

Sociology 1, sec. 63Z CRN 30482
INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY
De Anza College Winter, 2024

Instructor: Kamau Birago, Ph.D. Classroom: Online E-mail:biragokamau@fhda.edu
Classes: Asynchronous via Canvas Canvas Office Hours: Fri 10:00-Noon via Canvas
Text: **Giddens** Anthony, et al. *Essentials of Sociology*, 8th ed. (Yes, the edition matters!)
(eBook option available)

**Please read this syllabus thoroughly and carefully at the beginning of the course
and consult it throughout the quarter.**

This course will consist of a somewhat abbreviated (we only have 11 weeks), online (via Canvas) asynchronous introduction to the discipline of sociology. There will be six general parts to the course: the *globalization* part, the *foundations* part, the *how we study* part, the *what we study* part, the *social inequalities* part, and the *social change* part.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Student Learning Outcome: The student will develop a sociological imagination, which is the ability to evaluate the effects of cultural, structural, historical, geographical, institutional and stratification processes on groups and individuals, including one's own experiences.

Student Learning Outcome: The student will distinguish the sociological perspective from other sciences, including its methods, theories and empathetic standpoint.

More Course Objectives: This is a course designed to give the student who takes it the ability to:

- (A) Outline the research process and describe different methods used within the discipline of sociology;
- (B) Compare and contrast different forms of social/cultural social institutions;
- (C) Distinguish among and describe different types of social inequalities and analyze how they relate to systems of social stratification; and
- (D) Use sociological analysis to think critically about some of the domestic and global dilemmas we are currently facing (or not facing) and how one might go about effecting social change.

Sociology Department Statement on Feedback: The Sociology Department understands that students can interpret the feedback they get from teachers in a lot of different ways and that sometimes it can be difficult to receive critical feedback. We have high expectations for the quality of your work in our classes. We want you to know that when we give feedback, it is because we believe in your ability to reach those expectations. We believe in your intellectual abilities and in your desire to grow as a student. The goal of our feedback is to help you develop your skills.

Organization of Classes: In a fully asynchronous course, there are no scheduled face-to-face meetings between students and instructor nor among students. In essence, such a course is self-teaching with guidance/assistance by an instructor and, hopefully, help from fellow students. The student's motivation is the key to her/his success in such a course.

This online class will be taught using the Canvas course management system. If you have never taken an online course, and/or if you have never taken a course in Canvas, you will need to, as soon as possible, familiarize yourself with doing so. Information about Canvas and Online Education Orientation can be found in Canvas on the Student Resources page:

<https://deanza.instructure.com/courses/3382>. The Student Online Resources hub with extensive information and tips can be found at deanza.edu/online-ed/students/remoteteaching. I have also included these and other introductory possibilities in Module 1.

You access Canvas courses by clicking on Canvas on the De Anza College Home Page (www.deanza.edu), or through your Portal, or in several other ways. When you do so you'll see your Dashboard, a list of De Anza College Canvas courses that you have been enrolled in. (You may not be able to see our course until Monday, January 9.) You will then be able to click on our course, after which you will be taken to the course homepage. To the left of the text of the homepage will be two lists. The list closest to the text is Course Navigation (which includes Home, Syllabus, Modules, etc.). The list to the left of Course Navigation is Global Navigation (which includes Dashboard, Courses, Calendar, etc.).

The class organized into eleven Canvas Modules, or one module for each week of the class. To access the Modules, click on Modules in the Course Navigation. **Please depend only on the Modules, not the Calendar nor the To Do list, to guide you.** Each numbered Module (except for Module 1) has sections (numbered .1, .2, etc.). Each section has Readings, Lectures, and Reading/Lecture Reflections, or R/Rs (see below). In addition, a Module may have one or more Pages, which are assigned readings that are not in your textbook. The procedure is for you to read the assigned reading, then view the lecture, and then submit an R/R to me via email (e.g., complete Reading 2.1, view Lecture 2.1, and submit R/R 2.1). For Module 1 (the first week of class, Jan. 9-13), there are no Readings, Lectures, or R/Rs, but there are various tasks in Module 1 that you will need to attend to.

