Introduction to Sociology

SOC 101

Prof. Kesha S. Moore

Fall 2010

Class Hours: MWF 9:40am-10:30am

Class Room: Seminary 205

Office Hours: Monday 12noon-2pm; Friday 11am-12noon; and by appointment

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Course description:

Sociology is a social science that focuses on the study of societies, social groups, and social interaction. This field encompasses the creation, continuation, and transformation of collective behavior. Sociologists focus on a number of different levels of analysis, ranging from that of small groups to whole societies, in understanding social life. Regardless of the unit of analysis, the focus of the discipline is on social groups and collective behavior rather than the individual.

This course will use science fiction literature, movies, and television shows to ignite your sociological imagination. As a genre, science fiction invites us to imagine “new worlds” and envision how changes in history, knowledge, and technology, might affect our understanding of ourselves and our interactions. Such “imaginations” reveal that there is nothing “natural” or “inevitable” about our current social arrangements.

The purpose of this course is to help you develop a sociological imagination. This course will introduce you to sociology’s theoretical perspectives and central concepts. This course is designed to cultivate the skills necessary to be a good critical thinker. Students are expected to think and read sociologically and to express those thoughts clearly in writing and speech. This course will integrate sociological readings, short films, writing exercises, lectures and class activities to stimulate discussion about the changing structure of society. We will examine the processes that pattern social life as well as some consequences of our current social order. By the end of the semester, successful students will have acquired the following skills:

- a foundational understanding of the sociological framework
- the ability to read and interpret sociological texts
- the ability to sociologically interpret non-sociological sources
- the ability to write a sociological essay
- the ability to apply sociological concepts to science fiction

**Texts:**


**Grading:**

The grades for the course will be determined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytic Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>35%</td>
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**Attendance/ Participation:**

This course is designed to be interactive and therefore requires maximum participation from each student. Students will be provided with various participation formats (small group discussion, open forum, class presentations, question and answer, in-class writing assignments, etc.). Students are expected to come to class prepared (having completed all assigned readings) and ready to participate. *Students who have more than three absences (excused or unexcused) will receive a reduction on their final grade for the course.*

**Analytic Paper:**

During this semester you will write a sociological analysis of a science fiction. In this analytic paper you will apply key sociological concepts and frameworks to your analysis of a science fiction movie. Your essay will be 3-5 pages and respond to written questions that connect the movie themes to the core concepts of the course. You may choose 1 of 4 possible movies for your analytic paper. *Each movie will have its own due date, so please be mindful of your schedule when you sign up for a movie selection. All movie selections are final and you are not allowed to change your selection after the first week of class. Each movie listed is accompanied with two possible meeting times for us to discuss your paper assignment in more detail. You must sign up for at least one of the meetings times for the movie you have selected.* If you’d like, you
can participate in both but that is not necessary. Thus, I will meet with everyone in the class at least one time before your paper is due. Please make sure you watch the movie and jot down some paper ideas BEFORE our scheduled meeting. Even if you have seen the movie before, I suggest you watch it again with your new “sociological eyes”. The essay should be submitted electronically via Moodle by 9am on the dates due. Any submission after 9am on the assigned date will be considered late. Papers that are submitted late will receive a one-letter grade deduction for each day late. Your analytic paper is worth 25% of your total grade for this course.

Exams:

This course has a mid-term and a final exam. The exams will cover material from readings, lectures, videos, class activities and discussions. If you are unable to make the scheduled exam, you may take the exam at an earlier date. However, you are not allowed to take either exam after the scheduled date. The midterm is worth 30% of your total grade for the course and the final will be worth 30% of the course grade.

Policies:

Requests for academic accommodations must be formally filed with the Office of Educational Services. It is the student's responsibility to self-identify with the Office of Educational Services. To schedule an appointment call x3327 or stop by BC 114. Please note that there are no retroactive accommodations.

All assignments completed in this course are expected to be original scholarship completed by the student. All papers must be typewritten and double-spaced. Underline the thesis statement in your paper. Be sure to footnote ideas taken from the textbooks. You should give the authors credit for their ideas whether they are direct quotations of their words or not. You can refer to your student handbook or speak with me directly about standards and practices regarding plagiarism. Practicing plagiarism in any form is considered a violation of the academic code of ethics and will result in a failing grade for the course. Be sure to include the rest of the bibliographic information at the end of your paper.

Please start working on your paper assignments early. It will probably take you some time to organize your ideas. I encourage you to see me with questions during office hours. Turning in any assignment late will reduce your grade by one letter for each day late. If you wrote an A paper and turned it in to me one day late, your grade for that paper would be reduced to a B. If you turned the paper in two days late, your grade would be a C; three days late a D, etc. In this instance, Saturday and Sunday are counted as one day. Thus, a paper that is due on Thursday but turned in on Monday would be counted as two days late and the grade will be reduced by two letter grades. If you are ill, please notify me and attach a doctor’s note with your exam so that your grade will not be reduced.

