

essentials of
Sociology

DAVID B.
Brinkerhoff

LYNN K.
White

SUZANNE T.
Ortega

4TH
EDITION



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UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN



Wadsworth Publishing Company

ITP® An International Thomson Publishing Company

Belmont, CA • Albany, NY • Boston • Cincinnati • Johannesburg • London • Madrid
Melbourne • Mexico City • New York • Pacific Grove, CA • Scottsdale, AZ • Singapore • Tokyo • Toronto

Publisher: Eve Howard
Assistant Editor: Barbara Yien
Marketing Manager: Chaun Hightower
Editorial Assistant: Ari Levenfeld
Project Editor: Jerilyn Emori
Print Buyer: Karen Hunt
Permissions Editor: Robert Kauser
Production Coordinator: Electronic Publishing Services Inc., NYC
Interior and Cover Designer: Paul Uhl/Design Associates
Copy Editor: Salvatore Allocco, Electronic Publishing Services Inc., NYC
Illustrator: Electronic Publishing Services Inc., NYC
Cover Photo: Cotton R. Coulson, Courtesy National Geographic Society
Compositor: Electronic Publishing Services Inc., NYC
Printer: World Color Book Services/Taunton

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Printed in the United States of America
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

For more information, contact Wadsworth Publishing Company, 10 Davis Drive, Belmont, CA 94002,
or electronically at <http://www.wadsworth.com>

International Thomson Publishing Europe
Berkshire House 168-173
High Holborn
London, WC1V 7AA, England

Thomas Nelson Australia
102 Dodds Street
South Melbourne 3205
Victoria, Australia

Nelson Canada
1120 Birchmount Road
Scarborough, Ontario
Canada M1K 5G4

International Thomson Editores
Campos Eliseos 385, Piso 7
Col. Polanco
11560 México D.F. México

International Thomson Publishing Asia
60 Albert Street
#15-01 Albert Complex
Singapore 189969

International Thomson Publishing Japan
Hirakawacho Kyowa Building, 3F
2-2-1 Hirakawacho
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102, Japan

International Thomson Publishing
Southern Africa
Building 18, Constantia Park
240 Old Pretoria Road
Halfway House, 1685 South Africa

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Brinkerhoff, David B.
Essentials of sociology / David B. Brinkerhoff, Lynn K. White,
Suzanne T. Ortega. -- 4th ed.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.
ISBN 0-534-55548-9 (pbk.)
1. Sociology. I. White, Lynn K. II. Ortega, Suzanne Trager,
1951- . III. Title.
HM51.B8533 1999 98-15988
301--dc21

Preface

One of the most stimulating aspects of the discipline of sociology is that it deals with the major issues confronting our planet, our nation, and our lives. Perhaps more than any other discipline, sociology deals with the substance of ordinary life—getting a job, getting married (and staying that way), caring for children, and caring for aging parents. Sociologists also grapple with the major national and international problems of our times: homelessness, health care reform, environmental degradation, and poverty and dependence in the least-developed nations. An introductory textbook has both the challenge and the opportunity of giving students the sociological framework that will help them better understand how social structures shape the details of their own personal lives and the larger social world that surrounds them.

This fourth edition of *Essentials of Sociology*, has the same goal as the preceding editions: to provide a concise, balanced introduction to the field of sociology that is shorter and less expensive than a comprehensive text. Like the first three editions, the fourth edition provides a careful blend of theory and the latest research, combined with a series of examples, case studies, and applications that will help students develop the sociological imagination.

The fourth edition of *Essentials of Sociology* will be particularly helpful for instructors who teach short academic terms and have difficulty covering the material in a comprehensive text or for those who wish to supplement their text with readers, literature, or activities. In condensing the book, we have retained all the central concepts, theories, and research findings. We have also retained the examples that help students grasp the basics of the discipline and ensure that the book will be engaging and readable.

