

EAST HADDAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SOCIOLOGY CURRICULUM

Approved by the
East Haddam Board of Education

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Curriculum Contents

This curriculum is divided into 6 areas of study:

Unit I – Historical Development of Sociology as a Scientific Study of Behavior

Unit II – Sociological Research and Methodology

Unit III – Culture, Ethnocentrism and Objectivity

Unit IV – Early Childhood Physical, Social and Emotional Development

Unit V – Adolescence and Adulthood

Unit VI – The Functionalist Model and “Repairs” for Maladjustment

Course Description

Sociology is a course designed for a twofold task. First, it is to acquaint the student with correct terminology and some basic concepts of the discipline. Second, to teach the student about valid research methodology. It is a course designed to be both contemporary and topical, as well as informative and practical. In an ideal sense, it can help the student understand the transitions of adolescence and improve quality of life through better understanding.

Content and Performance Standards

The Connecticut Social Studies Curriculum Framework contains eight content standards related to Sociology. The eight standards numbered one, three, five, seven, nine, eleven, thirteen, and fourteen and the corresponding performance standards are listed below.

Content Standard #1 – Historical Thinking

Students will apply knowledge of historical thinking that has led to the formation of various norms and values in the U.S. This will include a development of thinking and recognizing change over time, contextualizing, comprehending and analyzing historical literature, researching historical sources, understanding the concept of historical causation, understanding competing narratives and interpretation and constructing narratives and interpretation.

Educational experiences will assure that students:

- gather, analyze, and reconcile historical information, including contradictory data, when studying societal norms and values;
- evaluate data within the historical, social, political, and economic context in which it was created, testing the credibility and evaluating bias when studying social norms and values;
- examine and describe the multiple intersecting causes of events leading to and continuing the existence of social norms and values; and
- use primary sources to document and analyze multiple perspectives of aforementioned causes and events.

Content Standard #3 – Historical Themes

Students will apply knowledge of historical themes to foster an understanding of the how's and why's of both the formation of and the continued perpetuation of societal norms and values.

Educational experiences will assure that students:

- describe, explain, and analyze political, economic, and social consequences that come about as a result of resolution of conflict;
- demonstrate an understanding of the ways race, gender, ethnicity, class, and age have effected the formation of social norms and values; and
- analyze the causes and consequences of major technological turning points in history, and how they have effected the formation and re-formation of norms and values.

Content and Performance Standards (Cont'd)

Content Standard #4 – Applying History

Students will recognize the continuing importance of historical thinking and historical knowledge in understanding the areas of social service. Understand reasons why this is part of government and private service. Appreciated how it came about and why it still remains.

Educational experiences will assure that students:

- initiate questions and hypotheses about the historical development of social service programs;
- describe and analyze using historical data and understandings, the options, which are available to those who have become part of the social service “safety net”; and
- be active learners at the variety of social service institutions and agencies that there is an opportunity to visit and/or work at.

Content Standard #5 – United States Constitution and Government

Students will apply knowledge of the U.S. Constitution, how the U.S. system of government works and how the rule of law and the values of liberty and equality have an impact on individual, local, state, and national norms.

Educational experiences will assure that students:

- analyze historical and contemporary conflicts through the respective lens of local, state, and national norms;
- evaluate the contemporary roles of political parties, associations, media groups, and public opinion in local, state, and national norms and values; and
- describe means of conflict resolution as means of promoting valid social change.

Content Standard #7 – Political Systems

Students will explain that political systems emanate from the need of humans for order, leading to compromise and the establishment of authority.

Educational experiences will assure that students:

- analyze and evaluate the advantage and disadvantages of limited and unlimited government;
- explain how the purposes served by government have implications for the individual and society; and
- compare and evaluate a variety of systems of governance throughout the world, in various locations and amongst various cultures.

Content and Performance Standards (Cont'd)

Content Standard #9 – Places and Regions

Students will use spatial perspective to identify and analyze the significance of physical and cultural characteristics of places and world regions.

Educational experiences will assure that students:

- explain and describe the natural and cultural characteristics of one place (culture) to distinguish it from another;
- describe the human and natural characteristics of a place and how they shape or place culture;
- analyze ways different groups in society view places and regions differently; and
- demonstrate how personal knowledge and experiences influence an individual's perception of places.

Content Standard #11 – Human Systems

Students will interpret spatial patterns of human migration, economic activities, and political units in Connecticut, the nation, and the world.

