"The sociologist, then, is someone concerned with understanding society in a disciplined way ... His (or her) consuming interest remains in the world of [humans], their institutions, their history, their passions"

- Peter Berger, Invitation to Sociology (pp. 16, 18)

Course Description:
This course provides an introduction to the sociological perspective: its dominant questions and topics of inquiry, theories and concepts, methods of research and research findings. The course is organized around several key sociological questions: What is sociology, and on what bases do sociologists claim to know about the world? What does it mean to be human? How do we get people to do what we want them to do? Why is there inequality, what forms does it take, and what obstacles exist to diminishing it? How does society fill its needs? Finally, what’s the big “global” picture? We explore and suggest various answers to these questions, based on sociological research, throughout this course.

Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. Articulate a sociological perspective on social issues (exams; group discussions assignment, mini-assignments #1 and #4, in-class work);
2. Apply and evaluate sociological concepts (exams; participant observation assignment)
3. Explain how cultural context influences individual, group and/or institutional behavior and processes (exams, mini-assignment #2)
4. Analyze social phenomena from alternate perspectives (group discussion project)
5. Demonstrate an understanding of your and other societies, your social position and your personal characteristics in new, sociologically-informed ways (Mini-assignments #1 and #3, exams, group discussion project, participant observation project).

This course fulfills the Intellectual Perspectives requirement in the area of Social Thought and Tradition. We will work particularly on the skill areas of practicing and improving collaborative skills (through the group discussions and in-class group work), demonstrating problem-solving and critical thinking skills and developing an increased global awareness.
The course also serves as one of the foundational courses for Sociology and Criminal Justice Studies majors and minors, and is an elective course within the Child and Family Studies major.

**Course Requirements:**
These are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 3</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant observation project</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance in Group Discussion</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Oral</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Oral</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual source evaluations and outlined notes</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini-assignments</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#1 Social Inequality Monopoly assignment (2%)</td>
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<td>#2 Amish website notes (1%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>#3 Report on UN Sustainable Development Goal (1%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>#4 Attendance at Global Gift Market for 1 hour and reflection paper (Wed. Nov. 28) (1%)</td>
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**You may complete a substitute co-curricular assignment for ONE miniassignment if you choose; you need my permission in advance for this option. You will attend the event and write a 1-2 page typed, double-spaced summary (one paragraph only) and sociological analysis of the event. You may not “double-dip” this option, that is, also use the event or assignment to fulfill a requirement for another course.**

**One substitution for either #2 or #3 is attendance at an event that highlights careers available to sociology majors. To be scheduled during part of 12:40 free period when interested students can attend.**

**Exams** will have a varied format; that is, each exam combines multiple-choice, matching, short answer and essay questions.

Students will be assigned to groups to prepare and facilitate thoughtful, complex discussions on controversial issues of our times. You will work with group members to divide up the assigned “foundation” reading and each presenter will find at least TWO additional, high-quality sources on their specific topic or viewpoint (for example, the merits of decriminalizing drug use, or of focusing drug war efforts around...
violent gangs, or the reasons for women’s lower wages, or how immigrant children affect public schools) to elaborate their position. You will complete summary and evaluation sheets for the sources that you use, to better guarantee their quality. Thus each presenter facilitates class discussion around her or his particular topic, as well as of the larger topic at hand. Group members must work together to structure the presentation and divide the work. Thus you present the knowledge gained from your readings in an oral presentation, facilitate class discussion around your topic and submit source evaluations and outlined notes, properly cited, about one week later. Further guidelines will be distributed.

The participant observation project allows you to either intensively observe a social setting or do a norm violation experiment and develop some preliminary sociological analyses of your experience. Exemplary projects from the past will be posted at the D2L course site to guide you in doing the assignment.

There will occasionally be short take-home mini-assignments that will be graded on a S+ (100), S (85), S- (70) and U (0) basis. These assignments are listed above and noted in the course schedule. The total of them is worth 5% of your course grade. No late assignments are accepted and make-ups are only allowed in the cases of documented excused absences. All make-ups must be completed by the following course period.

Class attendance: I expect you to attend class regularly and to be on time for class. We all need this continuity to have coherent and meaningful discussions across class sessions. You are responsible for signing the attendance sheet distributed during the class period. After THREE missed classes each additional absence will significantly lower your final course grade. Please be aware that this is a “no-fault” policy so that there is no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. Missed classes for athletic commitments will generally be counted as part of the total two absences. If you miss more than six classes for any reason you will not pass the class. Also, chronic lateness counts as missed classes. Do see me early on if you have exceptional circumstances related to family issues, medical problems, or personal difficulties that affect your class attendance and course work.

