

Course Syllabus:  
**Introduction to Sociology<sup>1</sup>**  
Section: 0165304<sup>2</sup>

COURSE INFO:

Course location: Room 207  
Credit hours: 3

Meeting times: Tuesday 2-2:50; Thursday 1-2:50

INSTRUCTOR, CONTACT INFO:

Instructor: Eric Miller      Office: 131  
Phone: 319-887-3631 (Office)  
Website: [www.kirkwood.edu/faculty/emiller](http://www.kirkwood.edu/faculty/emiller)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course involves the study of human interaction in social entities ranging from small groups to large-scale societies. It involves, as well, the study of the impact—conscious and otherwise—of social group and category membership on individual and collective human behavior. As such, its overarching goal is the development in students of a sociological consciousness—the optimum awareness of the social element in human thought and action.

Objectives include the development of the following:

- Student awareness of the various viewpoints regarding the relationship between human beings and social forces (i.e., the major sociological paradigms)
- Student knowledge of basic concepts and methods of the discipline of sociology
- Student knowledge of basic facts and sociological viewpoints relative to social inequality, social movements and change
- Student application of sociological awareness to phenomena under study
- Student ability to articulate sociological awareness and understanding of facts, both verbally and in writing, and to do so in a cooperative, respectful and socially responsible way

TEXTS

Main text:                      Richard T. Schaefer, *Sociology Matters*, New York: McGraw-Hill  
Supplementary text:      Kurt Finsterbusch, ed., *Annual Editions: Sociology 08/09*, New York: McGraw-Hill (on reserve in the library)  
Other readings:              TBA

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<sup>1</sup> See also: *Social Sciences Master Syllabus* on the KCC website

<sup>2</sup> Synonym number

SOCIAL SCIENCE CORE COURSE OBJECTIVES

All social science core courses, including Introduction to Sociology, are designed to meet the following objectives that focus on research methods and evaluation throughout the semester.

The student will:

1. be able to understand and think critically regarding how the discipline conducts science.
2. become acquainted with classic and contemporary theoretical perspectives within the discipline.
3. become acquainted with classic and contemporary research within the discipline.
4. understand how the discipline analyzes data and draws conclusions.
5. learn the ethical guidelines and challenges of the discipline.

SOCIAL SCIENCE/CAREER OPTION DEPARTMENT WRITING POLICY

The Social Science/Career Option faculty feel strongly that good writing is the result of extensive writing practice. As a general rule there should be a minimum of three pages of writing for every credit hour taught in the course. Students should be informed before the writing of the purpose and the criteria with which their work will be graded. Faculty are responsible for giving meaningful and precise feedback on the writing using criteria discussed with the students in advance. Exceptions can only be made with permission of the Dean of Social Science/Career Option Department.

GRADING

Grade cut-offs:

A+ 97	B+ 87	C+ 77	D+ 67	F >60
A 93	B 83	C 73	D 63	
A- 90	B- 80	C- 70	D- 60	

FW: This grade has the same negative effect on your grade point as an F. The FW grade indicates a student failed the course, had not attended after the 60% point of the course, and did not withdraw by the withdrawal deadline.

Semester grade:

Students' grades on all course work will be calculated into a percentage with attendance points subtracted (if applicable—see attendance policy), and participation-intangibles points added or subtracted for the final course percentage.<sup>3</sup> Semester grades will then be given according to the cutoffs listed above.

Exception: Scores above 97 will, for the semester grade, confer an A. Kirkwood does not give or recognize the A+.

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<sup>3</sup> Participation and other less “objective” factors are converted into negative or positive points (or no points) and then factored in. See below.

Components:

Quizzes, Exams:	~80% (40% each)
Assignments Portfolio, Research Report:	~20%
Participation-Intangibles: <sup>4</sup>	~0-4 points
Other/Miscellaneous:	Up to 5%

*Quizzes and exams:* Quizzes are generally “objective” (multiple choice, true/false, matching, etc.); exams are usually a mixture of objective and essay.

Make-up policy:

**Quizzes:** After a certain point in the class period on a quiz day, a late student will not be allowed to take the quiz with the rest of the class and must negotiate with the instructor about whether and when he or she can do so. I allow students to take only *one* quiz late during the semester and then *only* if the reason for missing it is legitimate.

The ability to “make up” a quiz (i.e., take it late) in cases of lateness or absence must be negotiated with the instructor. It is the student’s responsibility to approach the instructor about his or her desire to take a quiz late and to do so promptly (see note below). If the reason for lateness or absence is not legitimate and/or if a student has already taken a quiz outside of the designated time, he or she will have to forfeit the quiz in question (and take a zero on that quiz). Students may not make up low quiz grades.

**Exams:** A mid-term exam grade of less than 70% can be made up within one week after a student receives the grade.<sup>5</sup>

The process for lateness and absence on an exam day is similar to that for quizzes. As with quizzes, after a certain point in the class period on an exam day, a late student will not be allowed to take the exam with the rest of the class and must negotiate with the instructor about whether and when he or she can do so. As with quizzes, it is the student’s responsibility to approach the instructor about his or her desire to make up an exam and to do so promptly (see note below). The reason for lateness or absence must be legitimate in order for the student to take the exam outside the designated time.

**Note:** Prompt notification of the need for an absence from a quiz or exam is one piece of evidence as to its legitimacy. Prompt notification of an absence and the desire to take a quiz or exam late is, therefore, required of anyone wishing to do so. Ideally, students should notify me of the need for absence before or on the day of the missed exam or quiz. Students must arrange to take a quiz or exam late within the week of its designated time. In the case of a make-up to compensate for a low mid-term exam grade, students must notify me of the desire to do the make-up within the week of receiving the original grade.

*Assignments and in-class work:* More information will be provided about the following but, briefly, there are several major types of assignments and in-class work that may be required in this course. These are portfolio assignments, in-class worksheets and spot-writing assignments.

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<sup>4</sup> Generally not a formal grade but takes the form of points added to semester total in cases of exceptional effort. See below.

<sup>5</sup> Typically the make-up score is averaged with the original score to determine the total mid-term exam grade.

**Portfolio:** Each student in sociology will maintain a portfolio of written assignments that are done periodically through the term. The compiled portfolio, with reflective essay (description forthcoming), will be due at the end of the term. Students will receive general guidelines for this component of the grade in a separate handout. I will also give more specific written and/or verbal descriptions of and guidelines for each of the assignments a few days before it is due.

**Other:** In-class worksheets will be accompanied by verbal or written instructions each time they are distributed. Generally speaking, these are not graded but may be assigned credit as an attendance aid if I deem this to be necessary. Unannounced, in-class spot-writing assignments may be given periodically throughout the term. These also may or may not be graded or assigned credit (factored into some component of the semester grade) but cannot be made up.

*The participation-intangibles component* does not usually assume the form of a letter grade but is factored in terms of negative or positive points added to or subtracted from the semester grade. It may include intangible factors such as effort and attitude. In most cases, credit for participation-intangibles affects one's grade by only a few percentage points (maximum) but this can represent a substantial effect on the overall semester grade.

#### MIDTERM GRADES

During full semesters a midterm grade will be calculated and posted on Eagle Net. The grade will be posted as "A" through "F" or as "S" (satisfactory) or "U" (unsatisfactory). The midterm grade is a grade-in-progress, and will not affect your official GPA, nor will it impact financial aid. The midterm grade has three purposes: first, to communicate your academic performance; second, to provide opportunities for you to discuss progress with your instructor; and third, to allow Kirkwood to design college-wide intervention programs that will improve student success.

#### DROP DATE

The last day to drop any course is 75% through the course. The specific date to drop this class for this term is indicated on the *Course Schedule* (to be distributed). Students dropping a class during the first two weeks of a term may receive a full or partial tuition refund. Details of the refund schedule are available from Enrollment Services in 216 Kirkwood Hall. For detailed discussion of drop dates and policies see the *Student Handbook*.

