Because things are not always what they seem!

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Time: Tues/Thur 12:05 - 1:25  
Location: B002 JSFB

Office Hours: Tues., Thurs. 1:35 - 3:00  
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A Short Analogy. In my household we have four very basic “general rules” which guide our behavior and interactions with others. One of these general rules (#3 to be exact) is: “ALWAYS CHOOSE FEAST OVER FAMINE.” A simple dictum (to borrow from Lemony Snicket, a word which here means a formal authoritative pronouncement of a principle). Indeed, from scriptural texts we are instructed to “feast upon the words of Christ;” “feast upon his love;” “feast upon this fruit;” “feast upon that which perisheth not;” etc. Now, running a rather standard search for terms like “nibble upon,” “sample randomly,” “timidly look into,” “noncommittedly explore,” strangely, I uncovered no references! “Nibble upon the words of Christ,” “Randomly Sample his love,” “Timidly and noncommittedly get that fruit that perisheth not,” etc. Sort of loses something doesn’t it! So, back to our analogy, you can have the all-you-can-eat intellectual buffet, or the puny piece of the no-thought, no-effort academic Melba toast–Yum! I, for one, am always amazed how often in higher education students choose the Melba toast over the buffet! Most of you are freshmen, you should decide now what your academic culinary regimen will be–toast or buffet. I am prepared to give you an intellectual buffet. Your tuition is the admission fee. You just need to bring your big appetite! Therefore, if you are simply looking for an academic snack on Melba toast, you are in the wrong food line and you should definitely try a different line. If this is the case (and you must ask yourself that now!) get out of this line now! Take a different course. Switch lines immediately for this one is for the all-you-can-eat buffet!

In a climatic ending to a novel I have not yet written (and will most likely never write), the lead character, (lets call her Tess of the Dobermans), tells a disheartened youth, (her sister’s brother’s sister named Tess, whose brother is a General Authority) “Things are not always as they seem.” The story ends, I sell a bejillion copies of the novel and the world comes to the basic understanding that, Yes, indeed, things are not always as they seem. This course, however, will be exactly (almost) as it seems. We will explore how the social world--which, oh by-the-way, is the world you and I both live in--can be understood through an entirely different perspective than that which you are used to. By presenting this different perspective, it will compel you to think about it and its implications. In the words of Yoda, (or at least in his phraseology) “Converts I

“The average person adapts himself to society, the abnormal person refuses to do so. Therefore, all social change is dependent on abnormal people.” George Bernard Shaw
ask not for.” Frankly, I don’t care if, at the end of this semester, you find this perspective useful or not. What I intend to do is make you think about your world by presenting you an alternative—sociology. Even if you reject the alternative, you will have to think about your current weltanschauung (which is a spiffy German word for worldview or personal frame of reference) differently. You will have to justify it in light of new information. I will challenge you and your weltanschauung and I will expect you to do the same to each other and to me. No kidding. I take the role of Professor (someone who professes) seriously. It is difficult to profess something that means little to you. Neutrality is darn (a good Mormon expletive) hard to profess. I will not play the role of the dispassionate observer/scientist. I will profess some very specific views and I will not try to mask them. I expect you to do the same. However, because you are paying for the class and I get paid for it, I still get to set the agenda and the ground rules. Congratulations! You have just been exposed to your first sociological lesson—POWER. Something we will spend considerable time discussing.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

The beginning of the course will focus on the rise of sociological thought and the historical context which framed it. The course will emphasize sociology as a unique way of viewing and interpreting the world around us. You will be exposed to major theorists, theories, concepts and ideas which will help you form the beginnings of a "Sociological Imagination." The main emphasis of this course will not be the memorization of terms, dates, and names to be regurgitated on a series of multiple choice tests. Emphasis will be placed on the understanding and internalization of key concepts that will allow you to view common everyday events and situations in a new way—through a Sociological Imagination. Using this "Sociological Imagination," the course will then focus on applying the particular theories and concepts you have learned to an examination and understanding of contemporary problems, institutions, and events in American society in particular and the world in general.

**READINGS**

Over the course of the semester you will read six books, one article and some New York Times articles. The books are available at the Bookstore.

