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**FALL 2007**  
**SOCIOLOGY 101**  
**Introduction to Sociology and Social Problems**



*"It is by means of the sociological imagination that humans hope to grasp what is happening to themselves as minute points at the intersection of biography and history within society." C. W. Mills*

Late one summer night a police officer observed a motorcycle traveling at speeds of nearly 100-mph and running stop signs. The officer chased the motorcycle into the city of Benton Harbor where it hit a building and finally stopped. The driver of the motorcycle died at the scene.

Surprisingly, the incident provoked outrage in the Benton Harbor community and led to a violent standoff between police and scores of rioters. The ensuing two nights of rioting saw an estimated 300 people take to the streets, and at least a dozen buildings and as many cars set ablaze. One bystander was shot and at least 15 other people were hurt. "It looks like a war zone," is how one resident described the scene.

Many people living in surrounding communities met reports of the incident with shock and disbelief. Their reaction was, in part, due to the destructive nature of the outburst that burned a large section of this economically depressed city. It was, however, also provoked by the reason given for the riot. Many did what they did because they felt persecuted, or as one young male put it: "We're tired of it! We're sick of them killing us!" The riot and the explanation given for it incensed many outside observers, some of whom asked: "Was it not the motorcyclist who broke the law in the first place? Weren't the police simply upholding the law?"

Because of their explosive and destructive nature, riots are the objects of great fascination and study. Riots are forms of collective behavior that occur periodically in society, but they typically endanger only people and property within the neighborhoods of the individuals perpetuating the violence. So, why do they happen? Why did this riot *really* occur?

There are, of course, many ways to look at human events and behaviors. The *perspective*, or point of view, that people use determines which facts become important and suggests how these facts can be woven together to form a coherent pattern of meaning. The police officers investigating the riot would use one perspective. They would focus on piecing together what happened, and on identifying and apprehending the individuals involved. This point of view is concerned primarily with accurately describing what happened and establishing a course of action to be taken in accordance with the law.

A psychiatrist could offer another perspective, one that might be applied to an offender's behavior. From a psychiatrist's point of view, the most important issue is the state of mind that

led the individuals to act in such wanton violence. In this case, the psychiatric perspective would isolate a different set of facts and prescribe a response based on appropriate medical principals.

Sociologists bring yet another perspective to understanding human behavior. A sociologist attempting to make sense of this incident would note, at the very least, that most of the offenders were young males, and that they were all African Americans. Moreover, a sociologist would look for commonalties between this incident and other riots, and try to determine what (if anything) is generalizable. For example, are young males from disadvantaged groups statistically more likely to participate in riots than are other groups?

Notice that the facts highlighted by the sociological perspective differ in a crucial way from those noted by police or psychiatrists. The police are concerned with facts that pertain to this one, specific situation. Knowing that an offender is male is useful only insofar as it leads to identifying *which* male was involved. Likewise, psychiatrists seek out the personal traumas that may have contributed to an explosive outburst in a particular person. Both police and psychiatrists share the assumption that, in important respects at least, every crime and every person is unique. In contrast, a sociologist looks beyond any *particular* event or person to understand how and why one *category* of people behaves differently from another.

This brief example illustrates the important idea that, to a large degree, reality depends on the perspective we use. In this course you will be introduced to the sociological perspective (or what C. W. Mills in the above quote calls the sociological imagination), and how social forces affect our everyday lives.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

There are three principal objectives in this course:

- a. to invite you into the world of sociological understandings by exposing you to our concepts, theories, and research methods used by sociologists to study society.
- b. to initiate in you something of a "sociological perspective" from which to view and better comprehend the social world in which we all live; and
- c. to help make you a better consumer of data and research we confront everyday in newspapers, television, and the Internet.

Note: This class is a "flagged" course. This means that a majority of the material deals with issues of class, race, gender, nationality, or age. Sociologists have long been interested in how these characteristics become culturally defined and, in the process, culturally valued. You are required to take 4 credits of "flagged" courses during your Hope College career (I strongly encourage you to take more). Completing Sociology 101 fulfills this core requirement.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

We will be using James Henslin's, Essentials of Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach (7th Edition) as our main textbook. Henslin has long used "everyday life" to inform his sociological imagination, and this new edition of his text follows that approach. This book will

be listed as “**H**” under the reading assignments.

