



University of New York, Tirana

Introduction to Sociology

Instructor: Dr. Albert Doja, HDR

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Office hours: By appointment.

Class Schedule: 16:00 – 19:00 on Friday at 4C

Prerequisites

English Composition II

Course purpose

The main objective of this course is to give students a clear understanding of some of the main areas of contemporary sociology: the systematic study of social behaviour and human groups. We will examine the ideas of some of the main early thinkers in sociology and the ways in which their ideas have been adapted by their contemporaries. The course includes topics that relate to group dynamics, collective behaviour, social institutions, social control and social change.

Students should be able to identify, from a sociological perspective, factors in society which contribute to social change and social conflict, and utilise sociological concepts to evaluate and comment upon those factors. In addition, students should be able to employ basic sociological concepts in the analysis of current events, through the relationship between individuals and groups involved in those events. At the same time, students should be able to think critically about the sociological concepts and methods themselves.

The first part of the course deals with the development of sociological theories and models. The second part deals with specific issues to which these are applied such as politics, family, gender, work, health, education, identity, ethnicity, inequality.

Main text: Anthony Giddens, *Sociology*, 5th edition

Additional reading will be provided to students throughout semester in the form of articles and commentaries.

Course requirements

Participation: Lecture and active participation attendance is mandatory. In general this class is intensive and interactive. Active participation extends beyond mere attendance. Expect your instructor to keep track of how often you contribute to class discussion (as a whole), particularly during the panel discussion section.

Missing class could seriously affect your grade! Each absence will cost you points off of your participation grade. Your absences count whether you have a good excuse or not. University's policy is that if a student is absent for more than 20% of the course (i.e. 9 hours), then 'F' will be the grade awarded for the course.

Panel Discussion: Leading a panel discussion will make up 10% of the course grade. Students are expected to present results of their research of issues focused on throughout the course, and actively moderate and propose questions and themes (set the agenda) to advance discussion. Panel members should be solidly informed from

their sources, discuss aspects of it with the rest of the class, table and field questions and give educated answers and analysis. The goal of this assignment is to make qualified analyses of mediated issues.

Assessment

Students will be assessed according to the following:

- 10%** Class participation
(including ability to demonstrate comprehension of reading)
- 10%** Discussion paper (3 pages)
- 20%** Essay (6 pages)
- 20%** Essay (6 pages)
- 40%** Final exam

Discussion paper (Due Week 3)

The aim of the discussion paper is to get you to consider the relevance of a sociological concept to your own experiences. Using the concepts (such as cultural difference, coercive power, social structure, functionalism, conflict theories, values and norms, social roles, identity, socialisation or forms of social change) in the first two chapters of Giddens's book, consider an aspect of your life or society to which you can apply the 'sociological imagination'. In other words, distance yourself from that aspect and consider the ways in which it might be analysed.

You do not need to refer to any other source aside from Giddens but if you quote anything from the book you must reference it correctly (if you are not sure how to do this please see me).

Essays

First Due: Week 5

Second Due: Week 10

The purpose of the two short essays is to engage you in some more depth with a particular area of sociological analysis, such as social interaction, gender, race, class or ethnicity.

First: Choose a European country (not Albania) and search JSTOR for articles that deal with one of these areas (eg. "Germany AND Ethnicity"). Find at least three articles and use them to write a short paper of at least 6 pages (1.5 spaced, excluding bibliography) on the ways in which that issue affects that society and how that may be changing. Use the analysis from the relevant chapter in Giddens to support your examination. **Note:** You must print and bring the articles you are using to class in Week 7 of semester.

Second: Choose one of the following topics and again use at least three articles from JSTOR, in addition to Giddens to prepare a short essay of at least 6 pages. **Note:** You must print and bring to class the articles you are using in Week 11.

1. How are poverty and social exclusion related to one another?
2. How is a person's experience of ageing shaped by social factors?
3. In what ways do families produce socialised roles for individual members?
4. What affects can racial or ethnic discrimination have on individuals or groups within society?
5. In what ways have work practices and work relations changed in the past 30 years?
6. What problems are present in the relationship between globalisation and migration in the contemporary world?
7. How have processes of globalisation affected the form and functioning of cities?

Essays must be typed on A4 paper and **must be 1.5 spaced in 12 point font with 2cm margins**. The bibliography is **not** included in the page count.

The following grading scale will be used as a standard for final evaluation:

Letter Grade	Percent (%)	Generally Accepted Meaning
A	96-100	Outstanding work
A-	90-95	
B+	87-89	Good work, distinctly above average
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	Acceptable work
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	
D+	67-69	Work that is significantly below average
D	63-66	
D-	60-62	
F	0-59	Work that does not meet minimum standards for passing the course

General Requirements

Deadlines are critical. Therefore, late assignments and absence from tests will not be tolerated. In the event of illness or emergency, contact your instructor IN ADVANCE to determine whether special arrangements are possible. The University's rules on academic dishonesty (e.g. cheating, plagiarism, submitting false information) will be strictly enforced. Please familiarize yourself with the STUDENT HONOUR CODE, or ask your instructor for clarification.

Course Policies: Students are reminded not to approach the instructor for copies of the previous week's materials immediately before, during, or immediately after class. Students are expected to collect materials from their classmates or see the instructor during consultation hours.

The workload assumes that students are spending two hours studying for every one hour in class. For this session that means that you should expect to study for about 6 hours a week outside of the class time, not including the time spent on assignments. I reserve the right to make changes in the syllabus that do not affect the total amount of work required by students.

Students who are disruptive in class will be asked to leave. Disruption includes anything that negatively interrupts the flow of lecture or discussion. If you need to sleep, please do so outside of class. Cellular phones should be off during class. On no account should students answer their cell phones during class, or leave the room to do so unless you clear it with the instructor before class starts.

