

Dr. William Thornton  
Stallings Hall, 124  
504-865-2134  
[thornton@loyno.edu](mailto:thornton@loyno.edu)  
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## SOCI-C100-051: INTRODUCTORY SOCIOLOGY

**Course Description:** The purpose of this course is to acquaint students with the basic concepts and core material in the discipline of sociology. This information will be used to describe and analyze the basic institutions in American society (i.e., family, education, government, religion, and economy). In addition, the topics of culture and socialization will be examined in detail. Other areas of study include social disorganization (crime, delinquency and deviance), social stratification, urban issues, ethnic and racial issues, war, politics, medicine, social change, collective behavior, etc. We will also spend time on the examination of sociological theories and research methods. Many of the topics discussed in this survey course are covered in greater detail in more advanced sociology courses offered in City College.

### Course Objectives:

1. To acquaint students with the discipline of sociology
2. To examine key research in select fields of sociology
3. To apply sociological theories and techniques to the study of social phenomena
4. To examine the operation of basic social institutions in society
5. To examine the concept of culture within the context of society
6. To explore the applied areas of sociology to American society
7. To explore the nature of social structure from the micro to macro level

**Course Texts:** 1. Margaret Anderson and Howard Taylor. Sociology: Understand A Diverse Society. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2004. (2) George Ritzer. The McDonaldization of Society. CA: Pine Forge Press, 1996

**Course Requirements:** (1) midterm exam - [20%]; (2) final exam -[20%]; (3) McDonaldization analysis - [20%]- see guidelines at end of syllabus ; (4) term paper - [45%] - see guidelines at end of syllabus; (5) attend class and discuss

City College has a strict policy on class attendance, which I must adhere to. Unexcused class absences will result in the lowering of your grade. No make up examinations are given in the course and all assignments must be turned in on time. Please do not email your class assignments as attachments. I require that you give me two hard copies of each written assignment.

**Course Outline:** Topics correspond to chapters in the main text. Please read the material for the assigned week before coming to class.

## **Introducing the Sociological Perspective**

1. Developing a Sociological Perspective Chp. 1
  - What is sociology
  - The sociological imagination
  - The significance of diversity
  - The development of sociology
  - Theoretical foundations in sociology
    - functionalism
    - conflict theory
    - symbolic interactionism
    - ethnomethodology
  
2. Doing Sociological Research Chp. 2
  - The research process
  - The tools of sociological research
  - Prediction, sampling and statistical analysis
  - Value free sociology
  - Ethics in research

## **Individuals in Society**

3. Culture Chp. 3, McDonaldization book
  - Defining culture
  - The elements of culture
  - Cultural diversity
  - Popular culture
  - Theoretical perspectives on culture
  - Cultural change
  
4. Socialization Chp. 4
  - The socialization process
  - Theories of socialization
  - Agents of socialization
  - Socialization across the life cycle
  - Resocialization
  
5. Society and Social Interaction Chp. 5
  - What is society
  - Theories about analyzing social interaction

- Interpersonal attraction
  - Social institutions
6. Groups and Organizations Chp. 6
    - Types of groups
    - Social influence
    - Formal organizations and bureaucracies
    - Functional, Conflict and Symbolic Interaction theoretical perspectives
  7. Collective Behavior and Social Movements Chp. 22
    - Characteristics of collective behavior
    - Crowds
    - Riots
    - Collective preoccupations
    - Social movements
  8. Sexuality and Intimate Relationship Chp. 7
    - The sexual revolution
    - Contemporary sexual attitudes and behavior
    - Sexuality and sociological theory
    - Sex and social issues
  9. Deviance Chp. 8
    - Defining deviance
    - Sociological theories of deviance
    - Forms of deviance
    - Deviance in global perspective
  10. Crime and Criminal Justice Chp. 9
    - Types of crime
    - Crime and organization
    - Race, class, gender and crime
    - The criminal justice system
    - Terrorism as international crime

### **Social Inequalities**

11. Social Class and Social Stratification Chp. 10
  - Social differentiation vs. social stratification
  - Why is there inequality
  - Functionalism vs. conflict theory
  - The class structure of the U.S.
  - Diverse sources of stratification
  - Class consciousness

