

The University of Texas at El Paso
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Fall 2023

Soci 1301-11661: Introduction to Sociology
T/R 9:00-10:20 am; Quinn Hall 212

Professor

Dr. Aurelia Lorena Murga, Associate Professor of Sociology
Contact information: Old Main 305; almurga@utep.edu
Student Hours: please email for an appointment.

Teaching Assistant (TA)

Valerie Hernandez
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About this Class

This course is designed to provide students with a basic overview and understanding of the discipline of sociology, which is the scientific study of human behavior in society. Throughout the semester we will focus on a number of sociological concepts, theories, and research. We will also be discussing a broad range of social issues and the different sociological theories used to examine these. The overall objective of the course is for you to gain a general knowledge base that allows you to critically examine and understand the social issues that impact our lives.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of Sociology 1301, students should be able to:

- Examine the influence of group membership on the individual.
- Explain the research process(es) used in sociology.
- Assess the dimensions of social stratification in U.S. society.
- Produce sociological explanations for social problems.

Required Texts

1. E-book: <https://openstax.org/details/books/introduction-sociology-3e>
2. Additional assigned readings are available on Blackboard (Bb).

Course expectations

Workload: As a general rule, in any 3-credit hour course, students are expected to spend 3 hours per week in the classroom and 6-9 additional hours per week doing coursework outside the classroom. The time commitment may vary from week to week, depending on the amount of reading and other assigned work. Some weeks may require significantly fewer hours, some may require more.

Active Participation: As a friendly reminder, you should log on to Bb on a regular basis (I suggest at least once a day) to check for any announcements or emails. All coursework (e.g., Inquisitive quizzes and exams) must be submitted via Bb (except any in-class writing responses). If you encounter any problems with Bb, contact the UTEP Helpdesk (747-4357) for assistance.

You are highly encouraged to attend every class if you expect to do well in this course. I will NOT drop students from the course. If you choose to drop the course, it is your responsibility to do so. Keep in mind that failure to withdraw from the course will result in a grade of "F" for the course.

Friendly reminder: Problems with your computer are NOT an acceptable reason for deadline extensions. If you encounter computer problems that cannot be resolved in time, you should use another computer to complete the work prior to the deadlines. It's a good idea to have an alternative computer identified BEFORE you run into problems.

Assessments (Grading)

Exams 80%

You will have 4 exams (each worth 20% of your final grade) throughout the semester that may include multiple choice, true/false, and short response/essay questions. Exams cover assigned readings (textbook chapters and supplemental readings found on Bb) and information covered during class discussions and lectures. Each exam is worth up to 100 points.

Participation 10%

Full credit for participation will be earned by coming to class prepared to discuss the readings and by fully engaging in-class assignments. We will have a series of assignments in-class or on Bb that include creation and submission of discussion questions, in-class assignments, short memos, and quizzes. Students are expected to demonstrate knowledge and critical thought of the course material.

Gains Report (Final) 10%

Students will be required to complete and submit a list of 10 "things I learned" in introduction to sociology. You will make a list of 10 bullet points with each including 4-5 sentences of writing. I am not asking you to simply list the topics covered, but to thoughtfully engage with what you have learned during the semester, so if you simply list topics covered in the class, you will be awarded 0 points for this exercise.

Make-Up Assignment Policy: Make-up assignments/in-class quizzes and exams are strongly discouraged and WILL ONLY BE ADMINISTERED WITH THE SUBMISSION OF A UNIVERSITY EXCUSED ABSENCE.

Grading Scale

A	90-100%
B	89-80%
C	79-79%
D	60-69%
F	59% and below

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Email Policy

Please feel free to reach out to me via email with any questions you may have regarding the class or assignments. During the week, Monday-Friday, you can expect a reply from me within 24 hours. If you email me over the weekend, I will respond on the next weekday.

Classroom Conduct

You must demonstrate the highest level of respect for your peers and for the instructor. All points of view will be welcomed and respected; however, statements or behaviors that are disrespectful towards individuals or groups will not be tolerated. Behaviors that are distracting to your peers and to the instructor are not acceptable (e.g. coming in late, packing up or leaving early, using cell phones, and having side conversations).

Copying and Plagiarism

The materials used in this course are copyrighted. Course materials include and are not limited to: syllabi, quizzes, exams, course assignments, review sheets, outlines, lecture notes, and power points. Since these materials are copyrighted you do not have permission to copy them, unless I expressly grant you permission.

Plagiarism is commonly defined as passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., that belong to another. Therefore, you are committing plagiarism if you copy someone's work without attributing it to the original author, and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of that person. Plagiarism is one of the most serious academic sins, because it destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated.

ADA Policy

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 and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass. CASS' Staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

Please note: Instructor reserves the right to modify the schedule/syllabus at any time during the semester—any modifications will be announced during class and/or through Bb.

