

**Selected Topics in Sociology: Intercultural relations, education and community engagement in
sociological practice
SOC 4396
University of Texas at Dallas
Summer 2018**

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Course Description

Globalization has led to an increased awareness of diverse social worlds. While differences are often highlighted, there are many social conditions, issues and interactional processes that span geographic boundaries. This course focuses on the similarities across societies, as well as the unique aspects of social life influenced by cultural, economic and political factors. Students will have the opportunity to gain knowledge of sociological concepts, theories and processes that guide program development and social policy focused on improved education, community development, and economic independence. A service learning component will allow students to apply sociological knowledge to projects aimed at improving youth and community education. The setting of a small Dominican Republic community permits for a comparison of key cultural, political and social characteristics that shape local economic opportunities and societal conditions.

Course Objectives

- Students will develop sociological knowledge of the role culture, politics and economic conditions play in shaping social structure and social conditions across national and international geographic regions. Student understanding of concepts, theories and relevant research will be assessed through writing assignments.
- Students will gain insight about key aspects of youth and community education through relevant sociological research and cases in practice. Assessment of student knowledge and understanding will be based on case projects.
- Students will gain first-hand experience conducting community and educational projects in a study abroad program. Student ability to apply relevant literature and theory will be assessed through participation in youth education and community health programs, as well as through a research paper, field notes, and class presentation.

Required Texts

The Sociology of Community Connections, John G. Bruhn (2011, 2nd edition). Springer.

Additional required readings available on eLearning.

**You will be responsible for materials covered in all of these sources.*

Students will also be required to keep a travel journal/notebook documenting field assignments and reflection. The journal/notebook must be carried during all travels.

Requirements

- Attendance for all class sessions, prior to and following the field trip, are required.
- Two **4-5 page** case responses that specifically address community development. The cases will require critical assessment of key issues and examination of the role education and culture play in community engagement and development (**10%** of your course grade).
- Participation in **service learning project** during an 8-day field trip to Dominican Republic (**40%** of your course grade).
- Field notes collected during the service learning project (**20%** of your grade).
- A **10-12 page research paper** that draws on sociological theory and research to examine a community issue such as general education, health, family, or economic opportunity using field notes and observations from assigned service learning project. The paper will comprise **20%** of your course grade.
- In class **research paper presentation** (**10%** of your course grade).

Course Evaluation/Grading

Evaluation of the student will be based upon performance on examinations, class participation, attendance and a term paper. The grade will be determined on a percentage of the total points earned. If the student earns 93% of total points or more, the grade will be an A; 90% - 92% will be an A-; 87% - 89% = B+; 83% - 86% = B; 80% - 82 % = B-; 77% - 79% = C+; 73% - 76% = C; 70% - 72% = C-; 69% or below = F.

General Policies

- Off-campus Instruction and Course Activities

Off-campus, out-of-state, foreign instruction/travel, and course-related field trip activities are subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities.

Detailed information regarding this policy, in accordance to *Texas Education Code*, Section 51.950, can be accessed at the UT Dallas Policy Navigator, <http://policy.utdallas.edu/utdbp3023>, and at <http://www.utdallas.edu/administration/insurance/travel>. Additional information is available from the office of the school dean.

For information regarding UT Dallas policy on the following topics go to: <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

- Student Conduct & Discipline
- Academic Integrity
- Email Use
- Withdrawal from Class
- Student Grievance Procedures
- Incomplete Grade Policy
- Disability Services
- Religious Holy Days

Tentative Course Outline

Class meetings held prior to travel

May 10, 2018
10:00am – 2:00pm

Sociology of Culture
Bruhn – Chapters 1 & 10
Vaisey – What People Want: Rethinking poverty, culture, and educational attainment (eLearning)
Aber & Small – Citizen or Subordinate: Permutations of belonging in the United States and the Dominican Republic (eLearning)

May 14, 2018
10:00am – 2:00pm

Sociology of Community
Bruhn – Chapter 6 & 7 (pp. 143-153)
Totikidis & Prilleltensky - Engaging community in a cycle of Praxis: Multicultural perspectives on personal, relational and collective wellness (eLearning)
Sanchez-Ancochea – Development Trajectories and New Comparative Advantages: Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic under Globalization (eLearning)
Case response 1

May 21, 2018
10:00am – 2:00pm

Education and Sociological Practice
Fritz - Including Sociological Practice: A global perspective and the U.S. case (eLearning)
Suiter – Community health needs assessment and action planning in seven Dominican bateyes (eLearning)
Salusky – The Meaning of Motherhood: Adolescent childbearing and its Significance for Poor Dominican Females of Haitian Descent (eLearning)
Case response 2

Sessions completed during trip to Dominican Republic

May 28, 2018

Depart for Dominican Republic
Arrive afternoon – country orientation & safety overview
Education session - local culture

May 29, 2018 -
June 2, 2018

Morning: Begin service learning project
Afternoon: continue with project
Evening: reflect, discuss events as a group, and draw connections between the day's work and relevant global issues

June 3, 2018

Explore a mangrove forest by boat with local tour guide

June 4, 2018

Depart for U.S.

Class meetings following travel

June 8, 2018
10:00 – 2:00pm

One-on-one meetings for paper requirements

June 15, 2018
10:00am – 2:00pm

Final Project Due and Presentations
(open forum for students and faculty)