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Course Syllabus
SOC 2201/W02, CRN# 81681
Principles of Sociology
Online Course
Kennesaw State University
Fall 2012

IMPORTANT!!!
I EXPECT STUDENTS TO READ THE SYLLABUS IN ITS ENTIRETY!
Throughout the course I will NOT be able to reply to routine questions with answers already provided in the syllabus!!

Required Text:

The course uses one major textbook: Sociology: A Global Perspective, by Joan Ferrante, 7E, Thomson Wadsworth 2008 which is available at the campus bookstore. Everyone in the course is required to have a copy of this text. The textbook will refer you to its supporting website, which has a host of additional helpful learning services, so you will have to check it out:

www.thomsonedu.com/sociology/ferrante

(then click on Student: Companion site)

Course Content Description

This course is intended as a general introduction to Sociology. Many students begin this course with basic questions such as: “*What do sociologists study? Is it something like psychology*”...? Like other social scientists, sociologists are interested in people; but unlike psychologists, who focus mainly on the individual’s perception of circumstances and his response to them, sociologists seek to understand primarily how society and social groups shape the individual. The academic discipline of Sociology encompasses analysis of a wide array of social issues, from a diversity of perspectives, including culture, inequality in society, deviance and crime, families and workplaces. They share a common approach of viewing society through the lens of a *sociological imagination*. This means that large institutions such as the family or the economy, or social structures such as gender, race, class, age, or the times one lives in (historical period), all external to the individual, become crucial in understanding personal troubles. As sociologist C.

* The best way to reach me is via the e-mail function in Vista.

Wright Mills warned us, an honest understanding of our own experiences and chances in life comes only from locating ourselves within our period and from becoming aware of the experiences of individuals in our circumstances. In C. Wright Mills' words, this can be "*a terrible lesson and in many ways, a magnificent one*". The goal is to critically engage the issues and it is recommended that students attempt to think about how each theory and/or issue relates, or does not relate, to their own lives and experiences. By the end of this course, you should be able to develop your own sociological imagination - a trait that will aid you in any career or simply in understanding life itself .

Learning Objectives

This is a broad and introductory course with several broad and general objectives:

1. Students will become familiar with the broad themes of the discipline of Sociology. This will be measured by assessments [exams] that test comprehension of major themes and terms in each chapter.
2. Students will study the key concepts of Sociological thinking, and the key terms of the discipline, also tested in the exams.
3. Students will engage and interpret the course chapters and themes by participating in discussion forums for each chapter specified in the syllabus, and by preparing for the two examinations scheduled at the end of each module.
4. Students will translate the primary Sociological theories, methods and themes into their real life by expressing how these relate to themselves in the discussion threads.
5. Students will develop their communication and critical thinking skills by actively participating in discussion forums for each chapter and practicing responsible and civil engagement of complex, varied and sometimes controversial issues. Communication skills will also be developed by careful consideration of key terms, comparisons and contrasts framed in the multiple choice questions on the exams.
6. Students will reflect on each chapter and determine what they need to understand better, what they do or do not agree with, and what questions they wish to ask. These will all be reflected in the discussion forums, and will give students a chance to clarify information and concepts before each exam.

Minimum Technology Requirements, Course Strategies and Methods

This is an entirely online course and will be conducted entirely through GeorgiaView Vista. You will begin by logging in here:

<http://vista.kennesaw.edu/>

Students are expected to have the necessary computer background to work in this format, and are advised to seek additional technical assistance from computer services if needed [See resource links in Welcome Module]. Students will be expected to read each assigned chapter carefully, and then to use the linked PowerPoint presentations and Chapter Objectives under each module, as review material. The reading schedule is not "written

in stone” but we will advance largely according to the schedule specified at the end of the syllabus.

Discussion Board Posts. For each chapter students will be expected to make at least 1 substantive dialogue contribution to ongoing discussions that will occur online.

The assigned chapters will be grouped together into 3 modules of several chapters each. After each module there will be an online assessment: a Quiz, a Midterm and a Final. [See schedule on the last two pages of the present syllabus]. Questions will be mainly multiple-choice. The **Vista-based e-mail** and the **Announcements** tool will be our forms of communication. I will often post under Announcements with important updates and general comments, so please make sure you always check the announcement page. Students can also contact me via Vista-based e-mail.

IMPOPRTANT (read all!!)

On-line Discussion/Participation Requirement

1. *Introduce yourselves.* The first participation will be Student Introductions, the Discussion Thread for which will be found in Start Here/Welcome Module. Instructions will be found at the top of the Discussion Thread, and this will take the place of the typical in-class go-around introductions.

