

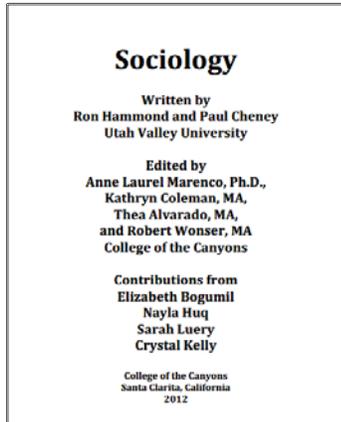


Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

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Textbook Name:

Sociology



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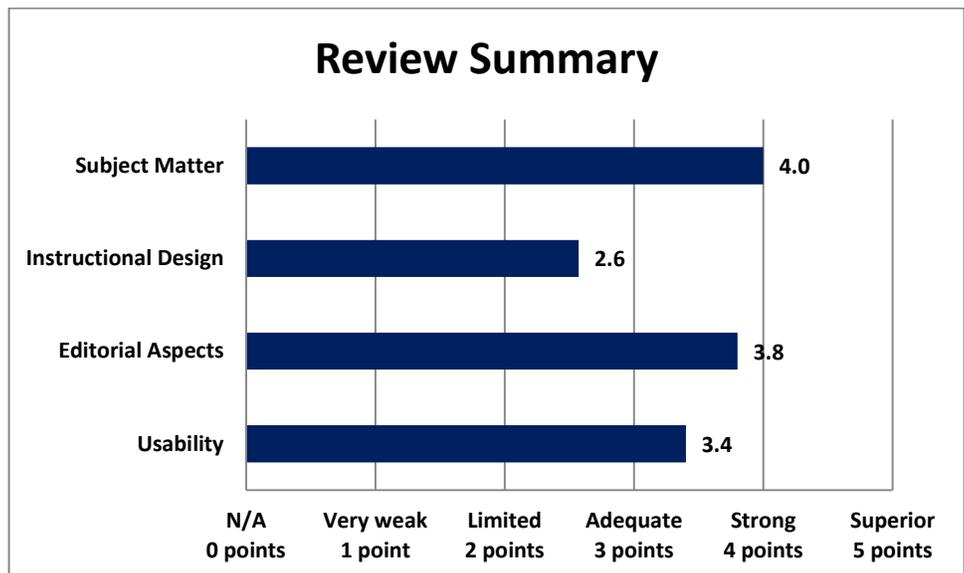
Format Reviewed:

[Online](#)

A fee may be associated with various formats.

Date Reviewed:

October, 2014



California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation

CA Course ID: [SOCI 110](#)

Subject Matter (30 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the content accurate, error-free, and unbiased?					X	
Does the text adequately cover the designated course with a sufficient degree of depth and scope?					X	

Does the textbook use sufficient and relevant examples to present its subject matter?					X	
Does the textbook use a clear, consistent terminology to present its subject matter?					X	
Does the textbook reflect current knowledge of the subject matter?					X	
Does the textbook present its subject matter in a culturally sensitive manner? (e.g. Is the textbook free of offensive and insensitive examples? Does it include examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?)					X	

Total Points: 24 out of 30

Please provide comments on any aspect of the subject matter of this textbook:

- Authors at times get a little careless in sentence construction or claims. This is not deliberate, but must be considered in future editions. For example, "The US Centers for Disease Control lists suicide as the 10th most common form of death with about 34,500+ reported last year in the US." Instead of 'last year' why not just provide the specific year? Leaving it out means the reader will have to figure out (from the cover page) when the book was published.
- If the book was published in 2012, I was struck by why some of the examples in the text are less current. For instance, in the coverage of Demography and Urbanization, authors use 1990 census data to illustrate population change covering 1990 to 1999. Given ready availability of data, I would have used 2000 to 2010 to cover the most recent census years.
- The concept Doubling Time is used in the text, but nowhere is the formula provided. Africa is mentioned as having a growth rate of 2.4, with its population expected to double in 29 years. How is the student to understand how the 29 years were obtained?
- I could not place the chapter on "Getting Through School" within an Introduction to Sociology course. Authors appear to be presenting some personal experience; chapter sounds more like counseling. I have not seen this in another text.
- We read in the text on deviance that Durkheim listed some categories as having the highest suicide rates: males, Protestants, singles. The divorced category is left out, and this is a serious omission considering the consistently strong impact of divorce on suicide---a fact that Durkheim covered in *Le Suicide*.
- Authors state that "Education is the great equalizer." Is this always true? The sentence conceals the vast inequality (of wealth and income) that exists in the US and around the world. Yes, education enhances the likelihood of getting a job that may or may not pay well, but how explain the vast sums obtained through inheritances by individuals that may not be highly educated, but simply because they are from families that over decades or centuries amassed vast fortunes and passed these on to their children? Think of the 1% versus the 99%. My point is that there must be a more nuanced way of writing certain things. There are many PhDs without jobs---even in Sociology. In the very next paragraph, authors state that "The top 10-25% of individuals in the U.S. are born into privilege. They are offered the educational levels, social networking, marriage market, and overall better life chances that only money can buy, including exclusive educations at prep-schools, admittance into competitive programs, and Ivy League degrees." If education is such a great equalizer, these 10-25 percent should not be so uniquely privileged. Someone outside that group will never enjoy the privileges that they have even with a PhD or MD.
- Test banks are not provided. Likewise, summaries of chapters are not given. Questions for discussion are not provided.

