

*Course Outline*

EST 203

# **INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY**

**David Sonnenfeld, Ph.D., Instructor**

*Dept. of Environmental Studies*

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry  
*Spring 2022, TuTh 9:30-10:50 am, Bray 321*

## **DESCRIPTION**

### **Overview**

A long-established, social scientific field of inquiry, sociology seeks to understand the human condition, asking questions about the origins of and possible solutions to the deepest social problems, from the troubled angst of individuals to the sustainability of our global home. This is a broad, introductory course on principles and methods of sociology including group dynamics and development, different structural arrangement of social groups, community development and adjustment processes, and humans' relationships with the natural environment. Successful completion of this course will provide students with a beginning understanding of sociological concepts and theories, and their application, laying the foundation for further studies on particular topics, and sociological insights on everyday life, including both self and society. Course methods include reading, writing, and lectures; in-class Q&A and discussion are vital components of the learning process. Over the course of the semester, each student will write weekly journal entries on the week's readings; three, take-home formal essay assignments; and a two-part final paper. Successful completion of this course satisfies SUNY's General Education Social Science requirement.

### **Objectives**

#### *Course learning outcomes*

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Apply basic sociological concepts, theories, and methods to better understand contemporary social problems;
- Discuss the role social institutions, social structures, and social systems play in socialization and social control, and inequality; and
- Apply sociological thinking to their own lives, organizations, communities, and society/ies, more broadly.

#### *SUNY General Education requirements*

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to demonstrate:

- Knowledge of major concepts, models, and issues of at least one discipline in the social sciences; and

- An understanding of the research methods used by social scientists to explore social phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and employment of mathematical and interpretive analysis.

### *B.S. Environmental Studies program learning outcomes*

- Critical thinking
- Interdisciplinary synthesis
- Communication skills

### *ESF undergraduate learning outcomes*

- Values, ethics, and diverse perspectives
- Critical thinking
- Technological and information literacy
- Communication skills

### **Requirements**

- Read all required texts
- Attend class meetings/ lectures regularly
- Participate in course discussions
- Write a series of weekly journal entries (@ 250 words)
- Complete three formal essay assignments (@ 3-5 pp.)
- Complete final paper, w/ Parts A & B

### **Grading**

Essay assignments (3), 45%

Final paper (parts A & B), 30%

Weekly journal entries (12) & participation, 25%

### **Communication**

Office: Baker Lab 214

Hrs. M 2:00 – 3:30 pm, Th 11:00 am – 12:30 pm, & by appointment

Tel. 315.470.4931 (office), 315.464.0084 (voice/ text)

E-mail: [dsonn@esf.edu](mailto:dsonn@esf.edu)

URL: <https://www.esf.edu/es/sonnenfeld>

### **TEXTS**

#### **Required**

Giddens, Anthony, Mitchell Duneier, Richard Appelbaum, and Deborah Carr. 2021. *Essentials of Sociology*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: W.W. Norton. ISBN 978-0-393-53792-5

#### **Recommended**

Best, Joel. 2012. *Damned Lies and Statistics: Untangling Numbers from the Media, Politicians, and Activists*, updated ed. Berkeley: University of California Press. ISBN 978-0-520-27470-9

hooks, bell. 2008. *Belonging: A Culture of Place*. New York: Routledge. ISBN 978-0-415-96816-4

Mendenhall, Emily. 2022. *Unmasked: COVID, Community, and the Case of Okoboji*. Vanderbilt University Press. ISBN: 978-0-826-50452-4

Vance, J.D. 2018. *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*. New York: Harper. ISBN 978-0-062-30055-3

Note: *Each student is required to select and closely read one (1) recommended text, above, of your choosing, for Part A of your final paper. The assignment involves writing a thoughtful and original, critical review essay on the text. Detailed instructions to come...*

## **Bookstore**

Syracuse University Online Textbook Store: <https://syracuse.ecampus.com/>

## **ASSIGNMENTS** (via Blackboard)

Weekly journal entries (due ea. Thursday, beginning 2/3)

Essay #1, "Individuals and Society" (due Tues., 2/22)

Essay #2, "Organizations, Institutions, and Economy" (due Tues., 3/22)

Essay #3, "Urbanization, Inequality, and Globalization" (due Tues., 4/12)

Final paper (parts A & B; due by end of regularly scheduled final exam period for this course)

Note: *All deliverables are due prior to the beginning of class on the designated dates.*

## **WORKING SCHEDULE**

(See next page)

## **WORKING SCHEDULE**

### **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

#### **Week 1 – What Is Sociology?**

##### ***Tues., 1/25: This course***

What is sociology?

