SOC 150: Introduction to Sociology
Summer 2014 @ California State University, Northridge
M&W 6-910pm, May 27 – July 6, in Sierra Hall 365
http://csun.edu/~egodard/150 & Moodle

Description
This is a comprehensive course that will introduce students to the discipline of Sociology and its approaches to describing and understanding patterns of social variation, including in society and among human social interactions. Areas covered will include sociological methods, explanations, concepts, areas of research, applications, and disciplinary issues, all at a basic level.

Particular emphasis will be given to how sociological pursuits in each of these areas differ from both the use of common sense and from the approaches and concerns of other disciplines, in the social sciences and beyond.

Not all Sociology is scientific, nor equally so – and this course will cover and address those variations within the discipline, as well. Much of Sociology is devoted to the critical evaluation of social, cultural, and theoretical assumptions embodied and reified in social practices. Exploration of these ideas will help students better understand the description and explanation of sociological phenomena, in the abstract and in their daily lives.

Goals
During the course, it is expected that you will:

• Become familiar with the basic methods, ideas, concepts, topics, and issues of the discipline of Sociology.
• Develop an understanding of the power of social and cultural contexts in explaining human relations.
• Consider humans as agents acting within structures, both of which continually reconstruct meaning.
• Consider the sociological complexity of important contemporary issues, including ideas about what is important, what is contemporary, and even what is social.
• Refine your consumption of and reaction to course material, in Sociology and other disciplines, by coming to understand various issues as well as their explanation through a sociological lens.

Objectives
Students will be able to recall and comprehend concepts, principles, theories, and knowledge in the field of Sociology and (for those who are Sociology majors) as related to their particular option. (Department SLO #1)

Students will be able to apply critical thinking skills to answer questions about social phenomena. (Department SLO #3)

Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the diverse nature of groups in society and their relevance to cross-cultural and global issues. (Department SLO #7)

Format
The course will consist of lectures and readings, punctuated with quizzes and exams. Readings should be completed prior to class, as the lectures are intended as a supplement not a substitute. Sociology is a broad and complex discipline, and many readings introduce more aspects of it than it is possible to cover in class meetings.

Schedule
A complete course schedule of topics, readings, assignments, lectures, and more is available on the Moodle site for the course. Exam dates will not change, but other elements are subject to ongoing adjustment at the instructor’s discretion. It is your responsibility to be aware of the current schedule. Do not rely on a printed copy!
Materials

All readings will be online and freely accessible, utilizing open source texts from OpenStax, the Open Textbook Library, Boundless.com, and Wikibooks; and supplemental materials from journals, websites, blogs, YouTube, and more. Readings – required as well as recommended – will be listed and/or provided via the Moodle schedule.

To participate in frequent quizzes, you will need a TurningTechnologies’ ResponseCard “clicker” (RF is sufficient); a ResponseWare app on a mobile device; or a device that can browse (via WiFi, 3G, 4G, etc.) to rwpoll.com.

The course website (see header) includes this syllabus, a Frequently Asked Questions collection, and General Course Guidelines (www.csun.edu/~egodard/sop.html). You will also need access to Moodle for a complete schedule with links to readings, assignments, handouts, lecture notes, grade progress, and the intake form. Moodle will also be used to announce any changes or important notices.

Assignments

Regular quizzes (40% of your grade) will encourage you to read, assess whether you have, and add incentive for you to attend. Each quiz will include five questions, at 6 points each, for a grade from 70-100. Quizzes cannot be made up, and must be submitted via the prescribed “clicker” within the time allotted.

There will be two multiple-choice exams (counting 30% each), opening Wed. June 17 and Monday July 6. You will have 60 hours to complete each exam, and scores will be transformed using a formula discussed during the first lecture meeting. Further instructions will be given via Moodle, closer to the administration dates.

Several extra credit opportunities will allow you to apply course readings to your own life. These might also satisfy any external requirements students have for writing in the course (such as for transfer credits elsewhere). Submissions must be submitted via the provided TurnItIn links, double-spaced and with one-inch margins.

Administration

Standard guidelines about general matters (conduct, plagiarism, accommodations, etc.) that apply to all of my courses are detailed in a separate document, available via Moodle, the course website, or directly at www.csun.edu/~egodard/sop.html. You are expected to review these materials, and to promptly alert me to any questions or concerns about them, as well as any special circumstances that may apply to you (including but not limited to disabilities, schedule conflicts, and religious holidays.) You will need to acknowledge that you have reviewed and accepted them via an intake form which you must complete by the 2nd meeting.

You may drop through SOLAR without approval from anyone until one date, and with a change of schedule form signed by the instructor until a second date. Confer with A&R (or Tseng during winter sessions) to confirm those dates. Beyond that, you must appeal to the vice president of undergraduate studies, must have documented proof of a real emergency, and will receive a W grade except for documented medical withdrawls.

Contact

Email (the official form of communication at CSUN) is my preferred method of communication. I try to both acknowledge each email and provide a complete answer as quickly as possible; that sometimes takes two replies.

You may also contact me via my campus phone (818-677-4050), which forwards to my mobile phone 24/7, as well as through Facebook, Google (talk/chat/+), Skype, and Moodle messages. With advanced notice, I can also be available via Yahoo, AIM, MSN, Windows Live, MySpace, Second Life, GroupMe, and other services; and am happy to consider becoming available via any other service, site, or app which you may wish to recommend to me and/or through which you would prefer to be connected.