The First Sociology Course: Suggestions for How to Represent the Discipline in an Introductory Course When There Are Too Many Topics to Cover.

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Q1. What is the point of sociology as a discipline?
Q2. What is the point of an introduction to sociology class?
Q3. What topics should be included in the course agenda to adequately represent the discipline?
Q4. How should the topics be organized?

**STEPPING BACK IN HISTORY: WHY SOCIOLOGY?**

- The industrial Revolution and social disorganization
- Call for a new science of society to solve problems
- Emphasis of the new science:
  - Society as organism
  - Social structures
  - Empiricism
  - Objectivity (Value Free)
  - Objective Possibility
Q1. THE POINT OF SOCIOLOGY

The Sociological Perspective:
Understanding of *structural basis* of human experiences, behaviors, and social conditions

(Peter L. Berger)

The Sociological Imagination:
Understanding perceived personal trouble as public issue.

*Structural solutions* to problems of the human experience

(C. Wright Mills)
Q2. THE POINT OF INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY COURSE?

LEARNING SOCIOLOGICAL REASONING
✓ Understanding the concept of social structures
✓ Social structures as basis for all human social realities
✓ Connections between individual experiences and social structures
✓ Structural solutions to solving problems
✓ Evidence-based explanations
✓ Objective possibilities

Q3A. SELECTING TOPICS FOR THE COURSE

ANTECEDENT DECISIONS:
❖ Do you want to use a Theme?
  E.g. – Stratification
    – Socialization
    – Sociological Perspective
    – Sociological Imagination

❖ Extent of depth of coverage?

❖ How many topics do you want to cover?

❖ Best is the best value-added order for the chapters?
3B. AREAS OF CHAPTERS THAT ADEQUATELY REPRESENT THE DISCIPLINE

- **FOUNDATIONAL CORE**
  - **BASIC CONCEPTS**
    - Introductory Chapter
    - History & Development of Sociology
  - **ANALYTICAL TOOLS**
    - Sociological Theories
    - Research Methods

- **SUBSTANTIVE AREAS**
  - **SOCIAL INTEGRATION**
    - Socialization
    - Culture
    - Social Groups
  - **SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS**
    - Family
    - Government
    - The Economy
    - Religion
    - Education
  - **SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN SOCIETY**
    - Social Stratification
    - Race and Ethnic Stratification
    - Gender Stratification
    - Age Stratification
  - **CHALLENGES TO STATUS QUO**
    - Deviant Behavior
    - Social Change
    - Collective Behavior and Social Movements
Q3C & Q4A. TWELVE CHAPTERS THAT MAY ADEQUATELY REPRESENT THE DISCIPLINE

- **FOUNDATIONAL CORE**
  - **BASIC CONCEPTS**
    - Introductory Chapter
    - History & Development of Sociology
  - **ANALYTICAL TOOLS**
    - Sociological Theories
    - Research Methods

- **SUBSTANTIVE AREAS**
  - **SOCIAL INTEGRATION**
    - Socialization
    - Culture
    - Social Groups
  - **SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS**
    - Family
  - **SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN SOCIETY**
    - Social Stratification
    - Race and Ethnic Stratification
    - Gender Stratification
  - **CHALLENGING STATUS QUO**
    - Deviant Behavior
1. Introductory Chapter

Why? To introduce sociology and Social Structure

- Basic Concepts
  - Definition of Sociology
  - Social Structures
  - The Sociological Perspective
  - The Sociological Imagination

2. Chapter on Development of Sociology

Why? To demonstrate:
- A) Sociology as problem solving discipline
- B) Underpinning ideas for sociological Theories

- History of Sociology
- Major foundational social thoughts
  - August Comte
  - Herbert Spencer
  - Karl Marx
  - Max Weber
  - Emile Durkheim

- Emphasizing structural determinism
3. Chapter on Sociological Theories

➢ The Grand Theories
  ✓ Structure Functional Theory
  ✓ Social Conflict Theory
  ✓ Symbolic interaction Theory

