American Society
(SOCI 1301-002, CRN 11155)
Course Syllabus
Fall, 2026.

College: Liberal Arts
Department: Sociology & Anthropology
Term: Fall 2026, Aug. 24-Dec 3, 2026.
Meeting Days: Monday and Wednesday
Time: 1:30 PM-2:50 PM
Location: Old Main, room 214
Meeting: In person
Instructor: Oscar Bueno, M.A.
Email: oibuenocarbaja@miners.utep.edu
Office Hours: By appointment. Old Main, room 213
LMS: Blackboard (announcements, readings, quizzes, submissions)
Course Modality: Primarily in person. The first week, August 24–28, will be completed online asynchronously. The September 23 class will also be asynchronous. All other meetings will take place in Old Main 214 unless otherwise announced through Blackboard.

Required materials:
Conerly, T. R., Holmes, K., & Tamang, A. L. (2021). Introduction to sociology 3e. OpenStax. https://openstax.org/details/books/introduction-sociology-3e

Course Description

This course covers foundational terminology and concepts in sociology as they relate to social institutions, the development of society, characteristics of group life, and social inequalities. The course should cover debates about class, race, gender, power, and social justice.

Flexibility clause. Any change will be posted on Blackboard with clear instructions and updated deadlines.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Apply the Sociological Imagination: Apply the sociological imagination to analyze everyday life and contemporary social problems within the United States and the Borderlands, distinguishing between personal troubles and public issues.
- Utilize Major Theoretical Perspectives: Compare and apply major sociological frameworks—including structural functionalism, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism, and feminist perspectives—to evaluate how social institutions, power structures, and systems of stratification operate.

- Implement Sociological Research Methods: Conduct a disciplined and ethical non-participant observation, distinguish observation from interpretation, and recognize the differences and relationships between qualitative and quantitative evidence.
- Synthesize Social Identity and Stratification: Analyze how socially constructed identities—including race, ethnicity, gender, and social class—intersect with institutions to shape systemic inequalities, collective action, and life chances.
- Communicate a Collaborative Sociological Analysis: Develop an evidence-based StoryMapJS that applies the sociological imagination, course concepts, and theoretical perspectives to a social problem in American Society viewed from the Borderlands.

Assessments & Weights (Total = 100%)

- Weekly quizzes—15%
    - Quizzes assess preparation for class and familiarity with OpenStax, complementary readings, and assigned media. They are completed in Blackboard, normally by Sunday at 11:59 p.m. Twelve quizzes are planned; the two lowest scores are automatically dropped. Quizzes cannot be made up after answers are released, except for documented university-authorized circumstances.
- Midterm and final exams —40%
    - The midterm (20%) and final (20%) measure understanding and application rather than isolated vocabulary. Both use mainly auto-graded items plus one short sociological application. The final is cumulative, with greater emphasis on the second half of the course. The university final-exam period for this class is Wednesday, December 9, 1:00–3:45 p.m.; delivery details will be announced on Blackboard.
- Sociological Practice Journal —20%
    - The journal is a four-entry field notebook. Each entry begins with a short, ethical non-participant observation in a public or semi-public setting. Entries are submitted separately in Blackboard and build toward the final project.
- Team Final Project — 20%
    - Teams of 4–5 students will create a public-facing analysis of a social problem in American society, examined from the borderlands. The project must connect social theory to everyday life and demonstrate the sociological imagination. Detailed instructions and the grading rubric will be posted on Blackboard.
- Attendance — 5%.
    - Attendance is mandatory.
    - Absences will be excused only with appropriate documentation or by prior agreement with the instructor.

Late Work

- **No late submissions are accepted for quizzes.**
- Submissions received after the deadline are subject to a 10% grade reduction per 24-hour period (up to a maximum of 72 hours). After 72 hours, late submissions will automatically receive a grade of zero (0).

Grading Scale

- 90–100 = **A** | 80–89 = **B** | 70–79 = **C** | 60–69 = **D** | Below 60 = **F**
- A final grade of C (70%) or higher is required for this course to satisfy UTEP Core Curriculum requirements.

Academic Integrity & AI Use

- Cite all sources properly.
- AI tools may be used only for language support, brainstorming, and structural organization when permitted by the assignment.
- AI may not replace assigned reading, observation, source evaluation, or sociological analysis.
- Permitted AI assistance must be disclosed in a brief Assistance Note.
- Submitting AI-generated substantive content or analysis as one's own work constitutes academic dishonesty, whether or not the tool is disclosed.

Accessibility & Accommodations (CASS)

- Students requiring accommodations must contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Accommodation notifications may be submitted at any point during the semester. CASS is located in Union East 106 and can be reached at 915-747-5148 or cass@utep.edu.
- The instructor will collaborate with CASS to ensure equal access.