All dates and times for this course will assume the **Pacific Time Zone**. Unfortunately, that means that if you are taking the class from outside of the Pacific Time Zone, **you** will have to calculate what the times given for our class translate to for you.

Course Requirements and Grading:

- I. Participation - 20%
- II. Reading & R/R's - 20%
- III. 1st Midterm Exam - 20% (administered Fri. 2/2)
- IV. 2nd Midterm Exam - 20% (administered Fri. 2/23)
- V. Final Exam - 20% (administered Tue. 3/26)

For your course grade I follow conventional grade point procedures: A = 4.0, an A- = 3.7, a B+ = 3.3, a B = 3.0, and so on. So for example, if you receive an A for your Participation grade, you

get a 4.0 grade point for that course requirement. Secondly, I multiply your grade point for each requirement by its percentage of the course grade. Thus, to continue the example, your Participation 4.0 will be multiplied by .20 (because this assignment was 20% of your course grade), giving you .80 for Participation. Notice that if you get a 4.0 on every course requirement, you'd earn .80 for each, and $.80 \times 5 = 4.0$, or an A. This math establishes your base grade which will be *at least* your grade, but *if* I feel you've earned it due to your growth over the course, I reserve the right to adjust it upward. Final grades are on the conventional scale wherein an A = 3.85+, an A- = 3.5 to 3.849, a B+ = 3.15 to 3.49, a B = 2.85 to 3.149, etc. **Notice that a student who gets a zero on any one of the five course requirements can achieve a maximum course grade of 3.2.**

Midterms and Final Exam: You will take both Midterms and the Final Exam within Canvas. **All three are required to pass the course.** You can access them, after I have opened them up for you to access, by clicking Quizzes in the Course Navigation menu. In addition, instructions for taking these exams will be provided in the Modules. Both Midterms and the Final Exam will have time limitations (which you will find in their respective instructions pages). Exams are to be taken **at a single setting** – once you begin you must continue until you are finished or until the time limit for the exam runs out. **The dates for the Midterms and the Final Exam are set – you must take them on those dates whether you have completed your preparation or not.**

Instructor Expectations: There are a number of expectations I have for students in this course, as follows:

i) *courtesy.* It is expected that all students will be respectful toward one another and the professor. In an online class, this means in your written communication and during office hours.

ii) *special needs.* If you have any physical, mental, or other disability, either hidden or visible, which may require classroom, test-taking, or other reasonable modifications, please email me as soon as possible. You must also be in contact with Disability Support Services. Please refer to the Canvas Page: Student Support and Disability Services.

iii) *participation.* In a fully asynchronous course such as ours, a significant percentage of the Participation grade will be based on the quantity and quality of your participation in our class discussion, which is accessed by clicking on Discussions in the Course Navigation menu, and then clicking on Discussion. The discussion is to be limited to the sociology you are learning about. If you wish to interact with your classmates about non-sociological matters, (such as exchanging information about each other or interests with each other) please use Chat rather than Discussions.

iv) *communication.* Feel free to initiate communication with me at any time throughout the course. One-on-one “online face-to-face meetings” can be arranged during my office hours (see the entry in Module 1 for the link) and you can always contact me via email concerning your ongoing experiences in the course. This includes any problems you're having with Canvas, with the readings, any issues you're having with me, or anything else. Instructors tend to look favorably upon demonstrations of student commitment to *learning*, beyond the utilitarian objective of getting good grades.

v) **independent individual work.** R/Rs and exams must be free from plagiarism, joint composition from classmates or others, and any other form of cheating. Violation will result in a zero for that assignment, and the student will be referred to Dr. Elvin T. Ramos, the Social Sciences/Humanities Dean, for disciplinary action.

vi) **make up/revision/extra credit policy.** I do not accept make up work, revisions, or allow make up exams. I do not accept extra credit work.

vii) **being informed.** As a college student, and especially one taking a sociology course, I expect you to be aware of what's going on in the world. Please watch the world/national news daily (or obtain comparable awareness by another means). Try to make connections between current events and what you are learning in class.

viii) **R/Rs.** Each Module has its R/R assignments and deadlines listed in the Module entry, "R/R:[number]" (e.g., "R/R 2:1"). There will be an R/R due for each section of each Module (e.g., R/R 2.1, R/R 2.2, etc.). R/Rs are the main means you have of demonstrating that you are doing *and thinking about* the required readings and lectures. In my experience, there is a positive correlation between writing good R/Rs and performing well on exams. (An example of a good R/R is provided in Module 1.)