Changes in the Fourth Edition

This edition of *Essentials of Sociology* is a thoroughly revised version of the previous edition of *Essentials*. This volume has been thoroughly updated. We have carefully reviewed all the major journals and many of the specialty journals in order to provide students with the most current findings. Figures and graphs have been revised to incorporate the very latest data available.

Second, the book has been revised to take into account recent topical developments in the field. Over the last few years, the discipline of sociology has become more structural, more interested in all aspects of diversity—including issues of global interdependency—and more concerned with the social impact of technology. The fourth edition of *Essentials of Sociology* reflects these changes. To reflect the concern with social structure, a new chapter on social networks and groups has been added to the text. Coverage of diversity issues has been expanded by including two

new chapters on gender and age inequalities. More cross-national examples have been incorporated throughout the text. Chapter 10, for instance, includes a case study of declining life expectancies in Eastern Europe and Russia. In Chapter 3, the Focus On box features an analysis of “the strength of weak ties” in China and Singapore, and the Focus On box in Chapter 13 addresses Sweden’s democratic socialist system. Material on the new Human Development Index is included in Chapter 7. Finally, the social impact of technological change has been expanded throughout the text. In addition to its extended treatment in Chapter 15, technology receives attention in a new Focus on Technology feature incorporated in seven of the chapters of this fourth edition. For example, the Focus On box in Chapter 11 analyzes the relationship between technology, gender roles, and kinkeeping; Chapter 9 includes a Focus On box, highlighting the ways in which technology can be an equity issue; and, in Chapter 5, the impact of technology on law enforcement is discussed.

Plan of the Book

The fourth edition of *Essentials of Sociology* retains the pedagogical features that have made it successful. Each chapter contains at least one high-interest boxed insert. Clearly identified concepts, concept summaries, and chapter summaries continue to aid students in mastering the material. New Critical Thinking questions have been added to each chapter. Useful as the basis for group discussion or as individual writing assignments, these questions challenge students to apply sociological concepts and theory to problems relevant to their immediate lives.

Focus On

A boxed insert in each chapter introduces provocative and interesting issues. These Focus Ons fall into four different formats: Focus on American Diversity, Focus on a Global Perspective, Focus on Application, and Focus on Technology. To demonstrate to students the importance of understanding the increasing diversity of American society, the Focus on American Diversity boxes examine issues such as the measurement of IQ, gay and lesbian families, and gender differences in mathematics. The Focus on Global Perspective series introduces students to a comparative approach to social issues and to social science research and deals with topics such as women and development, international migration, and survey research in Nigeria. The Focus on Application boxes address important social issues and policy concerns such as the environmental movement and who benefits from current government subsidy and welfare programs. Finally, the Focus on Technology series links technological innovation to social change by analyzing the implications of technology for social relationships, social control, and social institutions.

Chapter Summaries

A short point-by-point summary lists the chief points made in each chapter. These summaries will aid the beginning student in studying the text and distinguishing the central from the supporting points.

Concept Learning Aids

Learning new concepts and new vocabulary is vital to developing a new perspective. In *Essentials of Sociology*, this learning is facilitated in four ways. When new concepts first appear in the text, they are printed in boldface type, and complete definitions are set out clearly in the margin. Whenever several related concepts are introduced (for example, pluralist, power elite, conflict/dialectic, and state autonomy models of American government), a concept summary is included as a text figure to summarize the definitions, give examples, and clarify differences. Third, a glossary appears at the end of the book for handy reference. Finally, Critical Thinking questions encourage students to make concepts and terms a working part of their vocabulary by using them to discuss a problem of personal or social relevance.

Internet Resources

An entirely new feature of this edition is the addition of suggested Internet sites at the end of each chapter. Some of the most relevant sites on the net for finding information related to issues discussed in *Essentials of Sociology* have been identified. For example, browsers are directed to sites that specialize in Marxism (Chapter 1), deafness (Chapter 2), international population data (Chapter 14), and gay and lesbian issues (Chapter 4).