#### COLLEGE CLOSINGS AND DELAYS

At various times throughout the semester we may experience weather-related closing or delays. The college policy is that students should report to whatever class would normally be in session when the campus opens.

#### ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

In part because of the discussion-oriented format of this course, I consider student attendance vitally important to its success—and yours.<sup>6</sup> Excessive absences *will* affect grades. Missing class time means missing a major component of the course rendering the reason for the absence relatively unimportant. Generally, **after five absences (three of which may be unexcused) a student's semester grade will be docked (2% for each absence)**. After a

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<sup>6</sup> While it may be possible to do quite well on quizzes, tests and assignments in the class without attending, one who pursues this avenue is missing out on the in-class activities that help one become fully rounded sociologically.

certain point this can drag an otherwise passing student into failing range. When truly emergency circumstances lead a student to go beyond the limit the student should have a doctor's excuse or other written documentation<sup>7</sup> to account for the absences.

Unless indicated otherwise, any extra-credit assignment options—should they become available—are open only to those with good attendance records (fewer than five absences) and will be accepted only after all outstanding (late) work is submitted.

It is the student's responsibility to do whatever is necessary to get caught up in the wake of an absence. This may involve one or more of the following: discussing material that was missed with the instructor, getting notes from classmates, finding out from classmates and/or the instructor what assignments were given during the absence.

*College Sponsored Activities:* Students involved in activities in which they are required to represent the college (i.e., college-sponsored activities) must give written notice to the faculty member at least one week in advance of the absence unless last minute schedule changes make this notice impossible. If regular season athletic schedules have been developed, student participants must present written notice of anticipated absences within the first week of the semester. Failure to provide timely written notice may result in loss of this opportunity.

I consider *leaving class early* to be in the same vein as absences since students miss vital material when this is done. Each instance of leaving early will, therefore, be treated as a partial absence.

*Lateness* detracts from the optimum learning of all and should be avoided. Consistent lateness will be factored negatively into the student's participation grade. As noted above, lateness on a quiz/exam day may disqualify a student from taking the quiz/exam.

#### PREPARATION

Students are expected to have done assigned readings the day each is discussed in class (i.e., the day it is listed on the syllabus). Preparation is obviously reflected in quiz and exam performance but will also factor into one's participation grade.

Students are expected to have a slender paper or plastic binder for the portfolio (not a three-ring binder which is too bulky) which will be handed in at the end of the term.

Quizzes and exams will require a #2 pencil. *Always* keep one handy. Students should bring readings relevant to a day's lesson with them to class.

#### OTHER BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

Students should be actively but respectfully involved in course activities and discussions. Verbal participation is an expectation of the course. Listening to others and aiding discussion, rather than dominating it, are equally important.

I will generally return student written work once and only once. If a student is absent on the day work is returned, it is his or her responsibility to retrieve the work outside of class time. Generally, students who have missed the distribution of their work should retrieve it from me during my office hours.

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<sup>7</sup> Documentation for absences must be submitted by the student, in *hard copy*, for the instructor to keep. Email, phone or verbal notification will *not* suffice.

The following are statements contained in the Social Science/Career Options Department list of components that pertain to a productive classroom learning environment. These apply to all social science classes including Introduction to Sociology:

- We believe that the best learning takes place in an environment where faculty and students exhibit trust and mutual respect.
- Students promote trust by preparing honest and thoughtful work, and by expecting evaluation based on performance. Faculty promote trust by setting clear guidelines for assignments and evaluations, honest feedback, and by assigning bias-free grades.
- Students show respect by being prepared and attending class on time, by paying attention, contributing to discussions, listening respectfully to others' points of view, meeting deadlines, and by striving for their best performance. Faculty show respect by their timeliness and preparedness, by taking students seriously, by valuing their goals and aspirations, and by providing honest feedback.
- In a productive learning environment, faculty and students work cooperatively, recognize and respect differences, model the values of character and citizenship, and become lifelong learners.

#### SOCIAL SCIENCE/CAREER OPTION DEPARTMENT CELL PHONE POLICY

In the interests of preserving an effective learning environment, as free of as many disruptions as possible, all cellular phones and pagers shall be out of sight and either turned off or placed in a non-audible mode while in the classroom.