R/R's are not to be summaries, nor opinions (e.g., "I like...", "I agree with...", etc.) nor reports (e.g., "I learned about this, I learned about that...", etc.). They are exercises in **critical thinking** (see, Page: Critical Thinking in Module 1). They may be critiques, questions about, or attempted applications of what you've read – as a whole, the single thing you found most compelling, or anything between these. They may also ask about something that you're not sure you understood, but you must include what your understanding *is*. Your R/Rs should be long enough for me to assess how your brain is processing the new sociology that you are being introduced to (between a paragraph and a page in length).

You may write about one sociologically interesting thing that stood out for you in the reading. On the other hand, you may write about the entire reading taken as a whole. Remember to **communicate, don't regurgitate**. Before you write, answer the following questions for yourself: What did I learn about *sociology* in this reading? What did I learn about the associated *theme* from the readings? What did I find confusing or questionable from the readings, and how can I *demonstrate* this to Professor B. beyond just stating it? What did I learn that was interesting, surprising, eye-opening, etc. from this reading? **Do not worry about being "right" or "wrong"**: That is not the point of the R/R. [Do not base what you write on the *examples* the textbook uses to illustrate a particular concept (these are any parts of a page that is not in the main text)].

R/R's will not receive grades. I will read and evaluate them, then assign to them one of the following designations: $\sqrt{+}$ means you've posed an interesting and provocative R/R, $\sqrt{}$ means you've posed an adequate one, $\sqrt{-}$ means your R/R was inadequate. (The ability to express your thinking through written communication is necessary: If this is something that is difficult for you, you should take steps to improve your writing skills, including but not limited to the writing resources available to you at De Anza.) You may or may not receive a comment about your R/R,

but a comment is in no way related to the evaluation of its quality. I expect that your R/Rs will improve over the course as you get accustomed to writing them. **I would prefer that one R/R is submitted in any one email message, rather than all of them submitted at the same time.**

If you are caught violating any of the expectations once, I will report your violation to Dean Ramos for possible disciplinary action. **A second violation** will result in **(1)** a second notification to Dean Ramos; **(2)** I will file an Academic Integrity report with the Student Judicial Affairs Office, and **(3)** you will have a letter in your file and the Student Judicial Affairs Office will judge your case. I don't know how I can make it any clearer about how seriously I take these expectations. Yet, there are often some students who just don't seem to get it. Please don't be one of them this quarter.

Exceptions to Instructor Expectations: If you have a legitimate and unavoidable reason for not being able to comply with any of the above expectations, then (1) we should discuss it, via email, as soon as possible, and (2) do not sign and turn in your Syllabus Acknowledgment until after we have discussed it.

If You Need Help: The Student Success Center offers individual and group tutoring, as well as several types of workshops. Students who use its services succeed at much higher rates than those who do not. As you may know, De Anza now also offers free online tutoring with Smarthinking, available to all students via MyPortal. For more information, go to www.deanza.edu/studentsuccess.

Your Instructor: Kamau Birago, Ph.D. You may call me Professor Birago (pronounced bĭ-RAH-gō) or Professor B. I'm aware that some students in past courses have concluded that I am "intimidating" after reading my syllabus, but these students have made an incorrect inference. The correct inference is, simply, "Professor B. is trying to provide me with all of the information I need in order to be successful in his class this quarter." The most efficient means of communication with me outside of class or office hours is via email. More about me is to be found in our Homepage in Canvas, and if that isn't enough, just (via email or Chat) ask!

After completely reading this syllabus and when Canvas opens up, you must copy, fill out and submit via email the Syllabus Acknowledgment, located in Module 1.