Extra Credit: Writing is an iterative process that helps us to figure out both what we think and the best way to communicate our thoughts. The Writing Center is structured to help you with all phases of the writing process including: exploring topics and assignments, organizing papers,
offering guidelines for effective communication, offering guidelines for various writing strategies, revision, techniques of grammar, help for ESL students, and word choice. For each paper, you will receive 5 extra points above the grade that you earned if you visit the writing center and work with a tutor. You can receive an additional 5 extra points if you visit the writing center a second time and meet with a tutor about a later draft. You can work with them on a draft or developing an outline. When you submit your paper, you must include the following: (1) final draft of the paper; (2) documentation of each visit to the writing center that is signed by the tutor (a short statement indicating that you met with a tutor, explaining what you accomplished during the session, and noting the date and time of your meeting). No extra credit will be given without submission of proper documentation. The Writing Center is located on the second floor of the library and is open between the hours of 10am-4:30pm M-F. You can schedule an appointment online at http://www.therichoch.com/wconline/drew/.

**Benchmark Practices:**

My goal in this course is to share with you my passion and knowledge about sociology. I want you to be successful in this course. Based on my observations of previous classes, successful students engaged in the following practices: Read and understand the course syllabus

- Complete the assigned readings each week
- Come prepared to class to actively participate in discussions
- Ask questions during class to enhance learning
- Ask for help from the instructor or classmates when needed
- Work with the instructor in creating an effective learning environment

If you commit yourself to completing the above learning tasks during this semester, this course will be a highly valuable learning experience for you and others.
Sci-Fi Movies for Sociological Analysis

1. Equilibrium (due on 9/24; meetings Friday 9/10 11am or Monday 9/13 at 1pm)

SYNOPSIS
A man who dares to feel finds his life in danger in this cautionary science fiction drama. In the future, after a Third World War has decimated much of the Earth's population, a new nation known as Libria rises up under the unquestioned leadership of Dupont (Angus MacFadyen). Believing human emotions and their expression were to blame for the failings of past societies, The Father has decreed that all citizens must take a daily dose of Prozia II, a drug which levels out the emotional landscape, and that all forms of creative expression are against the law; violating either regulation can be punished by death. John Preston (Christian Bale) is a Grammaton, an elite law enforcement officer who tracks down and punishes "sense offenders." One day, Preston accidentally fails to take his Prozia II, and for the first time begins experiencing emotions himself. Preston becomes aware of an underground of rebels who refuse to take their medication and have embraced art and literature, and he finds himself becoming infatuated with one of their number, Mary O'Brian (Emily Watson). Equilibrium is the second feature-length directorial effort from Kurt Wimmer, whose screenwriting credits include The Thomas Crown Affair and Sphere. ~ Mark Deming, All Movie Guide

ANALYTIC QUESTIONS
Consider the film Equilibrium (2002) alongside the concepts and themes discussed in this course. Use the experiences of the characters in the film as the basis of a paper that explores the relationship between science and society. Use the sociological framework presented in this course to describe the social system depicted in the film. Here, you must consider how social systems are maintained and re-created or changed through everyday acts. Be sure to consider the social statuses, roles, and social locations of the characters in the film and how their individual behavior is shaped by the larger social context.

2. A.I. (due on 10/8; meetings on Friday 9/24 at 11am or Monday 9/27 at 1pm)

SYNOPSIS
Based on the 1969 short story Super-Toys Last All Summer Long, by Brian Aldiss, this science fiction fantasy bears similarities to Pinocchio (1940) and originated as a long-gestating project of director Stanley Kubrick that passed to his friend Steven Spielberg after Kubrick's death. Haley Joel Osment stars as David, a "mecha" or robot of the future, when the polar ice caps have melted and submerged many coastal cities, causing worldwide starvation and human dependence upon robotic assistance. The first mecha designed to experience love, David is the "son" of Henry (Sam Robards), an employee of the company that built the boy, and the grief-stricken Monica (Frances O'Connor). David is meant to replace the couple's hopelessly comatose son, but when their natural child recovers, David is abandoned and sets out to become "a real boy" worthy of his mother's affection. Along the way, David is mentored by a pleasure-providing
mecha named Gigolo Joe (Jude Law) and a talking "super toy" bear named Teddy. His adventures take him to the Roman Circus-style "Flesh Fair," where mechas are destroyed for the amusement of humans; Rouge City, where Gigolo Joe narrowly avoids capture by police; and finally a submerged New York City, where David's creator, Professor Hobby (William Hurt) reveals the secrets of the boy's creation. Brendan Gleeson and narrator Ben Kingsley co-star in A.I., which was adapted from Kubrick's treatment by Spielberg, in his first crack at screenwriting since Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977). ~ Karl Williams, All Movie Guide