Instructional Design (35 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Does the textbook present its subject materials at appropriate reading levels for undergrad use?					X	
Does the textbook reflect a consideration of different learning styles? (e.g. visual, textual?)				X		
Does the textbook present explicit learning outcomes aligned with the course and curriculum?					X	
Is a coherent organization of the textbook evident to the reader/student?			X			
Does the textbook reflect best practices in the instruction of the designated course?				X		

Does the textbook contain sufficient effective ancillary materials? (e.g. test banks, individual and/or group activities or exercises, pedagogical apparatus, etc.)		X				
Is the textbook searchable?		X				

Total Points: 18 out of 35

Please provide comments on any aspect of the instructional design of this textbook:

- The book is organized into files, arranged in alphabetical order. This design is not great for pedagogical purposes. The first file is on Aging. This is typically not the first topic covered in an Introduction to Sociology course.
- The idea of breaking up chapters into single PDF files is great, as a student can easily download a file without having to do so for the entire book. It is the arrangement of these files that needs to be improved.

Editorial Aspects (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the language of the textbook free of grammatical, spelling, usage, and typographical errors?						X
Is the textbook written in a clear, engaging style?					X	
Does the textbook adhere to effective principles of design? (e.g. are pages laid out and organized to be clear and visually engaging and effective? Are colors, font, and typography consistent and unified?)					X	
Does the textbook include conventional editorial features? (e.g. a table of contents, glossary, citations and further references)				X		
How effective are multimedia elements of the textbook? (e.g. graphics, animations, audio)				X		

Total Points: 19 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- There is no table of contents (I did not find one). This needs to be corrected. In addition, the chapters need to be numbered and arranged in a chronological order or at least in the way that clearly indicates which Chapter is the Introduction to the entire book, what follows next, what comes, next, and so on. The Glossary, which is typically the last section of most textbooks comes as the 9th chapter.
- If the current treatment is maintained, I would urge authors to introduce a numbering system to chapters. Chapter 1 Introduction, Chapter 2 The Sociological Imagination, Chapter 3 What Sociologists Do, etc.

Usability (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the textbook compatible with standard and commonly available hardware/software in college/university campus student computer labs?						X
Is the textbook accessible in a variety of different electronic formats? (e.g. .txt, .pdf, .epub, etc.)		X				
Can the textbook be printed easily?						X
Does the user interface implicitly inform the reader how to interact with and navigate the textbook?				X		
How easily can the textbook be annotated by students and instructors?				X		

Total Points: 17 out of 25

Please provide comments on any aspect of access concerning this textbook.

- There is only one way to access the textbook. One must have the Adobe Acrobat PDF reader (or full software) in order to open the chapters and print, if needed.
- The instructor will need to indicate on the syllabus how the chapters are arranged, and match each chapter heading printed in the syllabus with the actual name that is available online.

Overall Ratings	Not at all (0 pts)	Very Weak (1 pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3 pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
What is your overall impression of the				X		

textbook?						
	Not at all (0 pts)	Strong reservations (1 pt)	Limited willingness (2 pts)	Willing (3 pts)	Strongly willing (4 pts)	Enthusiastically willing (5 pts)
How willing would you be to adopt this book?			X			

Total Points: 5 out of 10

Overall Comments

If you were to recommend this textbook to colleagues, what merits of the textbook would you highlight?

- The chapters stand alone to be opened and printed by the students.

What areas of this textbook require improvement in order for it to be used in your courses?

- Clearly, the organization of the chapters need improvement in terms of numbering so that they follow the standard practice in most textbooks on introduction to sociology. More graphical displays are also needed, providing the most up to date statistics.
- Supplementary materials are needed, such as test banks.

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