Title IX Statement

UTEP strictly prohibits all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment. Campus resources, safety protections, and official reporting procedures apply to ensure a safe learning environment.

Professional Conduct & Netiquette

- Log in regularly, come prepared to engage respectfully, and actively contribute to all online activities.
- Standard netiquette rules apply strictly to all discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback, and online communications to ensure a supportive learning environment.

Tips for Success

- **Reach out early:** Talk to the instructor as soon as you find yourself struggling with a concept or a deadline—do not wait until the end of the term.
- **Submit partial work:** Turn in your assignments even if they are not perfect. A partial grade is always significantly better than a zero (0).
- **Utilize extra credit:** Take advantage of extra credit opportunities whenever they become available. Small points can make a meaningful difference in your final course grade.

Weekly course map

MODULE	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	READINGS / MULTIMEDIA	ASSESSMENTS	INTERACTIONS	OUTCOMES
Week 1: Thinking Sociologically **Online asynchronous**	Define sociology. Explain the sociological imagination. Distinguish personal troubles from public issues. Recognize sociology in everyday life.	Read and watch assigned materials. Complete self-introduction and class survey. Conduct a brief observation of everyday social life.	OpenStax Ch. 1: An Introduction to Sociology. C. Wright Mills, "The Promise" (excerpt). Crash Course Sociology: What Is Sociology?	Quiz #1.	Blackboard welcome activities. Class survey. Course Questions forum. Instructor announcements and feedback.	Apply the sociological imagination to an everyday experience and distinguish personal troubles from public issues.
Week 2: Society, Interaction, and Theory	Identify major sociological perspectives. Compare macro- and micro-level explanations. Connect theory to social interaction and border life.	Analyze one social situation through multiple theories. Review aggregate class-survey results. Work in theory stations.	OpenStax Ch. 1 (theoretical perspectives) and Ch. 4: Society and Social Interaction. Selected Crash Course Sociology video.	Quiz #2. Practice Journal #1 launched.	Small-group theory stations. Whole-class report-back. Instructor feedback.	Compare functionalist, conflict, interactionist, and feminist interpretations of the same social situation.
Week 3: Sociological Research	Differentiate qualitative and quantitative methods. Distinguish observation from interpretation. Recognize ethical research practices.	Interpret class-survey data. Practice descriptive observation. Create a simple map of class affinities.	OpenStax Ch. 2: Sociological Research. Instructor research-methods materials.	Quiz #3. Practice Journal #1 due.	Observation lab. Small-group data interpretation. Peer comparison of fieldnotes.	Conduct an ethical non-participant observation and distinguish evidence, description, and interpretation.
Week 4: Culture and the Borderlands	Define culture, norms, values, symbols, and sanctions. Explain cultural variation and ethnocentrism. Analyze borderlands culture sociologically.	Analyze a cultural object or practice. Map visible and invisible norms. Discuss cultural meanings across contexts.	OpenStax Ch. 3: Culture. Selected article, podcast, or video on border culture (TBA)	Quiz #4. Practice Journal #2 launched.	Cultural-object groups. Norms and symbols activity. Collective discussion.	Explain how meanings, norms, and symbols organize everyday life in American society and the borderlands.
Week 5: Socialization, Groups, and Organizations **Sept. 23 asynchronous**	Explain socialization and the life course. Identify roles, statuses, groups, and bureaucracies. Analyze self-presentation across settings.	Map agents of socialization. Analyze roles and institutional expectations. Complete an asynchronous organizational case.	OpenStax Ch. 5: Socialization and Ch. 6: Groups and Organization. Selected multimedia (TBA)	Quiz #5.	Small-group role mapping. Asynchronous case analysis. Instructor feedback through Blackboard.	Analyze how identities and behaviors are shaped through socialization, groups, and organizational settings.
Week 6: Deviance and Social Control	Define deviance, sanctions, and social control. Compare theories of deviance. Examine who has power to define normality.	Compare cases of rule enforcement. Apply labeling, conflict, and functionalist perspectives. Discuss formal and informal control.	OpenStax Ch. 7: Deviance, Crime, and Social Control. Selected contemporary case or video (TBA)	Quiz #6. Practice Journal #2 due.	Case-analysis teams. Structured debate. Instructor synthesis.	Explain how deviance is socially constructed and how institutions differentially enforce norms.
Week 7: Social Stratification and Inequality	Define stratification, class, status, and life chances. Identify mechanisms that reproduce inequality. Apply theory to border inequality.	Complete a life-chances simulation. Map unequal access to resources. Analyze a current example of stratification.	OpenStax Ch. 9: Social Stratification in the United States. Short contemporary reading or multimedia. (TBA)	Quiz #7. Practice Journal #3 launched.	Simulation teams. Border-inequality mapping. Class debrief.	Explain how social structures distribute opportunities, constraints, and risks unequally.
Week 8: Integration and **Midterm**	Integrate foundational concepts, theories, and methods. Apply them to unfamiliar cases. Identify a sociological problem for collaborative analysis.	Review through concept mapping and case stations. Complete midterm. Form StoryMapJS teams and explore possible topics.	Review OpenStax Ch. 1–7 and 9. Instructor review materials.	Midterm Exam. StoryMapJS project launched.	Collaborative review. Team formation. Initial project consultation.	Synthesize concepts, theoretical perspectives, and evidence in a sociological explanation.

Week 9: Race and Ethnicity	Explain the social construction of race and ethnicity. Distinguish prejudice, discrimination, and institutional racism. Analyze racialization and power.	Analyze a contemporary institutional case. Apply racial-formation concepts. Develop the StoryMap sociological question.	OpenStax Ch. 11: Race and Ethnicity. Selected short reading or multimedia. (TBA)	Quiz #8. StoryMap topic proposal.	Case-analysis groups. Team proposal workshop. Instructor feedback.	Analyze how racial and ethnic categories interact with institutions to shape inequality and life chances.
Week 10: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality	Distinguish sex, gender, and sexuality as sociological categories. Explain gender socialization and inequality. Apply intersectional analysis.	Construct an intersectionality matrix. Analyze gendered institutions and interactions. Develop the StoryMap source map.	OpenStax Ch. 12: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality. Selected article or video. (TBA)	Quiz #9. Practice Journal #3 due. StoryMap source map.	Intersectionality groups. Team research workshop. Peer source review.	Explain how gender and sexuality intersect with race and class across everyday life and institutions.
Week 11: Family and Education	Explain family and education as social institutions. Compare institutional functions and inequalities. Connect institutions to life chances.	Compare institutional arrangements. Analyze education or family through competing theories. Build the StoryMap storyboard.	OpenStax Ch. 14: Marriage and Family and Ch. 16: Education (selected sections). Selected multimedia. (TBA)	Quiz #10. StoryMap storyboard.	Institution-comparison teams. Storyboard workshop. Instructor consultation.	Evaluate how family and education reproduce or challenge social inequalities.
Week 12: Government, Economy, and Work	Identify forms of authority and power. Explain relationships among government, economy, and labor. Analyze work in a transborder context.	Create a power map. Analyze a labor or border-economy case. Connect institutions to the project argument.	OpenStax Ch. 17: Government and Politics and Ch. 18: Work and the Economy (selected sections).	Quiz #11. Practice Journal #4 launched.	Power-mapping groups. Team evidence workshop. Collective case discussion.	Analyze how political and economic institutions organize work, mobility, and unequal access to resources.
Week 13: Health, Population, and Social Problems	Explain social determinants of health. Examine population and urbanization sociologically. Analyze how conditions become defined as social problems.	Conduct a framing analysis. Compare institutional and media definitions of a problem. Advance StoryMap production.	OpenStax Ch. 19: Health and Medicine and Ch. 20: Population, Urbanization, and the Environment (selected sections). Selected media. (TBA)	Quiz #12.	Framing-analysis teams. StoryMap production studio. Instructor feedback.	Evaluate how institutions, place, and inequality shape health, urban life, and definitions of social problems.
Week 14: Sociological Synthesis and Project Development **Thanksgiving week**	Integrate observation, theory, and evidence. Evaluate sociological arguments. Revise collaborative work for clarity and accessibility.	Complete peer review. Revise StoryMap argument, sources, visuals, and citations. Connect Practice Journal evidence to the project.	Team sources and draft StoryMap. No new textbook chapter. Nov. 26–27: university closed.	Practice Journal #4 due. StoryMap peer-review checkpoint.	Team production studio. Structured peer feedback. Instructor consultation.	Produce a coherent sociological argument connecting everyday experience to social structures and institutions.
Week 15: Social Movements and Social Change	Explain collective behavior and social movements. Compare theories of social change. Evaluate possibilities for collective action.	Analyze a social movement. Present and discuss StoryMaps. Synthesize the course and prepare for the final exam.	OpenStax Ch. 21: Social Movements and Social Change. Selected movement case or documentary excerpt.	Team StoryMapJS due. Final-exam review.	StoryMap showcase. Peer questions and feedback. Course wrap-up discussion.	Communicate an evidence-based analysis of a social problem and evaluate possibilities for social change.