Gettin Started

You are in for an exciting and eye-opening experience. Sociology offers a fascinating view of social life. The sociological perspective opens a window onto unfamiliar worlds—and offers a fresh look at familiar ones. In this text, you will find yourself in the midst of Nazis in Germany and warriors in South America. Sociology is broad, and your journey will even take you to a group that lives in a city dump. (If you want to jump ahead, on pages 188–189 you can see the photos I took of the people who live—and work and play—in a dump in Cambodia.) You will also find yourself looking at your own world in a different light. As you view other worlds—or your own—the sociological perspective enables you to gain a different way of looking at social life. This is what many find appealing about sociology.

Get ready for a fascinating journey. But be warned: As you observe other groups, you might end up questioning your assumptions about life. This is what happened to me when I took my introductory course in sociology as a freshman in college.
At the center of sociology is the sociological perspective. This simply means that to explain people’s behavior, sociologists stress the social contexts in which people live. They look at how these contexts influence people’s lives. Sociologists want to know how groups influence people, especially how people are influenced by their society—a group of people who share a culture and a territory.

To find out why people do what they do, sociologists look at social location, the corners in life that people occupy because of their place in a society. They want to know how such things as jobs, income, education, gender, race–ethnicity, and age affect people’s ideas and behavior.

Look at the items I just mentioned: jobs, income, education, gender, race–ethnicity, and age. You can see that sociology gets personal. In a recurring feature of this text, you will be able to apply sociological ideas to yourself. Let’s go to the first Making It Personal.

### MAKING IT PERSONAL

#### Putting Yourself in the Sociological Perspective

Let’s take a quick start at doing sociology. I don’t want you to simply memorize terms. This is not what the introductory course in sociology is all about. Sociology is about people’s lives—and this includes your life. So let’s get started by applying the sociological perspective, which can be rather abstract to learn. Please reflect on the following:

When you were growing up, how did being identified with a group called females or with a group called males shape your ideas of who you are today? Consider how this has influenced how you feel about yourself. How has it helped to form your ideas of what you should attain in life? How is it part of the ways that you relate to other people? As you consider this, even briefly, you will start to see how your group memberships (social location) are vital in producing the you that you are. Seeing this is the beginning of the sociological perspective.

#### WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO LEARN?

After you have read this unit, you should be able to

1. Explain what the sociological perspective is.
2. Understand how both history and biography are essential elements of the sociological perspective.
3. Apply the sociological perspective to your own life.

To apply the sociological perspective to these students at the University of Virginia, you would include such concepts as football game, fan, gender, and college student. What other social contexts would you add?

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**sociological perspective** understanding human behavior by placing it within its broader social context; also called the sociological imagination

**society** people who share a culture and a territory

**social location** the group memberships that people have because of their location in history and society
The sociological perspective is so significant to this course that I want to make sure you're learning what it is. So let's apply it to your life once more.

Consider when you were just a newborn baby, a crying little thing that had just emerged from your mother. If someone had kidnapped you and brought you to the Yanomamo Indians in the jungles of South America, a year or so later when you began to talk, would your first words be in English? You know the answer.

Now extend this just a little bit. You also know that you would not think like an American. You would not grow up wanting credit cards, for example—or a car, a cell phone, and an iPad. You would take your place in Yanomamo society—perhaps as a food gatherer or a hunter—and you would not even know about the world left behind at birth. You would also grow up assuming that it is natural to want many children, not debating whether to have one, two, or three children.

Do you see just some of the influences of your society, how it has produced not just your language but also even what you want out of life? If you are thinking along with me, you can see that even your personal, intimate desires—such as what you expect about marriage and children—are related to society.

The shorthand term for this is society in you.

(If you are an immigrant or were reared in another culture, apply the same ideas to yourself. The specifics about language and certain goals in life such as number of children might differ, but the idea is exactly the same.)

The norms of this Yanomamo teenager in the jungles of Brazil differ from your norms, they guide her behavior the same as yours guide you.

Although the norms of this Yanomamo teenager in the jungles of Brazil differ from your norms, they guide her behavior the same as yours guide you.
UNIT 1.1 // TESTING MYSELF
DID I LEARN IT? ANSWERS ARE AT THE END OF THE CHAPTER

Don’t skip this self-test or any that follow. These self-tests are designed to let you know how you are doing. The questions are not meant to be tricky. On the contrary, they are an essential part of helping you learn and do well in this course.

These questions are a way for you to pause and review the main points you have just read. This reinforces your learning. You will also immediately spot areas you didn’t master. If you don’t know an answer or if you miss a question, go back to that section and find the answer. This will help you look up any question you missed and master the material.

I think you will find that these little reviews help you learn sociology. And your instructor and I want you to do well in this course. Go through the Testing Myself slowly and think along with each question. I have designed them to help you learn.