Educational experiences will assure that students:

- describe the consequences of human population patterns and growth trends over time;
- explain the characteristics, distribution, and relationships of economic systems at various levels;
- explain and analyze how various populations and economic elements interact and influence patterns of settlement; and
- analyze the formation and cultural characteristics of urban, suburban, and rural settlements.

Content Standard #13 – Limited Resources

Students will demonstrate that because human, natural, and capital resources are limited, individuals, households, businesses, and governments must make choices.

Educational experiences will assure that students:

- analyze the impact of economic choices on the allocation of scarce resources;
- illustrate how resources have the potential to be used in a variety of ways depending on cultural norms;
- define, defend, and predict how the use of specific resources may impact the future;
- analyze how technological change can affect long-range productivity; and
- analyze how market forces and government regulation impact the use of resources.

Content and Performance Standards (Cont'd)

Content Standard #14 – Economic Systems

Students will demonstrate that various economic systems coexist, and that economic decisions are made by individuals and/or governments, influenced by markets, cultural traditions, individuals, and governments in the allocation of goods and services.

Educational experiences will assure that students:

- evaluate economic systems by their ability to achieve broad societal goals, such as efficiency, equity, security, employment, stability, and economic growth;
- describe how all countries economies reflect a mix if market, command, and traditional cultural elements;
- understand the causes and effects of periods of growth and recession evident in the history of market economies;
- explain the reasons for government action in the economy, including providing public goods and services, redistributing income, and promoting employment; and
- analyze the impact of specific government actions in the economy on different groups, including consumers, employees, and businesses.

UNIT I – HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AS A SCIENTIFIC FIELD OF STUDY

Content Standards 1, 3, 4, 7, 11, 13

Unit Goals

Students will explore and understand the contributions of early sociologists in Europe and later the United States. They will connect the application of scientific methodology and emerging sociological theory backed by scientific study.

Learner Outcomes

The students will:

- define the science of sociology;
- describe sociology's place amongst the social sciences;
- describe the role of Auguste Comte as the “father of sociology;”
- describe the contributions of Herbert Spencer;
- describe the contributions of Emile Durkheim;
- describe the contributions of Max Weber;
- describe the contributions of Sigmund Freud;
- examine the conflict models of the German philosopher Hegel and Karl Marx;
- explain the concept of “Social Darwinism;”
- examine the functionalist models of Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim;
- examine the role of Conflict, especially the French revolution, in the formation of the behavioral sciences;
- describe how sociological studies evolved from a need for order in a world devoid of such in the mid 19th century; and
- examine the need to maintain a high degree of objectivity in order to do valid behavioral research.

Suggested Classroom Illustrations

- Students will examine the functionalist and conflict models and determine some of the practical applications of each.
- Students will examine as many incidents as they can identify as examples of “Social Darwinism” at work.
- Students will divide into small groups to examine society and list the important social institutions and how they function within our society.
- Students will describe how “repairing” any breakdown of function within these institutions can lead to social issues, and how restoring function can alleviate many of these issues.
- Students will form into two groups and gather information to compare and contrast the definitions of psychology and sociology as behavioral sciences.

Suggested Evaluation/Assessment Activities

- Tests (essay and identification) on the various people and schools of thought.
- Students will participate in small group research activities to investigate the variety of social theories and present such theories to their classmates. Rubrics will include encouraging the use of power point as a tool to help organize a presentation as well as a visual aid to provide focus.
- Students will again divide into groups (two this time) and compare and contrast the relative strengths and weaknesses of the “conflict perspective” compared to the “functionalist perspective.”

UNIT II – RESEARCH METHODS

Content Standards 1, 3, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14

Unit Goals

The student will understand and demonstrate use of valid sociological research methods.

Learner Outcomes

The students will:

- describe classical laboratory experiments and understand control groups;
- describe the case study as a means of gathering information to help understand behavior;
- explain how statistical analysis can be used as a means of predicting human behavior;
- describe how sample surveys can be a valid measure of human behavior;
- Compare and contrast the potential for accuracy between random and representative sample surveys/polls;
- describe both the strengths and weaknesses of participant observation with special emphasis on objectivity;
- explain how the various research methods can be used within the context of a functionalist perspective;
- explain how historical analysis can be used for valid sociological research;
- describe why verifiability is so crucial to research, to continuously validate results; and
- explain why it is absolutely crucial to maintain a very high degree of objectivity when doing any type of behavioral research.