I encourage students to work together and help each other out as much as possible in terms of discussing and reviewing the material. However, each student must turn in or complete in class work they have completed originally for this class.

Assignments are to be word-processed. Continuing and regular use of e-mail is expected. Students must keep copies of all assignments and projects sent by e-mail. Plagiarism is a serious offence. Plagiarized work will automatically fail. Plagiarism involves passing of the work of others as your own or any other form of academic dishonesty such as copying from another student in class or submitting the same paper to two different classes. The first incident of plagiarism or cheating will result in an automatic "F" in the course, and appropriate action will be taken with the university authorities. If you have any concerns about what counts as plagiarism, please speak to me or your student advisor. You must also use appropriate referencing in footnotes and attach a bibliography. Again, if you are unsure about referencing, please speak to me.

Special note: If you feel that you have special learning difficulties, please, make an appointment with Ms. A. Gramo. She is trained to help students with learning difficulties. She has offered to provide this service to our students.

1: What is sociology?

Giddens, Chapter 1,

In what ways can we study human social life, groups and societies? What is the 'sociological imagination'? What is meant by a 'social structure' and the process of 'structuration'? How can we be aware of cultural differences? What is 'self-enlightenment'? In what ways might we examine an everyday activity such as drinking coffee and what kinds of conclusions might we draw from such a study?

2: Theoretical Thinking in Sociology

Giddens, Chapter 3 & 4

In what ways did the revolutions of the 18th century in Europe contribute to the development of new ideas about society? What did Durkheim mean by social facts and what did they do? What is Anomie? What were Durkheim's views on suicide? How did Marx view capitalism? What were Max Weber's views on 'social action' and rationalization? What was Harriet Martineau's contribution to sociology? What are some of the recent developments in sociological theories?

3: Globalisation and the changing world

Giddens, Chapter 2

What is 'globalisation'? How can we think about the relationship between the local and the global? What factors contribute to globalization? What debates are there over theories of globalization? In what ways are communications technologies involved in processes of globalization? In what ways does globalization affect us in Albania? Who are the hyperglobalists, skeptics and transformationalists and what do they believe? What are some of the consequences and risks of globalization?

4: The structures of everyday life

Giddens, Chapter 5, "Social interaction and everyday life"

In what ways can we study everyday process of social interaction? What are the differences and relationships between micro and macro sociology? What is non-verbal communication and how does it operate? In what ways are face, body and speech involved in social interactions? What is meant by 'interactional vandalism'? How can we understand reality as a social construction?

5: Gender & Sexuality

Giddens, Chapter 12

What is the difference between sex and gender? In what ways is gender socially constructed? What are Freud and Chodorov's theories of gender development? What is

patriarchy and how does it function? What are some of the different approaches to gender inequality? What is the relationship between gender and globalization?

Further Discussion: Rape & War

6: Race, Ethnicity and Migration

Giddens, Chapter 13

How does sociology conceptualise race and ethnicity? What is meant by ‘new racism’? How does sociology aim to explain prejudice, discrimination and racism? What is the difference between assimilation and cultural pluralism? How can we understand ethnic conflicts? What factors contribute to migration and the creation of diasporas? What is the ‘new migration’ in Europe? What is meant by the term ‘fortress Europe’?

7: Inequality

Giddens, Chapter 9 & 11

What is meant by “social stratification”? What was Marx’s theory of class? What was Weber’s approach to stratification? What about Erik Olin Wright? How did their theories differ? How can class be measured? What kinds of classes are there? What is gender stratification? What is social mobility and how does it function?

Further Discussion: The underclass in Britain & Japan

8: Poverty and Social Exclusion

Giddens, Chapter 10

What is poverty and how can it be measured? What explanations do sociologists give for poverty? What is meant by “dependency culture”? What is the ‘underclass controversy’? How does social exclusion function? What forms of social exclusion are there? What theories are there of the welfare state?

Further Discussion: Homelessness in the United States

9: Sociology of the Family

Giddens, Chapter 7

How does sociology define the terms; family, kinship and marriage? What different kinds of families are there? What is functionalism? How do feminists approach the study of the family? What recent approaches are there in sociology to the study of the family? How does sociology approach the study of domestic violence? How could the levels of violence within families be reduced? Is love enough to secure the institution of the family?

Further discussion: The Albanian *Kanun*

10: Sociology of Work

Giddens, Chapter 18

What is work, according to sociology? What is meant by the knowledge economy? How does the 'division of labour' operate? How did Taylorism and Fordism transform work practices? How has work been transformed in the last three decades? How do gender inequalities operate in workplaces? What is the domestic division of labour? How can we analyse unemployment?

Further discussion: Outsourcing

11: Mass Media and Communications

Giddens, Chapter 15

What forms of media are there? What debates are there around the relationship between television and violence? How objective is news coverage? What are the influential theories of the media? What has been the impact of some of the new media on societies? What impact do media monopolies have on the information provided by the media? What alternatives are there to global media? Should the media be regulated?

Further Discussion: Media & War

12: Cities and Urban Spaces

Giddens, Chapter 21

What are some of the features of modern urbanization? What theories are there about urbanization? What are some of the trends in Western urban development? What are the challenges of urbanisation in the developing world? What is the relationship between the city and the periphery? Globalisation and urban spaces?

Further discussion: Singapore as city-state

13: Politics and Government

Giddens, Chapter 20

How can we define power, authority, legitimacy, politics, the state, and sovereignty? What kinds of political rule are there? What is 'liberal democracy'? How do political parties and voting systems operate in Western countries? What political activities are carried out beyond the formal framework of political parties? What theories are there of nationalism and national identity? Where are there 'nations without states'?

Further discussion: The Environmental movement

14: Exam