1. At the heart of the sociological perspective is understanding how people
   a. are all alike under the skin
   b. can never fully understand who they really are
   c. change their minds over little things
   d. are influenced by society

2. When sociologists apply the sociological perspective, they
   a. use their own experiences to interpret what people tell them
   b. keep in mind that all people are the same under the skin
   c. look at the influences of social location
   d. find that people will give different answers if they are listening to different types of music

3. Jobs, income, education, gender, race–ethnicity, and age are all examples of what goes into the
   a. ideal way that people relate to one another
   b. sociological perspective
   c. production of the gross national product
   d. deterioration and renewal of a society

4. C. Wright Mills used this term to refer to the sociological perspective
   a. sociological imagination
   b. crafting knowledge independently of external influences
   c. historical variables
   d. life changes and life chances

5. In reference to the sociological imagination (perspective), C. Wright Mills used the word history. By this term, he meant that
   a. corrupt politics is destroying our society
   b. the schools do an inadequate job of teaching current events
   c. power differences among societies make wars inevitable
   d. each society is located in a broad stream of events that gives specific characteristics to its people

6. In reference to the sociological imagination (perspective), C. Wright Mills used the word biography. By this term, he meant that
   a. the education channel does not do adequate background research on its topics
   b. although the death of individuals is inevitable, society itself continues
   c. our specific experiences in society give us our orientations to life
   d. life is ever changing, and each person influences others

7. Sociologists view human behavior primarily as the outcome of
   a. instincts
   b. external influences
   c. internal mechanisms
   d. inherited tendencies

8. Mentioned in the text are these two levels of influence on our behavior and thinking
   a. a globalizing world and our small corners in life
   b. job insecurity and inflation
   c. education and home life
   d. communication and transportation

9. To apply the sociological perspective to myself, I would
   a. consider mental influences on my behavior and ideas
   b. look primarily to my country’s history
   c. watch videos and movies
   d. consider how my experiences have influenced my behavior and ideas

Now that you have taken the first of the little quizzes that run through this book, you can see how they review the main points that you just read. Testing Myself really does help you learn. Again, for any questions that you missed, please go back and review the section where the answer is so you can learn that point. This prepares you for the next unit. As you continue doing this, you will master sociology.

We’ll do this together, as I have kept you in mind continuously as I prepared this text. Even though I don’t know you personally, and have never even met you, I know what it is like to start college and to have so many new ideas swirling around in your head. After some of the confusion wears off, you will find it to be a wondrous experience, and sociology will be an important part of it.

Let’s go on to the second unit. You will see that this unit is a little longer and we cover a little more ground.
Tradition Versus Science

Just how did sociology begin? Even in ancient times, people asked questions about why war exists, why some people become more powerful than others, and why some are rich but others are poor. However, they often based their answers on superstition, myth, or even the position of the stars. They did not test their assumptions.

Science, in contrast, requires theories that can be tested by research. Measured by this standard, sociology emerged about the middle of the 1800s when social observers began to use scientific methods to test their ideas.

Sociology was born in social upheaval. The Industrial Revolution had just begun, and masses of people were moving to cities in search of work. This broke their ties to the land—and to a culture that had provided ready answers to the difficult questions of life. The cities greeted them with horrible working conditions: low pay, long hours, and dangerous work. Families lived on the edge of starvation, and children worked alongside the adults. Life no longer looked the same, and tradition, which had provided the answers to social life, no longer could be counted on.

Tradition suffered further blows. With the success of the American and French revolutions, new ideas swept out the old. As the idea that people don’t belong to a king and that they possess inalienable rights caught fire, many traditional Western monarchies gave way to more democratic forms of government. This stimulated new perspectives.

About this time, the scientific method—using objective, systematic observations to test theories—was being tried out in chemistry and physics. This approach opened many secrets that had been concealed in nature. With traditional answers falling, the next step was to apply the scientific method to questions about social life. The result was the birth of sociology.

Auguste Comte and Positivism

The bloody French Revolution had just taken place, where the crowds had cheered at the public execution of the king and queen of France. With this still fresh in his mind, Auguste Comte (1798–1857) started to wonder what holds society together. Why do we have social order instead of anarchy or chaos? he asked. And when society becomes set on a particular course, what causes it to change?

The way to answer such questions, Comte decided, was to apply the scientific method to the social world, a process known as positivism. Just as the scientific method had revealed the law of gravity, so, too, it would uncover the laws that

science the application of systematic methods to obtain knowledge and the knowledge obtained by those methods

scientific method the use of objective, systematic observations to test theories

positivism the application of the scientific approach to the social world

sociology the scientific study of society and human behavior
Auguste Comte (1798–1857), who is credited as the founder of sociology, began to analyze the bases of the social order. Although he stressed that the scientific method should be applied to the study of society, he did not apply it himself. Comte did not do what we today call research, and his conclusions have been abandoned. Nevertheless, his insistence that we must observe and classify human activities to uncover society’s fundamental laws is well taken. Because he coined the term sociology, Comte often is credited with being the founder of sociology.