Suggested Classroom Illustrations

- Students will demonstrate objectivity in a variety of sociological investigations done throughout the semester.
- Students will divide into small groups and investigate the relative strengths and weaknesses of the various research methods for practical applications in a variety of situations- everything must be validated.
- Students will choose at least one research methodology and apply it to a classroom assignment relative to the unit of study. They will do some valid research on behavior employing at least one of the aforementioned research methods
- Students will demonstrate their grasp of the concept of a representative sample in polling and survey taking. They will do so by actually executing a survey on some aspect of human behavior and share results with their classmates.
- Students will examine the latest research concerning human brain growth and function.
- Students will have a number of opportunities to use a variety of research methods in completing long-term research assignments.

Suggested Evaluation/Assessment Activities

- Essay tests/assignments on a variety of topics relative to, and in need of, sociological research. This could include topics such as the development of the frontal cortex, abusive behavior and its relationship to eating disorders, the role of various media in influencing personality/behavior.
- Project/presentation completion of research being sure to use valid research methodology. This is a study of behaviors and relationship to the socialization process and is a long term/final project that is begun in the early stages of the semester.

UNIT III – CULTURE, ETHNOCENTRISM AND OBJECTIVITY

Content Standards 3, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14

Unit Goals

The student will examine the concept of culture, with its infinite variety, and understand the necessity to avoid ethnocentrism and maintain objectivity-to study any type of group without pre-judging or over-analysis.

Learner Outcomes

The students will:

- discuss and define the concept of culture;
- examine the concepts of acculturation and socialization;
- describe the differences between culture and civilization;
- describe the general makeup of a pre-literate society;
- investigate the variations in culture by level of sophistication and geographic location;
- define the social function of religion;
- examine the social function, and wide variety, of political systems;
- define the social function, and myriad varieties, of family structure;
- examine the social function of some form of education structure;
- examine the potential social effects of geographic location;
- examine the potential social effects of environment on a culture;
- describe subcultures, countercultures and other variations of culture;
- describe the differences between material and non-material culture;
- compare and contrast literate and pre-literate cultures; and
- compare and contrast rural, urban, and suburban cultures that have emerged in the 20th century.

Suggested Classroom Illustrations

- Students will establish small groups to compare and contrast a minimum of two “foreign” cultures with that of the United States. These findings will be shared with classmates.
- Student will divide into small groups to compare and contrast the ritual behaviors of at least three other cultures with those of the United States. Each group will then present their findings to share with the entire class.
- Students will compare and contrast adolescent subculture with mainstream culture and note how adolescent influence changes the arts, fashion, language, etc.

Unit III – Culture, Ethnocentrism and Objectivity (Cont'd)

Suggested Classroom Illustrations (Cont'd)

- Students will organize into small groups and examine the role of each social institution (family, political structure, education, religion, economy) has in the formation and reinforcement of culture.
- Students will organize into small groups examine the aforementioned social institutions in the context of a functionalist perspective and try to use this theory to “repair” one or more clearly defined social ills. Problems and solutions will be presented to classmates for examination.
- Students will research and describe how we see leaders do this on multiple levels as political, religious, economic and family managers.

Suggested Evaluation/Assessment Activities

- Essay tests on the wide variety of terminology relevant to the subject as well as accumulated knowledge about a variety of newly studied cultures and subcultures.
- Project completion of written studies and class presentations, using Internet resources, on a chosen culture, subculture or behavior. Students will then be encouraged to use charts and illustrations a focal points in their presentation-and that power point can do all of this effectively and efficiently.

UNIT IV – CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Content Standards 1, 3, 4

Unit Goals

The student will examine the physical, emotional, and social development of pre-adolescent children. The life of a child from birth to their mid-teens.

Learner Outcomes

The students will:

- carefully examine and describe how a child develops speech patterns by social contact;
- examine, in detail, the development of the human brain from birth to the fully developed frontal cortex;
- examine a child's very powerful need for a sense of comfort and security-even more important than the need for food;
- describe how a parent/guardian must provide physical comfort for as child to develop properly into s secure and productive adult;
- describe, in detail, the role that social groups play in childhood development and paying special attention to siblings, play groups, school groups, and peer groups;
- describe, in detail, the seven stages of physical development that lead to walking and thus freeing hands for using tools;
- describe the physical development of hand-eye coordination, depth perception and the ability to grasp and use tools;
- describe the physical developments of the total oral cavity and the resultant development of human speech;
- describe, in detail, the full development of the frontal cortex and its effect of eventually allowing an adult to begin to actually ponder the consequences of their actions, and to actually begin to curb impulsive behavior; and
- describe why scientists have stated that a human being's personality is often fully formed by the age of three years old.

