Mr. Nelson  
Sociology 101 (Sociology for college credit)  
Fall 2015-2016 (½ year elective)  
Course Syllabus  
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(Twitter)  
Class Website: http://nelsonssociology101.weebly.com/  

Welcome to Sociology 101. It’s aptly named because this is college level Sociology, the same basic experience that you would receive in an undergraduate, introductory Sociology course at any college. Throughout our ½ year we will cover the following general topics, each with several sub-topics that accompany them:

The Sociological Perspective  
Culture  
Sociological research methods  
Social interaction and social structure  
Groups and organizations  
The mass media  
Deviance and social control  
Social inequalities  
Gender  
Race & ethnicity  
Social institutions (religion, family, schools, etc.)

“If selfies were only being used by the individual to excessively admire oneself (as the definition of narcissism suggests), then they would not be a social phenomenon. In this sense, I would even go as far to say that everything about a selfie—from the staging of the photo to the posting of the photo—is a social act intended to garner a social reaction”

-Peter Kauffman, “A Sociological Snapshot of Selfies”
Are You In The Correct Class?

More to the point, is this the class you think it is? Many students in this class are taking it for college credit through St. John’s University – therefore, **EVERYONE** will be taught at a college level, with college level work, whether you're taking the class for credit or not. You will be expected to complete the level and type of work that an undergraduate college student would expect.

*If you took this class because you believed that you can sit there, not participate, do no work, and watch videos all semester, this is the wrong course, and you should seek one that better fits your needs. If this is unclear at all, please speak to me after class or via email.

College Credit: (*For current 11th or 12 graders only)*

You **DO NOT** have to take this course for college credit. However, if you do choose the college credit option, a few notes, most of which I went over when I presented the course to you in February.

1. It costs **$325 dollars**, payable to St. John’s University, due by the end of this month (it cannot be late).
2. You must get the equivalent of a **B+ or higher** (so, an **85 or above average**) to receive the 3 credits.
3. There are **no traditional tests during the year** – this course is project and writing based, as is the case with college level courses (no scantrons!)
4. The **3 credits are transferable** to all local colleges (**Molloy, CW Post, Hofstra, Nassau Community College, Adelphi, Stonybrook, Queens College, etc.**), and **a handful of others**

*Please see the list on the course website for a complete list. Once you hand in your money the check is non-refundable, so if the college you plan on attending is not on the list, please do not hand in money!*

Participation:

If you’re not someone who normally participates let me challenge you by stating that you have an opinion, you have a voice, and you add value to this class. Believe it or not I’m the quiet one in my own classes – I’ve had to learn to share my opinions, and I think it will be of tremendous value for you to do the same. My job is to provide a safe and interesting environment where you feel comfortable doing so, which I will, but you must meet your half of the social contract by attempting to step outside of what’s sometimes comfortable to make class what it should be.

*See participation grading rubric on next page...
General Grading (types of assessments):

To mirror a college level class, your grades will come from a handful of written projects, your class participation (*see how this is graded below) and my overall impression of your contributions and understanding of materials, based on projects and participation.

Projects: Will be writing based (minimum of 2 pages each) and you will have 1 for each major unit (e.g., gender, culture, race)

Participation: In this case this means speaking in class – I format class so that in class we have discussions – therefore a major part of your grade is participation.

Grading Equation (how I actually do the math to calculation your grade)

A point system where all of the points you earn are divided by the total points I’ve offered. For example, if all of the assessments total 500 points in value and, of those, you earn a total of 450 points; your average will be a 90% (450/500).

*The only exception to this is your final project, which is worth a substantial portion of your total course grade.

Participation Grading Rubric (how I evaluate this grade, specifically):

Participation is graded as a 1 time test grade (per marking period), evaluated out of 100 points. This is equivalent to 2 full project grades – appropriate when we have over 80 classes in which there are daily opportunities to participate. So you can better understand where the grade I gave you came from, please see the following rubric (this is on the website as well, top of page).

*In all cases the range (e.g., 60-70%) is subject to my personal evaluation of BOTH the quality and the frequency of your comments, taken in tandem. To receive the highest grades, both variables should be high.

