

SENIOR CAPSTONE IN SOCIOLOGY (SOC 489) (1 credit)
Spring 2011 Minard 135 Monday, 1:00 – 1:50 p.m.

General Information:

Instructor: Dr. Gary A. Goreham

Office: 226 Barry Hall

Phone: 701-231-7637

e-mail: gary.goreham@ndsu.edu

Office Hours: 10:30-12:00 Monday/Wednesday (or by appointment)

Course Objectives:

The senior capstone course provides sociology majors an opportunity to reflect on their major as their attention turns toward their post-baccalaureate future. It is designed to help students summarize and integrate their course work, apply their emerging sociological perspective to real world events, and prepare for future careers, jobs, and/or graduate work.

Course Structure:

The class is designed as a seminar, so active participation by students is required. The course is organized around these three major themes: (1) summarizing and integrating past, present, and future course work in the sociology major; (2) apply the sociological perspective to real world issues; and (3) preparing for the future. Emphasis will be place on oral and written communication, teamwork, organizational skills, and attention to detail – all qualities necessary for successful careers in sociology-related fields.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe and apply the major theoretical approaches used in sociology.
2. Describe and apply key findings from sociological research.
3. Explain the “sociological imagination” and illustrate how it can be used in social policy, social action, and social ethics.
4. List career fields that employ sociology majors.
5. Display their own completed resume that could be provided to a prospective employer.
6. Prepare for an interview with a prospective employer.
7. List their own career goals and how lifelong education fits with those goals.

Course Materials:

Selected materials will distributed in class or made available on BlackBoard.

Disabilities Policy: *Any students who need special accommodations for learning or who have special needs are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor as soon as possible.*

Academic Honesty: *All work in this course must be completed in a manner consistent with NDSU University Senate Policy, Section 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct.*
<http://www.ndsu.nodak.edu/policy/335.htm>

Assignments:

1. Portfolio. The portfolio is a work-in-progress, and will be of value to you for years to come.
2. Homework assignments. All assignments must be typed or word processed. They are due at class time on the assigned date. Assignments will be docked one point per day they are late; weekends are counted as one day.
3. In-class exercises. Remember – classroom participation is nearly **one-half** of your grade!

Grading:

12 assignments @ 10 points each	120 points
Final portfolio	30 points
Class participation @ 10 points/class	<u>120 points</u>
TOTAL	270 points

Grading Rubric:

The weekly assignments will be grading using the following rubric.

Answered the questions or completed the activities the assignment	4 points
Reflective writing that shows thought and effort	4 point
Spelling, grammar, references	2 points
TOTAL	10 points

Course outline:

Jan. 17	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday – NO CLASS
<i>I. SUMMARIZING AND INTEGRATING THE MAJOR</i>	
Jan. 24	<p>Topic: Your major: An overview.</p> <p>Assignments: Assignment 1</p> <p>Reading assignments: Burawoy, Michael. 2005. “For public sociology.” <i>American Sociological Review</i> 70(1): 4-28. (Also see Michael Burawoy on “Public Sociology” at http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=7510336432593550855)</p>
Jan. 31	<p>Topic: Sociological theories.</p> <p>Assignments: Assignment 3</p> <p>Reading assignments: None.</p>
Feb. 7	<p>Topic: Sociological findings.</p> <p>Assignments: Assignment 4</p> <p>Reading assignments: Greenwood, Davydd J. and William Foote Whyte. 1993. “Participatory action research as a process and a goal.” <i>Human Relations</i> 46(2): 175-192.</p>
<i>II. LIVING SOCIOLOGICALLY</i>	
Feb. 14	<p>Topic: Thinking sociologically.</p> <p>Assignments: Assignment 6</p> <p>Reading assignments: None.</p>
Feb. 21	Presidents Holiday – NO CLASS
Feb. 28	<p>Topic: Social policy and sociology.</p> <p>Assignments: Assignment 7</p> <p>Reading assignments: Gaventa, John. 2004. “Participatory development or participatory democracy? Linking participatory approaches to policy and governance.” <i>Participatory Learning and Action</i> 50(October): 150-159.</p>