Available with your textbook is a free on-line study guide. To access the study guide, logon to [http://wps.ablongman.com/ab\\_henslin\\_essentials\\_7](http://wps.ablongman.com/ab_henslin_essentials_7) and select the chapter you want to review. The guide offers chapter summaries, flashcards of key concepts, and multiple choice questions to review.

Also accompanying your text is an anthology with readings related to many of the topics we will be covering. James Henslin also authors the anthology, Exploring Social Life. Required readings from the anthology will be listed as "**R**" under the reading assignments.

The third required book for our course is Luis Alberto Urrea’s The Devil’s Highway. This book reveals the story of two dozen immigrants, one-half of whom lost their lives attempting to enter the United States illegally. We will read and discuss The Devil’s Highway during Hope’s annual *Critical Issues Symposium* week, which this year is focused on issues related to immigration. Using Urrea’s book you will write a short essay looking at illegal immigration from a sociological perspective.

The final required text for our course is a workbook by Steven Barkan entitled Discovering Sociology. This workbook contains computer lab exercises that will be assigned during the course.

## EXAMS

There will be a total of four examinations given during the course. Exams will consist of multiple-choice and essay questions covering the assigned chapters from the text (“Essentials”) as well as the readings from *Exploring Social Life* and class notes. The final exam will be cumulative. Exams are to be taken on the day they are scheduled and makeup exams will be offered only when the instructor has excused a student’s absence prior to an exam.

## COMPUTER EXERCISE ASSIGNMENTS

Sociology 101 qualifies for a Social Science I class with the accompanying lab. To demonstrate how social scientists do research, a total of twelve computer out-of-class exercises are required. Lab assignments are due on the day they are scheduled. Because each lab exercise corresponds with the readings and topics for that week, late exercises will **not** be accepted. There are a total of 13 lab assignments listed in your syllabus, including one assignment (Exercise 1) that will be completed during class time. Only the 12 highest lab scores will be counted toward your final grade (i.e. your lowest scored lab will automatically be dropped).

## CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION

Classroom discussions are of vital importance to students’ learning. In addition to helping you understand the concepts, theories, and arguments covered in the textbook and lectures, your participation in classroom discussions and exercises will benefit other students as well. The many and varied ideas and viewpoints introduced in our discussions will help us all to begin grasping the complexity of contemporary social problems. Therefore, **regular contributions to class discussions will be considered in determining final grades**. To be a regular contributor, of course, requires you to attend class and to have completed the assigned

readings. There are also 16 in-class exercises that will be randomly assigned during the course. Students must be attendance on the day an in-class exercise is given to receive credit for it.

## GRADING

Final grades will be calculated on the following basis:

Regular Exams at 100 points each	3 x 100 = 300
Final Exam (cumulative) at 150 points	1 x 150 = 150
Book Essay ( <u>The Devil's Highway</u> ) at 50 points	1 x 50 = 50
Out-of-class computer exercises at 10 points each	12 x 10 = 120
In-class exercises at 5 points each	16 x 5 = <u>80</u>
TOTAL POINTS	700

Grades will be determined using the following cutoff points:

100-93 = A	76-73 = C
92-90 = A-	72-70 = C-
89-87 = B+	69-67 = D+
86-83 = B	66-63 = D
82-80 = B-	62-60 = D-
79-77 = C+	< 60 = F

## SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

Note: H = Henslin's Essentials of Sociology (7<sup>th</sup> ed.)

R = Readings from Henslin's Exploring Social Life (3<sup>rd</sup> ed..)

