

[↪ Get Started](#)[Syllabus](#)

Welcome to SOCI 1310: Introduction to Sociology

New to the course?

- Be sure to familiarize yourself with the [Syllabus](#) and *review the information carefully*. Be sure to fill out the [Course Pacing Guide](#). You must submit it as your first assignment before you will be able to proceed with this course.
- Click [Get Started](#) to begin your course.

Returning to the course? Click **Modules** in course navigation and resume where you left off.

Important reminders:

- This is a **9-month, online, correspondence self-paced course**.
- **All submissions, including exams, must be completed by the course expiration date.** When you registered for the course, you were sent an email to your Texas State account indicating registration and expiration dates.
- **You may not submit more than 2 assignments per week.**

- You may not take an exam before previously submitted assignments have been graded and returned.

**At the end of the course, you will be asked
to complete a brief course evaluation.
Your input will help improve the course.**

Meet Your Instructor

Welcome! My name is Michael Whitehawk, and I'm the instructor for this course. I have been teaching in the Department of Sociology at Texas State University since 2005. I currently teach Criminology and Introduction to Sociology. My interests are far reaching but include race/ethnicity and crime, juvenile delinquency, the institution of the family, sociology of disability, and adolescent friendship development. I have experience as a mental health case manager for Comal County and spent five years as an academic advisor for the College of Liberal Arts. In addition to my teaching duties, I am currently an undergraduate academic advisor for the Department of Sociology. In 2011, I was honored with The Alfred H. Nolle Chapter of the Alpha Chi National College Honor Society Favorite Professor Award. You may reach me via the Mail tool in the left-hand navigation menu.

Now that you know a little bit about me, I wanted to take a few moments to introduce you to this course. Watch the video below.



Click Next to proceed to Correspondence Course Information.

Course Syllabus

SOCI 1310 INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

FACULTY CONTACT INFORMATION

Mr. Michael Whitehawk

mw39@txstate.edu (<mailto:mw39@txstate.edu>)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A survey of the basic concepts in sociology including social organization, culture, socialization, groups, and human population leading to the development of a sociological perspective of human behavior. SOCI 1310 and 3300 may not both be counted for credit.

COURSE GOALS

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

- demonstrate knowledge of concepts related to social structure and social action: societal prerequisites, social institutions, stratification, deviance, and their own contributions to the creation and maintenance of order in society;
- apply a “sociological imagination” for analyzing human behavior, articulating their own sociological imagination;
- present an overview of basic sociological concepts and theories;
- describe the implications of living in a multicultural society;
- develop an enthusiasm for sociology as a way of perceiving the world while fostering their own tolerance for cultures different from their own;
- investigate human behavior through the exploration of social research;
- apply the concepts of sociology in the work world;
- participate in open, non-judgmental discussion about social events while applying a “sociological imagination”;
- discuss culture, prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping relative to tolerance;
- develop a personal enthusiasm for sociology as a way of understanding the world;
- explain social forces (class, race, ethnicity, gender, ability, sexual orientation) that affect life in the United States, which produce the beliefs and patterns of interaction that comprise the American way of life; and
- think critically about the sociological aspects of the world we live in, setting aside personal beliefs and values in order to view the world through a scientific lens.

COURSE MATERIALS

Croteau, D., and Hoynes, W. (2013). *Experience Sociology*. McGraw-Hill. New York, NY. ISBN: 978-0-07-319353-3

ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS, AND GRADING

Your grade will be based on eight assignments and two exams. You must make a grade of 60% or higher on the final exam in order to pass this course. Grades are based on a 400-point scale which breaks down as follows:

Assignments: 200 points (8 @ 25 points each) **Note:** *you may submit no more than two assignments per week for this course.*

Midcourse Exam: 100 points

Final Exam: 100 points

The exams will consist of 70 multiple-choice questions worth one point apiece. The remaining 30 points will consist of short answer essay questions.