Schedule

Week 1, 8/29 & 8/31

Tuesday, 8/29: Introductions

Thursday, 8/31: Chapter 1. An introduction to sociology & reading on Bb

Week 2, 9/5 & 9/7

Chapter 1. An introduction to sociology & reading on Bb

Week 3, 9/12 & 9/14

Chapter 2. Sociological Research & reading on Bb

Week 4, 9/19 & 9/21

Chapter 3. Culture & reading on Bb

Week 5, 9/26 & 9/28

Tuesday, 9/26: Exam 1 on Chapters 1, 2, & 3

Thursday, 9/28: Chapter 5. Socialization

Week 6, 10/3 & 10/5

Tuesday, 10/3: Chapter 5. Socialization & reading on Bb

Thursday, 10/5: Chapter 6. Groups and Organizations

Week 7, 10/10 & 10/12

Tuesday, 10/10: Chapter 6. Groups and Organizations & reading on Bb

Thursday, 10/12: Chapter 7. Deviance, Crime, and Social Control

Week 8, 10/17 & 10/19

Tuesday, 10/17: Chapter 7. Deviance, Crime, and Social Control & reading on Bb

Thursday, 10/19: Exam 2 on Chapters 5, 6, & 7

Week 9, 10/24 & 10/26

Chapter 9. Social Stratification in the U.S. & reading on Bb

Week 10, 10/31 & 11/2

Chapter 11. Race and Ethnicity & reading on Bb

Week 11, 11/7 & 11/9

Chapter 12. Gender, Sex, and Sexuality & reading on Bb

Week 12, 11/14 & 11/16

Tuesday, 11/14: Exam 3 on Chapters 9, 11, & 12

Thursday, 11/16: Chapter 18. Work and the Economy

Week 13, 11/21 & 11/23

No classes (UTEP closed on Thursday, 11/23)

Week 14, 11/28 & 11/30

Tuesday, 11/28: Chapter 18. Work and the Economy & reading on Bb

Thursday, 11/30: Chapter 19. Health and Medicine

Week 15, 12/5 & 12/7

Tuesday, 12/5: Chapter 19. Health and Medicine & reading on Bb

Thursday, 12/7: Exam 4 on Chapters 18 & 19

Class guidelines and ground rules

Discussing to Learn: Contribute ideas and views in the spirit of inquiring and learning together, rather than trying to debate or win arguments (unless the activity is designed as a debate or to assess best arguments).

Mindful Listening: Listen actively with attention and respect for what others are saying, without interrupting or tuning out to focus on preparing one's own contribution.

Stepping Up/Stepping Back: Pay attention to the voices in the room and be mindful of one's contributions. Are there patterns regarding which voices are being heard and which are not? How do I fit in these patterns? Is there need to step back and let others have opportunity to contribute? Is there need to step up and contribute more? Do we feel empowered to hold ourselves accountable for our class participation dynamics?

Listening Lenience: Remember that we are learning together and may not necessarily get something right the first or even second try. Practice being lenient with oneself and with others. Restating what someone just said can provide them an opportunity to clarify or revise their statement. Similarly, it is good practice to state when you say something not quite right and then try to state it again or ask for help in saying it.

Seek Clarification: Seek clarification when you are confused or have doubts, and also before you pass judgment on what another is saying. Practice statements such as "Are you saying that...?" or "What I hear you saying is..." or "If I understand you correctly...."

Ideas not Individuals: Focus on engaging others' ideas not judging or criticizing individuals. Asking for clarification can be helpful, and using language such as "The idea I hear you saying is..." (rather than "you said") or "I don't agree with that idea..." (rather than "I don't agree with you").

Support Our Statements: Offer supporting evidence of some kind to back up your contributions, such as data, clear reasoning or reference to a text, and be aware that your own experience or an anecdotal story may not fit a larger pattern. Remember that being an exception does not discredit a rule.

Emotional Awareness: Recognize that emotions are part of learning, and everyone can get emotionally worked up at any time. Remember that feelings are real and common yet are often temporal and will pass. Feelings also tend to be reactive and shaped by past experiences or other factors not necessarily present in the moment – this means reflecting more deeply about one’s own feelings and why they might be arising, and being compassionate about what may be happening for others who express strong emotions. Feelings are also not inferences, meaning that one’s feeling about something is a feeling, not an attribute about something else (e.g. feeling discomfort does not mean another person is trying to make me feel uncomfortable; or, feeling another person’s anger does not mean they are angry at me).

A Part is Not the Whole: Remember that your view or experience is your view or experience, a partial opening onto the whole, and not necessarily a general view or experience of everyone; nor are the views or experiences of others necessarily going to match your own. And, just as you cannot represent an entire group of people, nor can anyone else represent a group of people. It is quite okay for everyone to speak their truth and their experience, but working from individual views and experiences to more general ideas or conclusions often requires considerable work.

Complex Issues are Not Simple: There are no easy answers or simple solutions for complex issues. The goal is not for one view to prevail over others or to arrive at consensus but to find ways to inquire and work together to advance inquiry and understanding.

Acknowledge Offense: If you feel offended or sense others may be offended, speak up and acknowledge that you feel offended or sense that others might be. Agree as a group to pause so that everyone can consider their own feelings and consider what may or may not have been intended by a particular comment or moment.

Written or compiled by Jason Schreiner, Teaching Engagement Program, University of Oregon 3 updated February 2017