

Required Texts: Peter I. Rose, *They and We* (Fifth Edition)
William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged*

_____ Soc. 360 has a minimum formal prerequisite of Soc. 10 (Introduction to Sociology) and Junior or Senior standing. A broader and deeper background in Sociology is, of course, strongly advised. **Students with a sparse sociological background enter the course at their own risk**, and are urged to refresh or enhance their familiarity with the *perspectives* and the *language* of Sociology through a selective review of one or two *introductory* Sociology texts. Among those recommended are:

_____ Melvin DeFleur, *et al*, Sociology: Human Society

_____ Beth B. Hess, *et al*, Sociology

_____ Gerhard Leslie, *et al*, Order and Change

_____ Donald Light, *et al*, Sociology

_____ Richard T. Schaefer & Robert P. Lamm, Sociology

_____ Rodney Stark, Sociology

_____ This course has a tendency to attract a motley crew of students with widely diverse academic backgrounds. Also, and this pertains largely but not exclusively to those who are *not* Sociology majors, there is typically a wide dispersion of reasons why students enroll in it (including motives that are personal, social, academic, ideological, professional, therapeutic, attitude-reconfirming, truth-seeking, humanitarian, and/or social relevance, etc.). Therefore, it seems desirable to lay down a few ground-rules and, perhaps, voice a caution:

1. In the readings or lectures for a course of this type--- which focuses on provocative **social** issues --- ideas will be presented, statements will be made, and language may be used (including pejorative group labels) which, based on past experience, tend to strike some individuals as offensive or repugnant. It might be hoped that students can separate their **personal** sentiments and their **ideological** persuasions from their **sociological** studies of such **social** concerns. For some students, this course might even serve, in part, as an opportunity for examining the basis and justification of their sensitivities. Those who find themselves seriously offended, are urged to discuss the matter privately with the instructor.
2. This course is concerned, first and foremost, with a **SOCIOLOGY** of minority group and dominant group relations. **I regard myself as obligated**, primarily, to introduce and to entertain lecture and discussion material and bibliographic references that are consonant with my conception of the proprieties, priorities and problems of **sociology**, and matters that address the essential **substantive**, **conceptual** and **theoretical** concerns which I deem appropriate in such a course. **I regard students as obligated** to set aside (not erase) their **personal experiences and feelings** as life-long "members" of a dominant or a minority group, and demonstrate (a) their growing capacity for **detached sociological assessment** of this field of study, and (b) **familiarity with its literature**.

3. There will be two in-class, **one-hour**, essay-type, exams approximately one-third and two-thirds through the semester (advance notice to be given); and an in-class, **two-hour**, comprehensive, essay-type **Final Exam**, scheduled for **Tuesday, May 6th, 10:00 to 12 noon**. The one-hour exams will count **25% each**, and the two-hour Final will count **50% of the semester grade**.

4. Since grades will be determined **exclusively** on the basis of written performances, no one should feel inhibited from full and active participation during class-meetings. Comments, insights, critiques, questions, professional opinions and intellectual judgments are fully encouraged. It is, of course, understood that opinions and judgments based on ignorance, mindless clichés or "feelings" will **not** elicit the kind of respect that those **grounded in the literature** or based on **informed understanding and critical insight** would command. "Rap-sessions" based on knowledgeable and disciplined discussions will be accommodated; but racial, ethnic, or gender "Touchie-Feelie" or "consciousness-raising" sessions, whatever their merit elsewhere, shall be considered inappropriate here.

5. *The attached brief bibliography represents only an infinitesimal and unsystematic selection of worthwhile general items from a literally boundless literature of great variety and uneven quality. Additional reading assignments during the course may be drawn from this list, and/or the references in the texts, and/or journals cited below. Students are encouraged to indulge their intellectual curiosity fully by consulting this literature as well as other materials and, particularly, to pursue interesting footnote citations in the assigned readings. A topical index such as Sociological Abstracts serves as an efficient guide to the journal literature. Among the journals carrying relevant and important contributions toward this field are:*

American Journal of Sociology
American Sociological Review

Ethnicity

Phylon

Race

Social Forces

Social Problems

Sociology majors, especially, may want to invest (for this and other sociology courses) in a (paperback) dictionary of sociology such as Theodorson & Theodorson, A Modern Dictionary of Sociology, or Jary & Jary, The Harper Collins Dictionary of Sociology. In addition, there is a new paper edition of Allan Johnson, The Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology: A User's Guide to Sociological Language. (Check with Book-Store.)

6. My office hours are in the Tower, Room 613, **Tuesdays 10:00 to 10:45, or by appointment** (Tel. 516-6377).

7. As an **assignment** for the first couple of weeks, you are asked to:

- (a) consult one or two introductory sociology texts (that you used, or such as those cited in the opening paragraph, p. 1) and see how the field of "Race" or "Ethnicity" of Minorities" (or however it may be designated), relates to or fits into the discipline of Sociology as a whole;
- (b) look into any one of the dominant/minority group "Texts" listed in the first section of the Bibliography that is attached, and get a "feel" for the content and the range of what is generally included in this field, and the "approach(es)" or "perspective(s)" or "orientation(s)" adopted by the author(s);
- (c) examine the table of Contents (p. ix), and read Preface (pp. ix-xv) and Chapter 1 (pp. 3-20) of Peter Rose's book, and see how its content, range and approach, etc. compare to what you gathered out of item (b) above.