Herbert Spencer and Social Darwinism

Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), who grew up in England, is sometimes called the second founder of sociology. Spencer disagreed sharply with Comte. He said that sociologists should keep their hands off social reform: Societies are evolving, and we shouldn’t interfere with them. In a natural process, societies go from a lower form to a higher form. As Spencer put it, societies change from “barbarian” to “civilized.” This process takes many generations, and during this time a society’s most capable and intelligent members (“the fittest”) survive, while the less capable die out. These fittest members produce a more advanced society—unless misguided do-gooders get in the way and help the less fit (the lower classes) survive.

Karl Marx and Class Conflict

You might be surprised to see the name Karl Marx (1818–1883) in our discussion of the origins of sociology since he is known primarily as a communist and is demonized in the United States. Sociologists include him because he left a lasting understanding of how society is put together. He said that society is made up of two social classes: the bourgeoisie (boo-shwa-ZEE) (the capitalists, who own the capital, land, factories, and machines) and the proletariat (the exploited workers). You can look at history in various ways, but the theme running through it all, said Marx, is class conflict, the conflict between these two natural enemies.

Like Comte, Marx thought that people should try to improve society. Unlike Comte, Marx’s proposal for change was radical: revolution. Marx claimed that eventually, the workers would unite and break the chains that held them to the bourgeoisie. The workers’ revolution would be bloody, but it would usher in a classless society, one free of exploitation. People would then work according to their abilities and receive goods and services according to their needs (Marx and Engels 1848/1967). It doesn’t take too much imagination to see why the people in power in Germany weren’t too pleased with these ideas. They threw Marx out of the country, and his ideas, too, were discarded.

Karl Marx (1818–1883) believed that the roots of human misery lay in class conflict, the exploitation of workers by those who own the means of production. Social change, in the form of the workers overthrowing the capitalists was inevitable from Marx’s perspective. Although Marx did not consider himself a sociologist, his ideas about conflicting class interests have influenced many sociologists, particularly conflict theorists.
the country, and he settled in London, where he did most of his research.

It is important to stress that Marxism is not the same as communism. Marx proposed revolution as the way for workers to gain control of society, but he did not develop the political system called communism. This is a later application of his ideas. Marx himself was disgusted when he heard debates about his analysis of social life. After listening to some of the positions attributed to him, he shook his head and said, “I am not a Marxist” (Dobriner 1969b:222; Gitlin 1997:89).

Emile Durkheim and Social Integration

Until the time of Emile Durkheim (1858–1917), sociology was viewed as part of history and economics. Durkheim, who grew up in France, wanted to get sociology recognized as a separate academic discipline (Coser 1977). He achieved this goal in 1887 when the University of Bordeaux awarded him the world’s first academic appointment in sociology.

Durkheim’s second goal was to show how social forces affect people’s behavior. To accomplish this, he conducted rigorous research. One of his more interesting studies was on suicide. When Durkheim (1897/1966) compared the suicide rates of European countries, he found that each country had a different rate of suicide—and that these rates remain about the same year after year. He also found that different groups within a country have different suicide rates and that these, too, remain stable from year to year: Males are more likely than females to kill themselves, Protestants more likely than Catholics or Jews, and the unmarried more than the married. From these observations, Durkheim concluded that suicide is not what it appears—individuals here and there deciding to take their lives for personal reasons. Instead, social factors underlie suicide, which is why a group’s rate remains fairly constant year after year.

The key social factor in suicide, Durkheim found, is social integration, the degree to which people are tied to their social group: People who have weaker social ties are more likely to commit suicide. Consider Protestants, males, and the unmarried. Why do they have higher suicide rates? The Protestant religion encourages more independent thinking and action; males are more independent than females; and the unmarried lack the ties that come with marriage. Another way of putting this is to say that members of these groups have fewer of the social ties that keep people from committing suicide. In Durkheim’s term, they have less social integration.

Despite the many years that have passed since Durkheim did his research, the principle he uncovered still applies: People who are less socially integrated have higher rates of suicide. More than a century later, in our own society these same groups that Durkheim identified—Protestants, males, and the unmarried—are more likely to kill themselves.

It is important to stress the principle that was central in Durkheim’s research: Human behavior cannot be understood only in terms of the individual; we must always examine the social forces that affect people’s lives. Suicide, for example, appears to be such an intensely individual act that psychologists should study it, not sociologists. If we look at human behavior only in reference to the individual, we miss its social basis.

Let’s apply what Durkheim said in Making It Personal on the next page.

Max Weber and the Protestant Ethic

Max Weber (Mahx VAY-ber) (1864–1920), a German sociologist and a contemporary of Durkheim, also became a professor in the new academic discipline of sociology. With Durkheim and Marx, Weber is one of the three most influential of all sociologists. To introduce Weber, let’s consider an issue he raised that remains controversial today.