ANALYTIC QUESTIONS

Consider the film A.I. (2001) alongside the concepts and themes discussed in this course. Use the experiences of the characters in the film as the basis of a paper that explores the process and function of socialization. Use the sociological framework presented in this course to describe the stages that the main character undergoes in his process to become human. Compare his experience with our process of socialization in the U.S. What are the similarities and differences? Here, you must consider how the importance of social interaction to the experience of being human. Be sure to consider how socialization occurs across the entire life course.

3. Blade Runner (due on 10/29; meeting on Friday 10/15 at 11am or Monday 10/18 at 1pm)

SYNOPSIS

A blend of science fiction and noir detective fiction, Blade Runner (1982) was a box office and critical bust upon its initial exhibition, but its unique postmodern production design became hugely influential within the sci-fi genre, and the film gained a significant cult following that increased its stature. Harrison Ford stars as Rick Deckard, a retired cop in Los Angeles circa 2019. L.A. has become a pan-cultural dystopia of corporate advertising, pollution and flying automobiles, as well as replicants, human-like androids with short life spans built by the Tyrell Corporation for use in dangerous off-world colonization. Deckard's former job in the police department was as a talented blade runner, a euphemism for detectives that hunt down and assassinate rogue replicants. Called before his one-time superior (M. Emmett Walsh), Deckard is forced back into active duty. A quartet of replicants led by Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer) has escaped and headed to Earth, killing several humans in the process. After meeting with the eccentric Eldon Tyrell (Joe Turkel), creator of the replicants, Deckard finds and eliminates Zhora (Joanna Cassidy), one of his targets. Attacked by another replicant, Leon (Brion James), Deckard is about to be killed when he's saved by Rachael (Sean Young), Tyrell's assistant and a replicant who's unaware of her true nature. In the meantime, Batty and his replicant pleasure model lover, Pris (Darryl Hannah) use a dying inventor, J.F. Sebastian (William Sanderson) to get close to Tyrell and murder him. Deckard tracks the pair to Sebastian's, where a bloody and violent final confrontation between Deckard and Batty takes place on a skyscraper rooftop high above the city. In 1992, Ridley Scott released a popular director's cut that removed Deckard's narration, added a dream sequence, and excised a happy ending imposed by the results of test screenings; these legendary behind-the-scenes battles were chronicled in a 1996 tome, Future Noir: The Making of Blade Runner by Paul M. Sammon. ~ Karl Williams, All Movie Guide
ANALYTIC QUESTIONS

Consider the film *Blade Runner* (1982) alongside the concepts and themes discussed in this course. Use the experiences of the characters in the film as the basis of a paper that explores the role and dynamics of social stratification in society. Use the sociological framework presented in this course to describe the social hierarchies depicted in the film and how this social structure produces social inequalities experienced by the characters. What is the relationship between this social hierarchy and the function and operation of social institutions presented in the film? In addition, you must consider how social hierarchies are maintained and re-created or changed through everyday acts. Be sure to consider specific film characters’ attitudes, actions, privileges and outcomes are shaped by the larger social context.

4. The Book of Eli (due on 11/19; meetings on Friday 11/5 at 11am or Monday 11/8 at 1pm)

SYNOPSIS

In the not-too-distant future, some 30 years after the final war, a solitary man walks across the wasteland that was once America. Empty cities, broken highways, seared earth—all around him, the marks of catastrophic destruction. There is no civilization here, no law. The roads belong to gangs that would murder a man for his shoes, an ounce of water—or for nothing at all. But they're no match for this traveler. A warrior not by choice but necessity, Eli seeks only peace but, if challenged, will cut his attackers down before they realize their fatal mistake. It's not his life he guards so fiercely but his hope for the future; a hope he has carried and protected for 30 years and is determined to realize. Driven by this commitment and guided by his belief in something greater than himself, Eli does what he must to survive—and continue. Only one other man in this ruined world understands the power Eli holds, and is determined to make it his own: Carnegie, the self-appointed despot of a makeshift town of thieves and gunmen. Meanwhile, Carnegie's adopted daughter Solara is fascinated by Eli for another reason: the glimpse he offers of what may exist beyond her stepfather's domain. But neither will find it easy to deter him. Nothing—and no one—can stand in his way. Eli must keep moving to fulfill his destiny and bring help to a ravaged humanity.