The grading scale is as follows:

A: 360-400 points (90-100%)

B: 320-359 points (80-89%)

C: 280-319 points (70-79%)

D: 240-279 points (60-69%)

F: fewer than 240 points (59% or less)

COMMUNICATION POLICIES

Email

As the instructor for this correspondence course, I have organized the materials in such a way as to facilitate learning. I endeavor to be available to my students' intellectual and emotional needs, and I am always open to hearing those needs. I believe that every student in every class has the intelligence and ability to be successful. Students have responsibilities for the class to fully engage their reading, to be open to new ideas, and to demonstrate their knowledge of course concepts and terms. Success in this course can be secured by regularly reflecting on course materials and readings. With this understanding, I am open to your questions, and I am willing to correspond with you when necessary. The best way to contact me is through email. I check email regularly, and I will respond to email in a reasonable amount of time. My goal is to respond to students' emails the same day they are delivered. However, on occasion, it may take up three workdays for me to reply to emails. Should you wish to contact me, my email address is [mw39@txstate.edu \(mailto:mw39@txstate.edu\)](mailto:mw39@txstate.edu).

Discussion Forums

The discussion forums are not graded, but are for your benefit. My role in the discussion groups is that of a facilitator. I will answer questions, correct misconceptions, and/or redirect conversations as needed. You will find the following discussion forums in the course Canvas site:

General Course Questions: Post any questions or comments you may have about a topic, assignment, or technical issues to this forum. I will monitor the forum and respond to the questions. In that way, everyone will have the benefit of the question and answer.

Share and Tell: Use this forum to celebrate your personal accomplishments, encourage each other, post inspirational quotes, etc.

FREE TUTORING RESOURCES

A variety of free tutoring resources are available for students enrolled in correspondence courses. You may access tutoring through Tutor.com by clicking on Tutor.com: 24/7 Online Tutoring in the left menu of this course. Then just respond to the questions to start tutoring. If you need help with writing specifically, then choose Writing as your topic.

Free online tutoring for writing-related assignments is also available from the University Writing Center. For information on accessing these resources, please visit the Office of Distance and Extended Learning's [Free Tutoring](#) page. Currently-enrolled, degree-seeking students able to visit the Texas State campus are eligible for free in-person tutoring from the [Student Learning Assistance Center \(SLAC\)](#) on the fourth floor of Alkek Library

CANVAS TECHNICAL SUPPORT

The [Technical Requirements](#) page identifies the browsers, operating systems, and plugins that work best with Canvas. If you are new to Canvas check out the [Texas State ITAC Canvas Support](#) page.

STUDENT WITH DISABILITIES

The Office of Distance and Extended Learning is committed to helping students with disabilities achieve their educational goals. A disability is not a barrier to correspondence study, and we strive to provide reasonable accommodations to individuals in coursework and test taking. Students who require special accommodations need to provide verification of their disability to the [Office of Disability Services](#), Suite 5-5.1 LBJ Student Center, 512.245.3451 (voice/TTY).

Students should then notify the [Office of Distance and Extended Learning](#) at corrstudy@txstate.edu (<mailto:corrstudy@txstate.edu>) of any disability-related accommodation needs as soon as possible to avoid a delay in accommodations.

UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE

The [Texas State University Honor Code](#) applies to all Texas State students, including correspondence students. The Honor Code serves as an affirmation that the University demands the highest standards of integrity in all actions related to the academic community.

SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

As members of the university community, students are expected to be aware of and abide by university policies regarding academic honesty. By the same token, members of the faculty within the university community are expected to enforce those policies. Members of the Department of Sociology operate on

the assumption that each student has thoroughly reviewed the university policies regarding academic honesty and that the policies will be followed. Accordingly, members of the Department of Sociology will enforce all policies related to academic honesty.

The following is not a substitute for the statement of policies found in the above referenced material. Rather, it serves to call each student's attention to the breadth and depth of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes the following: Cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or abuse of resource materials. Each term or phrase is defined in some detail in the above referenced material. Because the offense of plagiarism can be confusing to students, the following information is provided as essential reading by all students. "Plagiarism means the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work offered for credit" (Texas State University Handbook, UPPS No. 07-10-01). Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- downloading or buying a research paper;
- cutting and pasting information from several sources to create a paper;
- leaving out quotation marks around quoted material, placing quotation marks around some but not all copied information;
- leaving out quotation marks around copied information but adding a citation implying that the information is the student's summary of the source;
- leaving out quotation marks for more than three consecutive words taken directly from a source;
- providing a reference/bibliography page but leaving out the reference citation in the body of the paper
- faking a citation; and
- unintentionally using words or ideas or quotes without citing them in the body of the paper and on the reference/bibliography page.

Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism or having plagiarized in the past without having been penalized does not excuse such acts in the Department of Sociology. Any student charged with plagiarism may appeal in writing in accordance with Texas State University policy.