RELIGION AND THE ORIGIN OF CAPITALISM

Weber wanted to uncover the origin of capitalism, which was transforming society. His conclusion was surprising: Changes in religion brought about capitalism. Here’s how it works. Roman
MAKING IT PERSONAL

Applying Durkheim

Did you know that 29,000 whites and 2,000 African Americans will commit suicide this year? Of course not. And you probably are wondering if anyone can know something like this before it happens. Sociologists can. How? Sociologists look at patterns of behavior, recurring characteristics or events.

Do you want even more specific predictions? Look at Figure 1.1. There you can see the methods by which African Americans and whites commit suicide. I’m sure you are struck by how similar they are. This indicates something far beyond the individuals who kill themselves. But there is more than this. These patterns are so consistent that we can predict with high certainty that of the 29,000 whites about 15,500 will use guns to kill themselves. We can also predict that of the 2,000 African Americans 60 to 70 will jump to their deaths.

Isn’t this amazing! Suicide—one of the most intense, personal, individualistic acts in the world is vitally influenced by social forces. These patterns—both the numbers of people who kill themselves and the ways they take their lives—recur year after year. As Durkheim would say, this indicates that suicide reflects conditions of society. But what conditions? To be frank with you, we sociologists are weak here. I can point out that the popularity and accessibility of guns are part of it, but these patterns of suicide also reflect many conditions that we don’t understand. Someone is going to find these patterns so intriguing that he or she will investigate them. Could it be you? (Go back to page 7.)

**Figure 1.1** How Americans Commit Suicide

![Graph showing suicide methods and percentages for whites and African Americans.]

*Note: These totals are the mean of years 2001–2008. (“Mean” is explained in Table 2.2 on page 25.)*

*Source: By the author. Based on CDC, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control Fatal Injury Data, 2011.*

Catholics are taught that because they are church members they are on the road to heaven. This encourages them to hold on to traditional ways of life. Protestants, in contrast, those of the Calvinist tradition, are told that they won’t know if they are saved until Judgment Day. Understandably, this teaching made them a little uncomfortable, and they started to look for “signs” that they were in God’s will. What did the Calvinists conclude? That financial success is a blessing from God. It indicates that God is on their side. As you can understand, this motivated them to bring about this “sign” and receive spiritual comfort. They began to live frugal lives, saving their money, and investing it in order to make even more. A surprising result of religious teaching, then, was the birth of capitalism.

Weber (1904/1958) called this self-denying approach to life the *Protestant ethic.* He termed the desire to invest capital in order to make more money the *spirit of capitalism.* To test his theory, Weber compared the extent of capitalism in Roman Catholic and Protestant countries. He found that capitalism was more likely to flourish in Protestant countries. Weber’s conclusion that religion was the key factor in the rise of capitalism was controversial when he made it, and it continues to be debated today (Cantoni 2009).
UNIT 1.2 // TESTING MYSELF

Did I Learn It?

As you probably noticed, this is a lot of material to cover in a short space. Don't be surprised if you don't know the answers to all 10 questions in this Testing Myself. There is no reason to expect that you will learn everything in the first reading. Now it's time to find out if there are gaps in what you learned, and then go back and fill in those gaps. You are laying a foundation here, so be thorough.

1. Sociology arose when traditional answers were no longer satisfactory. One of the background factors that upset society, stimulating the development of sociology, was the
   a. global warming of the 1700s
   b. entrance of women into the workforce
   c. Industrial Revolution
   d. war between France and Germany

2. The term scientific method refers to
   a. using objective, systematic observations to test theories
   b. applying observations of the social world to the physical world
   c. applying observations of the physical world to the social world
   d. methods to change society

3. This term refers to the process of applying the scientific method to the social world
   a. rapport
   b. rapprochement
   c. negativism
   d. positivism

4. Auguste Comte, who developed the term sociology and is associated with positivism, developed a grandiose view of sociology. He said that sociologists should
   a. analyze all societies on earth
   b. not limit their analysis to the earth, but search for extraterrestrial societies as well
   c. reform the entire society, making it a better place to live
   d. study the religious influences on people

5. Herbert Spencer developed the term the survival of the fittest. Spencer's idea that societies evolve, changing from lower to higher forms and that the less fit, primarily the poor, die as the more fit survive, is called social Darwinism. Spencer disagreed with

Comte. He said that because societies are evolving, with the fittest surviving, sociologists should
   a. do solid social research
   b. stay away from social reform
   c. be examples to others by having solid marriages
   d. encourage people to postpone marriage and get an education

6. Karl Marx, who developed the concept class conflict, said there are two social classes, and they are natural enemies. These classes are the
   a. bourgeoisie and the proletariat
   b. upper and the lower
   c. principled and the unprincipled
   d. ruly and the unruly

7. Emile Durkheim, who did research on suicide in Europe, found that Protestants, males, and the unmarried are more likely to commit suicide than are Roman Catholics, females, and the married. He said this is because they
   a. have less education
   b. are less successful economically
   c. are less integrated into society
   d. are more likely to be escapists

8. Durkheim's research on suicide revealed this basic sociological principle:
   a. People who are more integrated in society are more likely to commit suicide.
   b. Human behavior cannot be understood only in terms of the individual; we must always examine the social forces that affect people's lives.
   c. Recognizing human rights is a basic principle that helps societies advance.
   d. If human rights are trampled on, no matter how much education is stressed, a society cannot advance in ways that really count.

