

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

A. Olu Oyinlade, PhD.

Sociology & Anthropology Department

University of Nebraska, Omaha

Email: aoyinlade@unomaha.edu



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CHICAGO AREA SOCIOLOGY TEACHERS

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

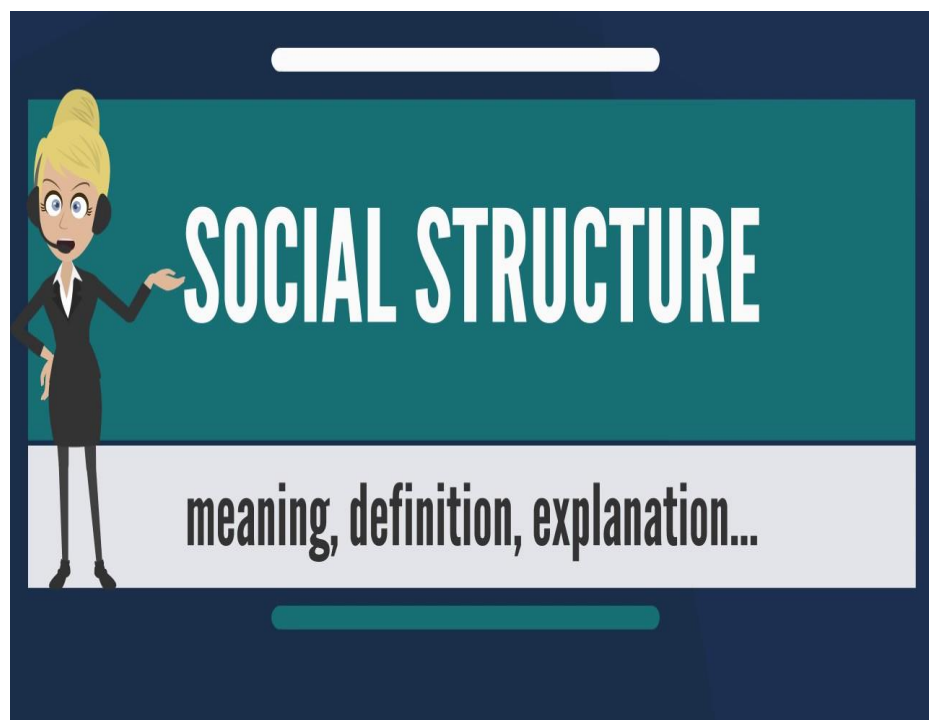
- ✓ Deviant Behavior

THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE THEME

Q4B. ORDER OF TOPICS AND KEY IDEAS UNDER EACH TOPIC

❑ 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

- ✓ *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

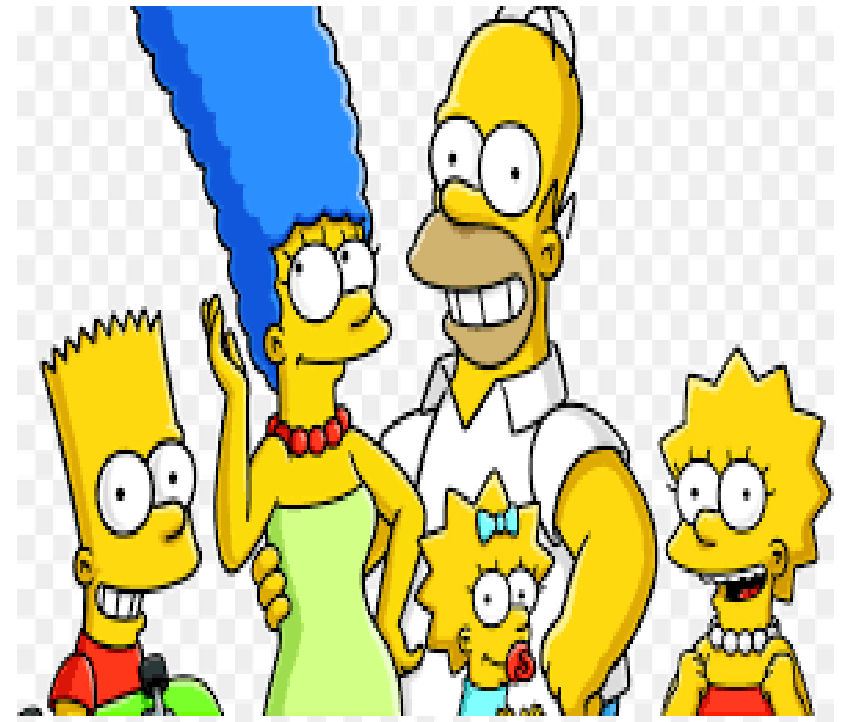
- ✓ Primary Groups
- ✓ Secondary Groups
- ✓ Mediating Groups



❑ 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.