What is the “sociological imagination”?

Aims of this course

Syllabus review

Questions?

REQUIRED

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch. 1, “Sociology: Theory and Method,” pp. 2-10 (9 pp.)

##### ***Thurs., 1/27: Sociological theory and methods***

Sociology’s theoretical foundations

Sociological research methods

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch. 1, “Sociology: Theory and Method,” pp. 11-39 (28 pp.)

RECOMMENDED:

Best, Damned Lies and Statistics

### **PART II: INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETY**

#### **Week 2 – Nature or Nurture?**

##### ***Tues., 2/1: Culture and society***

What is culture?

How has industrialization shaped modern society?

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch.2, pp. 40-71 (31 pp.)

##### ***Thurs., 2/3: Sociology of gender***

Nature or nurture?

Gender inequality

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch. 9, pp. 262-297 (35 pp.)

\*\*\* Weekly Journal Entry #1 due (*Essentials*, ch's 2, 9) \*\*\*

### **Week 3 – Socialization, the Life Course, and Families**

#### ***Tues., 2/8: Socialization, the life course, and aging***

How are children socialized?

Five major stages of the life course

Aging and society

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch.3, pp. 72-103 (31 pp.)

#### ***Thurs., 2/10: Families and intimate relationships***

Sociological perspectives on the family

Marriage and romantic partnerships

New family forms

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch. 11, pp. 338-375 (37 pp.)

\*\*\* Weekly Journal Entry #2 due (*Essentials*, ch's 3, 11) \*\*\*

### **Week 4 – Social Interaction**

#### ***Tues., 2/15: Social interaction and everyday life***

What is social interaction?

Social roles

Social interaction in everyday life

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch. 4, pp. 104-131 (18 pp.)

\*\*\* Essay #1 – Individuals and Society (due Tues., 2/22) \*\*\*

#### ***Thurs., 2/17: Review***

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

\*\*\* Weekly Journal Entry #3 due (*Essentials*, ch.4) \*\*\*

## **PART III: ORGANIZATIONS, INSTITUTIONS, AND ECONOMY**

### **Week 5 – Social Networks, Groups, and Organizations**

#### ***Tues., 2/22: Social networks and groups***

How do we benefit from social networks?

The Internet as social network

What are social groups? How do they work?

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch. 5, pp. 132-144 (13 pp.)

#### ***Thurs., 2/24: Organizations***

How do organizations function?

Is bureaucracy an outdated model?

How do organizations and groups affect your life?

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch. 5, pp. 145-159 (15 pp.)

\*\*\* Weekly Journal Entry #4 due (*Essentials*, ch.5) \*\*\*

### **Week 6 – Institutions**

#### ***Tues., 3/1: Education and religion***

Why are education and literacy important?

Education and inequality

Sociological perspectives on religion

Religion and everyday life

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch. 12, pp. 376-413 (37 pp.)

#### ***Thurs., 3/3: Political sociology***

Sociology the “the state”

Sociology of democracy

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch.13, pp. 414-433 (19 pp.)

\*\*\* Weekly Journal Entry #5 due (*Essentials*, ch 12) \*\*\*

## **Week 7 – Economy and society**

### ***Tues., 3/8: Economic sociology***

The social significance of work

Key elements of the modern economy

Work and everyday life

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch. 13, pp. 434-453 (19 pp.)

### ***Thurs., 3/10: Review***

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

\*\*\* Weekly Journal Entry #6 due (*Essentials*, ch.13) \*\*\*

\*\*\* Essay #2 – Organizations, Institutions, and Economy (due Tues., 3/22) \*\*\*

## **SPRING BREAK**

## **PART IV: URBANIZATION, INEQUALITY, AND GLOBALIZATION**

## **Week 8 – Communal Life**

### ***Tues., 3/22: Crime and deviance***

What is deviance?

Why do people commit deviant acts?