InfoTrac College Edition Exercises

Another new feature to the fourth edition is a series of InfoTrac College Edition exercises included at the end of each chapter. InfoTrac College Edition is an on-line database of 600 periodicals, journals, and magazines. Readers are asked to use specific InfoTrac articles in formulating their responses to the Critical Thinking questions in the text.

Student Study Guide

The student *Study Guide* will be invaluable in helping students master the material. The study guide contains an outline of each chapter, practice questions in matching, completion, multiple-choice, and essay form.

Acknowledgments

In preparing this edition as in the earlier editions, we have accumulated many debts. We are especially grateful for the good-natured and generous advice of our colleagues at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. Special thanks go to Robert Benford, Miguel Carranza, Jay Corzine, Julie Harms Cannon, Kurt Johnson, Jennifer Lehmann, Helen Moore, Wayne Osgood, Keith Parker, and Al Williams.

They were always willing to share their expert knowledge and to comment and advise on our own forays into their substantive areas. Thanks also to Tim Pippert, who created the InfoTrac College Edition exercises in this edition.

Special thanks go to the people at West and Wadsworth Publishing, including Clyde Perlee who first prompted us to become authors and Denise Simon, who was generous with encouragement and advice. We also wish to thank our current editor, Eve Howard. We benefitted greatly from her knowledge of what makes a college textbook usable. A special thanks also to her assistant, Barbara Yien. Our production editor, Jodi Isman, played a crucial role in turning our material into an attractive finished product. Her patience and her skill are deeply appreciated. Our copy editor, Salvatore Allocco, not only saved us from technical gaffes and inconsistencies, but performed the important service of checking the manuscript for problematic writing and examples. His queries improved our writing and our thinking. At all levels, the people at Wadsworth have been a pleasure to work with—ready to help us make our book the best possible, while leaving the substance and direction of the book in our hands.

We would like to express our gratitude to those people who reviewed the manuscript for us:

Jon Ianniti
State University of New York—Morrisville

James Lindberg
Montgomery College

Carol Jenkins
Glendale Community College

Deidre Tyler
Salt Lake Community College

John Leib
Georgia State University

Once again, we thank those people who reviewed the manuscript for previous editions of *Sociology*, and *Essentials of Sociology*. Their suggestions and comments made a substantial contribution to the project: Margaret Abraham, Hofstra University, New York; Paul J. Baker, Illinois State University; Robert Benford, University of Nebraska; John K. Cochran, Wichita State University, Kansas; Carolie Coffey, Cabrillo College, California; Paul Colomy, University of Akron, Ohio; Ed Crenshaw, University of Oklahoma; Raymonda P. Dennis, Delgado Community College, New Orleans; Lynda Dodgen, North Harris County College, Texas; David A. Edwards, San Antonio College, Texas; Laura Eells, Wichita State University, Kansas; William Egelman, Iona College, New York; Constance Elsberg, Northern Virginia Community College; Christopher Ezell, Vincennes University, Indiana; Joseph Faltmeier, South Dakota State University; Daniel E. Ferritor, University of Arkansas; Charles E. Garrison, East Carolina University, North Carolina; James R. George, Kutztown State College, Pennsylvania; Harold C. Guy, Prince George Community College, Maryland; Rose Hall, Diablo Valley College, California; Michael G. Horton, Pensacola Junior College, Florida; Cornelius G. Hughes, University of Southern Colorado; Jon Ianniti, SUNY Morrisville; William C. Jenné, Oregon State University; Dennis L. Kalob, Loyola University, New Orleans; Sidney J. Kaplan, University of Toledo, Ohio; Florence Karlstrom, Northern Arizona University; Diane Kayongo-Male, South Dakota State University; William Kelly, University of Texas; James A. Kithens, North Texas State University; Phillip R. Kunz, Brigham Young University, Utah; Billie J. