

Individual In Society
SYP 3000
Spring 2008

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Tues. 6:25-9:05 (Office Hours: T, 3:30-5:30)
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Course Description

What is the individual? What is the individual's relationship to social organization and social relations? How is the individual constituted or made through social relations? What possibilities and choices are available for the individual within social systems that are unequal and hierarchical? These are the questions that this course explores. People who study these subjects are generally known as *social scientists*; in the course we will explore what it means to be *social* and why the study of it is conducted through the practices and terminology of *science*.

Much of the way that we conceive of the relationship between the individual and society comes from Western notions of the self: as autonomous, isolated, able to make decisions for oneself and responsible for one's own actions. We will be examining how the self constructs itself out of cultural and social materials, and how society is constructed through the interactions of multiple individual selves.

Expectations: By the end of this course, you will be expected to be able to:

- understand Western notions of the autonomous self and alternative notions of the self embedded in social relations;
- see how people are constantly engaged in interpreting experience and how interpretation varies according to the frame;
- understand how one's position (gendered, racial, age, class) within unequal societies allows for different kinds of expression of selfhood;
- carry out analysis in order to examine how this happens in everyday life.
- You are responsible for completing the reading, turning in assignments on time, keeping your eyes on your paper during quizzes and participating in class discussion. Having a poor attendance record, turning in late assignments, cheating, disrupting or disrespecting the classroom (talking during lecture or discussion, PMing, sleeping, or otherwise just being rude), are all grounds for adjusting your grade downward. I reserve the right to adjust your final grade by as much as 1 full letter grade if you fail to comply with these basic expectations. Late assignments and made up exams will NOT be allowed except under extreme circumstances and regardless of the circumstances will automatically result in a penalty of a full letter grade deduction. Also, I take plagiarism very seriously. The university wide policy on plagiarism will be enforced.

****NOTE:** I will not accept emailed or handwritten assignments. You must type your work and print out a hard copy to be turned in on the day it is due.

Text: **Confessions of an Economic Hit Man**. John Perkins. Plume publishes paperback edition. Any edition will do. Cheap used.

Reading Packet available from the Sociology/Anthropology Department.

Website: <http://www.trinity.edu/%7Emkearl/>. This website is your friend. Also, check out www.fiu.edu/~grenierg for course info.

Grading

Your class grade will be determined by three elements: 1) Class participation and attendance (100 points); 2) Weekly quizzes on the readings scheduled for that day (100 points) (12 quizzes; drop lowest 2 grades); 3) Essays on Confessions of an Economic Hit Man (100x2 points).

Class participation and attendance: Attendance is necessary for this course. I expect you to take notes on what is presented in the class and on the discussions that take place. I hope to see evidence of this in your class participation. If you attend every class and complete your assignments on time, you will ace the course. Perfect attendance will gain you **100 points**. You will receive 90 points for up to 2 absences. Four absences will gain you no more than 80 points. More than four absences and your fate is entirely in my hands. To be excused, an absence must be explained in writing, with the reason clearly laid out. Medical reasons must have doctor's explanation.

Weekly Quizzes: Each week (starting January 22) you will have a set of reading to complete. Weekly Quizzes will be graded and each will be worth 10 points. There are 12 sets of packet readings. Therefore, you will be able to drop (or ignore) 2 of the weekly set of questions. In other words, you will be graded on 10 quizzes, for a possible total of **100 points**. Bring a pencil to class. These a bubble quizzes this time around.

Essays: Twice during the semester you will be given a question/prompt to guide you in writing an essay focusing on the text, Confessions of an Economic Hit Man. Each essay will be around 5 pages and **each** will contribute up to **100 points** of your total grade. You will use the perspectives that you have picked up from the readings and the class discussions as you address the prompt question. Format will be discussed in class. **(Due April 8...NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED. REPITO—NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED)**

There are **400 points** possible for the course. To calculate your final grade, divide your total number of points by 400 and find the percentage on this scale:

Grading Scale:

93-100% - A	80-82% - B-	67-69% - D+
90-92% - A-	77-79% - C+	63-66% - D
87-89% - B+	73-76% - C	60-62% - D-
83-86% - B	70-72% - C-	Below 60% - E

Schedule of Themes and Discussion Topics

Jan. 8 Introduction to Course: What is Sociology? What does it Mean to be Human?