How do we document crime?

Who are the perpetrators?

How do crime and deviance affect your life?

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch. 6, pp. 160-195 (35 pp.)

### ***Thurs., 3/24: Urban sociology***

How do cities develop and evolve?

Rural, suburban, and urban life

Urbanization around the world

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch. 15, pp. 490-506 (16 pp.)

\*\*\* Weekly Journal Entry #7 due (*Essentials*, ch's 6, 15) \*\*\*

## **Week 9 – Social Difference, Inequality, and Racism**

### ***Tues., 3/29: Stratification, class, and inequality***

What is social stratification?

What is social class?

Causes and consequences of social inequality

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch. 7, pp. 196-231 (36 pp.)

### ***Thurs., 3/31: Race, ethnicity, and racism***

Race and ethnicity

Race, ethnicity, and inequality

Racial and ethnic antagonism

Racism

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch. 10, pp. 298-337 (40 pp.)

\*\*\* Weekly Journal Entry #8 due (*Essentials*, ch's 7, 10) \*\*\*

## **Week 10 – Sociology of the World-system**

### ***Tues., 4/5: Global inequality***

What is global inequality?

Daily life in rich vs. poor countries

Sociological theories of the world-system

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch. 8, pp. 232-261 (30 pp.)

\*\*\* Essay #3 – Urbanization, Inequality, and Globalization (due Tues., 4/12) \*\*\*

### ***Thurs., 4/7: Globalization***

What is “globalization”?

What factors contribute to it?

Globalization and everyday life



Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch.2, pp. 63-71; ch. 16, pp. 528-536; 546-564 (34 pp.)

\*\*\* Weekly Journal Entry #9 due (*Essentials*, ch's 8, 16) \*\*\*

## **PART V: HUMANS' RELATIONSHIPS WITH NATURE**

### **Week 11 – Attitudes, Values, and the Environment**

#### ***Tues., 4/12: Humans and the environment***

Humans in natural environments

Natural and artificial environments

Social constructions of nature

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Sutton, Philip W., Ch. 1, "Natural Environments." Pp. 1-17 in *The Environment: A Sociological Introduction*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press (2007). 17 pp.

Sutton, Philip W., Ch. 2, "Knowing the Environment." Pp. 18-37 in *The Environment: A Sociological Introduction*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press (2007). 20 pp.

RECOMMENDED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch.2, pp. 49-53 (5 pp.)

\*\*\* Final Paper Part A (due Final Exam week) \*\*\*

#### ***Thurs., 4/14: The social construction of the environment***

An environment of the senses

Ecological citizenship

Naturework and its uses

Tossing nature out the window?

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Sutton, Philip W., Ch. 3, "Experiencing the Environment." Pp. 38-54 in *The Environment: A Sociological Introduction*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press (2007). 17 pp.

Čapek, Stella. Ch. 2, "The Social Construction of Nature." Pp. 11-24 in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*, eds. Kenneth A. Gould & Tammy L. Lewis. New York: Oxford University Press (2009). 14 pp.

\*\*\* Weekly Journal Entry #10 due (Sutton, ch's 1-3; Čapek) \*\*\*

## **Week 12 – Humans and the Global Environment**

### ***Tues., 4/19: Population and the environment***

World population growth  
Demographic transition theory  
Population policy and critiques

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED

Humphrey, Craig R., Tammy L. Lewis, and Frederick H. Buttel, ch. 3, “Population and the Environment.” Pp. 69-106 in *Environment, Energy, and Society: A New Synthesis*. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth/ Thomson Learning (2002). 38 pp.

RECOMMENDED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch. 15, pp. 507-526 (19 pp.)

### ***Thurs., 4/21: The sociology of sustainable development***

The historical context  
Corporate sustainable development  
Managerial approaches to sustainable development  
Alternative paths

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED

Humphrey, Craig R., Tammy L. Lewis, and Frederick H. Buttel, ch. 7, “The Sociology of Sustainable Development.” Pp. 220-264 in *Environment, Energy, and Society: A New Synthesis*. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth/ Thomson Learning (2002). 44 pp.

