SOCI 4310.001
Sociology of Work and Occupations
Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi
Spring 2018
MWF 11:00 – 11:50
Center for Instruction 102

Instructor: Dr. Michael Ramirez
Office: Bay Hall 344
Office hours: Monday/Wednesday/Friday 12:00 – 1:00 and 3:30 – 4:30
Tuesday 9:00 – 11:00
Friday 12:00 – 1:00
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Course Description and Objectives:

This course is an introduction to the Sociology of Work and Occupations. We will examine how sociologists have studied work and workers in modern industrial societies. Topics covered will include the social organization of work, historical changes in work, collective action, manufacturing, professions, service, temporary, and stigmatized work. The last portion of the course will focus on challenges for work and society, particularly how work-family conflict, gender, sexuality, race, and the global economy each affect work opportunities and outcomes.

Although the primary emphasis will be on contemporary American society, we will be attentive to ways in which contemporary work relations in the US are similar to, and different from, those in other contexts.

Student Learning Outcomes:
This course has two distinct yet compatible goals:
♦ To explore and understand theories and perspectives that address issues of work in the modern world.
♦ To analyze how the social organization of work affects other social institutions in contemporary life.

Materials:

Additional readings posted on BlackBoard.

**Attendance Policy:**
Regular attendance is essential to doing well in this course. I will be checking attendance regularly. It is your responsibility to make certain you have signed the attendance sheet. If you are not in class at the point that the sheet is passed around, you will be marked absent for that day.

If you need to arrive late or leave early because of an appointment or such, please talk to me before class and make your arrival/departure as quietly as possible. This is as much, if not more, for your classmates as it is for me. Many students find it very distracting to keep focused on lecture when others are coming and going at odd times.

Lastly, if you choose to come to class, I expect you to be mentally as well as physically present. Reading newspapers or other texts during class is unacceptable. If you need to get work done for another class, then just skip this class. We all have to make choices about where to put our energy on any given day.

**Grading Procedures:**
Your final course grade will be calculated as follows.

- **Midterm Exam:** 30%
- **Final Exam:** 30%
- **Quizzes:** 15%
- **Reading Groups:** 25%

**Final Letter Grades:**
- A = 90.00% to 100.00%
- B = 80.00% to 89.99%
- C = 70.00% to 79.99%
- D = 60.00% to 69.99%
- F = 0.00% to 59.99%

**Assignments:**

*Exams:*
We will have two exams (each worth 30% of your grade) throughout this course. Each exam will focus only on those materials read or studied since the last exam, although we will be building on concepts and theoretical understandings that will be drawn upon throughout the course. It is only in this sense that they will be cumulative. Exams may be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Make-up exams will only be given in extreme circumstances (such as auto wrecks, hospitalization, and family emergencies).
Reading Quizzes:
Over the course of the semester, I will randomly select days on which you will be given a short in-class writing assignment focused on the day’s readings. These may take the form of a short response to an article, a summary of the main points presented in the day’s readings, or a short quiz. To earn full credit on this portion of your grade, you must keep up with the readings and regularly attend class. These assignments can be completed in class only. If you are absent, for whatever reason, you will not be allowed to make up these points. I will drop your lowest score and average the remaining scores together in calculating this portion of your grade. This assignment is worth 15% of your final grade.

Reading Groups:
To make best use of our time in discussing the ethnographic study we will be reading this semester, I will divide you into reading groups. You will be assigned a different responsibility for your group each week. Details for this assignment will be discussed in detail in class. I will post extensive notes as to how to prepare for your reading groups and what is expected of you. Though you will be graded individually on your preparation and performance in your group, your group members will be relying on you to do your part each week. Failing to be prepared will shift the burden of this work to your group members. The reading group assignment will constitute 25% of your final grade.

Attendance:
I try to be understanding with emergencies that may come up in your life. I will take these issues into account, given that they are legitimate and that you tell me about them as they arise (this does not mean you have to provide me with every detail about what’s going on, but just keep me informed). If you have questions, see me as soon as possible. I will mark you as absent if you leave early, arrive late, or are not attentive during class.

Classroom Ground Rules:
In this class, we will discuss both abstract theoretical ideas and concrete, practical information about different social groups and social behaviors. I hope that these materials will challenge you intellectually and personally. Because this class may touch on controversial social issues, I propose the following ground rules, which I would like everyone to agree to and assume while in this classroom.

1. Acknowledge that all of us have learned misinformation about our own social group and about members of other groups, whether we belong to a majority or minority group.
2. Agree not to blame ourselves or others for the misinformation we have learned in the past, but accept responsibility for not repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.

3. Be respectful. Class discussion time is a critical point of showing respect and intellectual growth. We need to make our discussions “safe” for everyone. We all need to make this happen together. Listen carefully to comments. Do not interrupt. Use words (nonverbal and guttural sounds are not acceptable forms of communication). Frame your responses in civil terms (verbal attacks are not acceptable). If you want to take issue with someone else’s response, first summarize what you heard them say. Then discuss why the “idea” (not the person) is problematic.

4. You speak for yourself. You own your opinion and you get to keep it. The voices that we speak with are often indicative of larger narratives that have been a part of our particular social experience. We do not speak for all members of a group to which we belong. I strive to present research that is methodologically and theoretically sound. Your opinion may not be supported by research that I present in class. That dissonance may make you uncomfortable or even angry. Note those emotions. They are important.