➢ Connect each theory with foundational ideas

4. Chapter on Sociological Research

Why? To demonstrate sociological as a science

➢ The Scientific Method
  ✓ Patterned Regularities
  ✓ Empiricism and Objectivity
  ✓ Methods of Data Collection
  ✓ Research Variables and Hypothesis
  ✓ Types of analysis

5. Chapter on Socialization

Why? To demonstrate the role of learning in being human

✓ Structural basis of learning to develop all human potentials
  ✓ Acquisition of culture
  ✓ Learning meaning for symbols – structural
  ✓ Acquisition of language
  ✓ Roles of social institutions in what we learn
  ✓ Roles of agents of socialization
  ✓ Gender socialization
6. Chapter on Culture

Why? To demonstrate cultural bases of realities

- Explaining Culture
- Characteristics of culture
- Culture by levels of human associations
- Material and nonmaterial (symbolic) aspects culture
- Effects: Homogenizing & Heterogenizing
  - Value
  - Norms
  - Language
  - Collective conscience
  - Tools for social control, etc.

7. Chapter on Groups and Organizations

Why? To demonstrate groups as basis of behavior

- Significance of group structure and group types
- Differentiating among Social Groups, Aggregates & Categories
- Group characteristics
- Group structure
- Status, Role and Norms

Types of Groups
- Primary Groups
- Secondary Groups
- Mediating Groups
8. Chapter on the Institution of Family

Why? To demonstrate structural bases of sexual relationships and family formations

- Family as social institution and social unit
  - Understanding social institutions
  - Family as a social institution and units
  - Functions of family units to society
  - Types of families across societies
  - Marriage and why we marry
  - Structural factors that shape who we marry
  - Divorce patterns, causes & consequences

9. Chapter on Stratification [SOCIAL CLASS]

Why? To demonstrate significance of social class and wealth on human realities

- Consequences of income and wealth distribution
  - What social stratification means
  - Meaning of social class
  - Meaning of class stratification
  - Patterns of income and wealth distribution

- Consequences of patterns of distribution
  - To the poor / lower class
  - To the rich / higher classes

- Explanations for stratification by social class

10. Chapter on Stratification [RACE & ETHNICITY]

Why? To demonstrate significance of Race and Ethnic classifications on human realities

- Race and Ethnic Relations
  - Meaning of race and ethnicity
  - Determination of race and ethnicity
  - Income & wealth differences by race and ethnicity

- Methods of boundary maintenance
  - Attitude: Prejudice:
    - Racism, ethnicism, ethnocentrism
  - Behavior: Discrimination:
    - Racial and ethnic, individual, institutional
11. Chapter on Stratification [GENDER]

Why? To demonstrate impacts of gender on behavior

- Gender, Gender Roles and Gender Relations
  - Distinguish between sex and gender
  - Patterns of gender and gender roles in USA
  - Patterns of educational attainment—gender
  - Patterns of occupations by gender
  - Patterns of income distribution by gender
  - Patterns of poverty by gender
  - Explain why gender stratification exists

2. Chapter on Deviant Behavior

Why? To demonstrate the structural determinates of deviant and criminal behaviors

- Structural relativity of deviance
  - Differentiate between nonconforming and deviant behaviors

- Patterns of Crime
  - General patterns of crime statistics
  - Patterns of crime by gender, race and ethnicity
  - Patterns of victimization
  - Patterns of incarceration by gender, race and ethnicity

- Consequences of the Deviance Label and Incarceration
  - Employment opportunities
  - Participation in civic life
  - Secondary deviance / reoffending

- Why Deviance and Crime?
  - Adaptations to structural deprivation
  - Relative opportunity
  - Deviance as creation of the powerful
  - Differential association
  - Relativity of deviance through labels
CONCLUSIONS

❑ Keep in mind that the point of sociology is to understand how social structures shape human realities and how to solve problems through structural change.

❑ All topics should emphasize knowledge of social structure

❑ Avoid the pressure to cover too many chapters/topics

❑ 10 to 12 well selected chapters can adequately represent the discipline, depending on teaching style and time for exams and activities.

❑ Covering core foundation topics are essential

❑ At lease one or two topics from each substantive area depending on time.

❑ Arrange topics in best value-added order from your perspective
Thank you.