- **90-100% Daily, High Quality Contributions:** participation that is thoughtful, insightful, reflects a strong understanding of sociological concepts, is relevant to what we’re discussing, makes a clear contribution to class, and occurs daily (if not several times per class).

- **80-90% Consistent (but not daily) High Contributions:** This accounts for participation that occurs several times a week, shows a good understanding of course content and sociological concepts, and makes a good (not great) overall contribution to the class.

- **70-80% Occasional, Non-Consistent Contributions:** these are comments that are occasional in nature, of varying quality, and make some connection to course content,

- **60-70% Rare Contributions:** these are for the students who speak very sporadically, making little tangible contribution to class discussions. This could be localized to only participating on a single topic that interests you, rather than all (or most) topics.

- **50% Non-Class Contributor:** you have either only participated a handful of times, or never participated whatsoever in class.
Extra Credit Opportunities and Edits

There are several extra credit opportunities available to you throughout the semester. As the name implies, you will have to do work that goes above and beyond the assignment projects/papers that are typically assigned. Besides the assignments labeled “EXTRA CREDIT” — you can simply do a 1 page analysis (not a summary, an analysis) of any of the sources listed below each Unit. So, as an example, everything seen on this page under “RACE” could be used.

Edits

You may edit (or rewrite) any or all of your returned projects for a higher grade during the semester. So, if you received a 75% on your Culture project, you could simply fix whatever I noted in my comments and resubmit it for the higher of the two grades.
On Sociology...

One of the central aims of this course is to challenge you to think more critically about your position in society – how your background, class, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and so on influence your goals, beliefs, experience, and interactions with both other individuals and social institutions.

We will be looking at similarities and distinctions within and across groups, while challenging seemingly monolithic groups of identities. In addition to individual experiences, we will also look at how the socio-historical structures influence the life chances and choices of different groups of people. Therefore, while looking at how society (and societies) has changed over time, we will look at the history and development of the sociological discipline and its major paradigms.

This course underscores how our understanding of ourselves and our individual identities, shared relationships, structures and institutions are inescapably political, situational, socio-cultural and temporal. By paying attention to cultural and historical context, we will question taken-for-granted assumptions about seemingly natural and fixed categories (e.g., gender, race), identities and ‘social facts,’ which we take to be ‘real.’

And because this course deals with mature subject matter, a few words on…

Classroom Dialogue:

The issues we deal with in this course are often controversial and you may be exposed to arguments you do not agree with in the readings, discussions, class activities, or lectures. Together, we need to create a comfortable environment by sharing ideas, observations, and questions respectfully; such an environment is only possible when instructors and students treat each other with mutual respect and listen without interruption. Therefore, we will not tolerate words or actions that result in hostility in the classroom. The following ideas help us create a positive atmosphere:

- We are all knowledgeable in different ways. We all have something to teach and something to learn.

- No one is to be blamed for the circumstances of their existence that have been beyond their control. We cannot be blamed for repeating misinformation we have learned in our social locations, but we can hold each other accountable to not repeat misinformation after we have learned otherwise.

- Learn to appreciate different personalities. Try to draw out those who are quieter than others, but respect people’s comfort levels and learn to recognize active listening. Those who are more assertive should try to recognize and refrain from dominating the conversation.

- Everyone should be encouraged to rethink the assumptions and knowledge we bring into the classroom; approach learning with an open mind.

- Respect each person’s experience, never demeaning or trivializing another’s life experience.
• Each class is a learning community with a unique dynamic. We will welcome and thoughtfully consider critical feedback and constructive suggestions for change to enhance the classroom dynamic.
Procedure for any missed emails (*to avoid the “What do you mean I got a zero! I emailed it to you, I swear!” moments…)

These are formal instructions for those of you have attempted to email assignments, but they have not gone through. In terms of your grade and missing/late work, this is the only acceptable way to gain credit (in other words, I say that you are missing work, and you say that you emailed me, on time, this is what you do…) You must take screen shots of BOTH of the following (see example below):

1. The “SENT” email from your “SENT” folder, which shows your address, my address, time stamp, and that there was an attached file. No one erases sent emails, so if you sent it, it will still be there. Below is an image of this handout emailed to myself

2. The opened Assignment itself with you: name & date clearly visible, to the following email (check you spelling, please):

   nelsonsaphumangeography@gmail.com

This is the ONLY way to receive credit for missing work before report cards are due – If you cannot offer evidence that you emailed me, it is too late to submit the work, and you must accept the penalty to your grades, even if it results in a failing marking period grade.
**Class Website:**

http://nelsonssociology101.weebly.com/

*All class materials (whether handed out in class or not – mostly I won’t) are on the website. Please visit frequently and engage with course materials.