8. I do **not** lecture out of the text! My lectures are composed of my own synthesis of considerable segments of the sociological literature relating to dominant & minority groups, social stratification, and structures of institutionalized inequality. Therefore, extensive reading beyond the required assignments is encouraged, in order to keep up with the lecture material, grasp it, and situate it in the contexts of the broader issues that confront the sociology of dominant & minority group relations.

Any student who has a disability which would make it difficult to complete course assignments or tests as outlined in this syllabus, please make an appointment with me immediately so that I can either arrange for appropriate assistance or design an alternative procedure for grading your work.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

I would like to allow for a considerable range of flexibility for my lectures and for class input --- within the boundaries, of course, of what must, properly, be covered in a course such as this. Accordingly, the following loose course-outline is intended to indicate primarily topical sequence, rather than specific semester dates for each segment. Reading assignments in the **Rose** text are roughly correlated to the lecture topics, and they should be "self-paced" (which is not to be interpreted as meaning "left to the last minute"). This also applies to the **Wilson** text in the latter part of the course. Since I will **not** read either text to the class, nor even "follow" them in any exact sense, **the course should be seen as an intellectual challenge for each student to achieve a constructive integration of the lecture materials and the readings**. Some additional readings may be suggested and/or required.

Part One

INTRODUCTION

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On what we think is "real", and how that differs from the conceptual
On what is social and what is sociological --- and why (we think) it matters
On "race" and race
On the social construction of reality and its sociological reconstruction

See assignment, p. 2 above, Item 7 (a), (b), (c) and Item 8.

PART TWO

SIGNIFICANT CONCEPTS

Prejudice
Stereotypes
Social Distance
Discrimination
"Vicious Circle"
"Groups" and groups
Dominant and Minority Groups

read **Rose**, Chapters 2 through 7.

PART THREE

STRUCTURAL CONSIDERATIONS through 10;

Stratificational factors
Aspects of Nation, State and Territory
Dominant Group Power and Minority Group Weakness

read **Rose**, Chapters 8

read **Wilson**, Part 1.

PART FOUR

Current realities
Future prospects

read **Wilson**, Part 2.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR: SOME PRINCIPLES AND SOME CAUTIONS

___ On occasion, students ask about an instructor's "philosophy;" how he or she views the role of instructor in a university and defines the student-faculty relationship; where the instructor's "head is at;" or what is seen as the purpose of a specific course.

Some of these matters are addressed in the beginning of this syllabus. Below are some other thoughts that should indicate "where I'm coming from." I'd be happy to discuss any of these with any interested student.

I respect my field, that of sociology, and take it seriously. Precisely for that reason, I am critical of sociology and point to its flaws, ambiguities and limitations, its mistakes, distortions, slovenliness and misapplications ---- as well as to its strengths and its merit. (That is part of my responsibilities in my career.) If I didn't care enough, I just wouldn't bother approaching my field critically!

I respect my students, and take them seriously. Precisely for that reason, I am critical of their work and point to its flaws, ambiguities and limitations, its mistakes, distortions, slovenliness and misapplications ---- as well as to its strengths and its merit. (That is part of my responsibilities in my job.) If I didn't care enough, I just wouldn't bother!

I consider students enrolled in a university to be adults, with all that implies for them --- and for me.

Every student has a right to his or her beliefs. I do not expect, nor even want, anyone to believe (or worse, believe in) what I say in my lectures or what is contained in the text-book(s). But as an instructor I have a right to expect, and I will expect, everyone to understand what I and/or the text-book say(s).

All anyone ever really has, is opinions (whether students, scientists, or the U.S. Supreme Court). Opinions rooted in knowledge are worth respecting, opinions rooted in ignorance are not. Opinions based on how a person feels about some issue are very personal; thus, they may be revealing about that person, but they do not shed light on the issue; I consider them **none of my business** --- just as I regard my personal feelings **not** to be my students' business.

There are no **stupid** questions in the class-room; there are only questions rooted in (degrees of) ignorance, or in (degrees of) knowledge. In time, the latter should begin to predominate over the former.

In general, there are no "right" answers or "wrong" answers --- only good ones or poor ones. An answer is **good** if it reflects understanding, or if it leads to understanding; it is **poor** if it does neither. Understanding or explanation of something is **never complete** and **never permanent**; it is **always** tentative, it is **always** open to doubt, it is **always** partial, and it is **always** controversial.

I do **not** consider myself accountable for how **others misunderstand** or how **they misconstrue** what I say; nor am I responsible for how **they misapply** it. However, it is my responsibility as an instructor to try to correct misunderstandings and to reorient misinterpretations --- but I can obviously do that only if, and to the extent that, they come (or are brought) to my attention.

A grade represents my best professional evaluation of a piece of work. It neither is, nor can be,

a judgment about the person who submitted that work.

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