ANALYTIC QUESTIONS

Consider the film *Equilibrium* (2002) alongside the concepts and themes discussed in this course. Use the experiences of the characters in the film as the basis of a paper that explores the relationship between technology and social change. Use the sociological framework presented in this course to describe the social structure being created after the catastrophic destruction depicted in the film. What are the competing visions of society displayed among the characters? How do the characters build collective movements of individuals to support and enact their vision of society? Here, you must consider the basis of social order in this society, how status and resources are distributed, and the value of technology in building a new society. Be sure to consider the various forms of technology presented and the significance of each.
Sociological Perspective

8/30
Introduction

9/1
Topic: Social Systems
Readings: Johnson (p.7-35)

9/3
Topic: Social Status & Roles
Readings: Johnson (p.79-98)

9/6 LABOR DAY

9/8
Topic: Sociological Theory
Readings: Johnson (p.98-117)

9/10
Topic: Context Matters
Readings: Butler (p.5-44)

The art of social research

9/13
Topic: Language of Research
Readings: “Doing Social Research” (online)

9/15
Topic: Types of Social Research
Readings: Butler (p.47-70)

9/17
Topic: Generating a Hypothesis
Readings: Butler (p.70-102)

9/20
Topic: Reliability and Validity
Readings: “Getting Wired: Exploiting the internet for the collect of valid sexuality data” (online)

9/22
Topic: Evaluating Social Research
Readings: “Rebel Without Cause or Effect: Birth Order and Social Attitudes,” (online); “How to read a (quantitative) journal article” (online)

9/24
Topic: Ethics
Readings: ASA code of ethics (online); Ethics in Research (online); Butler (p.102-112)

Analytic Paper Option #1 due on movie Equilibrium (meetings Friday 9/10 11am or Monday 9/13 at 1pm)

Socialization and culture

9/27
Topic: Social Construction of Reality
Readings: Johnson (p.36-53)

9/29
Topic: Elements of Culture
10/1
Topic: “American Values”
Readings: Johnson (p.63-78)

10/4
Topic: Process of Socialization
Readings: Johnson (p.141-150)

10/6
Film: “The Merchant of Cool”
Readings: Johnson (p.151-164)

10/8
Topic: Discussion “The Merchant of Cool”
Readings: Butler (p.115-144)

**Analytic Paper Option #2 due on movie A.I. (meetings on Friday 9/24 at 11am or Monday 9/27 at 1pm)**

10/11
Topic: Norm Breaking
Readings: Butler (p.144-168)

10/13 Midterm Review

10/15 Midterm
Social Institutions

Politics and privilege

10/18 READING DAYS

10/20

Topic: Religion and Politics (pt.1)
Readings: Religion and Political Legitimation (online article)

10/22

Topic: Religion and Politics (pt.2)
Readings: Butler (p.168-196)

Economy & work

10/25

Topic: Social Stratification
Readings: Butler (p.196-220)

10/27

Topic: Social Stratification (pt. 2)
Readings: Butler (p.220-248)

10/29

Topic: Worker Alienation
Readings: “The Happy Worker” (online)

Analytic Paper Option #3 due on movie Blade Runner (meeting on Friday 10/15 at 11am or Monday 10/18 at 1pm)

Education
11/1

Topic: Education and Inequality
Readings: “When Race Matters: Teacher’s Evaluations of Students’ Classroom Behavior” (online article)

11/3

Film: “Children in America’s Schools with Bill Moyers”
Readings: Notes from the Back of the Room (online article)

11/5

Topic: Discuss Children in America’s Schools

Family

11/8

Topic: Courtship, Marriage, and Family
Readings: “Has the Future of Marriage Arrived?” (online article)

11/10

Topic: Life Happens
Readings: “Family Trends: What implications for family policy?” (online article)

11/12

Topic: Life Happens (pt.2)

Social Change

11/15

Topic: Causes & Consequences of Social Change
Readings: Johnson (p.118-130)

11/17
Topic: Practicing Social Change
Readings: Johnson (p.131-140)

11/19
Topic: Technology and Social Change
Readings: “Perspectives on Technology and Work Organization” (online article)

Analytic Paper Option #4 due on movie The Book of Eli (meetings on Friday 11/5 at 11am or Monday 11/8 at 1pm)

11/22
Topic: Collective Behavior and Social Movements
Readings: Johnson (p.165-176)

11/24 THANKSGIVING BREAK

11/26 THANKSGIVING BREAK

11/29
Topic: Globalization
Readings: Johnson (p.176-190)

12/1
Topic: Universities & Sweatshops

12/3
Topic: Universities & Sweatshops

12/6 CONCLUSION