



COURSE UNIT DESCRIPTION

Course Unit Title	Code
SOCIOLOGY	

Lecturer(s)	Department(s)
Coordinator: dr. Laimutė Žilinskienė Other(s): dr. Irma Budginaitė-Mačkinė	Vilnius University, Department of Philosophy, Institute of Sociology and Social Work Universiteto st. 9, 01513 Vilnius

Study cycle	Type of the course unit
First	General university studies

Mode of delivery	Course unit delivery period	Language (s) of instruction
Online	Autumn semester	English

Requirements for students	
Pre-requisites: -	Co-requisites (if any): -

Number of credits allocated	Total student's workload	Contact hours	Self-study hours
5	130	48	82

Purpose of the course unit: programme competences to be developed

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the field of sociology and sociological research, and help them develop an understanding of how societies function and change, how social circumstances influence individual biographies, as well as the purpose of various social institutions. Students will develop their ability to reflect critically on everyday knowledge about the social world, and appreciate learning in an intercultural and interdisciplinary environment.

Learning outcomes of the course unit	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
Students will be able to describe the aims of sociological inquiry and connect it to their own discipline.	Interactive lectures, reading assignment, workshop discussions, self-reflection.	Written exam
Students will develop a general understanding of social structures and the role of social groups and social institutions in contemporary societies.	Interactive lectures, analysis of multimedia examples, data interpretation exercises, think-pair-share activities.	
Students will know the key terms, concepts and ideas used by researchers to describe objects of social research covered during the course (e. g. family, gender, media, politics, social control, urban development, migration and other topics covered during the course).	Interactive lectures, analysis of multimedia examples, data interpretation exercises, think-pair-share activities, exploratory sociological neighbourhood tour.	
Students will understand how sociologists collect and analyse data. They will be able to critically assess and interpret sociological research findings.	Interactive lectures, think-pair-share activities, group coaching, problem-based research project topics, data collection, analysis, and interpretations conducted individually and in groups, presentation feedback.	Data analysis and interpretation project
Students will gain knowledge about real-life social issues, especially the social and cultural tensions inherent in global and local change. They will understand how cultural contexts affect social circumstances and individual behaviour.		
Students will understand the complexity of social problems and the motives behind multiple socially constructed values, attitudes and interests.	Interactive lectures, think-pair-share activities, group coaching, analysis of different points of view about a	Structured academic controversy

Students will be able to formulate and support a civic position with scientific arguments and sociological knowledge. They will practice communicating their position publicly and participating in informed and respectful decision-making.	controversial issue, search for supporting information, critical analysis of data and scientific theories, presentation feedback.	
Students will gain experience of cooperating in an interdisciplinary team to complete assignments in a creative and innovative manner.	Role-based group management, division of tasks, brainstorming, cooperative discussion and preparation of the assignments, short mid-project briefing sessions.	Data analysis and interpretation project, structured academic controversy

Content: breakdown of the topics	Contact hours						Self-study: hours and assignments		
	Lectures	Consultations	Seminars	Practical sessions	Laboratory activities	Internship/work placement	Contact hours	Self-study hours	Assignments
<p>1. Introduction to sociology. Getting to know each other. What is sociology? In what ways is sociology relevant for other professions? What is the use of sociology in everyday life?</p>	2						2	4	Read individually chosen excerpts (at least 20 pages) from: Osborne, Richard. <i>Introducing sociology</i> . London: Icon books, 2009. Prepare to share and discuss one key idea that you find most relevant to your profession and give examples of how you may apply it.
<p>2. The object of sociology. What is society? What is the difference between state and society? Why is it studied? What are the key terms used to describe society? How and why did sociology develop? Note: the workshop for this topic will contain a discussion of the knowledge inventories and will help students from different backgrounds connect sociology to their field of study. There will also be a team building activity for future group work.</p>	2		2				4	8	<u>Data analysis and interpretation project</u> Analyse survey questions in the assigned topic and explore the data to become familiar with it. Work with group mates to choose questions to include in the analysis. Analyse the data comparing information from different questions, countries and years.
<p>3. Social theory. What is social theory and how is it related to sociology? How are scientific theories created? How paradigms change in social sciences? What are the main issues raised by social theorists?</p>	2						2	4	<u>Data analysis and interpretation project</u> Work with group mates to decide what interpretations will be made about the data. Search for relevant scientific sources and study them (at least one source per group member)
<p>4. Social research. How do sociologists do research about societies and why should we trust them? How is social research conducted? What are the main methods of collecting and analysing sociological data? <i>Note: the workshops for this topic contain activities related to the data analysis and interpretation project.</i></p>	2		6				8	8	<u>Data analysis and interpretation project</u> Work with group mates to decide what interpretations will be made about the data. Search for relevant scientific sources and study them (at least one source per group member)

