“The difficulty in sociology, is to manage to think in a completely astonished and disconcerted (unsettled or confused) way about things you thought you had always understood.” - Pierre Bourdieu

Course Description

Sociology is fundamentally about rethinking common sense. It is the critical study of society and social behaviour through the analysis of the ways in which social structures shape and affect our lives.

The aim of this course is to provide a basic introduction to the discipline of Sociology. The course will start by covering some of the main theoretical and methodological approaches in the discipline, before moving to a discussion of topics that are pertinent to understanding the social world around us.

Students will be expected to nurture their “sociological imagination” and will be encouraged to engage in critical thinking about social issues from global, local and comparative perspectives.

Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students will be able:
1. to think critically about society and social phenomena around us
2. to understand the major theoretical paradigms in sociology
3. to identify the major methods employed by sociologists
4. to apply sociological principles to everyday social life
5. to analyze the social world by linking the macro-structures to the micro-dynamics
6. to recognize ways in which social structures affect social experiences
Outcomes

Students are expected to:
1. read the assigned course material and come to class prepared
2. regularly read newspapers, blogs, op-eds, etc
3. engage in class discussion and develop opinions/arguments on controversial social topics
4. present an article on a topic related to the class discussion
5. write an essay phenomenon using ‘tools’ of sociological analysis.

Course Textbook


Course Policies

1. Mobile phones are strictly prohibited in class.
2. Students are held responsible for all the material presented in the classroom, even during their absence. Exams usually contain questions whose answers are not in the textbook but were rather explained in the classroom discussions.
3. You are strongly encouraged to participate in the discussions during classes and indeed beyond the classroom. It will make the classes more interesting and vibrant, and it helps in learning and understanding sociology.
4. Students are expected to do their readings on weekly basis and to come to class prepared.
5. You should have a sense of responsibility. Class attendance is required and assessed (10%). If you don’t attend for more than fifth of the time of the course you will be dropped automatically without notification.
6. Students are expected to be punctual in coming to class. You will be marked absent if you arrive more than five minutes late.
7. Food is not allowed in the classroom. Water or coffee are permitted.
8. Academic integrity is taken very seriously. Any violation of academic integrity will NOT be tolerated and will result in serious repercussions. Please refer to AUB policies and procedures on academic integrity: http://pnp.aub.lb/university/handbook/158010044.html
9. Students caught cheating on an exam will receive an irreversible grade of zero.

Grading System

1. 10% Class participation (not just physical attendance)
2. 15% Presentation
3. 35% Mid-term
4. 40% Final Exam
Topics Covered

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Presentation

Each student will be assigned a reading to prepare and present in class. The readings will serve as a reference to discuss a certain topic from a sociological perspective. For their presentations, students are expected to research the topic at hand and add new material to what the assigned article is offering. Students are encouraged to bring in examples and case studies from the Arab region in order to adjust for the eurocentrism of the textbook. Students are also invited to critically reflect on the readings and to link their presentation topic to the broader discussions in the chapter. Presentations should be around 10-15 minutes maximum, it should be interesting and interactive. The use of audio or visual aid is welcomed.

AUB Disability Policy

‘AUB strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers due to a disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please inform me immediately so that we can privately discuss options. In order to help establish reasonable accommodations and facilitate a smooth accommodations process, you are encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Office: accessibility@aub.edu.lb; +961-1-350000, x3246; West Hall, 314’.

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