2. *Participation on discussion forums.* Students are required to participate in the discussion threads for each chapter as we proceed through the syllabus, **with the very minimum of one post per chapter, and more strongly encouraged.** This is the best way for you to ask questions, make comments, clarify notions, and demonstrate that you have read, understood and taken interest in the chapters. The discussions will be multi-directional: *student-student* (agree/disagree, add, clarify, ask related question, critique) *student-content* (share understanding of readings, ask questions, critique, add) *student-instructor* (answer/ask questions, critique, agree, etc) and *instructor-student* (general key posts, reply to specific posts, etc). From past experience, more than 1000 postings will likely be made by students during our term, and the instructor will reply to about 10% of the total postings, often engaging a whole thread at one time. The instructor’s posts will often include one key answer that may address posts by several students, with the purpose of clarifying important concepts for everyone.

The due date for the mandatory first post on the chapter of the week will be the end of the week in question (Friday). At all times, we will attempt to stick to the schedule for readings specified on the last page of this syllabus. Posting in retrospective IS possible: you can always go back and re-visit or link to older topics. For example, just because we find ourselves in the week assigned to Chapter 2 and we are posting on the board for Chapter 2, does not mean that posts on the Chapter 1 board can no longer be made. We can always go back with the newly acquired knowledge, make connections and post on

recent chapters/boards. However, keep in mind that posts in retrospective (that is, posts on a board we have covered in a previous week) should be additional follow-ups / further dialogue and NOT your first mandatory post on that board. As mentioned above, the first post (which for some will be the only one) is due by the end of the week (Friday)!

The instructor will often post in RETROSPECTIVE. This is to allow all students to finish their posts for the week and to provide summary replies/responses in accordance to the needs of the class.

3. *Instructor's posts are mandatory reading.* While I allow for the possibility that you may skip some posts by your colleagues (though you are advised to review them all!), the Instructor's posts are **mandatory** reading each time. This means you will also have to cover all the posts I may reply to, in addition to those in which I clarify content directly. This is the part where I offer my guidance to students. This is similar to lecturing, clarifying concepts or moderating discussions in live, face-to-face classes. It is the nature of an online class that students end up a bit more "on their own" than it might be the case for a traditional, face-to-face class. This is my way of ensuring that students are not left with unaddressed issues or misunderstood, disconnected or disorganized knowledge.

4. *Once-per-module post connecting various media with a textbook topic.* Students are asked to read available newspapers, local or national/international, and connect with sociological themes being covered at that time in our textbook. **A minimum of one time per module, students need to cite a news story** in their discussion posts, explaining the story they saw, how it relates, and also providing the citation for the news story: name of publication, date, page number [or website address].

5. *Content of posts.* The instructor is more interested in the *content and substance* of your comments, than their length. In fact, long postings should generally be avoided, as it is expected that everyone in the class will read all the postings as they develop into a large group conversation.

Basic grammar should be taken into account; spell checking and proof reading are mandatory. Consult the Writing Center [see: Links Page in Welcome Module] for assistance with writing. However, **content** will remain foremost for assessment purposes. The instructor will qualitatively evaluate students' posts throughout the semester based on the degree to which posts reflect a thorough and accurate understanding of the issues discussed. Opinions expressed are open to you and your personal creativity and perspective. These discussions are, by definition, subjective, so rather than grading based on right-or-wrong, the instructor will evaluate your discussion postings for:

- consistency of engagement
- depth of analysis (superficial posts with simplistic arguments will be graded less).
- logic
- engagement with chapter concepts
- engagement with other students in the discussions

Regarding the latter criterium, students should consider writing some of their posts IN REPLY to another thread started by a colleague, instead of always starting their own. Make sure though that your reply brings further substance to the conversation and is not reduced to something along the lines of “*I agree with you, Jenny, you make a good point*”. That kind of post will HARDLY count. You will need to explain why you agree with Jenny and add more arguments in support of what she said.

Finally, DO NOT give boring titles to your posts and do not simply summarize what the textbook said. Avoid titles like “Ch 2” or a mere summary, as nobody will be interested in reading what you have to say, let alone posting a reply. Choose some attention-grabbing titles that will prove you are trying to make an interesting point related to the readings and will entice colleagues into a conversation.

6. Sociological, NOT psychological, perspective!!

Students are required to address issues from *a sociological perspective*; mere talk about personal feelings (Oprah style) or random anecdotes, without placing such example in sociological context or linking them to sociological themes/ theories, will not be good enough for a maximum score on participation

7. Statistics. At the end of the course, the instructor will also get statistics for how many postings each student read, how many posts were made, and how many hours the student spent on the site.

8. Impact on final grade. A total of 20% of your grade will be determined by the online course participation as a partial measure of individual work on the readings.

