociological theories about the world around you.

REQUIRED READING

- Selected readings: Available through Moodle (<http://uno.edu/moodle>).
 - Text: *On The Fireline: Living and Dying with Wildland Firefighters*, by Matthew Desmond. Available at the UNO bookstore. ISBN: 9780226144092.
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ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance and quizzes (20 points)

- On some days I will take attendance with a multiple choice question. This serves as a quiz, a measure of your participation (whether you are preparing for class), and your attendance.
- Absences can be excused if they are for a legitimate reason (e.g. documented illness, official university business, etc.). You may be assigned additional work.
- *Attention Athletes*: The attendance and participation policy applies to athletes. If athletic activity causes you to miss class more than 2 or 3 times, it is likely to have a negative effect on your academic performance. If you expect such conflicts, speak with me ASAP so that we may decide whether it makes sense for you to take this class.

Exams (20 points each)

- Instead of two exams (a midterm and a final), there are five exams scheduled throughout the semester
- The exams will be taken in class. You will need to bring a BLUE scantron, a #2 pencil, and your brilliant brain. No notes are allowed.
- There will not usually be a review session. Attending class, taking responsibility for understanding the material, taking copious notes, and studying them thoroughly will be important for earning a high score on the exams.
- There will be no early or late exams. Pre-purchased plane tickets or other travel plans are not grounds for rescheduling the exam. Please check on any such conflicts immediately and drop the class if necessary.
- If you are a student with a learning disability, please come to me early and we will make all the necessary arrangements.

Final grade (100 points total)

- There are six opportunities to win 20 points for a total of 120 points.
- At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest score (it may be an exam, but it may be the score for attendance and quizzes). Your final grade will be evaluated on a 100 point scale.

LETTER GRADES

- A *Outstanding performance.* You have demonstrated thorough knowledge and understanding of all material, shown superior critical thinking, and expressed insightful and original thoughts clearly. You have completed all required assignments and they have been among the best in the class.
- B *Good performance.* You have demonstrated solid knowledge and understanding of the material and good critical thinking. You have also shown the ability to express your ideas clearly. You have completed all required assignments and they have been of good quality.
- C *Satisfactory performance.* You have demonstrated basic knowledge and understanding of the major concepts taught in the class and some critical thinking. You have completed all or most of the required assignments and they have routinely been free of significant problems.
- D *Deficient performance.* You have only acquired a limited understanding of the class material. You have failed to complete all the required assignments and they have routinely had serious problems.
- F *Failure.* You have failed to learn a sufficient proportion of the basic concepts and ideas in the class. You have failed to complete required assignments and they have routinely had serious problems.

TWO NOTES ON SMARTS

Myth: “A” students are smarter than other students.

Fact: College has its own rules and skills. Being smart does not guarantee an A. Being smart *at college* means learning a specific skill set. Getting an A is a combination of effort, prior knowledge, and experience. If you are a frosh, you may find that you must work harder to get the same grade as a senior who has much more experience at excelling in college classrooms and, thus, knows better how to do it. Be patient with yourself. Don’t put pressure on yourself to get straight As from the get go. Acknowledge that there will be a learning curve and give yourself some time to climb it and look forward to when you will be the one with knowledge and experience.

Myth: We are born with a certain level of intelligence that remains static throughout our lives.

Fact: The mind is like the body. If you use it, it becomes stronger. If it is strong in one area, it may be weak in another. You can improve your critical thinking, your reasoning skills, your mathematical ability, how quickly and effectively you absorb new information, and more. But it isn't necessarily fun. Like working out your body, working out your mind can be uncomfortable, even painful. You're not really challenging and improving your mind until it hurts a little. So you may find that learning in this class (and others) is kind of like suffering. It's okay. It doesn't mean that you're not smart, it means that you're getting even smarter.

COURSE SCHEDULE

*****Please no recording (video or audio), duplicating, copying, etc.
any materials or lectures from this course without permission.*****

Thursday, Aug. 20 – What is sociology?

Read: • None

Tuesday, Aug. 25 – NO CLASS

Read: • None

Thursday, Aug. 27 – What is sociology?

Read: • Caplow, *Rule Enforcement Without Visible Means*
• Henslin, *Eating Your Friends is the Hardest*

Part I: Identities and inequalities

Tuesday, Sept. 1 – What are our identities?

Read (PICK TWO): • Lorber, *Night to His Day*
• Katz, *The Invention of Heterosexuality*
• Buck, *Constructing Race, Creating White Privilege*

Thursday, Sept. 3 – What are our identities?

Read: • No readings
Film in Class: • *The Difference Between Us*

Tuesday, Sept. 8 – How do they shape our minds?

Go online and take: • Harvard Implicit Test Website: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

Thursday, Sept. 10 – How do they shape our interactions?

Read (PICK TWO): • Wade & Sharp, *Skull Face and the Self-Fulfilling Stereotype*
• Staples, *Just Walk On By*
• Kimmel, *Masculinity as Homophobia*

Tuesday, Sept. 15 – How do they shape our interactions?

Film in Class: • *Class in America*
Read: • Bourdieu, *The Forms of Capital* [excerpts]

Thursday, Sept. 17 – How do they shape our life chances?

Read (PICK TWO):

- Tannenbaum, *The Problem When Sexism Just Sounds So Darn Friendly*
- Desmond & Emirbayer, Intro to *Racial Domination, Racial Progress* (excerpts)
- O'Brien, *Why is the American Dream Dead in the South?*

Tuesday, Sept. 22 – REVIEW

Thursday, Sept. 24 – EXAM

Happy test day! Please bring a BLUE scantron and a #2 pencil. Use the restroom BEFORE the exam.