- Social mobility
  - Poverty
12. Global Stratification Chp. 11
- Consequences of global stratification
  - Theories of global stratification
  - World poverty
  - The future of global stratification
13. Race and Ethnicity Chp. 12
- Race and ethnicity
  - Racial stereotypes
  - Prejudice, discrimination and racism
  - Theories of prejudice and racism
  - Diverse groups, diverse histories
  - Patterns of racial and ethnic relations
  - Attaining racial and ethnic equality
14. Gender Chp. 13
- Defining sex and gender
  - The social construction of gender
  - Gender stratification
  - Gender and diversity
  - Theories of gender
  - Gender and social change
15. Age and Aging Chp. 14
- The social significance of aging
  - Growing up and growing old
  - Death and dying
  - Age, diversity, and inequality
  - Explaining age stratification

### **Social Institutions**

16. Families Chp. 15
17. Education Chp 16
18. Religion Chp 17
19. Economy and Work Chp. 18
20. Power, Politics and Authority Chp. 19
21. Health Care Chp. 20

### **Social Change**

- 22. Population, Urbanism, and Environment Chp 21
- 23. Social Change in Global Perspective Chp 23

## II. MAJOR PROJECT GUIDELINES

(1) **McDonaldization of Society paper:** Sociologist George Ritzer sees the thousands of McDonalds restaurants that dot the U.S. landscape – and increasingly the world – as having much greater significance than the convenience of fast hamburgers and milk shakes. He coined the term the *McDonaldization of society*, to refer to the increasing rationalization of the routine tasks of everyday life. He points out that Ray Kroc, the founder of McDonald's, applied the principles developed by Henry Ford to the preparation and serving of food. A 1958 operations manual spelled out the exact procedure:

*It told operators exactly how to draw milkshakes, grill hamburgers, and fry potatoes. It specified precise cooking times for all products and temperature settings for all equipment. It fixed standard portions on every food item, down to the quarter ounce of onions places on each hamburger patty and the thirty-two slices per pound of cheese. It specified that French fries be cut at nine-thirty-seconds of an inc thick...Grill men... were instructed to put hamburgers down on the grill moving from left to right creating six rows of six patties each. And because the fist two rows were farthest from the heating element, they were instructed (and still are) to flip the third row first, then the forth, and six before flipping the first two.*

Ritzer stresses that “McDonaldization does not refer to just the robotlike assembly of food.” Rather, this process, occurring throughout society, is transforming our lives. Shopping malls are controlled environments of approved design, logo, colors, and opening and closing hours. Travel agencies transport middle-class Americans to ten European capitals in fourteen days, each visitor experiencing exactly the same hotels, restaurants, and other predictable settings. No one need fear meeting a “real” native, USA Today produces the same bland, instant news – in short, unanalytic pieces that can be read between gulps of the McShake or the McBurger.

Is all this bad? Not necessarily. Efficiency does bring reduced prices. But at a cost, a loss of something difficult to define, a quality of life washed away by rationalization.

In any event, the future has arrived. The trend is strongly toward the McDonaldization of human experience. For good or bad, our social destiny is to live in such prepackaged settings. When education becomes rationalized – which is now in process – our children will no longer have to put up with the idiosyncrasies of real professors, those people who think that ideas must be discussed endlessly and who never come to decisive answers anyway. What we want are instant, preformed solutions to social issues, like those we

find in mathematics and engineering. Fortunately, our children will be able to be instructed in computerized courses, in which everyone learns the same answers, the approved, precise, and proper ways to think about social issues. This certainly would be efficient – and the “iron cage” of bureaucracy that Max Weber said would entrap us ([www.stedwards.edu/bss/farral/mcdonize.htm](http://www.stedwards.edu/bss/farral/mcdonize.htm)).

*McDonaldization* refers to the increasing and ubiquitous presence of the fast-food model in most organizations that shape daily life. Work, travel, leisure, shopping, health care, education, politics have all become subject to McDonaldization. Each industry is based on a principle of high and efficient productivity, which translates into a highly rational social organization, with workers employed at low pay, and customers experiencing ease, convenience, and familiarity. Businesses that have copied McDonalds include childcare centers such as Kinder Care, drive in health care clinics that deal quickly and efficiently with minor health and dental problems (McDoctor), etc.

Ritzer identifies four dimensions of the McDonaldization process: efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. While aspects of McDonaldization bring benefits to people such as a greater availability of goods and services to a wide portion of the population, instantaneous service and convenience to a public with less free time, predictability and familiarity in the goods bought and sold, etc. However, Ritzer argues that as we become more dependent on what is familiar and expected, the danger of dehumanization arises. People lose their creativity, and the quality of goods and services is of little concern. This disrupts the fundamental human capacity for error, surprise, and imagination (Anderson and Taylor, 2004: 161-163).