Max Weber's 1904 analysis of how and why Protestants started capitalism remains a matter of controversy today.
9. Max Weber wrote a book called *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. By the term Protestant ethic, Weber referred to:
   a. a religious orientation that denies the reality of suffering
   b. the unity of religion and science
   c. attaining more education in order to get a better job
   d. a self-denying approach to life

10. By the term spirit of capitalism, Weber referred to:
   a. the people who developed windmills which increased production
   b. the supremacy of capitalism to socialism
   c. the desire to invest capital in order to make more money
   d. profits becoming the motivator in offering private education, including long distance learning

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**FROM ANOTHER STUDENT**

I am in my 50’s and am in about my 3rd year of college and have been putting off taking Sociology because I always thought of it as learning about welfare or people on welfare! I really am enjoying your text, easily read and understood. Thank you so much for all you’ve opened up for me.

Kathy Stone
Ozarks Technical Community College

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**Sexism at the Time:**

**Women in Early Sociology**

As you may have noticed, all the sociologists we have discussed are men. In the 1800s, sex roles were rigid, with women assigned the roles of daughter, wife, and mother. In the classic German phrase, women were expected to devote themselves to the four K’s: *Kirche, Küche, Kinder, und Kleider* (church, cooking, children, and clothes). Trying to break out of this mold meant risking severe disapproval. At this time, many people had no formal education at all, not even the first grade. For most of those who had gone to school, their learning was limited to basic reading, writing, and adding and subtracting. Higher education was rare and reserved primarily for men. Of the handful of women who were able to pursue higher education, some became prominent in early sociology. Marion Talbot, for example, was an associate editor of the *American Journal of Sociology* for thirty years, from its founding in 1895 to 1925. Some early female sociologists had an influence that went far beyond sociology. Frances Perkins was the first woman to hold a cabinet position, serving twelve years as U.S. Secretary of Labor under President Franklin Roosevelt. Grace Abbott became chief of the U.S. government’s Children’s Bureau. The photo wheel on the next page portrays some of these early sociologists.

The early female sociologists were on Comte’s side, viewing sociology as a way to improve society. They looked for ways to stop lynching, integrate immigrants into society, and improve the conditions of workers. As sociology developed in North America, a debate arose: Should the purpose of sociology be to reform society or to do objective research on society? Those who held the university positions—which were men—won the debate. They feared that advocating for the poor would jeopardize the reputation of sociology—and their own university positions. It was these men who wrote the history of sociology. Distancing themselves from the social reformers, they ignored the early female sociologists (Lengermann and Niebrugge 2007). Now that women have regained their voice in sociology—and have begun to rewrite its history—early female sociologists are again, as here, being acknowledged.
A classic example of how early female sociologists were ignored is Harriet Martineau (1802–1876). Although Martineau was from England, she is included here because she did extensive analyses of U.S. social customs. Sexism was so pervasive that when Martineau first began to analyze social life, she would hide her writing beneath her sewing when visitors arrived, for writing was “masculine” and sewing “feminine” (Gilman 1911/1971:88). Despite her acclaimed research on social life in both Great Britain and the United States, until recently Martineau was known primarily for translating Comte’s ideas into English.
Interested in social reform, Harriet Martineau (1802–1876) turned to sociology, where she discovered the writings of Comte. She became an advocate for the abolition of slavery, traveled widely, and wrote extensive analyses of social life.

Racism at the Time: W. E. B. Du Bois

Not only was sexism assumed to be normal during this early period of sociology, but so was racism. This made life difficult for African American professionals such as W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963). Du Bois, who became the first African American to earn a doctorate at Harvard, also studied at the University of Berlin, where he attended lectures by Max Weber. In 1897, Du Bois began teaching at Atlanta University, where he remained for most of his career.

It is difficult to grasp how racist society was at this time. As Du Bois passed a butcher shop in Georgia one day, he saw the fingers of a lynching victim displayed in the window (Aptheker 1990). When Du Bois went to national meetings of the American Sociological Society, restaurants and hotels would not allow him to eat or room with the white sociologists. How times have changed. Today, sociologists not only would boycott such establishments anywhere, but they would also refuse to hold meetings in that state. At that time, however, racism, like sexism, prevailed throughout society.

Du Bois did extensive research. For about twenty years, he published a book a year on black–white relations. He was also a social activist. Along with Jane Addams and others, Du Bois founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Continuing to battle racism both as a sociologist and as a journalist, Du Bois eventually embraced revolutionary Marxism. He became such an outspoken critic of racism that for years the U.S. State Department, fearing he would criticize the United States in other countries, refused to issue him a passport (Du Bois 1968). At age 93, dismayed that so little improvement had been made in race relations, Du Bois moved to Ghana, where he died and was buried (Stark 1989).

