SOCI 101

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

PROFESSOR
KURT REYMEERS, PH.D.

SOCIOLOGY.MORRISVILLE.EDU
The Sociology of Everyday Life

What does the *structure* of everyday social life look like? What are the “building blocks” of society? What are the social forces that shape our behavior?

We can begin with understanding (1) **STATUS** and (2) **ROLE**

1. **a. Status:**
   A recognized social position that an individual occupies. Status is passive and static. We APPROPRIATE status.

   **b. Status Set:**
   All possible statuses that a person can move between over time; for example,
   - businessman
   - dance partner
   - athlete
   - father
   - boss
   - Harley club member
   - fan
   - friend
The Dimensions of Social Space

Static Position = Status

analogy: x15, y59, z82 = “Friend”
  x8, y12, z71 = “Student”
  et cetera...
c. How statuses are obtained?

i. **Ascribed status: involuntary positions**  
   *for example,*
   - male or female (sex), skin color (race), daughter or son (familial relation)

ii. **Achieved status: voluntary positions**  
   *for example,*
   - college student/professor, athlete, officer, criminal

Note that the **two types of status work together**: what we are ascribed often helps/hinders us to achieve other statuses.

iii. **Master Status: a status with special importance to others** (to your **social identity**);  
   *for example,* your gender or state of disease
2. a. **ROLE**

The behavior expected of someone who fills a particular status. “Role” is active and dynamic. We REPLICATE status in our role behavior.

b. **ROLE SET:** A number of roles attached to a single status;

for example, Status = Mother

*Role Set* = disciplinarian, cook, caregiver, ‘doctor’, maid, ‘chauffeur’
The Dimensions of SOCIAL SPACE

Activity/Behavior at XYZ = Role

(e.g. $x_{15}$-$y_{59}$-$z_{82}$ = “Friend” = loyal, honest, sharing, listening, etc.)
The Sociology of Everyday Life

3. Social Roles demand a person’s time and energy
   a. Role Conflict
      Involves conflicts between two or more statuses (what role do I play?)
      For example:
      Conflict between role expectations of a police officer who catches her own son selling drugs – mother and police officer
   b. Role Strain
      Involves a strain from a single status (who should I satisfy?)
      For example:
      Manager who tries to balance concern for workers with task requirements from bosses
   c. Role Exit – (becoming an “ex”)
      Disengaging from social roles can be very traumatic if not properly prepared.
      For example:
      - Ex-boyfriend or girlfriend, ex-husband or wife, ex-worker (retiree), ex-student (graduate), ex-con (criminal), ex-patriate (traitor), etc.
The sun shines and people forget
The spray flies as the speedboat glides, and people forget
Forget they're hiding
The girls smile and people forget
The snow packs as the skier tracks, and people forget
Forget they're hiding
Behind an eminence front
Eminence front, it's a put on
Come and join the party, dressed to kill
Won't you come and join the party, dressed to kill
The drinks flow, people forget
The big wheel spins, the hair thins, people forget
The news slows, people forget
The shares crash, hopes are dashed, people forget
Forget they're hiding
Behind an eminence front
Eminence front, it's a put on

Theme: Status and Role – Positions and Fronts

Artist: The Who
Song: Eminence Front
Album: It’s Hard
I'm just an ordinary average guy
My friends all are boring
And so am I
We're just ordinary average guys

We all live ordinary average lives
With average kids
And average wives
We all go bowling at the bowling lanes
Drink a few beers
Bowl a few frames

We're just ordinary average guys

And every Saturday
we work in the yard
Pick up the dog doo
Hope that it's hard (woof woof)
Take out the garbage and
clean out the garage
My friend's got a Chrysler
I've got a Dodge

We're just ordinary average guys

Theme: The Sociology of Everyday Life

Artist: Joe Walsh
Song: Ordinary Average Guy
Album: Ordinary Average Guy
We don't need no education
We don't need no thought control
No dark sarcasm in the classroom
Teachers leave them kids alone
Hey teacher leave them kids alone
All in all it's just another brick in the wall
All in all you're just another brick in the wall
We don't need no education
We don't need no thought control
No dark sarcasm in the classroom
 Teachers leave them kids alone
Hey teacher leave them kids alone
All in all it's just another brick in the wall
All in all you're just another brick in the wall

Theme: Group Conformity