\*\*\* Weekly Journal Entry #12 due (Humphrey, et al., ch’s 3, 7) \*\*\*

\*\*\* Final Paper Part B (due Final Exam week) \*\*\*

## **Week 13 – Collective Behavior and the Environment**

### ***Tues., 4/26: The environmental movement***

Social movement concepts  
Origins of American environmentalism  
Contemporary environmental movements  
Environmental movement outcomes

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED

Humphrey, Craig R., Tammy L. Lewis, and Frederick H. Buttel, ch. 6, "The Environmental Movement." Pp. 175-219 in *Environment, Energy, and Society: A New Synthesis*. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth/ Thomson Learning (2002). 45 pp.

RECOMMENDED:

Giddens, et al., *Essentials*, ch. 16, pp. 538-545 (8 pp.)

**Thurs., 4/28: Organizing the ecological society**

The attitude-behavior split

The problem of collective action/ the tragedy of the commons

Dialogue, democracy, and the environment

Reorganizing communities, societies, and ourselves

Q&A

Discussion, in small groups

REQUIRED:

Bell, Michael Mayerfeld, with Michael S. Carolan. Ch. 10, "Organizing the Ecological Society." Pp. 223-250 in *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Pine Forge Press/ Sage (2004). 28 pp.

\*\*\* Weekly Journal Entry #11 due (Humphrey, et al., ch. 6; Bell, ch. 10) \*\*\*

**Week 14 – Conclusion**

**Tues., 5/3: Review**

Conclusion and review

Q&A

Discussion

**Final Exams, 5/6 – 5/12**

\*\*\* Final Paper (parts A & B) due, via Blackboard, by end of regularly-scheduled exam period (TBA) for this course. \*\*\*

**NOTICES**

(See next page)

## **NOTICES**

### **COVID-19 protocols**

Students in this course are required to follow ESF's evolving Covid-19 protocols and restrictions. These can be found on the college website at: <https://www.esf.edu/restart/>.

### **Accommodations**

SUNY-ESF works with Syracuse University's Center for Disability Resources (CDR) in assisting students with learning and physical disabilities. If you think you may need accommodations in this course related to a disability, you may contact the ESF Division of Student Affairs, 110 Bray Hall, tel. 315.470.6660, or email [studenthelp@esf.edu](mailto:studenthelp@esf.edu), for assistance with the process. You may also contact CDR directly via their website at <https://disabilityresources.syr.edu>; or call 315.443.4498 or email [disabilityresources@syr.edu](mailto:disabilityresources@syr.edu) for more detailed information. CDR is responsible for coordinating disability-related academic accommodations and will work with the student to develop an access plan. Since academic accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ESF's Division of Student Affairs or CDR as soon as possible to begin this process.

### **Academic integrity**

*Plagiarism* is presenting others' work as your own without acknowledgment of its source(s). Plagiarism includes verbatim and close paraphrasing of material from course texts and other published materials, cutting and pasting from electronic sources, and unattributed paraphrasing. Acts of academic dishonesty are defined in the [ESF Academic Integrity Handbook](#) and violate the College's *Code of Student Conduct*. Students are accountable for such acts. If you have any questions about how to properly quote or reference others' work, please consult writing reference texts, your instructor, or other campus resources.

### **Personal electronics**

This course is intended to be an educational experience for all. To ensure that the classroom environment is conducive for learning, please follow these guidelines in use of personal electronics: *Cell phones* should be *off* while class is in session. If you need to maintain your phone on silent mode due to a personal emergency, please notify the instructor in advance. Digital devices may be used for reading, note-taking, and course-related research activities. *Text messaging, social media* viewing, updating, etc., during class is disruptive and not permitted. Use of *ear buds* or *earphones* during class is uncondusive to participation and is not permitted. Disruptive behavior is a violation of [ESF's Code of Student Conduct](#). Students who are disruptive may be asked to leave the classroom; persistent disruptions will have further consequences. Thank you for helping us all get the most out of class.

### **Fire alarm procedures**

If a fire alarm sounds, exit the building immediately to the designated area for this course. Stay together as a class until released. Take all personal belongings with you, including electronics, backpacks, coats, and keys. Please let your instructor know in advance if you might have any special needs in case of a building evacuation. For further information, contact the ESF Division of Student Affairs, 110 Bray Hall, tel. 315.470.6660, or email [studenthelp@esf.edu](mailto:studenthelp@esf.edu).