

# SEEING OURSELVES



# SEEING OURSELVES

*Classic, Contemporary,  
and Cross-Cultural Readings  
in Sociology*

*Seventh Edition*

*Edited by*

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## Preface

If there is a college course that is more exciting for students than the introduction to sociology, we don't know what it is. Both of us began our careers as students taking the "intro course," and we both found it to be life-changing. Over the (many) years since then, we have received thousands of e-mail messages from students that, in different ways and using different words, say pretty much the same thing: "Sociology has given me a new way to see the world around me. It has changed the way I think about myself and our society. It has given me knowledge and skills that I can use every day."

Why is sociology so exciting? First, understanding how society operates is a source of power, helping us to recognize the opportunities and challenges that frame our lives and to see that society is a human creation that is subject to change. Second, sociology is liberating. It frees us from the belief that we alone are responsible for our life situations and, by showing how society shapes our world, opens the door to new possibilities. Third, sociology is plain fun. Looking at our

families, workplaces, campuses, and local communities with a sociological eye, we suddenly recognize patterns and processes that were always there but went unnoticed. To learn to see sociologically is to have the world around you come alive as it never has before. What could be more fun than that?

Sociology is also a vast and diverse body of knowledge that stretches back more than 150 years. *Seeing Ourselves: Classic, Contemporary, and Cross-Cultural Readings in Sociology* captures this rich legacy, presenting it to readers in the words of the men and women who created it. This collection of readings contains the work of the discipline's founders and others who have made lasting contributions. In addition, it contains important research being done by women and men who are standing on the shoulders of the founders. Finally, it deepens our understanding of our own way of life by making comparisons with other societies and cultural systems.

This reader provides excellent material for use in a wide range of courses. *Seeing Ourselves* is

most widely used in introductory sociology, but it is also well suited for courses in social problems, cultural anthropology, social theory, social stratification, American studies, women's studies, and marriage and the family.

Since its introduction a decade ago, *Seeing Ourselves* has been the most popular reader in the discipline. This seventh edition offers eighty-two readings that represent the widest range of material found in any similar text. In short, *Seeing Ourselves* gives instructors the largest selection of articles to consider for their courses. It also gives students the best value for their textbook dollar, costing less per article than competing readers and "custom" readers.

### THE THREE C'S: CLASSIC, CONTEMPORARY, AND CROSS-CULTURAL

*Seeing Ourselves* is the only reader that systematically weaves together three types of selections. For each general topic typically covered in a sociology course, three types of articles are included: *classic*, *contemporary*, and *cross-cultural*.

*Classic* articles—30 in all—are sociological statements of recognized importance and lasting significance. Included here are the ideas of sociology's founders and shakers—including Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Georg Simmel, Ferdinand Tönnies, as well as Margaret Mead, W. E. B. Du Bois, Louis Wirth, George Herbert Mead, Thomas Robert Malthus, and Charles Horton Cooley. There are also many more recent contributions by Alfred Kinsey, Jessie Bernard, Robert Merton, Erving Goffman, Peter Berger, Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore, C. Wright Mills, Talcott Parsons, Leslie White, and Jo Freeman.

We realize that not everyone will agree about precisely which selections should be called "classics." But we hope that instructors will be pleased to see the work of so many outstanding women and men—carefully edited with undergraduate students in mind—available in a single, affordable source.

Twenty-nine *contemporary* selections focus on current sociological issues, controversies, and applications. These articles show sociologists at work and demonstrate the importance of ongoing research. They address many of the issues that concern today's students, providing solid data and reasoned analysis. Among the contemporary selections in *Seeing Ourselves* are Donna Gaines on teenage suicide, Patricia Madoo Lengermann and Jill Niebrugge-Brantley on women founders of sociology, Becky Thompson on our cultural obsession with thinness, Michael Messner on how our society defines "masculine," Jill Kilbourne on the power of mass-media advertising, Paula Rothenberg on privilege that many of us take for granted, George Ritzer on McDonaldization and jobs, Elijah Anderson on the normative system that operates on the streets of some low-income communities, David Rosenhan on diagnosing mental illness, Andrew Hacker on patterns of inequality in the United States, Judith Lorber on the social construction of gender, Patricia Hill Collins on black women's oppression, Karen B. Brodtkin on the social construction of race, William Julius Wilson on the rising desperation of some inner-city residents, Thomas Dye on who's at the center of power in the United States, Susan Douglas and Meredith Michaels on motherhood, Naomi Schaefer Riley on student life at religious colleges, Jonathan Kozol on inequality in U.S. public schools, and Eric Schlosser giving an insider look at the fast-food industry.