Mar. 7	<p>Topic: Social action and sociology.</p> <hr/> <p>Assignments: Assignment 8</p> <p>Reading assignments: Freire, Paulo. 1970. "Cultural action and conscientization." <i>Harvard Educational Review</i> 40(3): 452-477.</p>
Mar. 14	Spring Break – NO CLASS
Mar. 21	<p>Topic: Social ethics and sociology.</p> <hr/> <p>Assignments: Assignment 9</p> <p>Reading assignments: Feagin, Joe R. "Social justice and sociology: agendas for the 21st century." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 66(1): 1-20.</p> <p>American Sociological Association Code of Ethics. http://www.asanet.org/cs/root/leftnav/ethics/code_of_ethics_table_of_contents</p>
III. YOUR CAREER AS A SOCIOLOGIST	
Mar. 28	<p>Topic: Careers in sociology.</p> <hr/> <p>Assignments: Assignment 10</p> <p>Reading assignments: "Careers in Sociology" http://www.asanet.org/cs/root/leftnav/careers_and_jobs/careers_in_sociology "What are they doing with a BA in Sociology?" http://www.asanet.org/galleries/Research/ASAResearchBrief_revised.pdf</p>
Apr. 4	<p>Topic: Interview of an employer; Self-exploration</p> <hr/> <p>Assignments: Assignment 11 AND Assignment 12</p> <p>Reading assignments: None.</p>
Apr. 11	<p>Topic: Resume writing.</p> <hr/> <p>Assignments: Assignment 13</p> <p>Reading assignments: None.</p>
Apr. 18	<p>Topic: Interviewing for a job.</p>

	<p><i>Assignments:</i> Assignment 14</p> <p><i>Reading assignments:</i> None.</p>
Apr. 25	Spring Holiday – NO CLASS
May 2	<p><i>Topic:</i> Continuing and lifelong education.</p> <p><i>Assignments:</i> Assignment 15</p> <p><i>Reading assignments:</i> None.</p>
May 9	<i>Assignments:</i> Turn in completed portfolio.

ASSIGNMENTS

I. SUMMARIZING AND INTEGRATING YOUR MAJOR

A. Your Major: An Overview (Assignment 1)

By the conclusion of this course, you should have a professional portfolio that demonstrates what you have learned and who you are as a sociologist. Assignment 1 is designed to get you started on this portfolio. Subsequent assignments will add to this.

For Assignment 1, create the structure of your portfolio. Obtain a ring binder. Create a cover page for the outside and/or inside of the binder. Develop dividers that follow the outline of the course (i.e., three major parts, and multiple subsections within each part—see list of topics above).

For the first section (“Your major: An overview), list all of the courses you’ve taken as part of your sociology major, the courses you are currently taking, and any courses you still plan to take. Under the title of each course, type the course description from the university catalog. Also, in this subsection, include as many syllabi as you still have from the courses you have taken.

Keep a hard copy of all of the subsequent assignments and include them in your portfolio as we progress. You will hand-in your portfolio at the end of the semester, and it should include these assignments.

B. Sociological Theories (Assignment 3)

Concepts are connected with theories. Pick one course at the 200/300/400 level in sociology (exclusive of theory and research methods courses). (This should be a different course from the courses used in section B above.) List the course title. Identify two theoretical perspectives (grand theories and/or middle range theories) discussed in this course. Explain each theory in a separate paragraph. Then, apply each theory to a single event in your life or in the news. Discuss how the theories give you different views of the same event.

D. Sociological Findings (Assignment 4)

Concepts and theories are of little value unless they fit reality. Pick two courses at the 200/300/400 level in sociology (exclusive of theory and research methods courses). List the course titles. For each course, identify two famous research studies. Describe the studies in a paragraph or two. (HINT: It will help to include a copy of the refereed research journal articles.) In a separate paragraph for each study, indicate how findings of each study may be used to understand a life event or a news event.

II. LIVING SOCIOLOGICALLY

A. Thinking sociologically (Assignment 6)

In this part of the course, we will try our hands at thinking sociologically in a variety of different topic areas. Imagine that you are a sociology instructor writing an assignment asking students to think sociologically. Identify at least five key questions that you would want your students to address as they think sociologically about a topic. Why are each of these questions sociologically important?

B. Social policy and sociology (Assignment 7)

Identify a social problem from a news article. Imagine that a group of state legislators asked for your expertise as a sociologist to better understand this issue. First, describe the issue in a paragraph or two. Second, attempt to help these legislators by applying your key questions from Assignment 7 above to the issue (one or two paragraphs per question).

