

**Course Code and Title** : SOC 101 Introduction to Sociology (1<sup>st</sup> term 2009-2010)

**Instructors**

Professor Peter Baehr

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**Office hours:** Tuesday 11.30-12.20pm; 2.30-3.20;

**Wednesday: 11.30-12.20pm; Friday: 1.30-3.20pm**

**Brief Course Description**

This is an introductory course in Sociology, starting with an overview of the nature of the discipline, followed by a survey of various aspects of the structures and dynamics of social life. General and specific examples are used to illustrate how thinking sociologically adds to our knowledge of the world around us.

**Aims**

This course aims to introduce students to the methods, subject matter, and perspectives of sociology.

**Learning Outcomes**

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

- (1) recall fundamental perspectives, methods, and concepts in sociology
- (2) understand readings in basic sociology texts
- (3) effectively consolidate and communicate course materials in class discussions and presentations as well as in the form of academic essays
- (4) apply sociological thinking to analyze everyday social life issues

**Assessment and Measurement of Learning Outcomes**

Four assessment components measure the learning outcomes (LOs) listed above:

- 1. Tutorial discussion and participation (20%) (measures LOs 1 - 4)
- 2. Writing assignments (20%) (measures LOs 1 - 4)
- 3. Mid-term Test (20%) (**13<sup>th</sup> October**) (measures LOs 1, 2)
- 4. Final exam (40%) (exam week) (measures LOs 1 – 4)

Assessment	Points	Level of attainment/assessment criteria
<b>Leading a tutorial discussion, 10%</b> (individual or group, depending on class size)	8-10%	Demonstrate excellent preparation and understanding of the topic, able to lead and stimulate discussion, able to incorporate relevant materials from lectures and the textbook, able to consolidate and summarize discussion from the class in a meaningful manner, able to critically reflect on the discussion
	6-8%	Demonstrate adequate preparation and understanding of the topic, able to steer class discussion in a focused manner, able to incorporate some materials from lectures and the textbook, some critical reflection on the discussion
	4-6%	Demonstrate some preparation and understanding of the topic, able to incorporate some materials from lectures and the textbook

	0-3%	Lack of preparation and understanding of the topic, unable to incorporate materials from lectures and the textbook in the discussion
<b>Tutorial participation 10%</b> (individual)	8-10%	Nearly always participate in class tutorial discussions, demonstrate good understanding of sociological thinking through questions and comments on the discussion
	6-8%	Regular contribution to tutorial discussion, demonstrate some understanding of sociological thinking through questions and comments on the discussion
	4-6%	Sometimes contribute to tutorial discussion, limiting mainly to questions about facts and/or asking for clarification of concepts
	0-3%	Rarely contribute to tutorial discussions, seldom ask questions, offer insights or give comments
<b>Two papers on any tutorial topics 10% each</b> (at least one written individually)	8-10%	Demonstrate excellent understanding and application of contents covered in lectures and tutorials, clear and logical organization of paragraphs and contents, fluency of language use and conformity to styles of academic writing
	6-8%	Demonstrate good level of competence in the understanding and application of course contents, adequate consideration and effort in the organization and style of writing
	4-6%	Demonstrate some understanding and application of course contents, acceptable use of language and style
	0-3%	Demonstrate little understanding of course content and how they can be applied in daily life, careless in the organization of materials and below average ability in the use of language and conformity to academic writing style
<b>Mid-term test 20%</b> (multiple choice)	16-20%	Excellent ability to recall fundamental sociological perspectives, methods and concepts as covered in lectures, tutorials and the textbook
	11-16%	Good ability to recall fundamental sociological perspectives, methods and concepts as covered in lectures, tutorials and the textbook
	6-10%	Average ability to recall fundamental sociological perspectives, methods and concepts as covered in lectures, tutorials and the textbook
	0-5%	Poor ability to recall fundamental sociological perspectives, methods and concepts as covered in lectures, tutorials and the textbook
<b>Final exam</b> (multiple choice, short questions and/or long essay)	31-40	Demonstrate excellent level of accomplishment in all four learning outcomes under an exam environment
	21-30%	Demonstrate good level of accomplishment in all four learning outcomes under an exam environment
	11-20%	Demonstrate average level of accomplishment in all four learning outcomes under an exam environment
	0-10%	Demonstrate low level of accomplishment in all four learning outcomes under an exam environment

## Indicative Content

### 1. The Sociological Perspective

2. Culture
3. Socialization
4. Social Interaction in Everyday Life
5. Groups and Social Organizations
6. Deviance, Conformity and Social Control
7. Social Stratification
8. Gender, race and ethnicity
9. Families
10. Religion
- 11.

