

# Sociology 108x: Introduction to Global Sociology

## CONTENTS

- 1 What is this course about?
- 2 What can I expect from this MOOC?
- 3 How will I be evaluated?
- 4 What if I have a problem?
- 5 There is a lot of sensitive stuff here! How will we manage it?
- 6 Timeline and Organization

## I. WHAT IS THIS COURSE ABOUT?

It has become cliché to say that we live in a globally interconnected world, but what exactly does that mean? This course will help you address this question by developing your sociological imagination. And you might be surprised to know that global sociology begins with *you*, in *your* specific time and place, in *your* particular social and economic circumstances.

This course begins from the premise that the thousands of you registered for this course, like the billions of our siblings who share this planet with us, already know a great deal about your own social worlds. Indeed, we are all perfectly socialized into our everyday worlds. We know the rules, even when we bend or break them. We conform, resist, or rage silently, depending on our own personal aims in any given situation.

But often, we find ourselves trapped in those worlds, lacking the broader perspective that would help us understand how our own everyday experiences both affect and are affected by social forces that we can't necessarily see. Structures like class, race, nation, gender, and sexuality, to name just a few, are all around us, but these structures are so seamlessly woven into our everyday worlds that we require a new

perspective to see them. Sociology exposes the social origin of our everyday problems, and in so doing, reveals to us our interconnection to a global social world that is complex, but knowable.

By beginning with you, with me, and the community we are about to create together, we are building upon a tradition of bottom-up knowledge in sociology. Knowledge produced by everyday people, especially from those located in marginal positions in our shared global political economy, can often see the social world more clearly than those who are more privileged. Throughout this course, we will return to that idea, sharing knowledge of our own social worlds with one another through discussion and peer-to-peer assignments, and persistently asking who might be left out of our considerations.

It's a tall order to take on all these big topics in one class, however massive and however open, so we have focused this course on a single object that we all share: clothes. The global garment industry is fueled by global capital and cheap labor, and has, for at least two centuries, offered us a multilayered view of global social structures. By tapping into the dynamic history and continuously evolving present of garment production, we will learn to "see" sociologically, test various theories of inequality, and generate new questions of the social world that we all share.

One warning before we begin, though: once you begin to "see" sociologically, there is no going back! It will be impossible to take anything at face value again!

So, check out the tag on your garment to see where it was made. Let's start to see ourselves in the world in a whole new way.

[\[back to top\]](#)

## II. WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM THIS MOOC?

Enough with the high-level bird's eye view stuff, right? Is this MOOC really worth taking time out of your busy life for?

For starters, this is NOT a filmed classroom. This is a class designed from the ground up, specifically for this platform, using every available creative resource.

### *Videos*

There are five types of video content integrated into the courseware, which make up the bulk of the course content that you will be invited to learn from:

- 1 Short lecture videos on a specific topic or idea, often filmed in special locations
- 2 One-on-one interviews with experts or other special guests who speak from their own experience about the topic for the week.
- 3 Award-winning documentary films. There are two: *China Blue* and *Made in L.A.* These films will appear in Weeks 4 & 5, and in Week 7, respectively.
- 4 Case Studies provide an in-depth view of a specific current event or phenomena related to the week's content. You will find these have a distinctive presentation style. The three case studies in this course were designed, researched, and filmed with SOC108X's Course Assistant, Kalina Yingnan Deng.
- 5 One-on-one interviews with everyday people living in the communities we filmed in for the course. See the Interviews tab on the course website for more information about these unique interviews. A montage of these interviews helps to launch Week 2.

### *Graded & Ungraded Activities*

There are five instruments set up to facilitate your learning, some graded, and some not:

- 1 Comprehension Exercises (CEs) and Quizzes appear throughout the course, usually after video content or after a section of readings and videos. These exercises highlight what the most important points are. The answers provided to

you when you “show answer” are extensive explanations meant to deepen your understanding, so please take time to read them even if you got the answer right.

2

3 CEs are ungraded, and are a way of offering you an opportunity to firm up your learning as soon as you have watched or read something. CE’s often come in two parts. Part 1 contains multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank or other assessments with clear answers, and Part 2 contains one or more open-ended prompts, similar to short answers discussed below.

4

5 Quizzes are graded, and are essentially the same as CEs in form and content.

6

7 Short Answers (with rubric) are opportunities to answer open-ended prompts, and appear every week that there is a quiz. Short answers are graded using a self-assessment rubric that will allow you to understand the most valuable aspects of writing an evidence-based answer. You will almost always have to reference one or more of the required readings for the week to complete these.

8

9 Discussion Questions prompt you to discuss with one another the concepts introduced in class. Often, you will commandeer examples from your own personal experience in your home country to participate in discussions. While your posts will not be graded, you must self-report your participation at the end of each week in a tool labeled Forum Participation. If you post two or more times in a week, you receive full credit. Your participation in discussion forums forms the basis of your participation grade, to be specified below.

10

11 Thinkpiece Assignments (with Rubric) invite you to answer a specific question based on the content provided, and ask you to make an argument and provide evidence from the readings. The answers you come up with can range from a few sentences to a paragraph or two. You will be provided with a rubric to facilitate evaluation of your own work and deepen your understanding of the content as well as the requirements of clear social scientific writing.

12

13 Thinkpiece Assignments are graded, and are otherwise similar in form and content to Thinkpieces.

14

15 Peer-assessments (with Rubric) ask you to research a specific question in a way that emerges from your understanding of the class materials. You will grade the essays of three of your peers and then in turn have your essay graded by three others. We will have two peer assessments over the course of ten weeks, one of which is the equivalent of a final paper.

16

17 Peer-Assessments are graded and comprise the largest component of your overall grade.

18

**NOTE:** Units marked in the courseware as “Quiz,” “Short Answer” or “Assignment” are *required* for course completion. All other activities are ungraded and optional.