Free Tutoring Resources

A variety of [free tutoring resources](#) are available for students enrolled in Texas State correspondence courses.



FREE TUTORING



University Writing Center

The Texas State University Writing Center's online tutoring service allows Texas State correspondence, self-paced study students, to work with a writing tutor in real time in an online environment. During the online tutorial, both the student and the tutor are

Submission 1: Course Pacing Guide/Course Study Schedule

Start Assignment

Due No Due Date **Points** 0 **Submitting** a file upload

Download and add target dates to this [Course Pacing Guide/Course Study Schedule](#).

Then click Submit Assignment and attach and submit your completed document.

After you upload your document, click Next to proceed with the course.

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You are currently logged into Student View

Resetting the test student will clear all history for this student, allowing you to view the course as a brand new student.

Reset Student

Leave Student View

L1: Objectives and Assignments

Objectives

The objectives for each lesson will guide you through the material of the course. It is a good idea to refer back to the objectives from time-to-time if you are unclear about the content and subject matter on which you will be assessed.

Upon completion of this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- define sociology;
- describe the sociological perspective and the sociological imagination;
- describe how the rise of modernity contributed to the foundation of sociological thought;
- summarize the contributions of the major figures in the history of sociology, beginning with Auguste Comte;
- define social theory;
- describe the key dimensions of sociological theory: micro and macro analysis, consensus versus conflict, and subjective versus objective reality;
- describe structural-functionalist theories, conflict theories, and symbolic interactionist theories;
- describe how the concepts of culture, structure, and power are central to the sociological perspective;
- use the sociological perspective to explain the social changes taking place in the postmodern era;
- differentiate social science research from everyday reasoning;
- describe the four key elements of sociological research;
- describe the role of theory in social science research;
- describe the features, strengths, and weaknesses of the major data collection methods;
- apply ethical standards to the challenges researchers encounter in conducting research;
- compare and contrast the three approaches to social science research; and
- describe tactics for evaluating a scientific study.

Assignments

In *Experience Sociology**, read:

- Chapter 1, "Sociology in a Changing World"
- Chapter 2, "Understanding the Research Process"

Then:

- read the lesson content and
- complete and submit Assignment 1.

*Note: Read each chapter carefully. It is also a good idea to take notes as you read through the material. When/if you come across a word/term, with which you are not familiar, feel free to refer to the "Key Terms" at the end of each chapter. Additionally, the authors of the textbook have provided excellent resources for your use. If you will use the resources provided, your learning experience will be greatly enhanced. Should you have questions, please feel free to contact your instructor. Enjoy your reading!

Click Next to proceed to L1: Reading Outlines and Summaries.

L1: Discussion

Sociology, a Brief History, and Some of Its Theories

Sociology is the scientific study of society, the people who comprise it, and all social life. Sociologists often teach, conduct research, and use their knowledge in proactive professions, e.g., marketing assistant.

Lesson 1 contains one of the most important concepts of this course, the “sociological imagination. Sociologist **C. Wright Mills** created the term to help us comprehend the impact of societal events on the lives of individuals, and at the same time, how each person impacts society. He famously described how when someone loses his or her job that is an individual problem, but when the unemployment rate jumps up, that is a social issue. Or, think back to the attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001 when many people were killed and injured. Our society changed after those events. Contributions of individuals are also seen with a sociological imagination. Martin Luther King Jr.’s actions during the Civil Rights Movement in no small part also contributed to large-scale social change. An additional example might be a wealthy benefactor who subsidized a young student’s education who later helps find a cure for AIDS. In this scenario, both the rich individual and the student had an impact on society.

Remember, the “sociological imagination” allows one person to view how actions that happen worldwide can affect or impact his/her personal life, and then recognize how one person can alter society.

Another very influential sociologist, Peter Berger (1963), provides insight that helps us recognize and explain how individuals are inextricably linked with society. He called proclaimed, **that we attempt to see the strange in the familiar and see the general in the particular**. I suggest that you take some time to ponder what Berger meant exactly with this statement and how it relates to Mills’ concept of the sociological imagination.

Sociology, as a discipline, integrates global perspectives. On Earth today, billions of dollars (or other currencies) are transferred internationally continuously, and when someone can brush their teeth in New York, have lunch in England, and go to bed in an African village, it is easy to see contemporary society is global and distinct from societies past. It is no longer an option to isolate one’s thinking. Disasters in Bangladesh affect us as most world events do.

