

Instructor: Dr. Yvonne Leung 梁以文 (yleung@ust.hk)

Office Hours: Tu & Thu 3-4pm (Rm2382; by appointment)

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SOSC1850-L1: UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course invites students to explore how social forces shape individual experiences and societal structures. Students will learn to recognize how personal issues often stem from larger, unarticulated social problems. The course also emphasizes the transformative potential of sociology. By analyzing the constraints and opportunities shaped by social forces, students will gain a deeper understanding of how society influences behavior and how this knowledge can empower them to take creative control of their lives.

II. 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.

III. 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.

IV. MODES OF ASSESSMENT & ILOs

Class Participation	10%	ILO1: assess students' understanding of course materials in class
Short Quiz 1	20%	ILO1 & ILO2: assess students' understanding of sociological concepts and theories
Short Quiz 2	20%	ILO1 & ILO2: assess students' understanding of sociological concepts and theories
Reading Quiz	10%	ILO1 & ILO2: assess students' understanding of sociological concepts and theories
Final Exam	40%	ILO1, ILO2 & ILO3: evaluate students' understanding and application of sociological

		concepts and theories
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- ※ Class participation: best 5 scores out of 8; must be done in class, NO make-up.
- ※ 2 closed book short quizzes in MC format.
- ※ 1 open book reading quiz in MC format.
- ※ A final examination in the form of 2 long questions; assessing students' understanding of the subject matter, analytical competence and the ability to integrate the course materials.

V. CONTENTS AND SCHEDULE

Wk	Tuesday	Thursday
1	[03/09] Introduction	[05/09] Culture and Socialization
2	[10/09] Sociological Theory	[12/09] Sociological Theory
3	[17/09] Deviance and Crime	[19/09] Deviance and Crime
4	[24/09] Deviance and Crime	[26/09] Deviance and Crime
5	[01/10] Public Holiday	[03/10] Economy & Class Inequalities
6	[08/10] Economy & Class Inequalities	[10/10] Economy & Class Inequalities
7	[15/10] Economy & Class Inequalities + Short Quiz 1	[17/10] Education
8	[22/10] Education	[24/10] Education
9	[29/10] Education + Reading Quiz	[31/10] Family & Gender
10	[05/11] Family & Gender	[07/11] Family & Gender
11	[12/11] Family & Gender	[14/11] Power & Politics
12	[19/11] Power & Politics	[21/11] Power & Politics
13	[26/11] Power & Politics	[28/11] Short Quiz 2 + Class round-up

VI. GRADING RUBRICS

Final Exam (40%)

Grades		
A	Excellent	Very clear and relevant focus. In-depth and accurate understanding of subject knowledge/theories/concepts, and excellent application. Very comprehensive and logical argument with substantial evidence. Very well-structured and highly coherent; highly effective presentation, clear and fluent.
B	Good	Clear and relevant focus. Good understanding of subject knowledge/theories/concepts, and effective application. Comprehensive and logical argument with good evidence; reasonably in-depth discussion. Structured and coherent; presentation clear and fluent.
C	Satisfactory	Quite clear and relevant focus. Rather superficial understanding of subject knowledge/theories/concepts, and satisfactory application.

		Fairly comprehensive and logical argument with some evidence; discussion not in-depth enough. Fairly structured and coherent; presentation not clear and fluent enough.
D	Below Satisfactory	Barely clear and relevant focus. Obvious misconceptions of subject knowledge/theories/concepts; limited application. Argument a bit illogical; discussion superficial and with biases. Loosely structured and obvious problems with expression.
F	Fail	The focus is very vague or irrelevant. Lack of proper understanding of subject knowledge/theories/concepts; application very limited. Argument illogical with little evidence; very superficial or biased discussion. Disorganized, unclear and substantial problems with expression.

VII. 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

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.)

Henslin, J. 2007. *Down to Earth Sociology: Introductory Readings*. New York: Free Press.

VIII. COMMUNICATION & FEEDBACK

- Results of quizzes will be released via Canvas within one week of the assessment.
- Students can check the results by making an appointment with the instructor after the results have been released.

IX. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.