The First Sociology Course: Suggestions for How to Represent the Discipline in an Introductory Course When There Are Too Many Topics to Cover.

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BASIC GUIDING QUESTIONS IN DESIGNING THE INTRODUCTORY CLASS TO REPRESENT THE DISCIPLINE

➢ Q1. What is the point of sociology as a discipline?
➢ Q2. What is the point of an introduction to sociology class?
➢ Q3. What topics should be included in the course agenda to adequately represent the discipline?
➢ Q4. How should the topics be organized?

STEPPING BACK IN HISTORY: WHY SOCIOLOGY?

➢ The industrial Revolution and social disorganization
➢ Call for a new science of society to solve problems
➢ Emphasis of the new science:
  ➢ Society as organism
  ➢ Social structures
  ➢ Empiricism
  ➢ Objectivity (Value Free)
  ➢ Objective Possibility
Q1. The Point of Sociology

- The Sociological Perspective: Understanding of structural basis of human experiences, behaviors and social conditions (Peter L. Berger)

- The Sociological Imagination: Understanding perceived personal trouble as public issue. Structural solutions to problems of the human experience (C. Wright Mills)
Q2. THE POINT OF INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY COURSE?

LEARNING SOCIOLOGICAL REASONING

✓ Understanding the concept of social structures
✓ Social structures as basis for all human social realities
✓ Connections between individual experiences and social structures
✓ Structural solutions to solving problems
✓ Evidence-based explanations
✓ Objective possibilities

Q3A. SELECTING TOPICS FOR THE COURSE

ANTECEDENT DECISIONS:

❖ Do you want to use a Theme?
  E.g. – Stratification
    – Socialization
    – Sociological Perspective
    – Sociological Imagination

❖ Extent of depth of coverage?

❖ How many topics do you want to cover?

❖ Best is the best value-added order for the chapters?
3B. AREAS OF CHAPTERS THAT ADEQUATELY REPRESENT THE DISCIPLINE

- **FOUNDATIONAL CORE**
  - **BASIC CONCEPTS**
    - Introductory Chapter
    - History & Development of Sociology
  - **ANALYTICAL TOOLS**
    - Sociological Theories
    - Research Methods

- **SUBSTANTIVE AREAS**
  - **SOCIAL INTEGRATION**
    - Socialization
    - Culture
    - Social Groups
  - **SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS**
    - Family
    - Government
    - The Economy
    - Religion
    - Education
  - **SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN SOCIETY**
    - Social Stratification
    - Race and Ethnic Stratification
    - Gender Stratification
    - Age Stratification
  - **CHALLENGES TO STATUS QUO**
    - Deviant Behavior
    - Social Change
    - Collective Behavior and Social Movements
Q3C & Q4A. TWELVE CHAPTERS THAT MAY ADEQUATELY REPRESENT THE DISCIPLINE

- **FOUNDATIONAL CORE**
  - **BASIC CONCEPTS**
    - Introductory Chapter
    - History & Development of Sociology
  - **ANALYTICAL TOOLS**
    - Sociological Theories
    - Research Methods

- **SUBSTANTIVE AREAS**
  - **SOCIAL INTEGRATION**
    - Socialization
    - Culture
    - Social Groups
  - **SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS**
    - Family
  - **SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN SOCIETY**
    - Social Stratification
    - Race and Ethnic Stratification
    - Gender Stratification
  - **CHALLENGING STATUS QUO**
    - Deviant Behavior
1. Introductory Chapter

- Why? To introduce sociology and Social Structure
  - Basic Concepts
    - Definition of Sociology
    - Social Structures
    - The Sociological Perspective
    - The Sociological Imagination

2. Chapter on Development of Sociology

- Why? To demonstrate:
  - A) Sociology as problem solving discipline
  - B) Underpinning ideas for sociological Theories
  - History of Sociology
  - Major foundational social thoughts
    - August Comte
    - Herbert Spencer
    - Karl Marx
    - Max Weber
    - Emile Durkheim
  - Emphasizing structural determinism
3. Chapter on Sociological Theories

The Grand Theories
- Structure Functional Theory
- Social Conflict Theory
- Symbolic interaction Theory