#### DROPPING

The last day to drop the course is 75% through the term. Consult the *Course Schedule* (to be distributed) for the exact date of the drop deadline. Students dropping the course during the first two weeks of the term will receive a partial or full tuition refund. For detailed discussion of drop dates and policies see the *Student Handbook*.

#### DISABILITY

Students with disabilities who need accommodations to achieve course objectives should file an accommodation application with Learning Services, Linn Hall 133 and provide a written plan of accommodation to your instructor. Please do so well before the accommodation is needed. A written plan of accommodation will be constructed by the office and presented to the instructor. This plan is *required* for any accommodation sought by the affected student. (Please provide me with a copy of your accommodation to keep on file.)

Note on **taking quizzes and exams in the test center**: As a student with a certain kind of disability, you have every right to this accommodation. If you plan to use it, however, I expect you to send me an email reminder of the fact the night before *each* such quiz or exam is to be taken. I consider this to be your responsibility and ask you not to expect items will be placed in the test center for you without a reminder.

#### INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY AND CONTACT

Office hours and meetings with students: though I aspire to the ideal of complete availability to students, in practice I cannot guarantee an audience with students outside of my office hours. I am obligated to drop what I'm doing during my office hours to meet with you but cannot make the same promise outside that time. The best way of ensuring a meeting outside of office hours

is to arrange such a meeting ahead of time. I will try to accommodate such meetings as best I can but I ask that students attempt such meetings only if truly necessary.

Phone contact: Much can be accomplished through a telephone call that cannot be done through other means of contact (I feel more comfortable discuss specific grade issues by phone than by email for example). Most often, though, I prefer to communicate with you about course issues via email rather than by phone (albeit in a way that does not disclose grade information). If you have an urgent issue to discuss with me by phone, I consider it primarily your responsibility to contact me rather than vice-versa. I am generally not reachable by any phone other than the one in my office (887-3631).

E-mail: I encourage contact by email and will try to respond to your email messages promptly. I check my email at least daily during the week. I am less likely to respond to emails on weekends and holidays. As a courtesy to me as your instructor, I ask that, when you wish to have me contact you by email, *you* initiate that contact by writing to me first and allow me to respond. This is faster and easier than giving me your email address and expecting me to type it out and initiate the contact.<sup>8</sup>

Note: Always indicate your class and section when contacting me by phone or email. I generally discourage submitting homework by email because of the inconvenience and time-consumption involved in opening and printing it. I consider this to be the student's responsibility.

#### PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

According to Webster, to plagiarize is "to steal or pass off the ideas or words of another as one's own ...to use created productions without crediting the source ...to commit literary theft ...to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source."

From the section of the Kirkwood *Student Handbook* on plagiarism:

Kirkwood Community College believes in the value of independent, honest work on the part of its students. Students are expected to conduct themselves with scholarly integrity. Cheating and plagiarism are serious acts of misconduct and shall be subject to disciplinary action, including possible expulsion from the college. Each confirmed incident of cheating or plagiarism will be reported by the instructor to the Associate Dean or Director who will report it to the Dean, Student Development.

The *Handbook* goes on to say that in cases of plagiarism the instructor can assign a failing grade to the assignment in which plagiarism occurs. A second case of plagiarism can result in the student failing the course as a whole. A third case may result in expulsion from the college. Students should consult the *Handbook* for more information.

To avoid a charge of plagiarism the college suggests the following:

Kirkwood students are responsible for authenticating any assignment submitted to an instructor. If asked, you must be able to produce proof that the assignment you submit is actually your own work. Therefore, Kirkwood recommends that you engage in a verifiable working process on assignments.

The college suggests that you keep copies of all drafts of your work, make photocopies of research materials, write summaries of research materials, hang onto writing center receipts,

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<sup>8</sup> I generally do not communicate specific grade information by email. Such communication is insecure and would become too time-consuming if done regularly.

keep logs or journals of your work on assignments and papers, learn to save drafts or versions of assignments under individual file names on computer or diskette, etc. The inability to authenticate your work, should an instructor request it, is a sufficient ground for failing the assignment.

