SOCIALLY OF COMMUNITY
SOC 576
3 credit hours
Spring 2008

Class location: University Center
Class meeting times: W 2:00 – 4:50

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Office hours
Monday/Friday: 11:00 – 12:00; Wednesday: 9:00 – 10:00;
Tuesday/Thursday: by appointment.

Course Description
Sociology of Community is designed for students who are interested in critically examining the concept of community and critiquing the various theories about, practical applications of, research involved in, and possible future scenarios for community. This course will introduce students to relevant theories (both classical and contemporary), measurement issues, statistics, and research methods involved in the study of community. It will include the full range of issues/problems normally encountered in the conduct of research and application of knowledge in this area. The purpose of this course, then, is to provide each student with the broad conceptual and empirically-based perspectives that are appropriate for decision-making and problem-solving associated with community and community-related issues.

Course Objectives
• To promote interest in the scientific study of community;

• To develop skills in conceptualization and analysis of community and community-related issues;

• To develop understanding of basic elements and processes (e.g., social, economic, political, environmental, etc.) of community organization, structure, and operation through review and discussion of theories, methods, and findings of major scientific and case studies of community; and,

• To identify issues in the sociology of community needing research attention.
**Required Books**
Students are expected to purchase the following books:


**Requirements and Grading**
Part of the tradition of higher education is the need to evaluate performance. Each student’s final course grade will be based upon his/her performance on the following requirements:

**Class Attendance and Participation (10%)**
Regular and punctual class attendance and participation is expected of each student at SHSU. A record of class attendance will be kept and the final course grade will be negatively affected by excessive and/or not excusable absences. Detailed information on the class attendance policy and participation criteria will be provided during the first class meeting.

**Two Book Reviews (2 @ 10% each)**
Students will be required to write a review of two books.


- **Book #2**: Student’s choice. Must be approved by instructor.

**Group Assignment (3 @ 10% each)**
Four assignments will focus on the group process. To successfully complete each assignment will require students to come together and act as a unit. Details on each group assignment (including grading) will be given in class. To adequately complete the assignments, each student will provide an assessment of the efforts/contributions of their colleagues and themselves, as well as an evaluation of overall group success.

**Original Research Paper (20%)**
The major written assignment will be the preparation of a professionally useful paper on a topic related to the theme of the course (i.e., community, community development,
etc.). Students may take a quantitative, qualitative, or a mixed-methods approach to the research paper. Regardless of the approach, **rigor is required**. The paper must be typed, double-spaced, and fully-referenced. It is expected that the paper will lead to a presentation at a professional meeting, a journal publication, and/or a thesis/dissertation proposal. My guideline to students on the required length of the paper is straightforward: “Do as much as you must, and as little as you dare.”

**Mid-Term Examination (20%)**
There will be one in-class examination at or near mid-term. The exam will consist of several essay questions.

NOTE: The mid-term exam will not be administered after the scheduled examination date. If a student cannot take the exam on the scheduled examination date, he/she must notify the instructor and make arrangements to take the exam early.

**Grades**
Grades will be based on a total of 800 points.

- 720 – 800 = A
- 640 – 719 = B
- 560 – 639 = C
- 480 – 559 = D
- 0 – 479 = F

**Academic Dishonesty**
All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: [http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty](http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty)

**Americans with Disabilities Act**
It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.
SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/811006.pdf

**Religious Holy Days**
Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/documents/861001.pdf

**Visitors in the Classroom**
Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

**Instructor Evaluations**
Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

**Classroom Rules of Conduct**
A classroom serves as a backdrop for interaction between instructor and student and between/among students. Facts and opinions rooted in knowledge are exchanged in a classroom; opinions rooted in ignorance should not be shared.

Students are expected to act professionally at all times in the classroom. The use of cell phones and other communication devices in the classroom is prohibited. The instructor reserves the right to ask any student who is ‘text messaging’ with his/her cell phone to leave the classroom.

The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link: https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html.
COURSE TOPICS AND PROPOSED READING LIST

WEEK 1 (January 16): Introduction and overview of course

WEEK 2 (January 23): Sociology of Community or Sociology in Community ... or Both? Some Fundamentals ... and/or a Refresher


Additional readings may be announced prior to class.


WEEK 3 (January 30): In Search of Community [Group Assignment]


WEEK 4 (February 6): Theoretical Perspectives of Community: Human Ecology


WEEK 5 (February 13): Theoretical Perspectives of Community: Social Systems


Warren, Roland L. 1972. “The ‘Great Change’ in American Communities” (pp. 53-94) and “The American Community as a Social System” (pp. 135-166) in The Community in America. Chicago: Rand McNally & Co.


WEEK 6 (February 20): Theoretical Perspectives of Community: Interactional Theory


**Week 7 (February 27): Attempts at Defining Community: Mostly Past, a Few Present**


Kinneman, John A. 1947. “The Nature of Community” (pp. 3-17) and “Classification of Communities” (pp. 18-36) in *The Community in American Society*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc.


**WEEK 8 (March 5): In-Class Mid-Term Examination**

- (March 12): Spring Break – No Class -

**WEEK 9 (March 19): Community Development – Part I**


Wilkinson, Kenneth P. 1999. “The Rural Urban Variable in Community Research (pp. 37-60); “The Community and Rural Well-Being” (pp. 61-79); “Rural Community Development” (pp. 81-100) in *The Community in Rural America*. Middleton, WI: Social Ecology Press.


**WEEK 10 (March 26): Community Development – Part II**

Chapter 1 in *Land-Grant Universities and Extension into the 21st Century*; “What is a Land-Grant College.”


“Appendix 5: The 105 Land-Grant Colleges and Universities” in *Education Through Cooperative Extension*


**Smith-Lever Act (1914) and Related Pieces of Legislation - Origin, Scope, Mission, and Philosophy of Cooperative Extension**

Excerpts from *Report of the Country Life Commission and a Special Message from the President of the United States.*


“Appendix 2: Smith-Lever Act (Amended November 28, 1990)” in *Education Through Cooperative Extension*  


*The Tribal Colleges: Elementary and Secondary Education Reauthorization Act of 1994 - Origin, Scope, Mission, and Philosophy of Tribal Colleges*  
Land-Grant Status for Certain Indian Colleges (United States Senate Report)

Additional readings may be announced prior to class.

**WEEK 11 (April 2): Social Capital (A Concept Receiving Much Attention … Maybe Too Much Attention?) [Group Assignment]**


**WEEK 12 (April 9): Natural Resource/Environmental Problems and Community**


Additional readings may be announced prior to class.
WEEK 13 (April 16): Student’s Choice [Group Assignment]
Details will be provided at the beginning of the semester.

WEEK 14 (April 23): The Future of Community


WEEK 15 (April 30): Discussion of Book Reviews
Review of second book due

WEEK 16 (May 7): Individual Research Paper Presentations
Individual research paper due

NOTE: This syllabus does not constitute a contract between student and instructor. It may be necessary to change (a) the sequence of topics, (b) the readings (by adding or deleting one or more), (c) the date of the examination, and/or (d) assignment due dates. Any changes will be repeatedly announced in class.