Connect each theory with foundational ideas

4. Chapter on Sociological Research

Why? To demonstrate sociological as a science

The Scientific Method
- Patterned Regularities
- Empiricism and Objectivity
- Methods of Data Collection
- Research Variables and Hypothesis
- Types of analysis

5. Chapter on Socialization

Why? To demonstrate the role of learning in being human

Structural basis of learning to develop all human potentials
- Acquisition of culture
- Learning meaning for symbols –structural
- Acquisition of language
- Roles of social institutions in what we learn
- Roles of agents of socialization
- Gender socialization
6. Chapter on Culture

- Why? To demonstrate cultural bases of realities
  - Explaining Culture
  - Characteristics of culture
  - Culture by levels of human associations
  - Material and nonmaterial (symbolic) aspects culture
  - Effects: Homogenizing & Heterogenizing
    - Value
    - Norms
    - Language
    - Collective conscience
    - Tools for social control, etc.

7. Chapter on Groups and Organizations

- Why? To demonstrate groups as basis of behavior
  - Significance of group structure and group types
  - Differentiating among Social Groups, Aggregates & Categories
  - Group characteristics
  - Group structure
  - Status, Role and Norms
  - Types of Groups
    - Primary Groups
    - Secondary Groups
    - Mediating Groups
8. Chapter on the Institution of Family

Why? To demonstrate structural bases of sexual relationships and family formations

- Family as social institution and social unit
  - Understanding social institutions
  - Family as a social institution and units
  - Functions of family units to society
  - Types of families across societies
  - Marriage and why we marry
  - Structural factors that shape who we marry
  - Divorce patterns, causes & consequences

9. Chapter on Stratification [SOCIAL CLASS]

Why? To demonstrate significance of social class and wealth on human realities

- Consequences of income and wealth distribution
  - What social stratification means
  - Meaning of social class
  - Meaning of class stratification
  - Patterns of income and wealth distribution

- Consequences of patterns of distribution
  - To the poor / lower class
  - To the rich / higher classes

- Explanations for stratification by social class

10. Chapter on Stratification [RACE & ETHNICITY]

Why? To demonstrate significance of Race and Ethnic classifications on human realities

- Race and Ethnic Relations
  - Meaning of race and ethnicity
  - Determination of race and ethnicity
  - Income & wealth differences by race and ethnicity

- Methods of boundary maintenance
  - Attitude: Prejudice:
    - Racism, ethnicism, ethnocentrism
  - Behavior: Discrimination:
    - Racial and ethnic, individual, institutional
11. Chapter on Stratification - Gender

Why? To demonstrate impacts of gender on behavior

- Gender, Gender Roles and Gender Relations
  - Distinguish between sex and gender
  - Patterns of gender and gender roles in USA
  - Patterns of educational attainment—gender
  - Patterns of occupations by gender
  - Patterns of income distribution by gender
  - Patterns of poverty by gender
  - Explain why gender stratification exists

2. Chapter on Deviant Behavior

Why? To demonstrate the structural determinates of deviant and criminal behaviors

- Structural relativity of deviance
  - Differentiate between nonconforming and deviant behaviors

- Patterns of Crime
  - General patterns of crime statistics
  - Patterns of crime by gender, race and ethnicity
  - Patterns of victimization
  - Patterns of incarceration by gender, race and ethnicity

- Consequences of the Deviance Label and Incarceration
  - Employment opportunities
  - Participation in civic life
  - Secondary deviance / reoffending

- Why Deviance and Crime?
  - Adaptations to structural deprivation
  - Relative opportunity
  - Deviance as creation of the powerful
  - Differential association
  - Relativity of deviance through labels
CONCLUSIONS

- Keep in mind that the point of sociology is to understand how social structures shape human realities and how to solve problems through structural change.

- All topics should emphasize knowledge of social structure.

- Avoid the pressure to cover too many chapters/topics.

- 10 to 12 well selected chapters can adequately represent the discipline, depending on teaching style and time for exams and activities.

- Covering core foundation topics are essential.

- At least one or two topics from each substantive area depending on time.

- Arrange topics in best value-added order from your perspective.
Thank you.