

Cedar Crest College  
Introduction to Culture and Society  
Fall 2009

Course: SOC 100-80

Credits: 3

Central Curriculum Requirement:

Social Sciences (SS)

Meets: W, 7-9:30 p.m.

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Course Domain:

This course is designed to provide an overview of sociology. Its main objective is the definition and elaboration of sociological concepts, which when meaningfully applied, will enable the student to fundamentally grasp social realities in a systematic, reliable manner. In addition to serving as a basic course for students who plan to take other courses in sociology, the course is designed to equip students for informed participation in social processes and institutions, both from an appreciative and a change agent stance.

Course Objectives:

This course should enhance the student's fundamental grasp of the following "life skills":

1. Ability to view the world more objectively;
2. Ability to understand group dynamics;
3. Ability to understand and evaluate human problems;
4. Ability to understand our personal problems in a broader social context;
5. Ability to facilitate large group discussions;
6. Ability to critically think in formulating opinions and to discuss issues with an open mind.

Course Outcomes:

By introducing you to the three main paradigms in sociology, this course will enable you to:

1. Examine the importance of the sociological perspective in understanding personal and social problems that confront us on a daily basis;
2. Connect our personal and social problems to societal structures;
3. Engage the three dominant sociological paradigms to help critically think through the complex personal and social issues with which we are confronted on a daily basis;
4. Understand the implications of global problems such as poverty and inequality and their impact on gender, race, age and ethnicity; and

5. Understand how social structures such as the family, education, religion, economy, polity, and medicine play key roles in determining our realities and experiences.

**Texts:**

Finsterbusch, K. (2008). *Taking sides: Clashing views on controversial social issues*. (15th ed.) Guilford, CT: Dushkin Publishing Group.

Macionis, J.J. (2009). *Sociology* (12th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

**Student Assignments:**

Each student is expected to fulfill the following assignments:

1. To read all assigned readings in advance of class sessions so as to meaningfully participate in class discussions. We all had opinions on various social issues before we shared this course. In reading assigned articles we become more informed than before and are then able to more meaningfully participate as students and as citizens in promoting social change.
2. To regularly attend and participate in class sessions. Attendance will be taken and will comprise a portion of the course grade. You will be graded according to the percentage of the scheduled full class sessions you attend. There are several avenues to learning in addition to reading. Another avenue is testing your thinking in class discussions and with interchanges with the instructor. Moreover, by regularly attending class you will at least subliminally experience the oratorical stylings and spell-binding informative presentations of the instructor.
3. To work with a small group of students in creatively facilitating class discussion on selected issues from the *Taking Sides* text. The class will grade this facilitation according to the following three criteria: Relevance to the topic, that the group used a creative format for facilitating discussion that effectively enhanced learning, and that the group provided good follow-up to the class discussion that the format initiated. The key point is to provide lively, informed discussion of that topic for no less than 50 minutes. Working cooperatively in teams is a fundamental skill for effective and creative participation in all aspects of social life. This assignment also provides an opportunity for students to develop skills in making effective oral presentations in facilitating discussion. This is also a fundamental life skill.
4. To write an (350-400 words) informed personal opinion statement on each of the *Taking Sides* issues that will be discussed in class. Each of these statements must be based on and reflect the student's understanding of the "yes" and "no" articles associated with the issues. At least three direct quotes from the articles must be included along with the page numbers in parentheses. Students may also include in each statement issues or concepts in support of their personal opinions which they believe the authors didn't adequately consider. The personal opinion statement for each issue is due at the beginning of class on the day on

which that issue is scheduled to be discussed according to the daily class plan. A personal opinion statement written inadequately or handed in late will receive only half credit and must be submitted no later than the last day the course is scheduled to meet. Statements with less than **350** words may not be resubmitted. All multiple-page papers not stapled will receive only half credit. Statements submitted late must meet all other criteria in order to receive half credit.

These statements provide an opportunity for students to develop their critical thinking skills on complex social issues in a written format. The follow-up class discussions enable students to consider other points of view in further establishing their positions on these social issues. No one side has the whole “truth.” Each side makes a meaningful contribution to a synthesis of ideas that comprises a more holistic approach to what is the “truth.” We must seek to develop an open mindedness as we necessarily take positions on social issues while continuously being open to new evidence that may persuade us to alter our positions.

5. To prepare for and successfully complete three multiple choice exams which will test the student’s mastery of concepts covered in the Macionis text. Each exam will cover eight chapters. Review sheets will be presented for each of the three exams indicating all of the topics covered by the exams.