9. Board interaction.

Critical thinking is highly advisable. Questions are encouraged. Polite disagreements are fine. However:

- *Respect is a basic necessity in all online interactions.* When critiquing a theory, point of view, etc., the arguments must be sound, well-reasoned, logical (or based on evidence) and respectful. DO differentiate between critiquing an idea (which is not only fine, but also advisable) and ad-hominem attacks! The latter means attacking the person who expressed a point of view you tend to disagree with.
- *Language and tone are important.* According to KSU Computer Usage Policy and Guidelines [www.kennesaw.edu/infosec] you may not employ lewd or threatening language in any electronic communication. This would violate the bounds of good taste as well as laws and regulations. Please see the Etiquette Statement in the Welcome Module for a more detailed discussion.

Extra-Credit

I will offer only one extra-credit opportunity for those of you who will want to excel in this class. The assignment will consist of reading a book titled “**Bottleneck: Humanity’s Impending Impasse**” by **William R. Catton, J.** You are strongly advised to start reading

this book from the mid part of the semester so you will have enough time to digest it over the next 15 weeks. Realizing that you need extra points to your Final Grade at the last minute and starting to read the book a night before the extra-credit assignment is due will not work in this case. I warn you that this is not an easy, “fluffy”, intuitive read but rather a sociological masterpiece, highly relevant to what is happening to all of us around the globe today!.

At the end of the semester, you will formulate the required post on the last discussion board. This last post on Board 16 will be an essay about modernity which EVERYONE will be required to post. **The extra-credit will consist of integrating Twenge’s and Campbell’s ideas in the essay**. In other words, you will draw on this book to formulate your reply for the last discussion board. “Drawing” doesn’t mean “agreeing with everything”. You should certainly read the book with a critical and reflective eye but keep in mind that simply dismissing an author and his thesis just because you don’t like what you hear doesn’t count for a sound intellectual argument. Arguments along the lines of “it’s just her opinion!” are simply not acceptable. In order to substantiate why a certain thesis is not valid you would have to back it up with strong empirical evidence, logical arguments and sound, well-argued ideas.

All in all, you will have to demonstrate in your essay that you **read, understood and critically reflected on the book’s overall message and the way it relates to the topic of your essay**.

When you write your final post at the end of the semester (on Ch 16), be sure you include “Twenge/Campbell” in the title so I know you completed the extra-credit assignment.

This reading assignment is entirely optional and it will be **the only** extra-credit opportunity available in this class.

It will add a maximum of 4 points to your final grade and it is also very likely to maximize your board participation grade.

Exam Schedule and Format

a. Strategy

Please make a note of the exam schedule and plan accordingly. After the Midterm exam is completed, the next Module of the course will open in WebCT. Exams are essentially open book; students can take them wherever they can log on to a high-speed computer. But study and preparation are necessary because the exams are *timed* and the clock starts as soon as you begin, so there will not be time to look up answers. You must be prepared in advance to do well on the tests. The exams will have approximately 50 questions (multiple-choice format) with an allotted time of 90 minutes. The questions asked in exams will primarily cover the major issues and concepts covered in the text and on the discussion boards, as opposed to obscure dates, individual places and names, or the most

briefly discussed concepts. The Midterm will provide feedback for students as the course gets underway.

b. “Make-Ups”

Every semester it is inevitable that some students will produce more or less “compelling and verifiable” reasons as to why they could not come to class or be online on a specific date and time at which a test was scheduled. When teaching large numbers of students, lecturers can hardly afford to launch investigations into the worth of each and every one of such claims. To avoid requests for Make-Up Exams - which can affect the well-functioning of the entire course - I have included a “Grace Day” for each test. This means that once a test is open it will remain open through the end of the next day. Unlike the rigid schedule of an exam to be taken at a specific hour, you will have the option of taking the exam on the day scheduled OR any time during the next day. Again, do remember that once you open and begin taking the exam, you will only have the allotted time.

Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will requests for make-ups be possible beyond the “grace” days. If a student is not able to take the exam during the days in which the exam is generously made available – he/she will have to “make do” with a 0 score on that specific test .

c. Schedule

QUIZ (at the end of Module 1)	Sep 27, 8:00 am- Sep 28, 9:00 pm, 9:00 pm
MIDTERM EXAM (at the end of Module 2)	Nov 1, 8:00am- Nov 2, 9:00pm
FINAL EXAM (at the end of Module 3)	Dec6 8:00 am – Dec 7, 9:00 pm

d. Exam Study Assistance and Study Guides

To help you prepare for exams, the textbook comes packaged with a Study Guide. It also has a useful companion website with glossary and a host of exercises to help you study. Use these aids extensively when preparing for exams. However, for every exam, your best study guide will be the CORE CONCEPTS in each chapter. I will not provide Study Guides tailored specifically to questions on the exam.