Your assignment is to apply McDonaldization to some aspect of American life and explain how the process has benefited and/or harmed the endeavor. Your paper should be 5 to 7 pages long and should address clearly what you are examining (e.g., a hospital, a chainstore, a funeral, a gated residential community, a cruise ship, a university), what are the positive aspects of McDonaldization, and what are the negative aspects of McDonaldization. Include a summary section in your paper speculating on the future of McDonaldization as it applies to what you have studied. The paper should be typed and double-spaced with approximately one-inch margins all around.

**(2) Term Paper:** Your major project will entail the writing of a term /research paper on a sociological topic of your choice. I suggest that you examine the table of contents in the textbook to get an idea of possible topics. Since Introductory Sociology is a survey course, covering many varied topics in the field, students should not have a problem in selecting topics that interest them, or that are in their major area of study (e.g., psychology, sociology, nursing, criminal justice, organizational science, computer information systems, etc.). I strongly suggest that you do indeed select an area that you have some interest in. If you are beginning your career at Loyola, you will be asked to write many papers before you graduate. By concentrating on a given area of study, and developing that area as you write papers in different courses, you will develop an area of

expertise, which can later be expanded into a thesis, dissertation, etc. if you continue your education.

I list a few possible choices drawn from past student papers. I will be glad to assign you a topic if you so desire.

- the new multi-culturalism: what is it and where is it going
- hate crimes, real or an illusion
- homeless children, myth or reality
- the slipping middle class family, what does the future hold
- the elimination of mid-level management in the workplace
- television, is it getting too violent for most of us
- pornography, is it a right or a crime
- casino gambling in a city, what are the implications
- America's dying cities, or where have all the middle classes gone
- private vs public schools, free choice or forced mediocrity
- a college degree for all people, is it really possible
- all grown up and no place to go - the plight of America's adolescents
- carjacking -- America's New Crime
- domestic violence in Russia
- life-chances of inner city African American males

I would like you to select a topic and develop a one-page outline of the topic with possible points that you will discuss in the paper. An outline should look something like this:

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**Political Correctness: What is It and What Does it Mean for The Operation of American Institutions**

**1. Political Correctness**

- a. **A Definition - exactly what does the term mean**
- b. **History of the term - where did the concept come from, why has it suddenly become popular**
- c. **Negative and Positive implications of political correctness**

**2. Political Correctness in Education**

- a. **Examples of the ideology in grade schools and how this affects the possible teaching of basic courses;**
- b. **Examples of the ideology in higher education and how this affects the teaching of certain course**

**3. Political Correctness in the Workplace**

- a. **Examples of PC in corporate America**
- b. **The new sexism and PC**
- c. **The new racism as PC**

4. **Political Correctness in Politics**
    - a. **Examples of in local, state and federal elections**
    - b. **PC and the candidate - are platforms presenting information or PC propaganda**
  
  5. **Political Correctness and the Future**
    - a. **PC as divisive or unifying**
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Basically, the outline should guide both your research and your writing of the research paper. Each major point in the outline should, theoretically, be a section in the paper that you will develop in more detail. Outlines can, of course, be much more detailed than my crude example.

I would like the paper to be about 20 pages long (1 inch margins, double spaced and typed in a normal type or font size -no large type will be accepted) and have a separate bibliography. Page count does not include the reference list. Your citation style for the paper should be in the following style:

direct quote - if the quote runs about three lines, put the quote in quotation marks "....." and reference this way: (Smith, 1992: 3). Here, the author's last name is Smith, the book or article was published in 1992, and the quotations came from page three. The citation in the reference list should appear in the following manner in alphabetical order:

Smith, J. 1992. The Book of Political Correctness. New York: McGraw Hill .

If the quote runs more than three lines, indent the quotation in from the paragraph, single space, and use the same citation style. If you are paraphrasing a source, even though you are not directly quoting it, use the same citation style, minus quotation marks or indenting. When in doubt, reference your work. Keep in mind that a research paper of the type you are writing is designed to inform, educate, and enlighten its reader. Therefore, the more references you have on a topic, the better informed the reader will be.

I strongly urge you to use headings in your paper to guide the writing. Thus, in my outline above, each of the number points could be a boldface heading in the body of the paper to guide the writing. Headings break up long pages of text and give the reader a visual relief as they read the paper.

In summary, once you have had your topic cleared by me, by my acceptance of your topic and outline, begin the paper. When you hand the paper in, it should include: (1) a cover page with the title of the paper, your name, and the name of the course; (2) an outline of the paper, (3) and the body of the paper; and (4) a complete reference list.