**How to Take Notes:**

You won’t be taking traditional notes in this class – in other words, you won’t be transcribing all of the words on the board onto a piece of paper! I will provide all of your vocabulary terms/concepts that you need to avoid having you copy. **What you will be copying are the things not on the board** – this includes interesting things discussed, examples of things said in class, etc. You will need to use these in projects.
Media & Content Disclaimer: (FOR PARENTS & STUDENTS)

This class utilizes media throughout to supplement reinforce concepts taught and discussed in class. As with all topics in this class, the subjects of the media viewed will require maturity, and will deal with adult and mature subject matters in an academic setting similar to a college classroom. *All media content will be viewed in a highly academic setting under my strict supervision. All media is directly relatable to course content, and all media content will be accompanied by class discussions and assessments.

*If you do not want your child to view any of the things below, due to content, it is your responsibility to have your child contact me, or contact me yourself using the email and/or phone number provided on page 1*

Below are examples of the media utilized in class, along with the material they relate to. Please research any of these films/documentaries on the Internet should you feel it necessary, and I encourage you to email/call with any questions or concerns. Thank you.

Culture Unit:
- **Murderball (Documentary)** – Perception of the disabled, sports culture, American value systems
- **Bowling for Columbine (Documentary)** – culture, role of violence in American culture, cross cultural comparisons, deviance

Gender Unit:
- **America the Beautiful (documentary)** – American standards of beauty, female body image, media and body image, American culture

Race Unit:
- **Good Hair (Documentary)** -Race, Racial Perceptions, Female African-American Cultural Practices, Globalization, Cultural Values/Beliefs
- **Crash (R Rated)** – Race, discrimination, institutional racism, quotas, ethnicity

Deviance & Social Control Unit:
- **Our American with Lisa Ling (Television Show, sex offender episode)** labeling theory, degradation ceremonies, perceptions of crime.

Educational System:
- **Little Rock: 50 Years Later - (Documentary)** -Race and education, social stratification and poverty, tracking in the U.S. educational system, race relations (both historical and contemporary)

Religion:
- **Jesus Camp (Documentary)** – religion, subcultures, socialization, evangelical movements in the United States, fundamentalism
• **The Devil's Playground** (Documentary) – culture & subcultures, deviance, socialization, religion, the Amish community

**Social Stratification:**
• 30 Days – Living on Minimum Wage episode
• Hidden America (ABC): The Children of the Appalachian Mountains (Dateline)
• 60 Minutes: Homeless Veterans (60 minutes clips)

**Student and Parent/Guardian Agreement: (DUE BY FRIDAY)**

*Note – this course deals with mature contemporary issues such as race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and others, and therefore this must be signed by both parent/guardian and the student. This must be back to me by this Friday!*

**Student**
I have been made aware of the class rules, content, and guidelines, and that I agree to abide by them during the course of the school year. I have also been made aware of the nature of the course topics and use of media (listed on previous page) in this class, and I (or my parent/guardian) agree to contact Mr. Nelson directly if I have a problem with any of them.

Student Name (Print) ________________________________

Student Signature ________________________________

Date _______

**Parent/Guardian**
I, the parent/legal guardian of the above student, have read and understand the class rules, guidelines and topics of study, and I approve that my child take part in all class content (including viewing of the media listed on the previous page) and if I have a problem with anything listed in this outline I will contact Mr. Nelson directly and immediately.

Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print) ________________________________

Parent/Guardian Signature ________________________________

Date _______

**Contact:** If there are any issues or questions regarding this, please call at 516 488 9631, or email at nelsonsaphumangeography@gmail.com