In addition to requiring a student to authenticate his/her work, Kirkwood Community College instructors may employ various other means of ascertaining authenticity—such as engaging in internet searches, creating quizzes based on student work, requiring students to explain their work and/or process orally, etc.

In this course, other kinds of academic dishonesty, such as cheating, will be treated in a way that is analogous to the plagiarism policy including consequences ranging from failing grades for individual assignments to, potentially, failing the course as a whole. As is the case with plagiarism, each instance of any other type of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean.

#### STUDENT HANDLING OF CONCERNS/CRITICISMS OF COURSE POLICY AND METHODS

As an instructor I attempt to remain open to student input concerning my courses. I try to create a collaborative atmosphere in my classes—to a point—though I also insist that the instructor is the leader of the learning process. The extent of my openness to student input is, therefore, not absolute. It depends, in part, on the way in which students share concerns and criticisms. I do not feel compelled to consider concerns shared in a negative, confrontational way or shared in an inappropriate setting (see below).

In addition, it should be noted that openness to student input doesn't necessarily mean that changes sought by the student will always occur. I retain the right to disagree with your ideas even if expressed positively. There is a good deal of teacher discretion in setting course policy and practice; we can't always agree on everything. In some cases disagreements cannot be rectified and, unless there is some gross violation of student rights, the student will have to accept the course as is or drop. To demonstrate good faith students should attempt to rectify concerns by addressing them to me in an appropriate way and setting before taking them to a higher level. Should the need arise for this last resort, students may consult the *Handbook* for information about this process.

The process of sharing concerns or criticisms should follow the guidelines listed below. Concerns, criticisms should be:

##### 1. Constructive

The ideal here is a spirit of partnership informed by an assumption that I really do want to do a good job as a teacher and to do so in an ethical way. We should both be open to the possibility of changing our minds about an issue. The student should be open to altering his or her thinking about an aspect of the course based on a clearer understanding of it. If a student remains critical after discussion of his or her concern it would be helpful if the criticism were accompanied by positive suggestions for change. It is more constructive to propose a positive suggestion for what you would like than merely complaining about what you don't.

##### 2. Shared in an appropriate setting

Students should seriously contemplate whether to share concerns during class with the entire class present for a couple of reasons. First, the concerns may not be shared by enough others to warrant using up the time of the whole class. Second, like most people, I find criticism in front of group of people—especially when done in a confrontational, chip-on-shoulder fashion—

very uncomfortable. I try to avoid criticism of students in an all-class setting and I expect students to grant me the same respect. The point is to avoid putting each other “on the spot” and forcing rapid decisions based on pressure tactics.

Note: Students should be assured that sharing of concerns, done in a positive spirit and according to the above guidelines, will not result in any kind of retribution from the instructor. Indeed, it is better to share concerns openly than harbor them privately where they may simply “fester” and affect the amount and nature of your class participation. It is also better to deal with concerns promptly and not “spring” your concerns on me at such a time or in such a manner that it is difficult for me to do anything about them.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, inappropriate handling of concerns is considered a legitimate component of your grade—it’s not wrong to be critical of the course or instructor’s methods or policies; it *is* wrong to express criticism in negative, inappropriate ways. My assessment of a student’s positivity/negativity—admittedly arrived at rather subjectively—is factored into his or her participation-intangibles grade.

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<sup>9</sup> Rule of thumb: if I first learn of your concerns in end-of-term evaluations, that’s too late!

### Course Calendar: Introduction to Sociology, 0165304,<sup>10</sup>

This schedule is intended as a broad overview of what we will be doing in the course week by week. As such, *it is subject to change*. On a related note, the reading required for this course is not necessarily limited to that listed below. Additions may be added periodically throughout the term.

