Instructor: Dr. Michael Ramirez  
Office: 344 Bay Hall  
Office hours: Mon/Wed 12:00 – 1:30 and Thurs 11:00 – 1:00  
Phone: 361-825-2388  
E-mail: Michael.Ramirez@tamucc.edu

Course Description:  
This course is designed to supplement concepts, issues, and theories presented in introductory sociology courses through the viewing and analyzing of contemporary American films. In particular, we will examine the sociological understandings of adolescence, gender, race, social class, and romantic relationships, as well as culture, deviance, crime, segregation, and aging in contemporary American films.

Student Learning Outcomes:  
After successful completion of this course, you will be able to:  
♦ define, understand, and explain advanced concepts in sociology  
♦ differentiate among competing theoretical perspectives in sociology  
♦ examine and analyze culture using sociological theories and concepts  
♦ use the cultural artifact of film to illustrate, compare, and critique sociological theories

Required Text:  
Required readings will be posted on BlackBoard.

Course Policies  
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.
Attention Policy:
If you choose to come to class, I expect you to be mentally as well as physically present. I do not allow laptops in class, so leave them at home. I also do not allow for other distractions in class. Sending/reading text messages, putting your head down on the desk, and reading newspapers or other texts during class is unacceptable. If you need to get work done for another class or have other non-class issues that are more pressing, then just skip this class. We all have to make choices about where to put our energy on any given day.

Classroom/professional behavior:
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor's ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

Statement of Civility:
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Grading Procedures:
Exams:
We will have two exams throughout this course. Each exam is worth 15% of your final grade. Each exam will focus only on those materials read or studied since the last exam, although we will be building concepts and theoretical understandings that will be drawn upon throughout the course. It is only in this sense that they will be cumulative. Exams will be a combination of multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions.

Response Papers:
To encourage you to prepare for class discussion, I am requiring you to write short (3 - 5 page) response papers after viewing each film in class. In these papers, you should primarily draw specific links from the film to the issues discussed and read in class. I will
provide a detailed grading rubric specifying required content, minimum page length, etc. in class. The 5 papers on the in-class films will count for 9% each. (The introductory paper will be worth 5%.) I will only accept late work in cases of extreme circumstances (such as auto wrecks, hospitalization, and family emergencies).

Discussion:
Active and regular participation is essential to this course. The final 20% of your final grade will depend on your class participation. I expect you to be present and prepared to discuss each day’s topics. You must do all reading prior to class and come prepared to discuss them. Getting a satisfactory grade for this requires more than simply attending class. You must actively contribute to our discussions. Participation does not mean that you must agree with everything we read. In fact, I hope you read all texts with a critical eye and share your evaluations with the class.

I will keep track of your contributions to class discussions, noting the quality of your comments more so than the quantity of them. In general, earning excellent discussion grades requires active, thoughtful, and insightful engagement with course material in which you demonstrate you have done assigned readings and are genuinely making an effort to understand material from readings and lecture. Refer to the rubric distributed on the first day of class for this portion of your grade.

To calculate your grade:

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\begin{align*}
\text{Exam 1} & \quad ____ \times 0.15 = ____ \\
\text{Exam 2} & \quad ____ \times 0.15 = ____ \\
\text{Introductory Paper} & \quad ____ \times 0.05 = ____ \\
\text{Response Paper 1} & \quad ____ \times 0.09 = ____ \\
\text{Response Paper 2} & \quad ____ \times 0.09 = ____ \\
\text{Response Paper 3} & \quad ____ \times 0.09 = ____ \\
\text{Response Paper 4} & \quad ____ \times 0.09 = ____ \\
\text{Response Paper 5} & \quad ____ \times 0.09 = ____ \\
\text{Discussion} & \quad ____ \times 0.20 = ____ \\
\text{Final Grade} & = \text{sum of these totals} \quad ____
\end{align*}
\]

Final Letter Grades:
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\begin{align*}
A & = 90.00\% \text{ to } 100.00\% \\
B & = 80.00\% \text{ to } 89.99\% \\
C & = 70.00\% \text{ to } 79.99\% \\
D & = 60.00\% \text{ to } 69.99\% \\
F & = \text{below } 60.00\%
\end{align*}
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Academic Integrity/Plagiarism:
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or
examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a grade of F for the course.

