This course is an introduction to the discipline of sociology. It will offer you an overview of the field with a focus on society in the United States and Los Angeles, in particular. It will also have a focus on social problems. In this way, the course material will not only attempt to explain society, but also to search for methods to improve or change society. While the course serves as an introduction to the concepts, theories and perspectives of sociology, the specific **objectives of this course** are to:

1. identify the underlying characteristics of sociological analysis and distinguish a sociological perspective from other perspectives—that is, to think "sociologically";
2. distinguish between anecdotal evidence and systematic analysis;
3. compare and contrast differing theoretical paradigms in sociology—particularly functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism;
4. recognize and employ theory in social analysis;
5. utilize the sociological imagination in order to place your experiences in the larger social context;
6. propose sociologically informed solutions to social issues; and most importantly
7. **to encourage critical thinking about what we see, hear, read and write.**

The purpose of this course is to expand our horizons and share thoughts and ideas; education is an interactional process. There is no one right answer to some of the questions we will discuss in this course. So it benefits us all to engage in discussion with and listen to AND RESPECT all members of the class. If you show disrespect to other students you will be asked to leave the class.

The course is an opportunity to explore different ideas put forth in lectures, in the readings, and in information you bring to the course. Thus, if you have an opinion that differs from that expressed in lecture or in the readings, bring it up so that we can all discuss it. Unlike other courses, lectures are rare and discussions are typical. So don't expect direct answers.

The following will determine **your grade in the course**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quizzes (4)</strong></td>
<td>25 questions (approximately 30 minutes); multiple choice; lowest quiz score dropped; quizzes might be taken in small groups; <strong>no make-up quizzes</strong></td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Midterm Exam</strong></td>
<td>Multiple choice and written analysis (essay and/or short answer questions); <strong>make-up policy detailed below</strong></td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>In-Class Group Presentations or Individual Essays</strong></td>
<td>Various topics; details to be distributed later</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Final Exam</strong></td>
<td>Cumulative; multiple choice and written analysis; 2 hours</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td>100%</td>
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Final grades will be assigned based upon the following cumulative points: A=100-90%, B=89-80%, C=79-70%, D=69-60%, F= below 60%.
**Readings:** You must come prepared to discuss the readings that have been assigned for that day; you are each responsible for the reading material and are EXPECTED to teach the material to each other. Some reading will not be addressed in class, but you are still responsible for its content and understanding.

**Participation:** Students are EXPECTED to participate in class. Only those students who consistently ask questions, offer answers, and give relevant input into class AND group discussion will be "given the benefit of the doubt" if they are on the border (within 1%) between letter grades.

**Attendance:** Attendance is required. 2 or more consecutive absences without contacting the instructor will likely result in you being dropped from the class. Students are expected to be present each day, on time, for the entire class period. Attendance will be recorded throughout the semester. Merely attending class, however, does NOT guarantee any particular grade in the course.

**Missed Quizzes:** If you miss a quiz, you will be given a zero (0) for that quiz. This includes coming to the class after the quiz has been started. **NO MAKE-UP QUIZZES WILL BE GIVEN.** Your lowest quiz score is dropped when calculating your final grade.

**Missed Exams:** If you miss an exam, you must contact me within 2 hours of the time of the exam. You must also take the exam within the next 2 days (5% deduction to your grade for EACH DAY) AND provide me with a serious, verifiable excuse (i.e., a doctor's note, funeral notice) or you will be given a zero. If you know you will miss an exam, come see me to arrange taking it EARLY.

**Computers:** I strongly encourage you to make use of the computers on campus or at home. Information for the course is often made available on the course web page. Some required reading is ONLY available via the web. If you do not have access to this, please inform the instructor.

**Phones and Pagers:** The classroom is a “cell free” environment. **Turn phones and pagers off.**

**Collaborative Learning:** We will rely heavily on collaborative learning in this class. Each student is expected to significantly contribute to class and small group discussions. I also strongly encourage you to study together and to get to know one another. On some assignments, you will be expected to work together and submit joint work. Each student is expected to significantly contribute to the final product.

**Academic Honesty:** All students are expected to do their own work and, when collaborating with others, to contribute to the final product. All forms of cheating and plagiarism are absolutely forbidden and can result in a failing grade for that particular assignment or test, and/or for the course. The following are all violations of academic honesty:

- Copying answers from another student
- Turning in assignments which are not the student’s own work
- Using words or even ideas which are not the student’s own without properly acknowledging the source (this is plagiarism)
- Using tools or assistance without prior permission from the instructor while taking exams.

**Required Reading:** The required readings for this course are found in:

2. **Online (Web-based) Readings**, accessible through the course web page,
3. **Additional readings may be assigned.**

Items 1 & 2 are available at the SMC bookstore **AND at “A and R Texts”** (across Pico; 310-314-4361).

**On reserve at the library**, you will find copies of the text and the Study Guide Plus. If you do not have web access, please see me as the web readings are NOT on reserve.