Online Courses for High School Students
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Sociology 1: The Study of Human Relationships

Why do people act the way they do? If you've ever wondered about human behavior, rules, or social change, you're already thinking like a sociologist. This course introduces sociology—the study of human social relationships and how people interact within groups and societies. You'll explore culture, socialization, groups, and institutions, and examine how they shape identity and behavior. The course also looks at why people follow or challenge rules, how inequalities develop, and how social change occurs. With a focus on adolescence and adulthood, you'll gain insight into how society influences who we are and how we fit into the world. If you're curious about people and motivated to understand—and improve—the world around you, this course is for you.

Prerequisite: None
Course Length: One Semester

Required Materials:

Physical

- Video recording device

Software

- Presentation software
- Word processing software

Optional

- Art supplies
- Audio recording device
- Digital camera
- Graphic design software
- Household items
- Presentation software
- Spreadsheet software
- Video recording device

Unit 1: Sociology Foundations

Have you ever asked yourself why people act the way they do? Maybe you've been in a situation where you saw someone acting in an unexpected way and you wanted to learn more about why. When you observe someone doing something unusual, and you try to figure out why they act the way they do, you are thinking like a sociologist.

Sociology is the study of human social relationships and how individuals interact with one another in groups. By studying sociology, you can gain insights into the complexities of our society. Sociology also helps us understand social change and the impact of globalization. If you're interested in understanding the world around you and making a positive difference, studying sociology can be a rewarding and enriching experience.

What will you learn in this unit?

- Explain the origins and history of sociology, as well as the contributions of leading sociologists.
- Compare and contrast sociological theories.
- Distinguish between the sociological perspective and the sociological imagination.
- Describe the steps in the scientific method.
- Discuss factors contributing to the institutionalization of science.

Unit 2: Culture and Society

When you think about the meaning of the terms "culture" and "society," how are they the same? How are they different? Culture and society surround us every day, but many people don't stop to explore these concepts. Fortunately, sociologists have been researching these ideas for a long time. In this unit, you will learn about different types of cultures and societies, the relationship between the two concepts, and how we can learn about and understand other cultures, subcultures, and countercultures.

What will you learn in this unit?

- Distinguish between material and nonmaterial culture and discuss examples of each.
- Describe the relationship between culture and society.
- Discuss holidays and traditions of different cultures.
- Compare and contrast subcultures and countercultures.
- Explain the difference between cultural relativism and ethnocentricity.

Unit 3: Rules of Society

The term "rules" can mean more than one thing. Sometimes it's used more generally, like "rules of society," to refer to all the different types of norms. That is how we will use it throughout most of this unit. It can also refer to a very specific norm, like a particular norm around how to greet people. Rules help keep society safe and organized, but not everyone agrees with them. Some people follow the rules, while others break them or work to change them. In this unit, you'll explore why people follow or challenge rules, what happens when rules are broken, and how group actions—called collective behavior—can lead to change.

What will you learn in this unit?

- Describe how different types of norms, as well as other influences, affect behavior.
- Differentiate between conformity and deviance.
- Compare and contrast social control and social problems.
- Summarize theories of collective behavior.

Unit 4: Social Institutions, Organizations, and Groups

Have you ever thought about the different ways you are connected to other people? How close are you with your family? Do you have a group of friends you like to hang out with? Do you belong to a club or play a sport? We are all associated with others in a wide variety of ways. Some connections are more official and others are more casual. All of these relationships with others help guide how we learn to act and interact. In this unit you'll learn about how social institutions, social organizations, and groups shape who you are and how you fit into society.

What will you learn in this unit?

- Compare various types of social institutions.
- Describe formal organizations and provide examples.
- Discuss types of groups and group dynamics.
- Explain how groups function.

Midterm Exam

Unit 5: Socialization

Have you ever wondered how you become who you are? In this unit, we will take a look at the process by which a person evolves into themselves and what elements impact this development. This evolution is influenced by factors such as your family, peer group, religion, school, and the media. Let's explore how these different groups, organizations, and institutions impact who you develop into over time.

What will you learn in this unit?

- Describe different agents of socialization.
- Evaluate how family and religion impact a person's socialization.
- Examine how education and the media affect an individual's socialization.
- Explain the stages in the socialization process.
- Connect theoretical perspectives on socialization to the real world.

Unit 6: Social Stratification

When you look at society, do you notice inequality? Societies categorize their members into groups in a hierarchy. Resources and opportunities are not distributed equally among these groups, which can result in class, racial, gender, and structural inequalities. Sociologists study these categorizations and inequalities to look for solutions to related social problems. In this unit, you'll learn more about the many complex layers of society.

What will you learn in this unit?

- Summarize the relationship between social stratification, social inequality, and social problems.
- Explain class inequality and its impact on society.
- Discuss the treatment of minority groups in society.
- Describe inequality in the healthcare system.

Unit 7: Society and the Individual

How does society affect individuals? Many factors such as group membership and culture, among others, affect how an individual develops their own sense of self. Biological development has an impact on the individual as well. In this unit, we will explore how many aspects of society influence a person's identity, with a special focus on adolescence and adulthood. What's influencing you right now? Let's find out!

What will you learn in this unit?

- Discuss how the five characteristics of the adolescent stage affect socialization.
- Summarize how adolescence became a distinct stage of development.
- Compare the elements of the social construction of the self.
- Describe the stages of adult development.
- Explain workplace roles and role conflict.

Unit 8: Social Change

A variety of factors can cause societies to change. Why does this change happen? There are a few different theories about the reasons behind social change. Sometimes social change can be predicted, but not always. When a society changes, new ways of thinking or doing things can become common and accepted. Social movements throughout history have made the world what it is today, but that's no guarantee that things will stay this way because social change is continuous and societies will continue to evolve in the future. This unit will help you think about changes that have already taken place as well as imagine future social changes. It might even get you thinking about what kinds of changes you'd like to see and help bring about in society.

What will you learn in this unit?

- Explain the causes and theories of social change.
- Describe the impact of innovation on society and culture.
- Analyze the effects of demography and urbanization.
- Discuss social movements and their effects.

Final Exam