At the end of the course I rank students on a class participation scale. Some degree of class participation is expected. We will use a “talking jar” in class to ensure that students are doing the reading and coming prepared to contribute thoughtful comments on or questions from the day’s reading. Your grade will be raised from 1 to 3 total points depending upon your amount and quality of class participation. “Class participation” includes participation in whole class discussions, active engagement in small group work and discussions about course material, course resources or related topics that you have with me before or after class or during office hours, and emailed comments of points you would have made in class if you had thought of them at the time or had felt comfortable speaking out. For example, a student with a final grade for written work of 75% would have that grade raised to a 78 (C+) if s/he had been a very regular and quality contributor to class discussions.

Keep up with the readings (bring them to class to refer to) and bring to class any questions or reflections that they inspire to share with the rest of us. The more actively that you participate in discussions and exercises, the more rewarding this class should be.
Submission Guidelines for Written Work: All course assignments, including miniassigments, must be printed and turned in as hard copy at the beginning of the class period. All assignments should use size 12 font and have numbered pages. Hard copy should be stapled. Assignments should generally have a professional presentation. Points may be deducted for not meeting these criteria, or for repeatedly not following the submission guidelines above. In addition, you are asked to submit your assignments electronically to the course’s D2L page, in the designated folder. Note that electronic submission is in addition to, not instead of, hard copy turned in during class.

**A NOTE ON RESERVE READING:** These readings are a critical part of the course. You should bring these readings to class, in printed or digital form, so you can consult them at that time. Make sure you bring them in a form where you can read and process them… cell phone access can be challenging in this regard.

Grade Calculation: I will use the D2L gradebook for the class. To compute your grade simply multiply the grade that you earned on a particular requirement by the percentage of the grade that it is worth. For example, if you earned an 80 on the first exam you multiply it by .15 which becomes a 12. A 75 on your Participant Observation assignment which is worth .20 becomes a 15, plus 12 equals 27. Do the same for all your other course requirements and add them up and you will have a number that is a percentage of 100. Put in hypothetical (possible) values for remaining requirements to reach the 100 total possible points to get a sense of where you stand. I do not generally give extra credit opportunities.

Judicious use of email: Many of us, myself included, can feel swamped by the barrage of email in our mailboxes. Sifting through messages takes up my time that is better spent preparing for classes and meeting with students. Thus I ask that you communicate with me via email only for urgent matters that cannot be addressed in person before or after the class period or during office hours. Also, I only read and respond to email during regular work hours on weekdays.

Class Cancellation Policy: If I must unexpectedly cancel class, due to illness of myself or a family member, bad weather or another emergency, please check your email for announcements for the next class period. Sometimes you will be given an assignment to complete using the D2L course page.

Technology Policy: I expect you to come to class with the intention of learning. This means that distracting activities including text messaging, replying to emails and listening to music should be put aside at the classroom door. All digital devices must be completely switched off once class begins and remain off for the entire period. If you are found using a digital device for purposes not related to class (e.g. NOT for taking class notes or pulling up the day’s readings on a tablet, which IS allowed) you will be penalized by that class period’s being designated as an unexcused absence for you. Repeated violations of this policy will lower your course grade.
**Classroom Etiquette:** You are expected to be on time for class and present and participating during whole class sessions and small group work. Wandering around or outside of the classroom, during class time, is unacceptable.

**Inclusion Policy:** Westminster College actively strives for the full inclusion of all our students. Students with disabilities who require access solutions for environmental or curricular barriers should contact Ms. Faith Craig, Director of Disability Support Services, in 414 Thompson Clark Hall or at 724-946-7192 or at craigfa@westminster.edu.

**The Academic Success Center** is located on the fourth floor of Thompson Clark Hall. The Director of the Center is Ms. Jessica Shelenberger. The Center can assist you with tutors for classes, time management and study skills and writing papers. Book an appointment at [http://www.westminster.edu/academics/learning-center/index.cfm](http://www.westminster.edu/academics/learning-center/index.cfm)

**Policy on Make-up Work:** All coursework must be completed by or on the date specified in the syllabus, unless special arrangements are made in advance with the instructor. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the specified due date. Assignments submitted before 4:00 on the same day will be docked 5 points, with 10 points subtracted for each day late thereafter. *Normally the only acceptable excuses for turning assignments in late without this penalty or for taking a make-up exam are medical excuses and family emergencies, for which you need to provide documentation. See the Undergraduate Bulletin for further description of academic policies on these matters.*

**Academic Integrity:** There are few greater rewards in life than being a person of good character. Possessing such a character means that you can look yourself in the eye in the mirror every morning and smile back at the face that greets you, regardless of other challenges that you may be facing.

Part of a good character, and central to the purpose and pursuit of any academic community, is academic integrity. All members of the Westminster community, including students, faculty, staff and administrators, are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity, in keeping with the philosophy and mission of the College. Thus you are expected to be familiar with and to abide by the College policy and procedures described in the 2018-19 Undergraduate Catalog.

Academic dishonesty is a profound violation of this code of behavior. It can take several forms, including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, misconduct, and providing false information. Academic dishonesty breaks the sense of trust that is central to a vital, educational community like Westminster. Dishonesty in any of these forms will not be tolerated. Students who engage in academic dishonesty face the penalties outlined in the College policy. In addition, all violations will be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs. Work that you submit in this class may be submitted to Turnitin.com, a plagiarism prevention service that also provides educational information on how to practice honesty in the conduct of research and writing of papers.

For the purposes of this course, I expect you to **do your own work** unless collaboration with others is required, allowed or encouraged for a particular assignment. I also expect you to do **original work** for this course. This means that you may not submit papers used for another
course for the purpose of fulfilling requirements in this course unless specific arrangements are made with me and you also have the permission of the other instructor. Behaving with academic integrity also means that you put forth your fair share of effort into group discussions and assignments that are undertaken in the course. See me if you are unclear about the meaning of any elements of this code.

**Personal Integrity:** The mission of Westminster College is to help men and women develop competencies, commitments and characteristics which have distinguished human beings at their best. The abuse of alcohol and other drugs serves only to undermine the achievement of these goals. The faculty therefore expects all students, as they do of themselves, to take seriously the implications of such risk-taking behaviors in their pursuit of a Westminster education.

**Grading Scale:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94 - 100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>&quot;Outstanding&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 - 93</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88 - 89</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>&quot;Superior&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84 - 87</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - 83</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78 - 79</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>&quot;Satisfactory&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74 - 77</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 - 73</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68 - 69</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>&quot;Passing but Inferior&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64 - 67</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 63</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 60</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>&quot;Failure&quot;</td>
</tr>
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**Readings:** Available at the Westminster Bookstore:


Additional readings at course D2L page
**Tentative Course Outline**

*Readings are listed on the day when they are due. I recommend that you read them in the order in which they are listed. SM refers to the Schaefer text. All additional readings are available at the course’s D2L page.*

T Aug 28  
Introduction to course  
--What is Sociology?  
--Friendship Diversity Exercise

R 30  
Results of friendship diversity exercise

What is Sociology?  
--The Sociological Perspective  
--The Emergence of Sociological Ways of Knowing  
--Major Theoretical Paradigms

Reading:  
Carefully review syllabus and bring your questions  
SM Ch. 1 through p. 20  
Berger, *Invitation to Sociology* (D2L)  
Study tips sheet (handout)  
Theoretical traditions (handout)

T Sept 4  
Learning to Learn

Sociology’s Ways of Knowing  
--The Scientific Method  
--Major Research Methods  
--Research Ethics

Reading:  
Doyle and Zakrajsek, “Mindsets for Learning” (D2L)  
SM Ch. 1, rest of chapter

R 6  
Sociology’s Ways of Knowing  
--Quantitative Research  
--Guidelines for Group Discussion Project

Reading:  
Schuman, *Sense and Nonsense about Surveys* (D2L)  
*Fighting for our Lives* (D2L; use my study questions to guide)

T 11  
Sociology’s Ways of Knowing  
--Qualitative Research: Techniques and Exemplars

Reading:  
Adler and Adler, *The Promise and Pitfalls of Going into the Field* (D2L)  
(use my study questions to guide Anderson)
R 13 What Does it Mean to be Human?
   --Culture and Socialization
   --Guidelines for participant observation project
Reading: SM Ch. 2 through p. 54 (but skip pp. 42-44)
   Review exemplary past participant observation projects at D2L

T 18 What Does It Mean to be Human?
   --Culture and Socialization
Video: Spotlight

R 21 What Does it Mean to be Human?
   - Continuation and discussion of film
   --Theories of socialization: Symbolic Interactionism

   How Do We Get People to Do What We Want?
   --Social Structure: Statuses, Roles, Groups and Networks
Reading: SM Ch. 2, pp. 57-61, 62-68; Ch. 3 through p. 85

T 25 EXAM 1

R 27 How Do We Get People to Do What We Want?
   --Social Control: Theories of Deviance
Reading: Ch. 4 through p. 115
   --Henslin, Eating Your Friends is the Hardest... (D2L)
   --Chambliss, The Saints and the Roughnecks (D2L)

   --Submit your proposed site and research plan for your participant
   observation project

T Oct 2 How Do We Get People to Do What We Want?
GROUP DISCUSSION 1: The War on Drugs
Reading: http://www.drugpolicy.org/facts/new-solutions-drug-policy/brief-history-drug-war-0 (research group: see other links at site as well)

http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/08/29/a-drawdown-in-the-war-on-drugs

R 4 Why Is There Inequality?
   --Stratification or Inequality Defined
   --Social class, income inequality and social mobility in the contemporary US
      --The Working Poor
Reading: SM Ch. 5 to p.149
   Shapiro on toxic inequality: https://www.bostonglobe.com/magazine/2017/02/24/ideas-for-curing-toxic-inequality/z6KcjQOpF2QzifYt4FpvK/story.html
   Ehrenreich, Nickel and Dimed (D2L)

T 9 Why Is There Inequality?
Guest speaker on welfare programs and evaluation (to be confirmed)

**Group Discussion 1 source evaluations and outlines due**

R 11 Why Is There Inequality?
GROUP DISCUSSION 2: Has Welfare Reform Helped to Alleviate Poverty?
Reading: From The Atlantic Magazine
file:///C:/Users/kpark/Documents/Word%20files/Social%20Class%20America%202015/Welfare/Spring%202018%20readings/The%20End%20of%20Welfare%20as%20We%20Know%20It%20-%20The%20Atlantic.htm

From the Institute for Family Studies:
https://ifstudies.org/blog/the-costs-and-benefits-of-welfare-reform

Reading: Class handouts on provisions of 1996 Welfare Reform

T 16 Why Is There Inequality?
In-class exercise: Social Inequality Monopoly
--Discussion of Monopoly exercise
--Submit worksheet (Miniassignment 1)

R 18 Why Is There Inequality?
--The Changing U.S. Population
--Racial and Ethnic Inequality
--Video clip on the black middle class
Reading: SM Ch. 6. McIntosh, White Privilege (D2L)

*Group Discussion 2 source evaluations and outlines due*

T 23 Why Is There Inequality?
- Gender
Reading: SM Ch. 7

R 25 Why Is There Inequality?
GROUP DISCUSSION 3: Should Affirmative Action Exist, and On What Bases?
Reading: https://www.mtholyoke.edu/~jesan201/classweb/arguments.html
NO CLASSES SAT OCT 27 THROUGH TUES OCT 30---- ENJOY YOUR FALL BREAK!

R Nov 1    Why Is There Inequality?
           • Gender socialization
           • Work with theoretical paradigms

T 6       Don’t forget to VOTE!
           Why is There Inequality?
           --Gender

GROUP DISCUSSION 4: Can Women Have It All?
Reading: Slaughter, Why Women Still Can’t Have It All (D2L)

*Group Discussion 3 source evaluations and outlines due to D2L folder

R 8       EXAM 2

T 13      How Does Society Fill its Needs?
           --Social Institutions: The Family
           --Social Class Differences in Family Life
           --Global Family Perspectives
Reading: SM Ch. 8 to p. 220
           Lareau, Unequal Childhoods (D2L)

R 15      How Does Society Fill its Needs?
           --Social Institutions: Religion
           --Case Study: The Old Order Amish
Video: American Experience: The Amish and discussion of film

Visit Website of Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, Elizabethtown College, and read http://groups.etown.edu/amishstudies/ (link also at D2L) for an overview of contemporary Amish societies.

Miniassignment 2: Submit a 1-2 page outline (Typed, single-spaced bullet points) of the information that you learn across several different characteristics of Amish society

*Group Discussion 4 source evaluations and outlines due
T 20 How Does Society Fill its Needs?
- Social Institutions: Education

Reading: SM Ch. 9 to p. 242; Ch. 5 pp. 149-153; The Ivy League was Another Planet (handout)

What’s the Big (Global) Picture?
- Globalization

**PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION PROJECT DUE

NO CLASS WED NOV 21 THROUGH SUN NOV 25: ENJOY YOUR THANKSGIVING BREAK!

T 27 What’s the Big (Global) Picture?
- Major Social Issues in Developing Societies: Poverty

Reading: Radelet, Breakthrough from the Bottom (D2L)


Miniassignment 3: Pick ONE sustainable development goal of particular interest to you and, in ½ page to one page, single-spaced, outline/summarize the progress that has been made toward it. Bring hard copy to class for discussion and submission

W 28 Miniassignment #4: Attend Global Gift Market, in the Witherspoon Rooms, for at least an hour between 8 am and 8 pm, and write a 1-2 page reflection on what you observe and what aspects would especially be of interest to a sociologist, and why (be specific). No obligation to donate!

R 29 What’s the Big (Global) Picture?
- Major Social Issues in Developing Societies: Hunger

T 4 What’s the Big (Global) Picture?
- Immigration Issues in the U.S.

GROUP DISCUSSION 5: Is Immigration an American Problem?
Reading: http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/05/03/key-findings-about-u-s-immigrants/

R 6 Course wrap-up
Complete course evaluations

Exam 3 takes place during the final exam period, which is from 8-10:30 on Wed. Dec. 12.
Group Discussion 5: Final paper is due to D2L by 3 pm on Thursday, Dec. 13 (end of final period).