Sociology as a substantive science has been evolving overtime. Research, methodologies, theories, and dissemination of findings have all been built on previous work and study.

An Extremely Brief History of Sociology

Sociology came into existence latter and distinct from the natural sciences, and arose in its infancy not until well into the nineteenth century.

Auguste Comte (1798-1857), a philosopher living during revolution in France and Europe, recognized that the social change around him might be subject to a set of laws not unlike the natural laws central to the natural sciences like physics. He coined the term “positivism” to refer to his (at the time) radical and contentious views.

Other early thinking positivists followed, for example, English philosopher **Herbert Spencer** (1820-1903). Spencer saw society like an ecosystem with interrelated parts with each part affected by all others. He also applied Darwin’s influential theory of “survival of the fittest” to society known as **Social Darwinism**. This highly problematic theory proposed that the most “fit” (intelligent, productive) within society would be the most successful.

Early sociologist **Emile Durkheim** (1858-1917), described in influential terms a connection between the structure of society and individual actions. His studies on suicide remain a cornerstone of the sociological perspective.



Left to right: Comte ([source](#)), Spencer ([source](#)), and Durkheim ([source](#)).

(Basic) Theories

As a science, sociology contains multiple theories (a theory is an interrelated set of ideas based on the relationships of known facts). Sociological theories are diverse, but most can be categorized within one of the three broad perspectives or umbrella theories: **structural-functional**, **social conflict**, or **symbolic interaction**.

The **structural-functional theory** is a perspective for examining arrangements within and between societies relating to societal institutions, e.g., the polity, the economy, the education system, the family, and so on. The family for example, as an institution, can offer positive consequences for society by encouraging procreation (thereby insuring the next generation of humans), caring for its members, inculcating values, attitudes and beliefs, and promoting conformity through norm

regulation. Of course, this does not always happen at an appropriate level within each family. Unfortunately, some families are involved with negative behaviors like family violence, abuse, drug addiction etc. In these cases families may be seen as dysfunctional for society.

The **social-conflict perspective** is a perspective that centers on disruptive features within society. Two examples are crime and poverty. Conflict theorists argue that it is ultimately the varied interests that determine values. Conflicts of interests are thought to be at the heart of human societies. Therefore, more powerful people are freer, legally and otherwise, to pursue their own self and group interests than the segments of society with less access to wealth, power and prestige.

The **symbolic interaction theory** is a widely accepted sociological system for studying smaller groups and the individual within society. Both of the previous theories are **macro** level theories; symbolic interaction examines society at the **micro** level of research. Hope people make meaning through their interactions with others and their environment is often at the basis of this approach. It enables researches to focus on the small-scale interaction of groups. Your textbook examines each of these theories in more detail. Make sure, as you read Chapter 1, to carefully take note of the characteristics of each theory and evaluate them for critical insights.

The Surface of Sociological Investigation

Within sociological research the importance of theories is vital as are the techniques used to gain knowledge and understanding of the social world. Chapter 2 explains the use of the **scientific method** for sociological investigation and details the basic research methods. The following are the elements of the scientific method.

- Objectivity—remaining (as much as possible) neutral, unbiased, impersonal;
- Precise measurements; and
- dissemination of results—with use of qualitative and/or quantitative methods.

Causative Research

In order to determine cause and effect, researchers must design and conduct an experiment. Experiments use **independent variable(s)** (used to see if it exerts an effect or cause) and **dependent variable(s)** (represents the effect or output) as well as control and experimental groups. Make sure you review the textbook's content on experiments.

Correlation Research

When cause and effect are not the issue at hand, or cannot be realistically be determined, correlation research can be used. Correlation research methods involve **secondary** or **historical analysis, participant observation, and surveys**. Please familiarize yourself with each of these methods.

The How to of Sociological Research

The following are 10 essential questions or steps needed when conducting sociological research. It is best to follow them in order and make sure to pay careful attention you will need to list and describe each step.