Disabled Student Services Statement

Kennesaw State University welcomes all students, recognizing that variations of abilities contribute to a richly diverse campus life. A number of services are available to help students with disabilities with their academic work. In order to make arrangements for special services, students should visit the disabled Student Support Services office and/or make an appointment to arrange an individual assistance plan. For more information, visit the office's website at: http://www.kennesaw.edu/stu_dev/dsss/dsss.html, or navigate to the Links Page in my Welcome Documents on the course's homepage. Please also feel free to contact the instructor directly with any questions or concerns you may have, using the WebCT email platform.

Website Links

Item 6 in the Welcome Documents Folder on the course's homepage is a list of useful links you may refer to throughout the semester. These include links to: Disabled Student Services, the Department of Sociology, KSU Financial Aid, the Counseling Center [CAPS], computer Tech Support, the Writing Center, KSU's Student Code of Conduct, and the Student Development Center.

Grading Formula

Board Participation, 20%
 Short Quiz, 20%
 Mid-Term, 30%
 Final, 30%

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE SOCI 2201 Fall 2012

W #	Date	Topic	Readings
MODULE 1: LIFE IS WITH PEOPLE <i>(Society, its basic structures, what keeps society together)</i>			
01	Aug 17	<u>Syllabus; Student introductions</u>	Chapter 1

	Aug 20 wk	The Sociological Imagination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is sociology, what do sociologists do? - Having a “sociological imagination”. - Social Structure and Individual Agency: the eternal interplay - Founding Fathers of Sociology - and what prompted them to found this discipline in the first place. 	
	Aug 24	First post for Ch 1 due	
02	Aug 27 wk	Theoretical Perspectives and Methods of Social Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sociological theories: Different ways of looking at society. - Methods of research: How do sociologists know what they know? 	Chapter 2
	Aug 31	First post for Ch 2 due	
03	Sep 3 Sep 4 week	LABOR DAY Social Interaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A social animal: solidarity and “the ties that bind” - Status and roles: Who’s who and who does what? - Social life is a “theater” 	Chapter 5
	Sep 7	First post for Ch 5 due	
04	Sep 10 wk	Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How culture shapes us and our social lives. - Elements of culture - What does the contemporary American culture look like? How is it different from that of previous generations? 	Chapter 3
	Sep 14	First post for Ch 3 due	
05	Sep 17 wk	Deviance, Conformity and Social Control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Socialization as a means of social control: Why do most people conform? - When socialization fails: Why do some people deviate from norms? - Labeling theory; Structural Strain theory 	Chapter 7
	Sep 21	First post for Ch 7 due	
06	Sep 24 wk	Module Review	
	Sep 27-28	QUIZ	Sep 27, 8:00 am- Sep 28, 9:00 pm
MODULE 2: LIFE IS AGAINST PEOPLE <i>(Social stratification and power; what pulls society apart)</i>			
07	Oct 1 wk	Formal Organizations	Chapter 6

	<p>Oct 4 Oct 5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Groups and organizations - Bureaucracy - Rationalization and the McDonaldization of society <p><i>"People Like Us" film opens</i></p> <p>First post for Ch 6 due</p>	
08	<p>Oct 8 wk</p> <p>Oct 10 Oct 12</p>	<p>Social Stratification (Class): A Hierarchical Animal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stratification systems - Theories of stratification/inequality - What is "class"? - Social Mobility and the American Dream <p><i>Due date for watching the film "People Like Us"</i></p> <p>First post for Ch 8 due</p>	Ch 8
09	<p>Oct 15 wk</p> <p>Oct 19</p>	<p>Race, Ethnicity and Racial Stratification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Racism, Prejudice, Discrimination - Minority groups - Immigration in a diverse society: Melting Pot, Salad Bowl or Pressure Cooker? <p>First post for Ch 9 due</p>	Ch. 9
10	<p>Oct 22 wk</p> <p>Oct 26</p>	<p>Gender: The social construction of sex differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is Biology Destiny?: Sociobiological interpretations of gender - Social Construction of Gender - Implications of gender inequality - Patriarchy, Feminism <p>First post for Ch 10 due</p>	Chapter 10 Post on joint Board 10+12
11	<p>Oct 29 wk</p> <p>Nov 1- Nov 2</p>	<p>Module Review</p> <p>MIDTERM EXAM</p>	<p>Nov 1, 8:00am Nov 2, 9:00pm</p>
MODULE 3: MAJOR SOCIAL INSTITUTION AND SOCIAL CHANGE			
12	<p>Nov 5 wk</p> <p>Nov 9</p>	<p>The Family: Is the oldest social institution breaking down or merely changing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family structure, family functions. - Historical Changes in family structure: the traditional extended family; the modern-nuclear breadwinner system; the contemporary dual-earner family and diversity in family forms. <p>First post for Ch 12 due</p>	Chapter 12 Post on joint Board 10+12
13	<p>Nov 12 wk</p>	<p>Economics and Politics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technological revolutions and changes in economic systems - Modern economic systems: capitalism and socialism as "ideal-types". 	Chapter 11

