Welcome!!!

Hi, I’m Kim, your Sociology instructor. Thank you for enrolling in my class. I’m delighted you are here. Over the years, hundreds of student have taken this class and been successful and I have every reason to believe (that with effort) you will be successful too.

Let me start off by saying “This is going to be a Great class!” In fact, regardless of which course you’re taking of mine, I promise that our class will be one that you will remember positively. Not only is the material interesting and thought provoking, almost everything we talk about will be relevant to YOUR life. After all, it’s Sociology! Before we get started, this letter will provide you with important information regarding the course. Please read the entire welcome letter on the pages below before proceeding with the course. Read it carefully and do all that you can to prepare yourself for optimal success in our class.

First of all, I want to apologize for creating such a LONG intro letter. However, I’d rather help you succeed in class (by encouraging some self assessment) than avoid it and let you sign up for something that doesn’t suit you. So, let’s make sure that taking a short term on-line class is for you…

**Basic Technological Requirements:** Given that this course is entirely on-line, most actual requirements for this course are rather technology-focused. You MUST have a valid email address (that you check regularly), regular and reliable access to the Internet, a web browser, and a word-processing program such as Microsoft Word. You may also find it helpful to have printer access. If you have all the basic requirements, please ask yourself the following:

- Can I use a standard browser like Explorer, Netscape, Firefox, Mozilla, Safari, etc?
- Can I use a word processor like Microsoft Word to type essays, term papers, letters, etc?
  - Can I access spell check, word count, change the margins etc?
- Can I handle e-mail, including opening and sending e-mail attachments?
  - Am I able to complete online forms with minimal difficulty?
- Can I find information on the Internet using a search engine like Google or Yahoo?

**Other Requirements/Pre-requisites:** There are no official pre-requisites for this course. However you should make sure that you have the time and motivation necessary to take this course. This course is an autonomous, college class and requires a mature, college-level approach to its responsibilities. We will be covering the ENTIRE BOOK and cramming in an entire semester’s worth of work / learning during our time together. It will be up to you to manage your time and to consistently meet the obligations of this course, sometimes with few, if any, reminders. For five and eight week courses students should expect to check in with the course daily, or at least a minimum of every other day, and to dedicate at least ten-fifteen hours weekly to reading and the completion of outside course work. For full semester courses, one should expect to check in every other day, or at the very least three times per week, and to dedicate three to five hours weekly to reading and the completion of assignments. If you’re a slow reader, you should probably allot more time… Although, on-line courses offer tremendous flexibility and autonomy, it takes considerable self-discipline to stay focused and to prevent falling behind.

**Are You Really Ready to Take an Online Class?**

If you can honestly answer “Yes” to all of these questions, then online learning may be for you:

- Are you self-motivated? Do you stay on task without direct supervision? Are you able to set goals for yourself and work for them without someone looking over your shoulder??
- Do you have time management skills? Do you generally meet due dates without needing prodding/reminders? Are you able to prioritize your own workload?
Do you usually understand written (vs oral) instructions?

Will you actually read the book? Frequently students have access to most of what’s going to be on their tests simply by attending lectures. As there are no “traditional lectures” you personally will be gaining access to the course material via reading your text. Will you actually do this?? Again, are you self motivated and do you have the time…

Do you learn best from reading things and exploring them on your own? Can you read the textbook and actually gain information from it? Do you have any difficulty comprehending collegiate level reading assignments?

Do you enjoy communicating by writing? Are you comfortable sharing your thoughts and ideas in written form? Do you have the skills to express yourself articulately?

Do you have patience with using a computer and the on-line process?? Can you wait a day or more to have your questions answered? Does computer use frustrate or annoy you?

Potentially Useful Links:
Online Learning Readiness Questionnaire - www.unc.edu/tlim/ser/
Is Online Learning For Me? - www.waol.org/prospective_students/isonlineforme.aspx

Now that you’ve decided that this class is something that is “workable” for your personality and schedule, let’s see what we’re going to be studying throughout the next few months.

What to do now…

Everything for this course, including exams, will take place online. To access our course, students will need to visit the COC course management system called Canvas which can be found at https://coc.instructure.com/login/canvas

Before our class begins, and especially if you’ve never taken an on-line class before, you should visit the COC Distance Learning website and take their tutorial so that you are familiar with the Canvas system - http://www.canyons.edu/Offices/DistanceLearning/Pages/CanvasAccess.aspx

Because I know that you will likely want to know as much about this class as soon as possible I will make your syllabus available (via e-mail) on Sunday, just over one week prior to our first official day of “class”. This will go to your COC e-mail address. It is STRONGLY recommended that you review our syllabus and course calendar. Like all syllabi, our syllabus is host to a wide variety of useful information about our class as well as the college in general. If, after reading the syllabus and other course materials, you decide that you want to drop this course, please, Please, PLEASE be kind to your fellow students and drop the class IMMEDIATELY so that other students can enroll in the course in a timely manner. If this applies to you, please drop BEFORE the semester starts! Conversely, if like what you see in the syllabus and decide to stay in the course, you will have access to the other course materials on the first official day of class. On that day however, only registered participants in the course will be able to enter the course website.

To visit our course on Canvas, you will need to log into the system. To do so, you will need your MyCanyons username (for example, jdsmith). For first time users, the password is: student. Please be sure to change the password when you log in for the first time.

Once the semester starts, expect to hit the ground running, so to speak, as we will begin work immediately. To confirm your place in the class, you should log in to the website and begin participating no later than 10:00 p.m. on the very FIRST DAY of class. If you do not access the class website and begin participating by Monday evening at 10:00 p.m., then you will be dropped from the class as a no-show. As noted above, you should plan to visit the course’s website often. This is especially true for the first week of class as there will likely be several announcements. The time of the day in which you participate
will usually be up to you but, you WILL need to be visiting our course on a regular basis to participate in discussion groups and the like. In addition to needing to log in on the first day of class, I will expect all students to actively participate within the discussion board and to be present on a consistent basis. If one signs in on day one, and then does not keep participating, they will be dropped. Also, if a pattern of nonparticipation later develops, and this behavior is not explained (via contacting me) I reserve the right to drop, without question.

Lastly, given that this is an on-line course, you MUST be prepared to read the material provided. Bearing in mind that most of my classes use open source texts (free!), specific information about the text required for this class will be at the bookstore. Conversely, you can e-mail me and I’ll gladly tell you.

Whew! I know it was a long letter. But, hopefully this letter, and the Canvas tutorial, will help you feel prepared to succeed in this course. However, if you have any questions about the course, please don’t hesitate to contact me either by e-mail or phone. I look forward to “meeting” you in on our first day of class.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Bonfiglio, MSW
Associate Adjunct Professor of Sociology
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Cell Phone: (626) 840-0374

Office Hours: call me anytime! (well, within reason 😊)
   Face-to-face appointments are made as needed. Don’t hesitate to ask!