The twenty-three *cross-cultural* selections offer sociological insights about the striking cultural diversity of the United States and the larger world. Included are well-known works such as "Body Ritual among the Nacirema" by Horace Miner, "India's Sacred Cow" by Marvin Harris, "The Amish: A Small Society" by John Hostetler, J. M. Carrier's "Homosexuality in Cross-Cultural Perspective," and Elaine Leeder's "Domestic Violence: A Cross-Cultural View." Other articles focus on Arab women and social research, learning to be a doctor in Canada, prostitution around the world, the ways in which global inequality benefits rich



countries including the United States, the practice of female genital mutilation, how courtship and marriage differ around the world, global population increase, the health of Native American men, the central role played by Japanese mothers in their children's schooling, and differences in the abortion movements that are found in various countries. Cross-cultural selections broaden students' understanding of other cultures and, in the process, sharpen their understanding of our own society.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE READER

This reader parallels the chapter sequence common to textbooks used in introductory sociology. Instructors can easily and effectively use these articles in a host of other courses and can assign articles in whatever order they wish. For each of the twenty-three general topics, we present a cluster of three to five articles, including at least one classic, at least one contemporary, and at least one cross-cultural selection. The expansive coverage of these eighty-two articles ensures that instructors can choose readings well suited to their own classes, and at the lowest cost.

The first grouping of articles describes the distinctive sociological perspective, brings to life the promise and pitfalls of sociological research, and demonstrates the discipline's applications to a variety of issues. The selections that follow emphasize key concepts: culture, society, socialization, social interaction, groups and organizations, deviance, and the importance of sexuality to our society. The focus then turns to various dimensions of social inequality, with attention to class, gender, race and ethnicity, and aging. The major social institutions are covered next, including the economy and work; politics, government, and the military; families; religion; education; and health and medicine. The final sets of articles explore dimensions of global transformation—including population growth, urbanization, the natural environment, social movements, and social change.

## A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

One of the advantages of using this reader is allowing students to read the exact words of dozens of notable sociologists. The editors have assembled their selections from the sources in their original form; although we have edited some readings for length, we have not altered any author's language. At the same time, we want students and instructors to know that some of the older selections—especially the classics—use male pronouns rather than more contemporary gender-neutral terminology, and one article employs the term “Negro.” We have not changed the language in any article, wishing not to violate the historical authenticity of any document. That said, we urge faculty and students, with the original articles in hand, to consider the importance of language and how it has changed in their analysis of the author's ideas.

## TEACHING FEATURES

*Seeing Ourselves* has two features that enhance the learning of students. First, a brief introduction, placed at the beginning of each selection, summarizes the main argument and highlights important issues to keep in mind while reading the article. Second, at the end of each article are at least three critical-thinking questions which develop the significance of the reading, help students evaluate their own learning, and stimulate class discussion.

## INTERNET SITES

Readers are also invited to visit our sociology Web sites. At <http://prehall.com/macionis>, students will find on-line study guides for the Macionis introductory texts (*Sociology* and *Society: The Basics*), including discussion topics, test questions, and Internet links. In addition, <http://www.TheSociologyPage.com> (or <http://www.macionis.com>) provides information about the field of sociology, biographies of key

sociologists, recent news of interest to sociologists, and more than fifty links to worthwhile Internet sites.

Also, [www.prenhall.com/benokraitis](http://www.prenhall.com/benokraitis) offers more than 400 “hot links” to topics such as theory, sociological research, culture, socialization, interaction and communication, sexuality, race and ethnicity, gender roles, aging, work, marriage and the family, health, and social change.

## INSTRUCTOR’S MANUAL WITH TEST QUESTIONS

Prentice Hall also supports *Seeing Ourselves* with an Instructor’s Manual, prepared by Leda A. Thompson. For each selection, the Instructor’s Manual provides a summary of the article’s arguments and conclusions, eight multiple-choice questions with answers, and suggested essay questions. The multiple-choice questions are also available on computer disk for both PC and Mac users.

## CHANGES TO THE SEVENTH EDITION

We are grateful to our colleagues at hundreds of colleges and universities in the United States and Canada who have made *Seeing Ourselves* a part of their courses. In response to this unparalleled reception, the editors have worked especially hard this time around to prepare what we believe is the best and strongest reader available for our discipline. Here are the key changes:

1. **Fifteen new articles** appear in the seventh edition. This raises the total to eighty-two, an increase of five articles from the last edition, and twice as many selections as in some other readers.
2. **More attention to important contemporary research.** We have made no changes to the *classic* selections, which, after all, stand up well over time. Most of the changes in this edition are new *contemporary* selections and reflect recent scholarship that has attracted a lot of attention both within and beyond the field of sociology.

These new and popular selections include “Teenage Wasteland” by Donna Gaines, “Women and the Birth of Sociology” by Patricia Madoo Lengermann and Jill Niebrugge-Brantley, “Unmarried with Children” by Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas, “Boyhood, Organized Sports, and the Construction of Masculinities” by Michael Messner, “Invisible Privilege” by Paula Rothenberg, “‘Night to His Day’: The Social Construction of Gender” by Judith Lorber, “Who Is Running America?” by Thomas Dye, “The Mommy Myth” by Susan J. Douglas and Meredith W. Michaels, “How Student Life Is Different at Religious Colleges” by Naomi Schaefer Riley, and “The Slaughterhouse: The Most Dangerous Job” from Eric Schlosser’s recent book, *Fast Food Nation*.