Part II: Culture and power

Tuesday, Sept. 29 – What is culture?

Read:

- Becker, *Becoming a Marihuana User*
- Kilbourne, *Can an Engine Pump the Valves of Your Heart?*

Thursday, Oct. 1 – Who controls it?

Film in Class:

- *Mickey Mouse Monopoly*

Tuesday, Oct. 6 – How does it influence us?

Film in Class:

- *The Lion King*

Read:

- Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (excerpts)

Thursday, Oct. 8 – What kind of power is it?

Read:

- Foucault, *We “Other Victorians”*

Tuesday, Oct. 13 – EXAM

Happy test day! Please bring a BLUE scantron and a #2 pencil. Use the restroom BEFORE the exam.

Thursday, Oct. 15 – FALL BREAK

Part III: Institutions and structure

Tuesday, Oct. 20 – What are institutions?

Read:

- Wade & Ferree, *Gendered Institutions* (pp. 1-4)

Thursday, Oct. 22 – Bathrooms and sports

Read:

- Wade & Ferree, *Gendered Institutions* (pp. 5-18)

Tuesday, Oct. 27 – Food systems and poverty

Film in class:

- *A Place at the Table*

Thursday, Oct. 29 – Neighborhoods and policing

Read:

- Davis, *Race and Criminalization*
- Massey & Denton, *American Apartheid*

Tuesday, Nov. 3 – Poverty and education

- Read:
- Gans, *The Uses of Poverty*
 - Kozol, *Savage Inequalities*

Thursday, Nov. 5 – EXAM

Happy test day! Please bring a BLUE scantron and a #2 pencil. Use the restroom BEFORE the exam.

Part IV: Case study: firefighting

Tuesday, Nov. 10 – A sociology of firefighting

- Read:
- *On the Fireline*, “Introduction”
 - *On the Fireline*, Chapter One: “Country Masculinity”

Thursday, Nov. 12 – A sociology of firefighting

- Read:
- *On the Fireline*, Chapter Two: “The Sanctuary of the Forest”
 - *On the Fireline*, Chapter Three: “A Joke Between Brothers”
 - *On the Fireline*, Chapter Four: “Real Firefighters Drive Green Engines”

Tuesday, Nov. 17 – A sociology of firefighting

- Read:
- *On the Fireline*, Chapter Five: “Learning and Burning”
 - *On the Fireline*, Chapter Six: “Taking the ‘Wild’ Out of Wildfire”

Thursday, Nov. 19 – A sociology of firefighting

- Read:
- *On the Fireline*, Chapter Seven: “The Beaver Creek Fire”
 - *On the Fireline*, Chapter Eight: “The Incompetent Dead”

Tuesday, Nov. 24 – EXAM

Happy test day! Please bring a BLUE scantron and a #2 pencil. Use the restroom BEFORE the exam.

Thursday, Nov. 26 – THANKS GIVING BREAK

Part V: Conclusion

Tuesday, Dec. 1 – What is the sociological imagination?

- Read:
- Johnson, *Patriarchy, The System*
 - Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*

Thursday, Dec. 3 – Why is sociology important?

- Read:
- Charon, *Sociology and Democracy*

TBA – FINAL EXAM

Happy test day! Please bring a BLUE scantron and a #2 pencil. Use the restroom BEFORE the exam.

COURSE POLICIES

- *Office Hours:* While my office hours are only three hours a week, I encourage you to make an appointment outside of office hours or come by my office to see if I'm available. I am happy to discuss class, college more generally, musings about majors, future planning, or graduate school.
- *Feedback:* I love getting feedback on my teaching and how the class is going. I value your input and I am often willing to make changes to the class according to your preferences. Please share with me any comments, suggestions, and ideas you may have. If you would like to do so anonymously, you can type and print out a note and drop it in my mailbox.
- *Class Demeanor:* As a student at the University of New Orleans and as a member of this class you must hold yourself and your peers to the highest standards of civil engagement and discourse. Chatting with your neighbor is frowned upon when I am lecturing, and it is absolutely impermissible when other students are trying to participate. While we may find ourselves disagreeing, we must do so with respect, a commitment to hearing what others have to say, and a willingness to think and rethink our own positions. Personal insults have no place in the college classroom.
- *Accommodations:* It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information, please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu>.
- *Accessibility:* I want my course to be as accessible to as many different people as possible. If there is any reason why the standard approach to college coursework is difficult for you to accomplish, please come talk to me about it. This includes those of you with a learning or physical disability (as discussed above), those of you who have other emotional or psychological challenges, those of you who have had past experiences that are anxiety-producing, those of you whose parents did not go to college (and can't help you understand the system as well as other parents might), those of you who are too shy to actively participate, those of you who have more responsibility than the typical college student (such as dependent parents, children, or an especially heavy workload outside of school), and other situations I can't anticipate. The earlier you come to see me, the more I can do to try to work with you to alleviate any unique disadvantages. I prefer that you come in the first two weeks but, if you do not and you decide you would like to, please do not hesitate to come to me at any time.
- *Grading Inquires:* All inquires/disagreements regarding grades will be handled during my office hours or at another mutually agreeable time. Grades will not be discussed immediately before, during, or after class.
- *Make-up Exams:* Make-up exams will generally not be given without appropriate official documentation excusing the absence.
- *Flexibility:* This syllabus only provides an approximate schedule for the course. I will discuss changes to the syllabus in class. It is your responsibility to keep up-to-date on class events and requirements.
- *Academic Integrity:* Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for further information. The Code is available online at <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu>.