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Office Hours: Mon & Wed – 12noon -1pm (Rm3334)

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## **SOSC1850-L1: UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY**

*“Ours is a time of uneasiness and indifference ... Instead of troubles – defined in terms of values and threats – there is often the misery of vague uneasiness; instead of explicit issues, there is often merely the beat feeling that all is somehow not right. Neither the values threatened nor whatever threatens them has been stated; in short, they have not been carried to the point of decision. Much less have they been formulated as problems of social science.” (C. Wright Mills 1959, The Sociological Imagination)*

*“(T)he discovery of sociology can change your life. It can help you to understand better the social forces you confront, the forces that constrain and free. This understanding has a liberating potential: By examining these forces you can stand somewhat apart from at least some aspect of society, and thereby exert more creative control over your own life.” (James Henslin, adapting from Peter Berger 1963, Invitation to Sociology)*

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### **I. COURSE AIMS**

1. To introduce the basic sociological concepts and perspectives;
2. To address some critical social issues and problems from sociological perspectives;
3. To enable students to relate sociology to their life experiences and the social context.

### **II. INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon completion of the course, students should be able:

- (1) To demonstrate basic knowledge of the key sociological concepts and perspectives;
- (2) To explain and analyze a wide range of social issues including deviance, gender inequality, family changes, class inequality, education, power, politics and so on; &
- (3) To apply some basic sociological concepts.

### **III. MODES OF LEARNING/ASSESSMENT**

Short Quiz 1	25%
Short Quiz 2	25%
Reading Quiz 1	10%
Reading Quiz 2	10%
Essay	30%

- ※ There will be 2 short quizzes in MC format.
- ※ There will be 2 reading quizzes also in MC format, which aim to help you recognize the key sociological issues and arguments discussed in the assigned reading (will be delivered later).
- ※ A free-topic essay of 600-1000 words is due on **10 December (Saturday), 11:59pm**. Write a sociological essay about yourself, your family or a social phenomenon (suggestions will be provided along the way). Late submission will receive a penalty and submission late for more than 3 days will not be accepted.\*

(\*File format: Word or PDF named as follows – “student name\_student ID”, such as “Chan Tai Tai\_12345678.” Such information should also be typed in the document.)

#### IV. CONTENTS AND SCHEDULE

Wk	Monday	Wednesday
1	[05/09] Introduction	[07/09] Culture and Socialization
2	[12/09] Public Holiday	[14/09] Deviance
3	[19/09] Deviance	[21/09] Deviance
4	[26/09] Deviance	[28/09] Sociological Theory
5	[03/10] Sociological Theory	[05/10] Economy & Class Inequalities
6	[10/10] Economy & Class Inequalities	[12/10] Economy & Class Inequalities
7	[17/10] Economy & Class Inequalities + Short Quiz 1	[19/10] Education
8	[24/10] Education	[26/10] Education
9	[31/10] Education + Reading Quiz 1	[02/11] Family
10	[07/11] Family	[09/11] Gender
11	[14/11] Gender + Reading Quiz 2	[16/11] Family/Gender
12	[21/11] Power & Politics	[23/11] Power & Politics
13	[28/11] Power & Politics	[30/11] Power & Politics + Short Quiz 2

#### VI. READINGS (available on Canvas)

1. Introduction: The “Sociological Imagination”
  - J.C. Alexander and K. Thompson 2008. *A Contemporary Introduction to Sociology – Culture and Society in Transition*, London: Paradigm, pp. 7-13.
- Culture & Socialization
  - Haralambos and Holborn 2004. *Sociology*, pp. vi-xi
2. Deviance
  - Haralambos and Holborn. 2004. *Sociology*, pp. 330-351, 353-355
- Supplementary
  - Howard Becker.1953. “Becoming a Marihuana.” *American Journal of Sociology*, 59 (3), pp.235-242.

3. Sociological Theory
  - Haralambos and Holborn 2004. *Sociology*, p. xiv-xxi, pp. 934-950, 961-964
4. Social and Class Inequalities
  - Bilton et al. 2002, *Introductory Sociology*, chapters 4 & 5 (pp.70-94, 98-127)
5. Education
  - Haralambos and Holborn 2004. *Sociology*, pp. xxvi-6, 692-694, 698-706, 731-756
6. Family
  - Haralambos and Holborn 2004. *Sociology*, 466-470, 478-488, 494-500
7. Gender
  - Haralambos and Holborn 2004. *Sociology*, pp 98-115, 126-137
8. Power and Politics
  - Haralambos and Holborn 2004, pp. 538-559

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#### Recommended Books for the Course

- Haralambos, M., and M. Holborn. 2004. *Sociology - Themes and Perspectives*. London: Collins. (Note: The latest edition contains very minor changes.)
- Bilton, T., K. Bonnett, P. Jones, D. Skinner, M. Stanworth and A. Webster. 2002. *Introductory Sociology*. London: Macmillan.
- Henslin, J. 2007. *Down to Earth Sociology: Introductory Readings*. New York: Free Press.
- Johnson, Allan G. 1997. *The Forest and the Trees - Sociology as Life, Practice, and Promise*. Temple University Press.
- Worsley, P. 1991. *The New Modern Sociology Readings*. London: Penguin, chs. 1,3,4,6,27,29,58,59,64,65,66,74.
- 莫家豪 (1998) :《社會學與社會分析》。香港：香港人文科學出版社。章 1-2。
- 李明堃, 黃紹倫主編 (1992) :《社會學新論》。香港：商務印書館。章 6,9,11,12。