<p>5. Gender and sexuality. What is the difference between sex and gender? How is gender constructed socially? In what ways does gender comprise social control? What is the relation between gender, power and politics?</p>	2					2	4	<p><u>Data analysis and interpretation project</u> Work with group mates to summarize the data interpretation and prepare the presentation</p>
<p>6. Families and the life – course. The problem of defining family. How did the modern family develop? What is the significance of generations in society? What is the influence of society on life-course choices made in childhood, adulthood, and old age, such as education, employment, marriage, divorce, or place of death?</p>	2					2	1	<p><u>Data analysis and interpretation project</u> Fill out the groupwork assessment form.</p>
<p>7. Deviance and social control. The social construction of deviance. How are social norms and transgressions defined? What are the key explanations of crime? What is unique about modern forms of social control and punishment? Why are Crime-free societies impossible?</p>	2					2	12	<p><u>Mid-term sociological term quiz</u> Prepare for the quiz.</p>
<p>8. Health and medicine. The social construction of health and illness. What is the sick role in modern societies? What are the social factors of health and illness? How did modern forms of healthcare develop? What is public health? Medicine and power relations.</p> <p><i>Note: the workshops for topics 8 -15 contain activities related to the structured academic controversy.</i></p>	2		1			3	4	<p><u>Structured academic controversy:</u> Study sources representing the point of view assigned to the group (at least one source per group member). Use them to understand and summarise the stakeholder's position regarding the issue under discussion.</p>
<p>9. Technology and society. What is the fourth industrial revolution? What is the social impact of recent developments in information technology, biotechnology, communication infrastructure, internet applications and transportation? Where is the truth in futurism?</p>	2		1			3	4	<p><u>Structured academic controversy:</u> Study sources representing the point of view assigned to the group (at least one source per group member). Use them to understand and summarise the stakeholder's position regarding the issue under discussion.</p>
<p>10. The global economy. What is capitalism and how did it develop? What are some of the key sociological interpretations of capitalism and globalisation? How does the global system of production, trade and consumption work? What does industrialization and deindustrialization</p>	2		1			3	4	<p><u>Structured academic controversy:</u> Study sources representing the point of view assigned to the group (at least one source per group member). Use them to understand and summarise the stakeholder's position regarding the issue under discussion.</p>

<p>mean for different world regions? The fourth industrial revolution and its critique.</p> <p>Political institutions. What is the sociological significance of key political orientations? What are the roles, functions and ongoing transformations of modern states and civic societies? What is post-politics?</p>									
<p>11. Migration, language and postcolonialism. What is the sociological significance of language? What are language ideologies and discourses? What links language, globalisation and migration? What are the main directions of contemporary migration? What is postcolonialism and neocolonialism?</p>	2		1				3	4	<p><u>Structured academic controversy:</u> Study sources representing the point of view assigned to the group (at least one source per group member). Use them to understand and summarise the stakeholder's position regarding the issue under discussion.</p>
<p>12. Space, architecture, and the city. The social construction of space. What is the structure of modern urban space? What is the social significance of urban change? How is space used as a form of social control? What is the role of global cities in contemporary geopolitics?</p>	2		1				3	4	<p><u>Structured academic controversy:</u> Study sources representing the point of view assigned to the group (at least one source per group member). Use them to understand and summarise the stakeholder's position regarding the issue under discussion.</p>
<p>13. Environmental issues. What are the implications of human-centered and environment-centered models of interaction between nature and society? What is the impact of environmental change on social change and vice versa? What is the role of climate change in global politics?</p>	2		1				3	4	<p><u>Structured academic controversy:</u> Study sources representing the point of view assigned to the group (at least one source per group member). Use them to understand and summarise the stakeholder's position regarding the issue under discussion.</p>
<p>14. The mass media. What is the social meaning of mass media? What is the impact of technological developments on the mass media landscape? What is agenda-setting in the mass media? How are mass media effects measured?</p>	2		1				3	4	<p><u>Structured academic controversy:</u> Study sources representing the point of view assigned to the group (at least one source per group member). Use them to understand and summarise the stakeholder's position regarding the issue under discussion.</p>
<p>15. Culture. The problem of defining culture. What is the relation between dominant cultures and subcultures? What is the cultural impact of technological innovations? What is consumption and consumer societies? How do global cultural industries work?</p>	2		1				3	1	<p><u>Structured academic controversy:</u> Study sources representing the point of view assigned to the group (at least one source per group member). Use them to understand and summarise the stakeholder's position regarding the issue under discussion.</p>

