

Happy New Year Everyone!

I want to welcome you all to **Sociology 131**online. Let me begin by introducing myself. My name is Dr. Meena Sharma. I am a full time instructor at Henry Ford Community College. I am extremely excited about this course and I think as the weeks pass, you will enjoy sociology as much as I do!

This class will be delivered entirely online. Therefore, your success in this class depends upon you setting aside regular time each day to study, being motivated to study on your own, and having self-discipline. There is no arguing that the course should be more convenient for you since there is some flexibility in your participation and pace. However, you should expect to spend as much time (possibly more) interacting, preparing and completing tasks for this course as they would in a traditional campus course. If you are curious to know how much time you should be dedicating to this online course, just remember this: a 3 unit course usually requires 3 hours of "in-class" lectures and activities per week. Most college research suggests that 2 times that amount of time is required to adequately prepare for class (i.e. 6 hours). You should plan on dedicating at the very least, that amount of time to the course. Further, keep in mind that more reading is required in this online class than a traditional campus class since you must read the chapter lecture content *in addition* to the text. Keep in mind, even though there is a brief PowerPoint lecture in each packet, there is more to each chapter that you need to know! Reading in this course is a must!!

Like any other on-campus course, you have a fixed schedule of activities and assignments to complete each week with due dates! You will also be interacting with me and with other students in the class on a regular basis throughout the semester. Although we (students and the instructor) are not tied down to specific times of day, we will adhere to a weekly schedule that includes various activities, including discussions, critical thinking assignments, post tests, etc. Please review the schedule, and please pay careful attention to deadlines listed in the course syllabus! You now have a course syllabus that includes the schedule of your assignment including due dates for your assignments so please do not email or call me to tell me you forgot or didn't have enough time to get your work in. ***If you have a busy and hectic life and don't think that you can dedicate enough quality time to this course, then I strongly recommend that you consider taking this course at a later time.*** The key to success in this class is responsibility and organization. Be aware of all due dates and time limits at all times! Due to the nature of this course, deadlines will not be extended for any reason, so please do not ask for an extension.

If you are hesitant and not sure that you can handle the commitment of an online course take the self-test on the HFCC UCompass login page: <http://henryford.ucompass.com>. Click the **Student Resources** link and then click "**Is online for you?**" to learn if your learning style and self-discipline are suited for online learning.

Technical Requirements:

There are certain technical requirements for success in this course. You are responsible for the necessary hardware and software as well as the ability to competently use both. **You must have access to a computer with a reliable Internet connection.** To ensure that your computer is ready for online learning click "**PC Requirements**" in the **Student Resources** section of the UCompass login page: <http://henryford.ucompass.com>. The **Technology Analysis** at the bottom of the page will evaluate your computer to make sure you have the necessary software applications to access the course content. If you do not have the correct version of an application there is a link to a free upgrade page. Make sure you do this before class starts!

Should you need Technical Support with your UCompass course click the Tech Support link on the UCompass login page. Call the support numbers listed or submit your issue via e-mail and you will receive a timely response.


IMPORTANT: Should you experience issues with your computer or Internet service, you must use the computers at HFCC or any public library. ***Please note that if you experience technical issues with your computer and/or the Internet, it is YOUR problem and YOUR responsibility to find another computer to use. You are STILL responsible for assignments regardless of the status of your computer. Because of this, you should not wait until the last minute to complete assignments.*** If you encounter any issue that may prevent you from completing assignments on time, you should contact me ASAP. Since I expect you to complete all assignments by the specified due dates, and have reminded you not to procrastinate, I will likely not allow you extra time for uncompleted work.

How Your Online Course Works:

The web address for your online course is: <http://henryford.ucompass.com>. **You will not have access to this course until the first day of regular classes for the semester.** The first day of class for the semester is **Monday January 10, 2011. You can access the class beginning at 8:00am on this day.** It will not be available sooner.

Log into Ucompass using your **WebAdvisor username** and the four-digit **mmdd of your birth** as your password (if your birthday is July 4, your password would be 0704). If you do not know your WebAdvisor username, find it through the

HFCC website at <http://www.hfcc.edu>. Click the blue WebAdvisor box, and then click the link for Students and follow the prompts to display your username.

 If you have trouble with your username or password contact the HFCC Help Desk, either via email at helpdesk@hfcc.net or telephone: (313)845-6345. Please DO NOT contact me; I cannot provide technical assistance with UCompass.

Each time you enter the course you will see the Announcements page. Review this page regularly for new course information. YOU are responsible for keeping up with announcements. **Please also check your UCompass email regularly** in case I send the class an email feature. YOU are responsible for keeping up with your UCompass email.

Soc 131: Each week under the “Course Materials” section, you will see a “packet.” Packets are readings, activities and assignments for each week. **The first week of classes, you will have 2 packets to complete: The Getting Started and the Chapter 1 packets. These 2 packets will be left “on” for 1 week.** Each packet will give details regarding the readings required for that particular week as well as specifics of the activities and/or assignments that are due for that week. The activities and assignments will vary throughout the semester. The assignment will be some sort of writing reflecting your performance of an activity and your understanding of the subject matter of the packet. The particulars of the assignment will be expressed in each individual packet. The activities and assignments from that packet will be due the following Monday at 8:00 P.M. **Once the packet has been “turned off” you will no longer be able to access it. Please refer to the course schedule and syllabus for due dates and any exceptions to this routine**

Please turn in all of your assignments on time. You will always be given enough time to complete assignments for each chapter. Once the deadline for the chapter has been reached, you can no longer turn your work in. If you miss a deadline, your assignment can not be made up and there is no opportunity for extra credit.

What you need:

There is only 1 text required for this course.

Curry, Jibou, Schwirian. (2008). *Sociology for the Twenty-First Century* (5th Edition): Pearson Prentice Hall. ISBN: 0132288214

I hope that you have read and understand the content of this letter. Once the course is available for you to access, you will need to open the “**Getting Started**” packet. In this packet you will find an extra copy of this welcome letter plus, these documents: **The course schedule, Syllabus, Helpful Hints, Getting Started Information.** These are very important documents for the course so I encourage you to print them out and keep them handy for your own personal reference. I hope all of these documents help guide you through this course but never hesitate to contact me if needed. Once you have reviewed all of these documents, please take the **Course Information Quiz**. Also, be sure to spend some time getting acquainted with the course and with UCompass. Click around to discover what material can be found in each link.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me at msharma1@henryford.ucompass.com. I check email several times per day, and I will respond to your email as quickly as possible. I will make every effort to respond to email within 24 hours unless it's the weekend or a holiday. **Email is the best way to reach me.** If you need to contact me via office telephone (313-317-1706), please be aware that it may take me longer to get back to you. However, I will still attempt to get back to you within 24 hours during these days. If you are leaving me a voice mail please speak loud and clear.

I wish you a fun and successful semester!

All the best,

Dr. Sharma