1. **What is the topic?** There are almost endless research possibilities. Ideas come as we develop our sociological imaginations and can strike any time and any place. The issue you decide on may have some personal significance for you.
2. **What have other researchers already discovered?** Most likely others have begun social inquiry on the topic you are interested in. Make visits to the library or electronic research databases to see which theories and methods other researchers have used to understand your topic. When you review the existing research, make note of the problems difficulties you encounter.
3. **What, precisely, are your questions?** Looking to investigate an unacquainted setting? Would you like to describe some subset of people? Maybe investigate the cause and effect relationship between two or more variables? If you choose to conduct research that is descriptive or exploratory, decide *who* you want to study, *where* the investigation will happen, and what varieties of concerns you want to explore. Then you must formulate at least one **hypothesis** that will be tested and **operationalize** each variable.
4. **What is needed to do the research?** Find out how much time you have to devote to the research. Is any money needed and available? Is there any special equipment or specific skills required? Will other people be needed or can you do the work by yourself? You will need to answer all of these questions as you plan the project.
5. **Are there any ethical concerns?** You must be aware of potential harm that may be caused by your research. Much research is innocuous, but if any potential harm or treats to privacy arise due to the study design they must be addressed and minimized. Will you, for example, promise anonymity to those involved? If you do, you must make sure that the anonymity is preserved.
6. **What research method(s) will be used?** Keep in mind that the appropriate research method is contingent on the types of questions that are asked and your particular limits. Reflect on and consider on all the research approaches and remember that sometimes they are combined.
7. **How will the data be recorded?** Which method you choose affects the collection process. Make sure to record all the data correctly and precisely. Keep in mind that you will need to make sense of it later, which could be some time from when you collected it. Be steadfast in your attempts to remain unbiased.
8. **What does the data say?** Analyze the data in relation to your original questions and choose how you will interpret the information you gathered. If your study involves hypothesis, decide whether to verify, rebuff, or amend the hypothesis. Remember that there may be multiple ways to look at and understand your data; often depending on which theory and perspective you apply. It is best to consider all explanations, which may be laborious.
9. **What conclusions may be drawn?** Create a final report asserting your conclusions. How did your efforts advance sociological theory? How did your work advance research methods? Are there policy implications? Think about the general public. What would they find interesting and

useful about your work? Finally, assess your own work, make note of the problems you encountered and the questions you still could answer.

10. **In what ways can you share your information?** Think about sharing your research with your campus newspaper or other publications. Maybe make a presentation in a class, campus gathering, or perhaps a meeting of professional sociologists. The idea is to get what you learned out there and share it with others. Give others a chance to respond to what you have done.

Jargon

There are many specific terms used in sociological research. Become familiar with the terms noted in the end of the chapter. Pay close attention to this terminology: validity, reliability, population, random sample, Hawthorne effect, operationalized variable, and measures of central tendency.

Final Thoughts

The framework for this entire course is laid out in these first two chapters. Put in the time and effort needed to grasp the basics in the discipline of sociology. Pay close consideration to key concepts, maps, table, figures, and boxes.

Click Next to proceed to Assignment 1.

Assignment 1

Start Assignment

Due No Due Date **Points** 25 **Submitting** a file upload **File Types** doc and docx

Please read the assignment instructions carefully.

All written assignments must be finalized and submitted as a Word document (.doc, .docx). **When saving the final version of the file for upload and grading, please include your first initial, last name and the course number in the file name.**

EXAMPLE: Assignment1.M.Whitehawk.SOCI1310.doc

Discuss each of the following in detail using your own words. Do **not** use definitions or examples from the text.

1. Discuss Mills's "sociological imagination" and give two examples. **(4 points)**
2. Discuss each of the following types of social research and include an example of each: experiments, surveys, participant observation, historical data. **(8 points)**
3. Name and discuss the basic concepts in each of the three umbrella theories. **(6 points)**
4. Name and discuss two symbolic components of culture that, to you, are the most important. Why? **(5 points)**
5. How does ethnocentrism differ from cultural relativity? **(2 points)**

Help with your writing:

Texas State University [Writing Center](#) on Campus

Additional resources can be found: [The Purdue Online Writing Lab](#)  (OWL)

Need help with your course? The Texas State Office of Distance and Extended Learning provides students with online tutoring in writing, grammar, math, and Spanish. For detailed information about this service, visit [our Web site](#) or contact us by phone.

The Office of Distance and Extended Learning



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[Leave Student View](#)

Telephone: (512.245.2322

Toll Free: 800.511.8656

Fax: 512.245.8934

corrstudy@txstate.edu (<mailto:corrstudy@txstate.edu>)

NOTE: Plagiarism is a serious violation of the [Texas State University Honor Code](#). If you do not know what constitutes plagiarism and what does not, the following resource will provide you with an excellent guide:

- [Purdue Online Writing Lab \(OWL\): Avoiding Plagiarism](#) 

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