**Academic Honesty/Plagiarism:**

**Definition:** In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism is a violation of academic expectations, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes:

- Using the work of another as your own,
- Downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
- Using resource materials without correct documentation,
- Using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and proper citation.
- Turning in a researched project without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.

When you are confused about citation of quotes or ideas, please visit the Writing Center or me to get help. Information on MLA documentation rules and APA documentation rules is available at Purdue University's OWL: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/), and from our local Writing Center at CASA.

**Statement of Academic Continuity:**
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Disabilities Accommodations:**
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.

*Dropping a Class:*
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. **Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course.** Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

*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.
Jan 14  Introduction to the Course

Culture, film, and society

**Sociological Theories of Media Influence**

Jan 16  Read:
Sutherland & Felty’s “Introduction” from *Cinematic Sociology*

Wilson et al.’s “Media Matter” from *Racism, Sexism, and the Media*

Introductory Paper Due

Jan 21  MLK Jr. Holiday

Jan 23  Read:
Sutherland & Felty’s “Introduction” from *Cinematic Sociology*

Wilson et al.’s “Media Matter” from *Racism, Sexism, and the Media*

**Coming of Age: Social Class, Gender, and Discovering Identity**

Jan 28-30  Read:
Williams’ “Trying on Gender, Gender Regimes, and the Process of Becoming Women”

Merton’s “Transitions and ‘Trouble’: Rites of Passage for Suburban Girls”

Bulman’s “Expressing Oneself in a Culture of Conformity”

Warrington & Younger’s “‘Life is a Tightrope’: Reflections on Peer Group Inclusion and Exclusion Amongst Adolescent Girls and Boys”

Feb 4-6  In-class film viewing
Friction Within the Family

Feb 13-18 Read:
Cosbey’s “Reel Families: Family Life in Popular Films”

Dowd’s “Understanding Social Mobility Through the Movies”

Walzer & Oles’ “Accounting for Divorce: Gender and Uncoupling Narratives”

Feb 20-25 In-class film viewing

Gender: The Performance and Constructions of Femininities and Masculinities

Mar 4-6 Read:
Benshoff & Griffin's “Masculinity in Classical Hollywood Filmmaking”

Lorber’s “Night to His Day: The Social Construction of Gender”

Walker’s “‘I’m Not Friends the Way She’s Friends’: Ideological and Behavioral Constructions of Masculinity in Men’s Friendships”

Mar 11-15 Spring Break

Mar 18-20 In-class film viewing
Mar 25  Paper Due  
   Discussion Day

Mar 27  Exam 1

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**Children's Media: The Intersections of Gender, Race, and Aging**

Apr 1-3  Read:
   Orenstein’s “What's Wrong with Cinderella?” (excerpt from *Cinderella Ate My Daughter*)

   England et al.’s “Gender Role Portrayal and the Disney Princesses”

   Towbin et al.’s “Images of Gender, Race, Age, and Sexual Orientation in Disney Feature-Length Animated Films”

   Condis’ “Race, The Disney Princesses, and their Animal Friends”

Apr 8-10  In-class film viewing

Apr 15  Paper Due  
   Discussion Day

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**Aging in the Workplace: The Social Construction of Growing Older**

Apr 17-22  Read:
Fennell & Davidson’s “The invisible man?: Older Men in Modern Society”

Ranzijn’s “Role Ambiguity: Older Workers in the Demographic Transition”

Stergio-Kita’s “Danger Zone: Men, Masculinity, and Occupational Health and Safety in High-Risk Occupations”

Oliffe’s “Masculinities, Work, and Retirement”

Apr 24-26    In-class film viewing

May 1    Paper Due
         Discussion Day

DATE    Exam 2
SOCI 3310 INFORMATION SHEET

Name: ________________________________

Name by which you wish to be called: ________________________

Email address: _________________________

Major & Year in School: ________________________________

What other sociology (or media) courses have you taken?

Favorite movies:

Is there any topic in particular that you’re most interested in? Why?

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 3310, and I understand the course requirements including the policies on grading, coursework, classroom ground rules, participation, attendance, absences, make-up exams, and academic dishonesty.

Name: ____________________________ (print)

Signature: __________________________