**BOOKS:** We will start with a short article by Hugh Nibley entitled: “Zeal without Knowledge.” You are about to step into issues and things of which you will have some strong opinions. Nibley’s article warns that “Zeal without Knowledge” is intellectually and spiritually damaging; he encourages you as a student to take the student role seriously—challenge yourself, learn. We will then turn to a spiffy book which metaphorically presents the moral issues of sociology: George Saunder’s *The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip,* This story will give you a good grounding in how sociologists view the world. Next, you will read the classic work of Charles Dickens written in the 1850s, *Hard Times.* The book wonderfully illuminates the shifts occurring in western culture and social structure in the 1800s that gave rise to the new categories of understanding of which sociology was one. The third book you will read is Benjamin Barber’s *Jihad versus McWorld:*
How Globalism and Tribalism are Reshaping the World. This book explores our contemporary global society, how we got here, and what it means. Specifically, he discusses how certain groups may eventually rebel against the increasingly materialistic world of the West. He wrote it in 1996. Very prophetic. We will use the book to frame a discussion on increasing “rationalization” and “globalization” in contemporary society. The fourth book is another literary (and sociological) classic W. E. B. Du Bois’ The Souls of Black Folks. This book is consistently mentioned in almost every “the most important books to read” lists. It will give you an intimate look at the emerging issues of turn-of-the-century (1900) America, specifically as it dealt with race relations and equality. The book is prophetic in its claim that the main problem of the modern world is “the color line.” For the fifth book, you will have a choice between two different books: Barbara Ehrenreich’s Nickeled and Dimed, and Edward N. Wolf and Richard C. Leone’s Top Heavy. Nickel and Dimed was written by a journalist (Barbara Ehrenreich) who wanted to see how one could survive in the new service economy. It is a very poignant and harsh piece. Consequently, it uses some language, typically from quotes, that is less than polite. If you don’t want to read this, I will give you the option to replace it with Top Heavy. This book takes a very statistical approach to what the new service economy looks like. The sixth book: The Practical Skeptic, is a very basic text book that covers the issues we will be addressing in class discussions. I have listed the chapters that specifically correspond with topics we will be covering. These chapters will help you to better familiarize yourself with the issues.

Finally, a seventh book is available as “recommended” but not required: David Korten’s When Corporations Rule the World. As you can already tell, this book deals with the new global economy and its moral/social consequences. All of these books will help you understand many of the issues of contemporary sociology. We will discuss the themes they address in class and tie them into the concepts and issues we are presenting.

Reading Critiques: You will be required to write a 1 PAGE double spaced (it must not exceed this length or points will be docked) critique for the Nibley article and each of the 5 (non-Text) books and two New York Times articles of your choosing (on inequality and globalization). The papers must be in 12cpi, Times New Roman font, have 1 inch margins all the way around, and use ASA – American Sociological Association–style. I have put an ASA Style Guide on Blackboard. Use it to learn proper ASA formatting. Do not use a cover/title page. Put your name in the upper left-hand corner and the full ASA citation of the work left-justified. The entire document is to be left justified.

Each paper will consist of three parts: 1) you will identify the primary thesis (thesis statement) of the reading – what is the main issue/concept the author wants you to walk away with (answers like “a splitting headache” will not be acceptable here)?, 2) an explication of the author’s logic (including methods, theories, data, evidence, etc.) and how it relates to his/her primary findings; and 3) YOUR CRITICAL EVALUATION AND APPLICATION of the piece – show me that you can go beyond the book by applying the concepts from it to a context or situation not discussed in the book.. Your application section can be, but is not confined to the following: personal experiences, reactions to news items, philosophical musing, etc. The point is, I want you think about HOW this information you just acquired can be applied. Tell me what YOU got out of this article and why. “I liked it” or “I didn’t like it” will not be acceptable. These must be scholarly evaluations that take me through the logic of your evaluation and go BEYOND
the information provided by the author in his/her book. This is a good opportunity to tie it in with other ideas, readings, experience, etc. you have stored in your heads to this point in your life. Bottom line, I want to see if you can intellectually apply the concepts.

These critiques must be handed in, at the beginning of class on the dates they are due. You may also email them as an attachment file to brownsoc111@gmail.com at least ½ hour before class on the day it is due. You will be graded on the consistency of your logic, your ability to argue your point, and on the mechanics of language, spelling and grammar. If you do not arrive at class in time for your paper to be collected at the beginning, or, if you wish to turn in your paper late, but still on the day it is due (until 5:00 pm), you may do so, but there will be an automatic deduction of 2.5 points from a potential 10-point paper. I will also accept late papers EMAILED through the week they are due (until Saturday 12:00pm) with an automatic 3.5 point deduction. I will not accept any papers after the week they are due. These dates are listed in the syllabus. You will need to email them to the above email address. Hand delivered papers on a Saturday will not be counted.

THE READINGS

1) Nibley, Hugh. 1978. Zeal Without Knowledge

EXAMS

There will be three “multiple choice essay” exams. Now, every educator knows that an essay exam is the best way to evaluate how well one
understands the concepts being discussed. However, every educator who actually wants a life (an idea which I highly espouse) also knows that when you have over 40 students, that to give essays exams is tantamount to the very ignorance you are supposedly trying to eliminate creating a nice oxymoron. Consequently, over the years, I have devised (a word which here means, I have figured out a way to still have a life) a way to give an essay exam in a multiple choice format--I write the essays and you choose which one(s) best addresses the scenarios I will present to you. I will try to give the exams in class and not in the testing center. However, if we get too far behind and we need to conserve class time, I will move them to the Testing Center, but will let you know well in advance. If you understand the concepts, you will do fine on the exams. I will prepare you before the first exam on what to expect. For example, I will use some of the examples from the newspaper articles you will read to formulate the essays and questions.

**Exams = 400 points**

There will be two in-class multiple choice exams and a comprehensive final. The first two exams will be worth 100 points each having 50 question worth 2 points each. The final exam will cover the new material since the second mid-term as well as that previously covered. There will be 50 questions from the new material and 50 from the previous two exams (25 questions each from Tests 1 and 2). It will be worth 200 points.