### Classroom Protocol

Appropriate classroom behavior is implicit in the Cedar Crest College Honor Code. Such behavior is defined and guided by complete protection for the rights of all students and faculty to a courteous, respectful classroom environment. That environment is free from distractions such as late arrivals, early departures, inappropriate conversations and any other behaviors that might disrupt instruction and/or compromise students’ access to their Cedar Crest College education.

*Furthermore:*

Students are expected to have prompt and regular classroom attendance in accordance with the policy stated on the syllabus.

Faculty are expected to make clear on the first day of class reasons for specific classroom decorum and repercussions for noncompliance. Faculty should be aware of setting boundaries and procedures for exceptions to expectation stated in the syllabus.

### Honor Philosophy

The Cedar Crest College Honor Philosophy is based upon the principle that, as a self governing body, students have the ability to create an atmosphere of trust and support. Within this environment, individuals are empowered to make their own decisions, develop personal regard for the system under which they live, and achieve a sense of integrity and judgement that will guide them through life.

Grading:

Class attendance, preparation and participation	25%
Facilitation of class discussion	10%
Written personal opinion statements	20%
Three multiple choice exams (each worth 15%)	<u>45%</u>
	100%

Course Outline:

- I. Overview of Sociology
  - A. The Sociological Perspective
  - B. Sociological Investigation
  
- II. Sociological Concepts, Perspectives and Foundations
  - A. Culture
  - B. Society
  - C. Socialization
  - D. Social interaction in everyday life
  - E. Groups and organizations
  - F. Déviance
  - G. Sexuality
  
- III. Social Inequality
  - A. Social stratification
  - B. Social class in the U.S.
  - C. Global stratification
  - D. Race and ethnicity
  - E. Sex and gender
  - F. Aging and the elderly
  
- IV. Social Institutions
  - A. The economy and work
  - B. Politics and government
  - C. Family
  - D. Religion
  - E. Education
  - F. Health and medicine
  
- V. Social Change
  - A. Population and urbanization
  - B. Collective behavior and social movements
  - C. Social change: traditional, modern, and postmodern societies

## Daily Class Plan

### January

- 21 Course overview  
C.1 The Sociological Perspective  
C.2 Sociological Investigation
- 28 C.3 Culture  
C.4 Society  
Student facilitated discussion on *Taking Sides* #3, “*Is Third World Immigration a Threat to America’s Way of Life?*”

### February

- 4 C.4 Society  
C.5 Socialization  
Student facilitated discussion on *Taking Sides* #6, “*Should Same-Sex Marriages Be Legally Recognized?*”
- 11 C.6 Social Interaction in Everyday Life  
C.7 Groups and Organizations  
C.8 Sexuality and Society
- 18 C.8 Sexuality and Society  
C.9 Déviance  
Student facilitated discussion on *Taking Sides* #16, “*Should Marijuana be Legalized?*”
- 25 Exam on C.1-8  
C.9 Déviance  
C.10 Social Stratification

### March

- 4 C.11 Social Class in the United States  
C.12 Global Stratification  
Student facilitated discussion on *Taking Sides* #7, “*Is Increasing Economic Inequality a Serious Problem?*” and #12, “*Has Welfare Reform Benefited the Poor?*” (One student group will facilitate discussion on both topics. All students, including the student group, should choose just one of the two issues on which to write their reaction paper.)
- 11 **BREAK**

- 18 C.13 Gender Stratification  
C.14 Race and Ethnicity  
Student facilitated discussion on *Taking Sides #9, "Has Affirmative Action Outlived Its Usefulness?"*
- 25 C.14 Race and Ethnicity  
C.15 Aging and the Elderly  
C.16 The Economy and Work
- April
- 1 Exam on C.9-16  
C.17 Politics and Government  
C.18 Family
- 8 C.18 Family  
C.19 Religion  
Student facilitated discussion on *Taking Sides #17, "Does the Threat of Terrorism Warrant Curtailment of Civil Liberties?"*
- 15 C.20 Education  
C.21 Health and Medicine  
Student facilitated discussion on *Taking Sides #14, "Should Biotechnology Be Used to Alter and Enhance Humans?"*
- 22 C.21 Health and Medicine  
C.22 Population, Urbanization, and Environment  
C.23 Collective Behavior and Social Movements  
C.24 Social Change: Traditional, Modern, and Postmodern Societies
- 29 Exam on C.17-24  
Course Wrap-up: Prescription for a New Future