C. Social action and sociology (Assignment 8)

Identify a social problem from a news article, your internship, work, or co-op experience, or reading. Assume that you wish to get involved in the *praxis* of this issue. First, describe the issue in a paragraph or two. Second, detail some of the specific steps you would use to involve yourself and others as you address the social problem (e.g., organizing, political action, funding, development, etc.). Use about a paragraph per step.

E. Social ethics and sociology (Assignment 9)

What do you believe are some of the core values of the discipline of sociology? Define and describe each of these values. Why do you believe these are the discipline's key values? Where does adherence to these core values place sociology politically or ideologically? Do you "buy" these core values? Why or why not? How are these values evident in the *praxis* of sociology? How are they evident in the ethical principles used in sociological research?

III. YOUR CAREER AS A SOCIOLOGIST

A. Careers in Sociology (Assignment 10)

Students and prospective students interested in sociology often ask what kinds of jobs they could get with a sociology major. Imagine that you are advising sociology majors about to engage on a job hunt. List at least 10 specific job titles for them to consider. (HINT: Look at the Classifieds from a couple of newspapers.) For each job title, indicate in one or two sentences how a background in sociology would be of use in the job.

B. Interview of an Employer (Assignment 11)

Choose a person who is at least 15 years older than you to be interviewed. The person you choose should be defined by you and others as successful in their career. You may choose to interview someone in your general chosen field of study or someone who is in an unrelated field (e.g., school teacher or business person). Professors and instructors are exempt from being interviewed. Try to find someone off campus. Some interview questions could include:

(1.) Find out how long they have been employed in their present position. What jobs did they have previous to this one?

(2.) What is their educational background? How did they apply their educational background to their career? If they were to attend college again (if they attended), what would they major in? What courses (particularly sociology courses) did they find most useful to their job?

(3.) How old were they when they figured out that this was the career they wished to settle on?

(4.) Find out what they perceive to be the qualities that led them to be successful in their career. What qualities have they seen in people who were “recipes for failure” in the work world?

(5.) If they were to give one piece of advice for people coming out of college today, what advice would they give?

(6.) Bring your interviews to the next class period and be prepared to share them.

C. Self-exploration (Assignment 12):

Discuss what type of career you wish to pursue and what type of job you would like to be doing 10 years from now. Describe the background and experiences you will need to do this distant job. Discuss why this job interests you, and why your sociological background would be of interest to someone hiring you. Draw a timeline starting with your age and today’s date, and ending with your age and the date of your retirement. List significant events you anticipate will happen between those two dates (e.g., marriage, children, purchase of home, job or career changes, investments, additional education, etc.).

D. Resume Writing (Assignment 13):

Use the information provided by Career Services (211 Ceres Hall) and any other information you may have available. Prepare a resume that could be sent to a prospective employer. Bring it to class and be prepared to talk about how you obtained information and the challenges you faced in preparing the resume.

E. Interviewing for a Job (Assignment 14):

(1) Collect a set of questions from the internet that you anticipate would be asked during a job interview. Type a set of notes that could be used as answers to each of these questions.

(2) Invite someone (preferably a business or professional employer) to conduct a job interview with you. He/she may or may not use the questions you prepared. Record or video the interview.

(3) Watch and critique the interview with a friend. What did you do well? What could be improved?

(4) Turn in: (a) your list of questions and answers; (b) information on the interview (name, date, place); and (c) the interview critique.

F. Continuing and Lifelong Education (Assignment 15):

Given your career goals, what education and training will you need?

(1) If you anticipate a graduate degree (e.g., M.S. or Ph.D.), what will be the academic discipline? When will you go? What are the advantages and disadvantages of applying for a graduate program immediately after you complete your B.S. compared with working for a few years and then applying? Where will you apply? What are the steps in making application, including obtaining references?

(2) What other forms of education and training will you seek (e.g., certificate programs, CEUs for seminars and workshops, apprenticeships, internships, etc.)? How,

when, and where will you apply for these?

(3) What on-the-job training or employer training programs do you anticipate?

(4) To what other lifelong education strategies are you committed (e.g., reading, travel, study groups, learning a language, etc.)?

G. Portfolio:

The final version of your portfolio is due. This should include all past assignments (both original AND corrected versions).