

## Notes regarding the design and implementation of an online offering of Sociology 101

An online version of the introductory sociology course (SOCIOLOGY 101) is being proposed. The pedagogical aims of the course are found in the University's GEC Requirements:

***GEC Social Science requirement.*** *Students who take this course will:*

- 1) understand the theories and methods of scientific inquiry as they are applied to the studies of individuals, groups, organizations, and societies;*
- 2) comprehend human differences and similarities in various social, cultural, economic, geographic, and political contexts; and*
- 3) develop the ability to comprehend and assess individual and social values, and recognize the importance of these values in social problem solving and policy making.*

***GEC Social Diversity in the United States requirement.*** *Students who take this course will:*

- 1) understand the roles of such characteristics as race, gender, class, ethnicity, and religion in the institutions and cultures of the United States; and*
- 2) recognize the role of social diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values.*

The Departmental statement regarding the meeting of these goals in Sociology 101 states:

*These objectives are met through the study of the contemporary and historical societies, the operation of major social institutions, and the study of contemporary social problems and processes, through the application of social science research, theory, and methods to these societies, institutions, problems and processes.*

The proposed online SOCIOLOGY 101 offering will fulfill these requirements.

In this class students meet these objectives through: 1) reading the selected textbook and other assigned readings; 2) multimedia online presentations, including podcasts, streaming video, powerpoint and lecture notes; 3) ten weekly online learning assignments focusing on each week's topics; 4) a reaction paper to a book on social change; 5) three written examinations on the course content and materials; and 6) participation in online discussion forums.

More specifically:

**1) Reading the assigned course textbook and supplemental readings**

Students will be expected to read the assigned text, as well as a limited number of supplemental readings.

**2) multimedia online presentations**

To augment the weekly assigned readings, "lecture" material will be presented through power point presentations and lecture notes; one 18-20 minute podcast introducing the week's topics and central concepts, and 1-3 shorter podcasts focusing in more detail on a few specific topics. Occasionally, this "lecture" material will be augmented by relevant streaming video. The advantage the online

experience has over traditional classrooms (even the multimedia ones) allows greater versatility in teaching the core concepts to students.

- 3) ten weekly online learning assignments focusing on each week's topics;**  
Each week, students will be required to complete an online assignment which will serve as both a teaching instrument and an assessment tool. A typical assignment may involve reading a brief online article or two, or viewing a video, and answering a series of related questions, some multiple choice, some short answer.
- 4) a reaction paper to a book on social change;**  
Students will be assigned a book on social change, i.e., Ritzer's *McDonaldization of Society*, and write a reaction paper in which they will apply the concepts to their own lives, as well as reflect on the nature of social change. This paper will be submitted electronically to Turnitin.com to check for and prevent instances of plagiarism.
- 5) three written examinations on the course content and materials;**  
Students will take 3 written examinations (2 midterms and 1 comprehensive final exam) over the course materials. The exams will be in a physical location on set days & times, and students will be required to present University or Government-issued photo id to gain access to the testing room.
- 6) participation in online discussion forums**  
Students will be required to participate in a certain number of the weekly discussion forums that will be set up to facilitate exploration of the weekly topics and get students to think and respond to some of the issues and concepts raised in that week's course materials.

**Academic integrity** will be maintained by holding the three exams in a physical location and specific time, and requiring students to present photo identification in order to take the exam. Students will also submit their reaction paper to Turnitin.com to protect against and check for plagiarism. Students will meet in the physical classroom on 4 occasions: the first day of class for an orientation to the course; for the two midterms; and during finals week, for the final exam.

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