**Make-up exams:** If you miss a scheduled exam without making prior arrangements with me (and you have a very, very, very, very good reason for it--and I get to decide if it’s a good reason) you may take a Make-up exam. However, I will automatically deduct 20 points from Tests 1 and 2 and 40 points from the Final. So, yes, there is redemption, but it will come at a cost. So don’t miss the exams. I will make announcements about exam schedules and such IN CLASS and at the BEGINNING of class.

**Readings Critiques = 100 points**

Each of the readings critiques for the five books, the Nibley article and the two NYT articles will be worth 10 points graded in half point intervals. You will also be required to hand in a critique for the Nibley article but it will not count toward your grade but must be handed in if you are to qualify for the additional points described below. If you hand in all eight critiques and receive a score of 5 or better on them, you will receive another 20 points. These are not extra credit points, they will be counted into the total possible points for the class whether you earn them or not.

**Total Points for Class = 500 points**

Grades will be figured on a straight 10% from the total possible points in the class. For the combined three exams and 8 critiques, there will be 500 total points possible for the course. Now, one more thing: THERE IS NO EXTRA CREDIT; Credit is credit. “Extra" credit is an oxymoron. So, don’t bother to ask – THE ANSWER WILL REMAIN "NO"!
And now for some other issues: You are all adults. McDonalds may use “free” toys in their Happy Meals to dupe kids into convincing their parents to buy Mcfood. I however, will assume that you have enough intelligence to know that the most important thing you will learn in your education is that if you actually approach it as that – your education – you won’t need a “free” toy to induce you to learn and study hard. I will give you no free toys like credit for attendance which frankly strikes me as about the most stupid, counter-productive pseudo-educational approach I can think of. I will frequently make important announcements about test etc. in class, that I will not necessarily put on Blackboard, you are responsible for being there to get the information. I and the TAs will not carry on personal one-on-one email and other consultations with students who were not in class to get the information. Three other things: 1) I am anal-retentive when it comes to being here on time. I will be here on time and I expect you to be as well. 2) Don’t cheat. Cheating will be dealt with mercilessly. Read up on plagiarism, what the University’s policy is on it, what are the definitions of it, and what are your liabilities if you do it: http://saas.byu.edu/catalog/current/ces_honor.aspx. Up until a couple of semesters ago, I tried to deal with cases of plagiarism in-house first. However, after a rather conniving student tried to pull one over on me, from now on, ALL suspected cases of plagiarism will be immediately reported to the Honor Code Office and the student will receive a zero for that assignment but will still have to redo the assignment. If they fail to redo the assignment, they will get an E for the course. In other words, I will have no tolerance for plagiarism. 3) The reading schedule is a guide only and should be treated as such. If we spend more or less time on any one section or chapter/topic that's OK. I will reserve the right to be flexible in order to get the desired point across. 4) The Powerpoint presentations on Blackboard are meant to supplement the lectures and are not intended as standalone materials. If you are hoping to just get the information from the powerpoints without attending class, they will make little sense and be very disappointing to you.

One last word: I hate having to be so “legalistic” in my syllabus and approach, but it seems that a way too many students didn’t get Christ’s memo called the New Testament that explains that we no longer live by the Law of Moses where everything is spelled out but rather by correct principles which guide our behaviors through our hearts and heads!
## Discussion & Reading Schedule & Due Dates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Critique Due Dates</th>
<th>McIntyre Chapters that Correspond the to Topics being Discussed</th>
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<td>1/8 – 2/7</td>
<td>Syllabus/ Expectations/ Introduction/ History/ Domain Assumptions/ Theories</td>
<td>Nibley 1/17 Gappers 1/24 Hard Times 2/7</td>
<td>(McIntyre Chapters Introduction, 1 - 3)</td>
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<td>Culture</td>
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<td>around 2/26</td>
<td>EXAM #1 Testing Center</td>
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<td>2/28 – 3/6</td>
<td>Groups/ Society/ Social Structure</td>
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<td>3/11 –3/18</td>
<td>Socialization &amp; Human Nature</td>
<td>Dubois 3/18</td>
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<td>Sociological Methods and the Scientific Method</td>
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<td>EXAM #2 Testing Center</td>
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<td>4/1 - 4/15</td>
<td>Social Class/ Inequality/ Social Stratification</td>
<td>Nickeled and Dimed 4/3 Wolf Top Heavy (Recommended)</td>
<td>(McIntyre Chapters 12 - 14) **New York Times Article and one-page Critique on Inequality (4/8)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>SATURDAY April 19th 11:00am – 2:00pm IN CLASS B002 JFSB</td>
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*You will need to register for New York Times on line. It is FREE. Go to: [http://www.nytimes.com/](http://www.nytimes.com/) and provide the appropriate information. You will get a daily email with links to headlines. Read through the articles through the semester and pick two (one on Globalization and the other on Inequality) that you would like to write a critique on. Don’t wait until last minute in the semester to do this. Bring ideas to class from articles you read so we can discuss them and alert others to their presence.*

TA Email Addresses and Office Hours: See Blackboard