Main text:	Richard T. Schaefer, <i>Sociology Matters</i> , New York: McGraw-Hill
Supplementary text:	Kurt Finsterbusch, ed., <i>Annual Editions: Sociology</i> , New York: McGraw-Hill (on reserve in the library)
Other readings:	TBA

<u>WEEK/DAT</u>	<u>Topic, Activity</u>	<u>Reading, Assignment</u>
<u>E</u>		
Week 1	Course Introduction; The Sociological View	
1/17	Lecture, discussion	
1/19	Lecture, discussion	Schaefer, Chapter 1
Week 2	The Sociological View	
1/24	Lecture, discussion	Schaefer, Chapter 1; Portfolio Assignment <sup>11</sup>
1/26	Lecture, discussion; <b>Quiz 1</b> (Chapter 1)	
Week 3	Culture & Socialization	
1/31	Lecture, discussion	Schaefer, Chapter 2
2/2	Lecture, discussion	
Week 4	Deviance & Social Control	
2/7	Lecture, discussion	Schaefer, Chapter 4; <i>Annual Editions</i> Reading-Portfolio Assignment <sup>12</sup>
2/9	Lecture, discussion	

<sup>10</sup> Synonym number

<sup>11</sup> Essay: Observing a Strange Social Setting; more information to be distributed in a handout and to be announced (TBA) in the week or so before the assignment is due.

<sup>12</sup> "Diversity within Unity," Etzioni, et al, from *Annual Editions: Sociology* on reserve in the library

Week 5	Stratification in the US & Global Inequality	
2/14	Lecture, discussion; <b>Quiz 2</b> (Chapters 2 & 4)	Schaefer, Chapter 5
2/16	Lecture, discussion	
Week 6	Stratification in the US & Global Inequality	
2/21	Lecture, discussion	Schaefer, Chapter 5; <i>Annual Editions</i> Reading-Portfolio Assignment <sup>13</sup>
2/23	Lecture, discussion	
Week 7	Stratification in the US & Global Inequality; Review	
2/28	Lecture, discussion	Schaefer, Chapter 5
3/1	Lecture, discussion; <b>Quiz 3</b> (Chapter 5)	
Week 8	Catch-Up/Review; Midterm Exam Week	
3/6	Catch-up; review activities	
3/8	<b>Exam 1</b> (Midterm)	
Week 9	Spring Break Week	
3/12 -16	No classes	
Week 10	Inequality by Race & Ethnicity	
3/20	Lecture, discussion	Schaefer, Chapter 6
3/22	Lecture, discussion	
Week 11	Inequality by Gender	
3/27	Lecture, discussion	Schaefer, Chapter 7; <i>Annual Editions</i> Reading-Portfolio Assignment <sup>14</sup>
3/29	Lecture, discussion	

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<sup>13</sup> “Goodbye Horatio Alger,” Jeff Madrick, from *Annual Editions: Sociology* on reserve in the library

<sup>14</sup> The reading for this assignment will be announced in class a week or so before the assignment is due. Also, **due date for all late work, resubmissions.**

Week 12	Inequality by Gender; Social Institutions	
4/3	Lecture, discussion	Schaefer, Chapters 7-8
4/5	Lecture, discussion	
Week 13	Social Institutions <sup>15</sup>	
4/10	Lecture, discussion	Schaefer, Chapter 8
4/12	Lecture, discussion; <b>Quiz 4</b> (Chapters 6-8)	Reflective Essay-Complete Portfolio due <sup>16</sup>
Week 14	Population, Community, Health & Environment	
4/17	Lecture, discussion	Schaefer, Chapter 10
4/19	Lecture, discussion	
Week 15	Population, Community, Health & Environment; Social Movements, Change, etc.	
4/24	Lecture, discussion	Schaefer, Chapters 10-11
4/26	Lecture, discussion	
Week 16	Social Movements, Change, etc.; Catch-up & Review	
5/1	Lecture, discussion; <b>Quiz 5</b> (Chapters 10-11)	Schaefer, Chapter 11
5/3	Catch-up, review activities	
Week 17	Final Exam Week	
5/8	No class	
5/10	<b>Exam 2 (Final)</b>	

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<sup>15</sup> Last day to drop: **4/13**

<sup>16</sup> Information about this assignment TBA