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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)

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	10%
Final Exam	40%

- ※ 2 closed book short quizzes in MC format.
- ※ 1 open book reading quiz in MC format.
- ※ A final examination in the form of essays; assessing students' understanding of the subject matter, analytical competence and the ability to integrate the course materials.

IV. CONTENTS AND SCHEDULE

Wk	Tuesday	Thursday
1	[07/02] Introduction	[09/02] Culture and Socialization
2	[14/02] Deviance	[16/02] Deviance
3	[21/02] Deviance	[23/02] Deviance
4	[28/02] Sociological Theory	[02/03] Sociological Theory
5	[07/03] Economy & Class Inequalities	[09/03] Economy & Class Inequalities
6	[14/03] Economy & Class Inequalities	[16/03] Economy & Class Inequalities + Short Quiz 1
7	[21/03] Education	[23/03] Education
8	[28/03] Education	[30/03] Education + Reading Quiz
9	[04/04] Family	[06/04] Mid-Term Break
9	[11/04] Mid-Term Break	[13/04] Gender
10	[18/04] Gender	[20/04] Family/Gender
11	[25/04] Power & Politics	[27/04] Power & Politics
12	[02/05] Power & Politics	[04/05] 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

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.