In addition, this edition of *Seeing Ourselves*, offers five new cross-cultural selections, enriching the anthology’s multicultural and global content. The new selections in this category are “‘Even If I Don’t Know What I’m Doing, I Can Make It Look Like I Do’: Becoming a Doctor in Canada” by Brenda L. Beagan, “Prostitution: A Worldwide Business of Sexual Exploitation” by Melissa Farley, “Domestic Violence: A Cross-Cultural View” by Elaine Leeder, “The Roots of Terrorism” from The 9/11 Commission Report, and “Japanese Mothers as the Best Teachers” by Keiko Hirao.

3. **A greater emphasis on race, class, and gender.** Because so much of the research carried out in sociology deals with the causes, the character, and the consequences of social inequality, this new edition of *Seeing Ourselves* offers more on these vital issues than ever before.

As in the past, we invite faculty and students to share their thoughts and reactions to this reader. Write to John Macionis at [macionis@kenyon.edu](mailto:macionis@kenyon.edu) or send a letter to the Department of Sociology, Palme House, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623 and to Nijole Benokraitis at [nbenokraitis@ubalt.edu](mailto:nbenokraitis@ubalt.edu) or contact her at the Department of Sociology, University of Baltimore, 1420 North Charles Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201-5779.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The editors are grateful to many people for their generous help in preparing this reader. First, the relationship between writers and publishers is a special mix of friendship, creative tension, and a shared commitment to doing the best job possible. In this regard, two important people at Prentice Hall are Chris DeJohn, former executive editor of sociology, and Nancy Roberts, Publisher for Humanities and Social Sciences. In addition, we acknowledge the timely and skillful work of the production team, including Joanne Hakim of Prentice Hall and Jessica Balch and the staff of Pine Tree Composition.

A number of our colleagues offered critical comments that have improved the final book:

Sharon Abbott, Fairfield University; Rebecca Adams, University of North Carolina at Greensboro; Amy Ansell, Bora College; Jacqueline

Bergdahl, Wright State University; Jonathan Cordero, Westmont College; Angela D. Danzi, Farmingdale State University of New York; Virginia Gill, Illinois State University; Pam Hunter-Holmes, Texas A & M University; Charles Jaret, Georgia State University; Todd M. Krohn, University of Georgia; Gail Murphy-Geiss, Colorado College; Thomas Soltis, Westmoreland County Community College; Cynthia Neal Spence, Spelman College; and George Ann Weatherby, Gonzaga University.

We dedicate this edition of *Seeing Ourselves* to students—yours and ours. Their insights, probing questions, and thoughtful observations about society enliven our classrooms and enrich our teaching lives immeasurably.



## About the Editors

**JOHN J. MACIONIS** is Professor and Distinguished Scholar of Sociology at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio. Born and raised in Philadelphia, he earned a bachelor's degree from Cornell University and a doctorate in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania. Macionis has authored a number of best-selling sociology textbooks, including *Sociology*, the leading comprehensive text; *Society: The Basics*, the leading brief textbook; and *Social Problems*, the leading text for that course. Professor Macionis has been active in academic programs in other countries, having traveled to more than fifty nations. In 2002, the American Sociological Association honored Macionis for his work with textbooks and for pioneering the use of new technology in sociology by bestowing on him the major Award for Distinguished Contributions to Teaching. At Kenyon, Macionis offers a wide range of upper-level courses, but his favorite course is Introduction to Sociology, which he teaches every year. He enjoys extensive contact with students, making an occasional appearance on campus to play oldies rock and roll, and each term inviting his students to enjoy a home-cooked meal. The Macionis family—John, Amy, and children McLean and Whitney—live on a farm in rural Ohio. In his free time, Macionis enjoys playing the Scottish bagpipes, working for environmental organizations, and sharing an adventure with his two children.

**NIJOLE V. BENOKRAITIS** is Professor of Sociology at the University of Baltimore. She earned a B.A. at Emmanuel College (Boston), an M.A. at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and a doctorate at the University of Texas at Austin. Professor Benokraitis, who immigrated to the United States from Lithuania with her family when she was 6 years old, is bilingual and bicultural and is very empathetic of students who try to balance two cultural worlds. She is the author, co-author, editor, and co-editor of seven books, including *Marriages and Families: Changes, Choices, and Constraints*. Benokraitis has published numerous articles and book chapters on topics such as sexism and institutional racism, has received grants and fellowships from many institutions—including the Ford Foundation and the Administration on Aging—and has made numerous appearances on local radio and television shows. She currently serves on the editorial board of *Women & Criminal Justice* and reviews international fellowship applications for the American Association of University Women's Educational Foundation. Benokraitis and her husband, Vitalius, have two adult children, Gema and Andrius. If she had free time, Benokraitis would read mystery novels, expand her mug collection, have more lunches with her past students, garden, and watch at least two movies every day.



# SEEING OURSELVES