**Required/Essential Readings:**

Macionis, John J. 2008. *Sociology*. 12<sup>th</sup> edition. Pearson Education

You should read the relevant chapters in the textbook accompanying each lecture before coming to class.

**Recommended/Supplementary Readings:**

Berger, P. 1986. *Invitation to Sociology*. London: Penguin.

Cargan, Leonard and Jeanne H. Ballantine. 2000. *Sociological footprints : introductory readings in sociology*. Belmont, Calif. : Wadsworth Pub. Co

Charon, Joel M. 2004. *Ten Questions: A Sociological Perspective*. 2nd ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth

Collins, Randall. 1992. *Sociological insight: an introduction to non-obvious sociology*. New York : Oxford University Press.

Giddens, Anthony. 1982. *Sociology: a brief but critical introduction*. London : Macmillan.

Lau Siu-kai et al (eds.) *Indicators of social development: Hong Kong : (various years)*. Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, (various years).

Levin, William C. 1991. *Sociological ideas: concepts and applications*. Belmont, Calif. : Wadsworth.

Mills, C. Wright. 1970. *The Sociological Imagination*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Ruggiero, Vincent Ryan. 1996. *A guide to sociological thinking*. Thousand Oaks, CA : Sage Publications.

An important learning objective of this course is to develop students' skills in applying sociological thinking to everyday life. Pay attention, therefore, to local and international news. Make it a habit to scan daily newspapers and read up on items which are of particular relevance to that week's lecture and tutorial topics. Use the internet to search for facts and figures on Hong Kong society (try <http://www.gov.hk>)

**Course rules**

- Lectures follow the textbook closely so please get a copy from the bookstore or use copies in the library; lecture outlines and notices will be posted on WebCT – lecture outlines are merely extractions from the textbook NOT its substitute

- English is the medium of instruction for lectures, tutorials and all written work
- Each unjustified absence from tutorials will result in a 5% deduction from your final grade – if you are unable to come to class for legitimate reasons, notify your instructor well in advance so that alternative arrangements could be made. If you miss class because of illness or other unforeseeable circumstances, you must notify the instructor within 24 hours of your absence. In case of illness, show the instructor a doctor’s certificate; in case of other reasons, a written explanation together with any supporting documents must be given so as to avoid the 5% deduction.
- If you are late for a tutorial for 10 minutes or more, you will be considered absent
- Students shall be aware of University regulations about dishonest practice in course work and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations.  
Examples of dishonest practice include plagiarism (i.e. presentation of another person's work without proper acknowledgment of the source), copying the work of other students or deliberately allowing other students to copy from you (whether from this or any other institution), submitting the same piece of work for more than one course.
- Supplementary mid-term test and final exam will only be granted if (1) an application is made at least one week before the test or exam date, or (2) in case of unforeseeable circumstances such as illness or emergencies, that an application is made within 24 hours after the missed test or exam. The course instructors are the final arbiters on whether there are legitimate grounds for a supplementary test or exam to be granted.
- During the week of the mid-term test you are to complete an on-line course teaching and learning evaluation. An email will be sent to you with instructions. It is important that you give adequate feedback to the instructors so as to enhance teaching and learning effectiveness.

### **Tutorial discussion and topics**

ALL students need to come to tutorials prepared, not only those assigned to leading the discussion. This means doing the specified reading and spending time thinking over the discussion questions so that you will have something to contribute in class.

Students responsible for leading each week’s discussion are NOT asked to give a presentation – you need to actively engage the class in discussion instead of trying to do all the talking. You are encouraged but not required to seek your instructor’s advice when preparing for your discussion.

#### **1. The Sociological Imagination**

Read chapter 1 “The Sociological Perspective”, esp. p.7 “Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life”, which consists of an extended quotation from C. W. Mills’ book, *The Sociological Imagination*.

Discuss the quote and share with the class what you think it means. Now, think of at least two personal experiences and try to analyse them from a sociological perspective, using the sociological imagination as described by Mills.

#### **2. Sociological Perspectives – applying theory**

To prepare for this class, bring one or more pieces of recent local or international news. You also need to read chapter 1 “The Sociological Perspective”, especially the section entitled “Sociological Theory”, p. 14-19.

Look at the box on p. 19 “Applying Theory” and make sure you understand it (ask the class or the tutor for clarification if you are unsure). Discuss which of the sociological perspectives described in the book can be best applied to understand the chosen news items.

### **3. Culture**

Read chapter 3 “Culture”, esp. “Thinking Globally: Confronting the Yanomamo: the experience of culture shock” on p. 60.

Share with the class any experiences stemming from cultural differences or misunderstandings that you may have. Related your discussion to any of the concepts related to culture as described in chapter three (e.g. culture shock, ethnocentrism, cultural lag, counterculture etc.)