Jane Addams and Social Reform

Although many North American sociologists combined the role of sociologist with that of social reformer, none was as successful as Jane Addams (1860–1935). Like Harriet Martineau, Addams came from a background of wealth and privilege. She attended the Women’s Medical College of Philadelphia, but dropped out because of illness (Addams 1910/1981). On one of her trips to Europe, Addams was impressed with work being done to help London’s poor. From then on, she worked tirelessly for social justice.

In 1889, Addams co-founded Hull-House, located in Chicago’s notorious slums. Hull-House was open to people who needed refuge—to immigrants, the sick, the aged, the poor. Sociologists from the nearby University of Chicago were frequent visitors at Hull-House. Addams used her piercing insights into the social classes, especially the ways in which workers were exploited and peasant immigrants adjusted to city life, to try to bridge the gap between the powerful and the powerless. With Du Bois, Addams was one of the founders of the NAACP. She was also one of the founders of the American Civil Liberties Union. She fought for the eight-hour work day and for laws against child labor. Her efforts at social reform were so outstanding that in 1931, Addams was a co-winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace. She and Emily Greene Balch (in 1946) are the only sociologists to have won this coveted award.
Talcott Parsons and C. Wright Mills: Theory versus Reform

Like Du Bois and Addams, many early North American sociologists worked toward the reform of society, but by the 1940s the emphasis had shifted to social theory. A major sociologist of this period, Talcott Parsons (1902–1979), developed abstract models of society that influenced a generation of sociologists. C. Wright Mills (1916–1962), who deplored Parsons’ theoretical abstractions and the general dry analyses of this period, urged sociologists to get back to social reform. He said that sociologists were missing the point. Our freedom, he stated, was threatened by the coalescing interests of a group he called the power elite—the top leaders of business, politics, and the military. Shortly after Mills’ death came the turbulent late 1960s and early 1970s. This precedent-shaking era sparked interest in social reform, making Mills’ ideas popular among a new generation of sociologists.

C. Wright Mills (1916–1962) was a controversial figure in sociology because of his analysis of the role of the power elite in U.S. society. Today, his analysis is taken for granted by many sociologists and members of the public.

The Tension Today: Basic, Applied, and Public Sociology

BASIC SOCIOLOGY

As we have seen, two contradictory aims—analyzing society versus working toward its reform—have run through North American sociology since its founding. This tension is still with us today. Some sociologists see their proper role as doing basic sociology, analyzing some aspect of society, with no goal other than gaining knowledge. To this, others reply, “Knowledge for what?” They argue that gaining knowledge through research is not enough. Sociologists, they stress, need to use their expertise to help reform society, to help bring justice and better conditions to the poor and oppressed.

APPLIED SOCIOLOGY

As Figure 1.3 below shows, one attempt to go beyond basic sociology is applied sociology, using sociology to solve problems. Applied sociology takes us back to the roots of sociology, for as you will recall, sociologists helped to found the NAACP. Today’s applied sociologists lack the broad vision that the early sociologists had of reforming society, but their application of sociology is wide-ranging. Some work for business firms to solve problems in the workplace, while others investigate social problems such as pornography, rape, pollution, or the spread of AIDS. Sociology is even being applied to find ways to disrupt terrorist groups (Sageman 2008a, 2008b).

From Careers in Sociology on the next page, you can also see that a Ph.D. is helpful but not essential to be an applied sociologist.

C. Wright Mills

C. Wright Mills (1916–1962) was a controversial figure in sociology because of his analysis of the role of the power elite in U.S. society. Today, his analysis is taken for granted by many sociologists and members of the public.

Figure 1.3

From Basic to Applied Sociology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASIC SOCIOLOGY</th>
<th>APPLIED SOCIOLOGY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience: Fellow sociologists and anyone interested</td>
<td>Audience: Clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product: Knowledge</td>
<td>Product: Change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Constructing theory and testing hypotheses
2. Research on basic social life, on how groups affect people
3. The middle ground: criticisms of society and social policy
4. Analyzing problems, evaluating programs, and suggesting solutions
5. Implementing solutions (clinical sociology)

Source: By the author. Based on DeMartini 1982, plus events since then.
Careers in Sociology: What Applied Sociologists Do

Most sociologists teach in colleges and universities, sharing sociological knowledge with students, as your instructor is doing with you in this course. Applied sociologists, in contrast, work in a wide variety of areas—from counseling children to studying how diseases are transmitted. To give you an idea of this variety, let’s look over the shoulders of four applied sociologists.

Leslie Green, who does marketing research at Vanderveer Group in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, earned her bachelor’s degree in sociology at Shippensburg University. She helps develop strategies to get doctors to prescribe particular drugs. She sets up the meetings, locates moderators for the discussion groups, and arranges payments to the physicians who participate in the research. “My training in sociology,” Green says, “helps me in ‘people skills.’ It helps me to understand the needs of different groups, and to interact with them.”