Suggested Classroom Illustrations

- Students will use textbooks and Internet resources to research the various clearly defined stages of child development.
- Research the number of learning activities that reinforce a wide variety of languages, gestures and postures that can be learned in response to particular social expectations that may vary dramatically from one place to another.
- Examine and clearly define the role that siblings play in the emotional and social development of a child.

Unit IV – Childhood Development (Cont'd)

Suggested Classroom Illustrations (Cont'd)

- Examine and clearly define the role that play the group plays in the social and emotional development of a child.
- Examine and clearly define the role that the school group plays in the emotional and social development of a child and how competition is first introduced as a social issue.
- Carefully examine and be able to describe how the human brain develops to maturity with some special emphasis on the frontal cortex.
- Carefully describe the role that parents need to play in order for a child to most fully experience a normal childhood.

Suggested Evaluation/Assessment Activities

- Tests will be essays on topics such as early childhood development, the role of various groups in this process, the role of parents, the process necessary to try to ensure healthy emotional and social development.
- Project completion (using internet resources as well as the textbook) of small group examinations of each stage of development during childhood, and presentations to the remainder of the class in order to share this research information. Presenters will be encouraged to make use of technology like power point to help organize and add focus to a presentation.

UNIT V – ADOLESCENCE AND ADULTHOOD

Content Standards 1, 3, 4

Unit Goals

The student will explore and describe the developmental stages after childhood and the transition into adulthood.

Learner Outcomes

The students will:

- analyze and clearly define the myriad of physical changes that occur during adolescence. Describe the emotional changes that also occur and their possible connection to the previously mentioned physical changes;
- identify and describe the complex web of changing social relationships that can also be related to the changes listed above;
- examine the variety of rites of passage that occur in a mix of cultures from various parts of the world-and compare them to ours;
- carefully examine the reduced role of parents and the dramatically strengthened role assumed by peer groups;
- carefully examine why a sense of independence accompanied by often-risky behavior plays such a crucial role in normal adolescent development;
- clearly define the social expectations of an adult within American society; and
- compare and contrast the relative difficulty of growing up as a teenager today or when your parents did, taking care to compare diseases, levels of violence, divorce rates, etc.

Suggested Classroom Illustrations

- Students will use textbook, Internet, class discussions, and videotape when available, to define social, emotional and physical changes during adolescence. They will divide into small groups and choose one of the adolescent years to research and present to their classmates.
- Student will divide into small groups, use resources and personal experiences to define and describe rites of passage here and in at least three other cultures and share their group's results to the entire class.
- Students will divide into four groups and research how risky adolescent behaviors adversely affect automobile insurance rates, juvenile laws, school codes, and behavior expectations for teens in general. (Each group should take one of the four economic or social issues.)
- Students will form at least three research groups, interview adults, search the internet and print media, and try to determine the relative difficulty of living now or in the age when parents grew up.

Suggested Evaluation/Assessment Activities

- Essay tests on topics of physical/emotional/social development of adolescents, rites of passage, becoming an adult (what is it?), brain development in its final stages, and influences from other social institutions (aside from family).
- Projects/presentations of a written analysis of adolescent behavior and the importance of experimentation and rebellion in this very unique growth process. Groups of three or less should investigate all of the physical, emotional and social aspects of development in one particular year of adolescence (each group has a different year) and organize a class presentation for the entire class using valid research and appropriate technology as well.

UNIT VI – THE FUNCTIONALIST MODEL AND “REPAIRS” FOR MALADJUSTMENT

Content Standards 1, 3, 7, 11, 14

Unit Goals

The student will examine a number of behaviors considered abnormal, compare these experiences with their knowledge of human development/socialization and both figure out what contributing factors were involved and how to try and repair damage if possible. This is a practical application of knowledge already mastered and a direct application of the functionalist perspective.