### **4. Socialization**

Read chapter 5 “Socialization”, especially the box “Controversy & Debate: are we free within society?” on p. 135. Discuss the three questions at the end of the section.

### **5. Social Interaction in everyday life**

Read chapter 6 “Social Interaction in Everyday Life”, especially the section “Dramaturgical Analysis: the ‘Presentation of Self’”, on p. 149. Discuss the concept “the presentation of self” and the related concepts of “front region” and “back region”.

### **6. Groups and social organizations**

Read chapter 7 “Groups and Organizations”, especially the section “networks” on page 172-175 (including the *Times* article “In Your Facebook.com”).

Consider the various social groups that you belong to, and the social networks to which you have access, and discuss the following questions in relation to them. What are the factors that shape the groups to which we belong, and the networks that we can access? What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of being in groups and social networks?

### **7. Deviance**

Read chapter 9 “Deviance”. Perform a non-criminal deviant act (e.g. stand facing the back of an elevator as you ride up or down, walk around campus backwards for a few minutes, shop out of someone else's shopping cart at the grocery store, order tea and scones in a bar, say goodbye when you should say hello, etc.). It is important that you discuss with your tutor on your intended act BEFORE you actually do it. As you perform this act, observe how other people react to you as well as

how you feel in performing the act. Take notes immediately after your act on:

- the non-criminal deviant act that you performed and where you performed it,
- *how* other people reacted to you and *why* you think they reacted that way, and
- *how* you felt when you acted in a socially deviant way and *why* you felt that way..

Come to class with your notes and share your experience with the class. What does this experience tell you about the nature of deviance? Which of the theories described in the text book (see p. 222 – 233) are useful in helping you understand your experience?

## 8. Social stratification

Read chapter 10 “Social Stratification”, especially the sections on class and caste in the United Kingdom, Japan, the Former Soviet Union, and China. (pp. 257-261)

Discuss your thoughts on social stratification in these societies. Do you find them familiar, or strange? How do these stratification systems compare to the one in Hong Kong or your home country? What do you think accounts for these differences?

## 9. Gender, Race and Ethnicity

You can choose to discuss gender or race and ethnicity for this week’s class.

Read chapter 13 “Gender stratification” or 14 “Race and ethnicity” before coming to class. Do some research to find out basic statistics on EITHER gender OR race and ethnicity in Hong Kong. Based on these statistics and your own experience/observation about living Hong Kong, to what extent would you say that gender stratification or racial/ethnic stratification exists in Hong Kong? To what extent is it a social problem?

## 10. Families

Read chapter 18 “Families”, especially the box “Think Globally: The Weakest Families on Earth? A Report from Sweden” on pp.466, and discuss the three questions at the end of the box (substitute “United States” with Hong Kong – which also has a small welfare state).

Do you agree with Popenoe that having a state which cares for nearly every aspect of a person’s needs will weaken or even replace the family? Consider this question within the context of Hong Kong and your family.

### Lectures

Date	Contents	Read
2 Sept	Introduction to the course	
9 Sept	The Sociological Imagination	Ch 1

### Tutorials

Tutorial discussion topic	Tues	Wed	Fri
Housekeeping/Work Habits/How to Read Social Science Texts/Library Tour	1/8/15 Sept	2/9/16 Sept	4/11/18 Sept
1. The Sociological Imagination	22 Sept	23 Sept	25 Sept

16 Sept	Sociological Perspectives	Ch 1
23 Sept	Culture	Ch 3
30 Sept	Socialization	Ch 5
7 Oct	Social Interaction in Everyday Life	Ch 6
14 Oct	<b>Mid-term test</b> (1 hour) Groups & Organizations	Ch 7
21 Oct	Groups & Organizations Deviance	Ch 7 Ch 9
28 Oct	Deviance Social Stratification	Ch 9 Ch 10
4 Nov	Social Stratification Gender Stratification	Ch 10 Ch 13
11 Nov	Race and Ethnicity	Ch 14
18 Nov	Families	Ch 18
25 Nov	Religion	Ch 19
2 Dec	CTLE and review	

2. Sociological Perspectives	29 Sept	30 Sept	2 Oct
3. Culture	6 Oct	7 Oct	9 Oct
4. Socialization	13 Oct	14 Oct	16 Oct
5. Social Interaction in Everyday Life	20 Oct	21 Oct	23 Oct
6. Groups & Social Organization	27 Oct	28 Oct	30 Oct
7. Deviance	3 Nov	4 Nov	6 Nov
8. Social Stratification	10 Nov	11 Nov	13 Nov
9. Gender, Race & Ethnicity	17 Nov	18 Nov	20 Nov
10. Families	24 Nov/1 December	25 Nov/2 December	27 Nov/4 December
11. Revision			