**Academic Dishonesty:**
It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the University’s codes on academic dishonesty. In general, any form of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to cheating and plagiarism) will not be tolerated. Such instances will be reported to the Department Chair, as well as to Student Affairs. Sanctions can include: receiving a zero on the assignment/exam, receiving an F for the final course grade, and/or recommendation for dismissal from the University. For more information, refer to: [http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/JAffairs/index.htm](http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/JAffairs/index.htm).

**Disabilities Services:**
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.
**Academic Advising:**
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

**Grade Appeals:**
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, *Student Grade Appeals*, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, *Student Grade Appeals*. These documents are accessible online at: [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf).
For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website: [http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html).

**COURSE READINGS**
Materials should be read BEFORE coming to class.

- TBR = *The Big Rig*
- DfG = *Destined for Greatness*
- AR = Additional reading posted on BlackBoard

**Jan 17:** Introduction to the course
   - Why Study Work?

**THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

**Jan 19 / 22:** What is Work? / Occupational Choice / Job Satisfaction
   - Readings: AR: Rybczynski’s “Keeping Saint Monday”
     - AR: Marx’s “Alienated Labor”
     - AR: Daniels’ “Invisible Work”
Jan 24 / 26 / 29: The Evolution of Work  
Readings: AR: Jacoby’s “The Way It Was”  
AR: Cowan’s “The Invention of Housework”

Jan 31: Collective Responses to Work  
Readings: TBA

Feb 2: Reading Group Day  
Readings: TBR  
Reading Group Assignment due

Feb 5: Collective Responses to Work  
Readings: TBA

TYPES OF WORK
Feb 7: Blue Collar Work  
Readings: AR: Molstad’s “Choosing and Coping with Boring Work”

Feb 9: Reading Group Day  
Readings: TBR  
Reading Group Assignment due

Feb 12: Blue Collar Work  
Readings: AR: Molstad’s “Choosing and Coping with Boring Work”

Feb 14: Professions  
Readings: AR: Pierce’s “Rambo Litigators”  
AR: Kunda’s “Engineering Culture”

Feb 16: Reading Group Day  
Readings: TBR  
Reading Group Assignment due

Feb 19: Professions  
Readings: AR: Pierce’s “Rambo Litigators”
AR: Kunda’s “Engineering Culture”

**Feb 21: Midterm Exam**

**Feb 23: Reading Group Day**
Readings: TBR
Reading Group Assignment due

**Feb 26 / 28: Service Work**
Readings: AR: Leidner’s “Over the Counter”
AR: Paules’ “Getting’ and ‘Making’ a Tip”

**Mar 2: Reading Group Day**
Readings: TBR
Reading Group Assignment due

**Mar 5 / 7: Temporary and Contingent Work**
Readings: AR: Henson’s “Just a Temp”

**Mar 9: Reading Group Day**
Readings: TBR
Reading Group Assignment due

**Mar 12 – 16: Spring Break**

**Mar 19 / 21: Stigmatized and Deviant Work**
Readings: AR: Newman’s “No Shame in My Game”
AR: Additional Readings TBA

**Mar 23: Reading Group Day**
Readings: DfG
Reading Group Assignment due

**CHALLENGES FOR WORK AND SOCIETY**
**Mar 26 / 28: Work – Family Conflict**
Readings: AR: Hochschild’s “Catching Up on the Soaps”
AR: Garey’s “Motherhood on the Night Shift”
AR: Epstein et.al’s “The Part-Time Paradox”

**Mar 30:** Reading Group Day
Readings: DfG
Reading Group Assignment due

**Apr 2 / 4:** Gender & Work
Readings: AR: Reskin’s “Culture, Commerce, and Gender”
          AR: Ehrenreich’s “Maid to Order”

**Apr 6:** Reading Group Day
Readings: DfG
Reading Group Assignment due

**Apr 9 / 11:** Race & Work
Readings: AR: Wilson’s “Jobless Poverty”

**Apr 13:** Reading Group Day
Readings: DfG
Reading Group Assignment due

**Apr 16:** Race & Work
Film: “Harvest: The Story Behind Wine”

**Apr 18:** Sexuality & Work
Readings: AR: Giuffre & Williams’ “Boundary Lines”

**Apr 20:** Reading Group Day
Readings: DfG
Reading Group Assignment due

**Apr 23 / 25:** Sexuality & Work
Readings: AR: Giuffre & Williams’ “Boundary Lines”
Apr 27: Reading Group Day
  Readings: DfG
  Reading Group Assignment due

Apr 30 / May 2: Looking Toward the Future: Summing Up the Sociology of Work
  Readings: To be determined.

May 4: Final Exam at 11:00 am
COURSE CONTRACT

In order to remain in this class, you must read the syllabus, complete this form, and return it to the instructor.

Statement of Understanding Course Requirements

I have read the syllabus for SOCI 4310, and I understand the course requirements including the policies on grading, coursework, classroom ground rules, attendance, absences, make-up exams, and academic dishonesty.

Name: __________________________ (print)

Signature: ______________________
SOCI 4310 INFORMATION SHEET

Name: ______________________

Name by which you wish to be called: ______________________

Email address: ______________________

Major: ______________________

What other sociology courses you have taken?

Have you worked for pay? If so, where? Doing what?

What career do you plan to pursue in the future?

Briefly, why does this line of work interest you?