Learner Outcomes

The students will:

- examine the lifestyle of Michael Jackson and how his self image developed from childhood experiences;
- describe why Michael Jackson seems to feel a need to be around children and still do childish things despite being over forty years old;
- examine the nature of dysmorphia of all types and how all seem to generate from a faulty self-image;
- describe, in detail the childhood developments (or lack thereof) that seemed to lead to Jeffrey Dahmer’s disorder;
- clearly define the specific steps that lead to the development of a serial killer and why this type of behavior is so rare;
- clearly define the role of facilitators, especially alcohol, and how they help to promote aberrant behavior-most notably serial murderers;
- explain how social definitions of image, reinforced by various types of media, can lead to a variety of behavior disorders;
- compare and contrast the self-image/self destructive disorders of body dysmorphia (bodybuilding/”bulking up) and eating disorders (anorexia nervosa and bulimia);
- explain the behaviors of transsexuals, transvestites, and homosexuals from the aspect of self- image perceptions;
- explain the development of addiction issues and decide whether these are correctible choices or illness; and
- explain how so many behaviors today are so widely treated by prescriptions of psychotropic medications.

Suggested Classroom Illustrations

- Students will research and review videotape and other resources available on the subject of Michael Jackson’s childhood experiences and present-day questionable behaviors. They will respond, in writing, to the sociological explanations for his rather bizarre behaviors.
- Students will research and explain all the behaviors necessary to produce a serial killer. They will then divide into groups to examine how many of the prominent cases fit this unique set of behaviors. Results will be presented to the entire class.
- Students will be presented with firsthand explanations, from a Hale-Ray alumnus, about the personal experiences of eating disorders.
- Students will organize into small groups in order to research the Internet, print media, and audiovisual resources for the latest information available about self-image and lifestyle choices. Each group will choose one for research and presentation to the remainder of the class. These will include transgender, transvestite, and homosexual choices.
- Research and clearly define the physical and psychological aspects of addiction and determine how much is controllable personality traits (often inherited) and how much is physical illness and much more difficult to correct.
- Divide into groups to investigate the increasing use of behavior modifying medications. Each group will research at least one such drug and all results will be shared with the entire class.

Suggested Evaluation/Assessment Activities

- Essay assignments carefully examining the behaviors stemming from image disorders such as, anorexia and bulimia, transgender, transvestite, homosexual, serial killers, addicts, and body dysmorphia.
- Final project/presentations regarding a type of behavior, using valid research methodology. And presented to the class, sharing information and using power point technology once again.

Print Media and Resources

Textbooks

Introduction to Sociology, Ethel wood and Judith Lloyd Yero, McDougal Littell Inc. Evanston Illinois, 2002

Homeless in Paradise, Rob Rosenthal, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1994

Classroom Library

Patterns of Culture, Ruth Benedict, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston 1959

Generations, Clifford Adleman, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1992

Down to Earth Sociology-introductory readings, James N. Henslin, The Free Press, New York, 1995

Teaching About Cultural Awareness, University of Denver, Denver, 1994

Social Structure and Social Thought, Norman Birinbaum, Oxford University Press, New York, 1993

The Practice of Social Research, Earl Babbie, Wadsworth Press, Belmont, CA 1983

The Structure of Sociological Theory, 4th Ed., Johnathan H, Turner, The Dorsey Press, Chicago, 1986

Community and Society, Ferdinand Tonnies, Michigan State University Press, East Lansing Michigan, 1957, originally published in 1887

The Sociology of Cities, James L. Spates and John J. Macionis, 2nd Ed., Wadsworth, Belmont, CA 1987

The Affluent Society, John Kenneth Galbraith, New American Library, New York, 1984

Behind Closed Doors: Violence in the American Family, Murray Stratus, Richard J. Gellis, Suzanne K. Steinmetz, Anchor Books, Garden City, NY 1990

The Divorce Revolution: The Unexpected Social and Economic Consequences for Women and Children in America, Lenore Weitzman, Free Press, New York, 1985

Educating Diversity, William Dunn, American Demographics, April 1993

Print Media and Resources (Cont'd)

Classroom Library (Cont'd)

The Homeless, Eileen Quigley, CQ Research, August 7, 1992

Black and White in America, David Gelman, Newsweek, March 7, 1988

Hispanic Americans, Rodman D. Griffin, CQ Researcher, January 8, 1993

Socioeconomic Gains of Asian Americans, Blacks, and Hispanics, Morrison G. Wong and Charles Hirschman, American Journal of Sociology 90, 1993

Websites

There are over 3 million websites pertinent to sociology on the google search engine alone. There is truly a multitude of resources available for virtually any type of research one may desire. Samples of the variety are readily available but serve little useful purpose here