Jan. 15 The Creation of the Individual and Individualism in the West

- **Reading: Grenier Notes on "The Day the Universe Changed"**
www.fiu.edu/~grenierg

Also: Use this Website to orient your thinking.

<http://www.trinity.edu/%7Emkearl/>

Jan. 22 The (Sometimes Invisible) Power of Society

- 1) The Promise: C. Wright Mills
- 2) Human Societies: Chapter 1 and 2 (Lenski, et. al.)
- 3) Body Ritual Among the Nacirema —(Miner)

First Quiz

- Jan. 29** **How Nature Leads to Nurture**
- 4) What Does It Mean to be Human? (Charon)
 - 5) A Natural Experiment of History (Diamond)
 - 6) The Origins of the Sacred Cow (Harris)
- Feb. 5** **The Creation of the Individual**
- 7) The Mind (Wilson)
 - 8) How is Society Possible (Charon)
 - 9) Socialization and Self—(Landis)
- Feb. 12** **Individualism and Modernity**
- 10) Modernity-Chapter 5 (Kivisto)
 - 11) The Consequences of Modernity: Chapter 1 (Giddens)
 - 12) Modernity and Self Identity—Introduction (Giddens)
 - 13) Individualism—(Kivisto)
- Feb. 19** **The Individual in Organizations**
- 14) Groups and Organizations—Chapter 5 (Macionis)
- Due: First Essay on Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*
- Feb. 26** **Isolated and Social: The Individual and the Avatar**
- 15) The Internet Readings—(Macionis)
 - 16) Synthetic Worlds—(Castronova)
 - 17) Stolle’s Tower—Part Three of Play Money, (Dibbell)
 - 18) Psychology of Massively Multi-User Online Role -Playing Games—(Yee)
 - 19) Gender Identities at Play: Case Studies of Two Women Playing Morrowind—(Hayes)
- March 4** **Creating the “Other” or Vice Versa**
- 20) Why can’t Everyone be Like Us? (Charon)
 - 21) Egypt: Faith, Gender and Class (Schneider/Silverman)
- March 11** **Gender Identities and the Individual**
- 22) Sexuality—Chapter 7 (Maciones)
 - 23) Becoming “Boys,” “Men,” “Guys,” and “Dudes”
 - 24) Beauty and the Beast of Advertising (Kilbourne)
 - 25) The Influence of Gender Socialization in Eating Disorders (Taub and McLorg)
- March 18** **Spring Break**
- March 25** **The Individual and Deviance: Deviant Compared to What?**
- 26) The Normal and the Pathological—(Durkheim)
 - 27) On the Sociology of Deviance—(Erikson)
 - 28) Social Structure and Anomie—(Merton)
 - 29) The Cochon and the Hombre-Hombre in Nicaragua—(Lancaster)
 - 30) Women in Lesotho and the (Western) Construction of Homophobia—(Kendall)
 - 31) Paraphilias Across Cultures—(Bhugra)
 - 32) Issue 5—Should Same-Sex Marriages be Legally Recognized?
 - 33) Issue 6—Is the Decline of the Traditional Family a National Crisis?
- April 1** **Racial and Ethnic Identities and the Individual**
- 34) A Question of Color (Winn)

- 35) The Black Male in Public (Anderson)
- 36) Issue 9—Has Affirmative Action Outlived Its Usefulness?

Due: Second Essay on Confessions of an Economic Hit Man

April 8

American Individualism

- 37) Popular Individualism (Gans)
- 38) Why are People Unequal in Society (Charon)
- 39) Why do we believe what we do? (Charon)

April 15

The Individual and Global Forces

- 40) Jihad vs. McWorld: Introduction (Barber)
- 41) The Hispanic Challenge (Huntington)
- 43) Issue 2—Is Third World Immigration a Threat to America's Way of Life?
- 42) Does the Individual Really Make a Difference? (Charon)

April 21

Finals Week Begins