Date	Class Topic	Reading Assignment
W – 8/29	Course Introduction	
F – 8/31	Introducing the discipline of Sociology The where, why, when, and who of the discipline?	H: 1-14
M – 9/3	Introduction to ExplorIt: Class will meet in <b>Martha Miller Center, Rm. #240</b> <b>Bring your Barkan workbook to class!</b>	Barkan workbook: Exercise 1
W - 9/5	Developing a Sociological Imagination “ <i>An Invitation to Sociology</i> ”	H: 14-20 R: Reading #1
F - 9/7	Research and Sociology How sociologists do their research	H: 20-33
M - 9/10	What is Culture? “ <i>The Fierce People</i> ” <b>Lab Exercise 2 Due</b>	H: Chapter 2 R: Reading #2
W - 9/12	Nature vs. Nurture: What makes humans different?	H: 58-69
F - 9/14	Gender Roles and the Socialization Process “ <i>Anyone’s Son Will Do</i> ”	H: 69-81 R: Reading #3
M - 9/17	Social Structure – The Macrosociological Perspective <b>Lab Exercise 3 Due</b>	H: 82-97
W - 9/19	Social Interaction – The Microsociological Perspective “ <i>Diary of a Homeless Man</i> ”	H: 97-111 R: Reading #4
F - 9/21	Groups and Formal Organizations “ <i>Just Another Routine Emergency</i> ”	H: Chapter 5 R: Reading #5
M - 9/24	<b>**EXAM #1**</b>	
W – 9/26	Deviance and Social Control Why is there deviance?	H: Chapter 6
F – 9/28	“ <i>Becoming a Prostitute</i> ” <b>Lab Exercise 5 Due</b>	R: Reading #6
M – 10/1	Global Stratification	H: Chapter 7
W - 10/3	<b>CRITICAL ISSUES SYMPOSIUM – No Class</b>	
F – 10/5	Illegal immigration in sociological perspective <b>**Book Essay Due**</b>	
M – 10/8	Social Class in the U.S. “ <i>The Uses of Poverty: The Poor Pay All</i> ” <b>Lab Exercise 6 Due</b>	H: Chapter 8 R: Reading 8
W – 10/10	Race and Ethnicity: Intergroup relations in global perspective	H: 220-234
F – 10/12	Race and Ethnicity American style “ <i>Showing My Color</i> ” <b>Lab Exercise 7 Due</b>	H: 234-253 R: Reading 9
M - 10/15	<b>FALL RECESS – No Class</b>	
W - 10/17	Sex, Gender, and Inequality “ <i>Sick Societies</i> ” <b>Lab Exercise 8 Due</b>	H: 254-276 R: Reading 10

<b>F - 10/19</b>	Age and Inequality	H: 276-289
<b>M - 10/22</b>	<b>** EXAM #2 **</b>	
<b>W - 10/24</b>	Social Institutions: The Family	H: 322-334
<b>F - 10/26</b>	The Myth of the Traditional American Family: Contemporary American Families <b>Lab Exercise 11 Due</b>	H: 334-351
<b>M - 10/29</b>	<i>"When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work"</i>	R: Reading 12
<b>W - 10/31</b>	Education in Global perspective	H: 352-363
<b>F - 11/2</b>	Problems in American Education <i>"College Athletics and Role Conflict"</i> <b>Lab Exercise 12 Due</b>	H: 363-366 R: Reading 13
<b>M - 11/5</b>	Religion in Sociological Perspective What are the sociological functions of religion?	H: 366-374
<b>W - 11/7</b>	Religion in America: Issues of religious diversity	H: 375-381
<b>F - 11/9</b>	The World of Politics: <i>"The Power Elite"</i>	H: 290-304 R: Reading 11
<b>M - 11/12</b>	Capitalism and Socialism: <i>"From Village to Factory"</i> <b>Lab Exercise 13 Due</b>	H: 304-321 R: Reading #7
<b>W - 11/14</b>	<b>** EXAM 3 **</b>	
<b>F - 11/16</b>	Population in Global Perspective: The three demographic variables <b>Lab Exercise 15 Due</b>	H: 382-396
<b>M - 11/19</b>	Fertility – "Why have children?"	Handout Reading
<b>W - 11/21</b>	Mortality – "AIDS: The Plague of the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century"	Handout Reading
<b>F - 11/23</b>	<b>THANKSGIVING RECESS – No Class</b>	
<b>M - 11/26</b>	Urbanization: The Rise of Cities and Urban Populations	H: 397-406
<b>W - 11/28</b>	Urbanism: City Life and Urban Problems <i>"Streetwise"</i> <b>Lab Exercise 16 Due</b>	H: 406-413 R: Reading #14
<b>F - 11/30</b>	Social Change and Technology in Developing Societies: <i>"The McDonaldization of Society"</i>	H: 414-424 R: Reading #15
<b>M - 12/3</b>	Social Change and Technology: in the United States <i>"How Many Sexual Partners Do Americans Have?"</i> <b>Lab Exercise 9 Due</b>	R: Reading #16
<b>W - 12/5</b>	Social Movements as a Source of Social Change	H: 424-437
<b>F - 12/7</b>	Wrap-up Day	
<b>W - 12/12</b>	<b>** Final Exam – 8:00am **</b>	
<b>W - 12/12</b>	<b>** Final Exam – 2:00pm**</b>	