

SOC 108
Thinking Global: An Introduction to Sociology
Spring 2009
MTh 11:10-12:20
PNW 116

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Office Hours: M 12:30-1:30, Th 10-11 or by appt.

I. Overview:

How are your personal problems related to larger issues in society and the world? To what extent is your trajectory as a college student in the US shaped by global economic and socio-political forces? In this course, you will come to understand sociology as a unique set of tools with which to interpret your relationship to a global socio-political landscape. By integrating classic readings in the discipline of sociology with the principles of global political economy and development studies, we will analyze and contextualize a range of social, economic, and political phenomena at the scales of the global, the national, the local, and the individual.

Because the course surveys a wide-ranging set of topics in sociology, drawing from a diverse set of readings, a key aim of this course will be to learn to read social science texts critically, making connections between them and learning to formulate critical questions. To this end, classtime and assignments will ask students to delve into the readings deeply to formulate better-informed questions about the world we live in and our place in it.

II. Required Text

McLeod, Jay. *Ain't No Makin' It*.

Note: You are welcome to purchase older editions of the book than the one available at the bookstore. If we end up reading the newer sections, access to those sections (through e-reserve) will be provided.

III. Grading and Assignments:

Students will be graded according to the following written assignments:

- 1) **Weekly reading responses** (<500 words): In these assignments, you will reflect upon the readings for the week and connect them with material covered earlier in the class. Although these are not summaries, you must touch briefly upon the key arguments for each reading in these responses. Each student must post one response to the course conference per week and I encourage you to read one another's responses.
- 2) **Participation/Attendance:** Discussion, exchange, and participation is a critical part of this class and classtime will be important in facilitating your understanding of the readings. Therefore, attendance is mandatory. More than two absences during the course of the term will dramatically affect your participation grade.
- 3) **3 Thinkpieces** (750-1000 words or 3-4 pages double-spaced): Thinkpieces flesh out the key themes of the class in the form of short essays. You will respond to prompts to be

handed out in class. These papers are formal and must be constructed around a central argument in response to a selected prompt. You are also free to come up with your own topics, but they must be approved in advance.

- 4) **Final Exam (Take-Home):** The Final Exam will include several identifications (to be described in a 1-3 sentences), a few short essays (outlining the key aspects of a specific topic in a paragraph), and one long essay (an analytical question that will ask you to draw upon the readings to analyze a specific issue).

Assignments will be weighted in the final grade as follows:

Reading responses/participation: 25%

Thinkpieces: 45% (15% each)

Exam: 30%

**A note about grading:* I grade work according to quality, effort, and a demonstrated understanding of the key concepts of the course/assignment. A grade of “B” indicates good work. It means that you have made adequate effort, have shown that you understand the main ideas, and have met the expectations of the class. To get a grade in the “A” range, your work must surpass those expectations. In short, “A’s” are for work at an excellent level. Grades of “C” or below indicate that you have not fulfilled the expectations of the coursework, either by not completing the assignment or by not putting in the required time and effort.

IV. Course Outline and Readings (on e-reserve unless otherwise noted):

February 2-5: Introduction & The Sociological Imagination

- C. Wright Mills (1959) “The Sociological Imagination.”
- Mary Romero. (1992) “Intersection of Biography and History: My Intellectual Journey,” from *Maid in the USA* pp 1-15

February 9: Sociology as a Concept & Method

- Earl Babbie. (1994) “An Idea Whose Time has Come.” from *Sociological Spirit: Critical Essays in a Critical Science*. (to be distributed in class)
- Emile Durkheim. *Suicide*. pp 208-215, 217-223

February 12-19: Conceptualizing Global Inequality

- Galbraith, John. (2002) “A perfect crime: inequality in the age of globalization.” *Daedalus*. Winter 131(1), 11-25.
- Frank, Andre Gunder. 1966. “The Development of Underdevelopment” *Monthly Review*. 18(4):17-31
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1974. "The Rise and Demise of the Capitalist World System." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 16(4): 387-415. (available online through Wellesley library)
- Sen, Amartya. 1999. “The Ends and Means of Development.” In *Development as Freedom*. New York: Anchor Books. 35-53.

February 23-26: Sociology of Class

- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. "Manifesto of the Communist Party" (pp 473-491) and selections from *The German Ideology* (pp 155-163) in Robert Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*.
- G. William Domhoff, "Who Rules America? The Corporate Community and the Upper Class." from *Who Rules America: Power and Politics in the Year 2000*.
- Reich, Robert. 2006. "The New Rich-Rich Gap." *Newsweek*. Available online at: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/10206251/site/newsweek/>
- Veblen, Thorstien. *The Theory of the Leisure Class*.

March 2-5: Sociology of Gender

- Cynthia Enloe. *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*. (selection)
- Hartmann, Heidi. 1983. "Capitalism, Patriarchy and Job Segregation by Sex." Pp 193-225 in E. Abel and E.K. Abel (eds) *The Signs Reader: Women, Gender and Scholarship*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Nickel and Dimed*. (selections)

March 9-12: Sociology of Race

- Berreman, Gerald. D. 1972. "Race, Caste, and Other Invidious Distinctions in Social Stratification." in Norman Yetman (ed.) *Majority and Minority: the dynamics of race and ethnicity in American life*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon (1991)
- Pager, Devah. (2003) "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol 108, No. 5 (March 2003) (available online through Wellesley library)
- In-Class film: *Race: The Power of an Illusion* (Part 1)
- THINKPIECE I DUE ON MARCH 12

March 16-19: Sociological Perspectives on Intersectionality

- Patricia Hill Collins. 1990. *Black Feminist Thought*.
- Thai, Hung. 2002. "Clashing Dreams: Highly educated overseas brides and low-wage U.S. husbands." In Hochschild, AR & Barbara Ehrenreich (eds.), *Global Woman*. Owl Books.
- Ong, Aihwa. (2003) "The Ambivalence of Salvation" in *Buddha is Hiding*. University of California Press.

SPRING BREAK: MARCH 23-27

March 30-April 2: Sociology of the Global Political Economy

- Reich, Robert. *The Work of Nations*. (selections)
- Cowie, Jefferson. 1999. *Capital Moves: RCA's 70-Year Quest for Cheap Labor*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. (selections)

April 6-16: Social Institutions I: Education

- McLeod, Jay. *Ain't No Makin' It*. (selections)

- THINKPIECE II DUE APRIL 16

April 20-23: The Family/The Household

- Hochschild, Arlie. *The Time Bind: When Work becomes Home and home becomes work.*
- Wolf, Diane. *Factory Daughter.* (selections)

April 27-30: Social Institutions III & IV: The State and the “Free” Market

- Friedman, Thomas. 2005. “While I was sleeping.” In *The World is Flat: a brief history of the twenty-first century.* New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 3-47.
- Przeworski, Adam. 1992. “The Neoliberal Fallacy.” *Journal of Democracy* Special Issue (July): 45-60.
- Evans, Peter et al. (1985) *Bringing the State Back In. Introduction.*

May 4-7: Agents of Change

- Margaret E. Keck & Kathryn Sikkink. *Activists Beyond Borders.* (selections)
- Evans, Peter. Counterhegemonic Globalization. *Contemporary Sociology*
- Basu, Amrita. 1995. “Introduction” in Amrita Basu (ed.), *The Challenge of Local Feminisms: Women’s Movements and Global Perspective.* Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press: 1-21.

May 11: Wrap up/review for final exam

- THINKPIECE III DUE MAY 11