Stanley Capela, whose master’s degree is from Fordham University, works as an applied sociologist at HeartShare Human Services in New York City. He evaluates how children’s problems—such as those that focus on housing, AIDS, group homes, and preschool education—actually work, compared with how they are supposed to work. He spots problems and suggests solutions. One of his assignments was to find out why it was taking so long to get children adopted, even though there was a long list of eager adoptive parents. Capela pinpointed how the paperwork got bogged down as it was routed through the system and suggested ways to improve the flow of paperwork.

Laurie Banks, who received her master’s degree in sociology from Fordham University, analyzes statistics for the New York City Health Department. As she examined death certificates, she noticed that a Polish neighborhood had a high rate of stomach cancer. She alerted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which conducted interviews in the neighborhood. Scientists from the CDC traced the cause to eating large amounts of sausage. In another case, Banks compared birth certificates with school records. She found that problems at birth—low birth weight, lack of prenatal care, and birth complications—were linked to low reading skills and behavior problems in school.

Daniel Knapp, who earned a doctorate from the University of Oregon, applied sociology by going to the city dump. Moved by the idea that urban wastes could be recycled and reused, he first tested this idea by scavenging in a small way—at the city dump at Berkeley, California. After starting a company called Urban Ore, Knapp (2005) did research on how to recycle urban wastes and worked to change waste disposal laws. As a founder of the recycling movement in the United States, Knapp’s application of sociology continues to influence us all.

From just these few examples, you can catch a glimpse of the variety of work that applied sociologists do. Some work for corporations, some are employed by government and private agencies, and others run their own businesses. You can also see that you don’t need a doctorate in order to work as an applied sociologist.

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY

The American Sociological Association (ASA) is promoting a middle ground between research and reform called public sociology. By this term, the ASA refers to harnessing the sociological perspective for the benefit of the public. Of special interest to the ASA is getting politicians and policy makers to apply the sociological understanding of how society works as they develop social policy (American Sociological Association 2004). Public sociology would incorporate both items 3 and 4 of Figure 1.3.

IF YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE about why the lines between basic, applied, and public sociology are not always firm, how basic sociology can morph into public sociology

Read more from the author: Unanticipated Public Sociology: Studying Job Discrimination in

Watch the Video Sociology on the Job: What is Sociology? in

SOCIAL REFORM IS RISKY

As some sociologists have found, promoting social reform is risky, especially if they work with oppressed people to demand social change. Always, what someone wants to “reform” is something that someone else wants to keep just the way it is. The opposition can come from people who are well connected politically. For their efforts at social reform, some sociologists have been fired. In a couple of cases, entire departments of sociology have even been taken over by their university administrators for “taking sociology to the streets,” siding with the poor and showing them how to use the law to improve their lives.

With roots that go back a century or more, this contemporary debate about the purpose and use of sociology is likely to continue for another generation.
UNIT 1.3 // TESTING MYSELF

DID I LEARN IT?  ANSWERS ARE AT THE END OF THE CHAPTER

Again, don’t let it bother you if you didn’t learn everything the first time through. Just go back and review the specific areas that this Testing Myself shows you missed.

1. Frances Perkins was the first woman to hold a cabinet position, serving twelve years as Secretary of Labor under President Franklin Roosevelt. Perkins was mentioned as an example of
a. the first case of affirmative action
b. an early female sociologist whose influence went far beyond sociology
c. tokenism
d. how socialism began to erode the American way of life

2. In early sociology in North America, controversy arose about the purpose of sociology. The issue was whether
a. sociologists should work to reform society or do objective research on society
b. women should be allowed to be sociologists
c. African Americans should be allowed to be sociologists
d. sociologists should take the side of the poor or of the wealthy

3. In early sociology in North America, women generally took the position that the purpose of sociology was to
a. improve family life
b. get the poor to give birth to fewer children
c. do objective research on society
d. reform society

4. The men who held the university positions won the debate about the purpose of sociology. When they wrote the history of sociology, female sociologists
a. picked the Department of Sociology at Princeton University, the publishers of this history
b. founded WISDOM, Women in Sociology Daring to Outdo Men
c. were mostly written out of that history
d. resigned en masse from colleges and universities and went into social work

5. The experiences of W. E. B. Du Bois illustrate the racism in society during the time of early sociology in North America. When Du Bois, one of the founders of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) and a prolific researcher on race relations, went to national meetings of the American Sociological Society
a. restaurants and hotels would not allow him to eat or room with the white sociologists
b. the association refused to let him speak
c. the U.S. State Department hid microphones in his hotel room
d. he was so poor that he brought canned goods from home to eat in his hotel room

6. Jane Addams was a sociologist who fought for the eight-hour work day and for laws against child labor. To help immigrants, the sick, the aged, and the poor, Addams also founded an organization in the slums of Chicago called Hull-House. Her efforts at social reform were so successful that she was
a. elected mayor of Chicago
b. awarded a million dollar grant by the state of Illinois
c. appointed Ambassador to Sweden
d. a co-winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace

7. Sociologist Talcott Parsons developed abstract models of society. Sociologist C. Wright Mills said that instead of doing this, sociologists should
a. do more research on the lives of the poor
b. use more advanced statistical techniques to analyze research
c. get back to social reform
d. open up centers to help the poor, like Jane Addams did with Hull-House in Chicago

8. The tension between sociological analysis and social reform that showed up in early sociology in North America continues today. To illustrate this ongoing tension, basic, applied, and public sociology are contrasted. The term basic sociology refers to doing research on
a. fundamentals of social life, such as learning language
b. some aspect of society, with no goal other than gaining knowledge
c. the medical institution in order to improve patient care
d. schools to improve teaching and learning

9. To illustrate the continuing tension between sociological analysis and social reform, basic, applied, and public sociology are contrasted. The term applied sociology refers to
a. using sociology to solve problems
b. doing research on the purpose of society
c. analyzing the basic philosophical questions of existence
d. trying to understand why at this historical point in time capitalism has become the world's dominant economic system

10. To illustrate the continuing tension between sociological analysis and social reform, basic, applied, and public sociology are contrasted. The term public sociology refers to
a. the study of international relations
b. research on the fundamentals of an organization, such as boot camp in the military
c. research on social interaction that occurs in public settings, such as parks
d. harnessing the sociological perspective for the benefit of the public
You have just been introduced to the sociological perspective and to the broad context that produced sociology. Congratulations on completing this chapter!

Before you close the text, however, it is time for a quick overview of what you have learned. This is one more way of “locking it all in,” so review this final section slowly and keep asking yourself, “Do I understand this?” If something isn’t clear, go back to the section where it was presented. As I mentioned in the previous units, it’s OK not to get everything the first time. It is the same with this review. You might have forgotten some things. Now is the time to find out. Also, the end-of-chapter reviews are excellent to use before you take in-class tests.

Unit 1.1 The Sociological Perspective: Seeing the Social Context

1. Explain what the sociological perspective is.
   - The sociological perspective is understanding how people are influenced by their social location (their social experiences, the social contexts that influence them).

2. Understand how both history and biography are essential elements of the sociological perspective.
   - The broad stream of events of history gives our society its specific characteristics—such as its ideas about how men and women should act and how they should relate to one another. Within our history-shaped society, we have specific experiences, our own biography. Both give us our orientations to life.

3. Apply the sociological perspective to your own life.
   - This is unique to you: Think about how your social locations have influenced your behavior and ideas.

Unit 1.2 Origins of Sociology

1. Summarize the origins of sociology.
   - Sociology developed when social change undermined traditional explanations of life. Main figures in sociology’s development are Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber. You should know their basic ideas.

2. State why Durkheim’s research on suicide reveals the essence of sociology.
   - Durkheim’s research revealed that each country has its own suicide rate, as do groups within a country. That these rates recur year after year indicates that suicide is more than individuals here and there deciding to kill themselves, that social conditions underlie suicide.

Unit 1.3 Sociology in North America: Social Reform Versus Social Analysis

1. Explain how sexism and racism were part of early sociology in North America.
   - At this time in history, sexism and racism were assumed to be a natural part of social life. For the most part, women and African Americans were pushed to the side and kept out of the mainstream of sociology.

2. Summarize the tension in sociology between social analysis and social reform.
   - The debate about sociology’s purpose—to do research on social life or to reform society—was won by the men who held university positions. As they wrote the history of sociology, they ignored the contributions of the social reformers. The debate continues today.
UNIT 1.1 // TESTING MYSELF
DID I LEARN IT? ANSWERS

1. d are influenced by society
2. c look at the influences of social location
3. b sociological perspective
4. a sociological imagination

5. d each society is located in a broad stream of events that gives specific characteristics to its people
6. c our specific experiences in society give us our orientations to life
7. b external influences
8. a a globalizing world and our small corners in life
9. d consider how my experiences have influenced my behavior and ideas

UNIT 1.2 // TESTING MYSELF
DID I LEARN IT? ANSWERS

1. c Industrial Revolution
2. a using objective, systematic observations to test theories
3. d positivism
4. c reform the entire society, making it a better place to live
5. b stay away from social reform

6. a bourgeoisie and the proletariat
7. c are less integrated into society
8. b Human behavior cannot be understood only in terms of the individual; we must always examine the social forces that affect people’s lives.
9. d a self-denying approach to life
10. c the desire to invest capital in order to make more money

UNIT 1.3 // TESTING MYSELF
DID I LEARN IT? ANSWERS

1. b an early female sociologist whose influence went far beyond sociology
2. a sociologists should work to reform society or do objective research on society
3. d reform society
4. c were mostly written out of that history

5. a restaurants and hotels would not allow him to eat or room with the white sociologists
6. d a co-winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace
7. c get back to social reform
8. b some aspect of society, with no goal other than gaining knowledge
9. a using sociology to solve problems
10. d harnessing the sociological perspective for the benefit of the public