16. Course review	2		2	12	Review course notes and prepare for the sociological terms quiz.
Total	32		16	48	82

Assessment strategy	Weight, percentage	Assessment period	Assessment criteria
Data analysis and interpretation project (group project)	20%	Seminars in the first half of the semester	<p>Students will work in groups of 5-6 people to complete a short data analysis and interpretation project. They will prepare two presentations based on data from the survey provided by the course instructor: in the first presentation they will present data on a chosen topic, and in the second presentation they will provide interpretation of the data based on scientific sources.</p> <p><u>Data analysis presentation 10%</u> Full points awarded for a presentation: 1) addressing at least several separate questions from the chosen topic; 2) comparing and contrasting data across several countries or regions, and points in time; 3) clearly narrating the presentation and answering questions; 4) fulfilling the given presentation structure (including compulsory title slide with full names of group members and final slide with full list of sources used). To be graded, the presentation must be uploaded to VU online learning environment (Moodle) one day before presentation.</p> <p><u>Data interpretation presentation 10%</u> Full points awarded for a presentation: 1) explaining the main questions raised by previous data analysis; 2) using scientific material (at least one source per group member) to interpret the data; 3) clearly narrating the presentation and answering questions; 4) fulfilling to given presentation structure (including compulsory title slide with full names of group members and final slide with full list of sources used). To be graded, the presentation must be uploaded to VU online learning environment (Moodle) one day before presentation.</p> <p><u>Individual contribution to group work</u> will be evaluated based on groupwork evaluation forms after the assignment is completed. Submission of a groupwork evaluation form is obligatory in order to receive the grade for this assignment. Based on the groupwork evaluation forms, students who have fully contributed to their group's work will receive the full grades for this assignment, the grade will be reduced for students who only contributed partially, while students who contribute nothing to group work will be awarded 0 points for the whole assignment.</p>
Structured academic controversy (group project)	20%	Seminars in the second half of the semester	<p>The structured academic controversy will take the form of a policy-making debate conducted in two rounds during workshop sessions. Students will work in teams of 5–6 people to address a controversial social issue presented during an initial briefing. Each group will represent different stakeholders and work to represent their points of view to prepare two presentations. In the first presentation, the groups will present their stakeholder's position and interests regarding the issue, while in the second presentation they will present the best solution to the issue based on both their groups interest and the points of view of other groups. The groups will then negotiate a final resolution.</p> <p><u>Stakeholder point of view presentation 10%</u> Full points awarded for a presentation: 1) presenting the interests of the assigned stakeholder; 2) using scientific sources and / or data to support statements; 3) clearly narrating the presentation and answering questions;</p>

			<p>4) fulfilling to given presentation structure (including compulsory title slide with full names of group members and final slide with full list of sources used)</p> <p>To be graded, the presentation must be uploaded to VU online learning environment (Moodle) one day before presentation.</p> <p><u>Stakeholder solution presentation 10%</u></p> <p>Full points awarded for a presentation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) balancing the interests of the assigned stakeholder with other stakeholder groups; 2) using scientific sources and / or data to support statements; 3) clearly narrating the presentation and answering questions; 4) fulfilling to given presentation structure (including compulsory title slide with full names of group members and final slide with full list of sources used). <p>To be graded, the presentation must be uploaded to VU online learning environment (Moodle) one day before presentation.</p> <p>Individual contribution to group work will be evaluated based on groupwork evaluation forms after the assignment is completed. Submission of a groupwork evaluation form is obligatory in order to receive the grade for this assignment. Based on the groupwork evaluation forms, students who have fully contributed to their group's work will receive the full grades for this assignment, the grade will be reduced for students who only contributed partially, while students who contribute nothing to group work will be awarded 0 points for the whole assignment.</p>
Written exam	60%	<p>Middle of semester, end of semester (sociological term quizzes). Lectures throughout the semester (lecture reflections)</p>	<p>At the beginning of the course, students will receive a list of key sociological terms that will be discussed during the lectures throughout the semester. During each quiz, three terms will be drawn randomly from the list of terms. For each of the terms, students will have to provide a) a sociological definition, b) a real-life example of the phenomenon from their own experience.</p> <p><u>Mid-semester sociological term quiz 30% (3 terms x 10%)</u></p> <p><u>End-of-semester sociological term quiz 30% (3 terms x 10%)</u></p> <p>Full points will be awarded for answers containing both definition and example, and demonstrating understanding and ability to correctly apply the term.</p> <p>Note: students who fail to attend either of the quizzes will be awarded 0 points for the whole course and fail it.</p> <p><u>Lecture reflections 10% (extra credit)</u></p> <p>Students will write a short reflection on what they have learned at the end of each lecture. Each learning reflection contributes 1 point to a maximum 10 point grade, so at least 10 lecture reflections must be submitted to receive full points. Thus by attending lectures there is a possibility to gain an extra 10% of the final mark. There is no penalty for NOT submitting lecture reflections.</p>

Author	Year of publication	Title	Issue of periodical or volume of publication	Publishing place and house or web link
Compulsory reading				
Osborne, Richard	2009	Introducing Sociology		London: Icon books
Recommended reading				
Babbie, Earl	2010	The Practice of Social Research		US: Wadsworth
Giddens, Anthony	2001	Sociology: Introductory Readings		Oxford: Polity
Mills, Charles W.	1959	The Sociological Imagination		
Ritzer, George	2013	Introduction to Sociology		NJ: Prentice-Hall
Joas, Hans; Knoebl, Wolfgang	2009	Social Theory: Twenty Introductory Lectures		Cambridge: CUP