### *Readings*

There are two kinds of reading materials:

Readings are required. The courseware will link you to readings in the form of pdfs or online articles that can be freely accessed.

Additional Resources are optional. They include selected encyclopedia content provided courtesy of Credo Reference, as well as a range of other selected material. See the Additional Resources tab on the course website for more information.

[\[back to top\]](#)

### III. HOW WILL I BE EVALUATED?

The breakdown of your grade will be as follows:

10 weeks of Forum Participation (through self-assessment):

15%

5 Quizzes, graded upon submission

20%

6 Short Answers, paired with Quizzes (through self-assessment)

10%

2 Thinkpiece Assignments (through self-assessment)

15%

2 Peer-Assessment Assignments

40%

Grading:

100-93 points:

A

90-92 points:

A-

88-89 points:

B+

83-87 points:

B

80-82 points:

B-

78-79 points:

C+

73-77 points:

C

70-72 points:

C-

60-69 points

passing

Below 60

...take the course again!

[\[back to top\]](#)

### IV. WHAT IF I HAVE A PROBLEM?








If you encounter any technical problem with the course (a link or video is not working, some feature is not appearing as it should, etc.), please

post in the Discussion forum (tab at the top of the window in the course website), and put the word STAFF in the subject line to help us identify and address your issue promptly.

If you encounter a substantive issue with the material (i.e. you cannot locate where the answer is to a particular question, or you disagree with the answer given on a quiz or exercise), please post to the discussion forum with the words TA QUESTION in the subject line and a Teaching Assistant will address your concern. If the TA cannot address it, she will direct it to me.

If you want to be notified via email about responses to your posts (or other posts of interest), you can "follow" posts by clicking on the grey star at the top right of a post. (Posts you're already following will have a blue star.) You can get updates about all the threads you follow by going to the Discussion Board Home and clicking on the check box for "receive update":

#### HOW TO USE EDX DISCUSSIONS

Find discussions	 Focus in on specific topics	 Search for specific posts	 Sort by date, vote, or comments
Engage with posts	 Upvote posts and good responses	 Report Forum Misuse	 Follow posts for updates
Receive updates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 	Check this box to receive an email digest once a day notifying you about new, unread activity from posts you are following.	

You only need to do this once. After that, you will receive a daily email digest about activity from posts you are following.

We look forward to hearing from you!

[\[back to top\]](#)

V. THERE'S A LOT OF SENSITIVE STUFF HERE! HOW WILL WE MANAGE?

The potential problem of having a truly bottom-up sociology begin with you is that things get very personal very quickly. You are likely to encounter views and experiences that diverge or even conflict with your own in the course materials and in the discussion forums. I invite you to regard these conflicts as opportunities for learning. Please take a moment to make a commitment to be respectful and civil in all exchanges that take place in the context of this course. Disagreement and discussion is encouraged, but personal attacks and inflammatory language cannot be tolerated. Each of us has a personal responsibility to work together as a group to provide a welcoming environment for all who participate in this course. Before you post something, think about whether you would feel comfortable saying aloud to peers what you have written, were this a face-to-face setting. If you feel the slightest cringe thinking about this, please do not post it.

You will also notice that there is a large proportion of the graded content of this course that requires you to assess your own performance and participation. Because of the way the edX platform is structured, self-assessment tools provided the only way we could ensure that certain types of open-ended writing assignments were included in a course with thousands of students. The self-assessment tool works according to an honor policy. This means that you are more than welcome to work together with your peers whenever possible, but that you must work on quizzes, assignments, and forum participation alone, and with a sense of integrity and responsibility.

[\[back to top\]](#)

## VI. TIMELINE AND ORGANIZATION

Here a very brief preview of what to expect from each week of the course. Content for each week will be released on Mondays at 11AM EDT. This course runs for 10 weeks beginning September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014. The courseware provides a step-by-step sequence for each section of content



each week. To complete this course successfully, I expect you will need to spend about 4-5 hours a week, and there is enough material here to go into far greater depth if desired.

## Headings

Week

Topic, Special Features

Graded Assignments

Week 1

1

The Sociological Imagination

Quiz 1

Week 2

2

Social Theory, Social Research

Thinkpiece Assignment 1

Week 3

3

Conceptualizing Global Inequality

Quiz 2

Week 4

4

Theorizing Class and Capitalism

- *China Blue* (part 1)

Quiz 3

Week 5

5

The Economics of Sex and Gender

- *China Blue* (part 2)

Peer Assessment 1

(submission)

Week 6

6

Making Race and Nation in the Global Economy

Peer Assessment 1

(grading)

Week 7

7

Intersectional Power

- *Made in LA*

Quiz 5

Week 8

8

Putting Global Sociology to Work I:

Bangladeshi Garment Workers

Thinkpiece Assignment 2,

Final Peer Assessment Released

Week 9

9

Putting Global Sociology to Work II:

The Global Anti-Sweatshop Movement

Final Peer Assessment

(submission)

Week 10

10

Wrap-Up, Panning Out

Final Peer Assessment

(grading)

Due Dates:

Quizzes, Thinkpieces and Short Answer problems are due on the last day of the course, November 10. The Forum Participation assessments are due at the end of each week. Peer Assessments will have their own specific due dates (to be announced) since everyone must work on these within the same time frame.

[\[back to top\]](#)

ABOUT EDX



[About](#) [Blog](#) [News](#) [FAQs](#) [Contact](#) [Jobs](#) [Donate](#) [Sitemap](#)

[Terms of Service & Honor Code](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Accessibility Policy](#)

© edX Inc. All rights reserved except where noted. EdX, Open edX and the edX and Open EdX logos are registered trademarks or trademarks of edX Inc.

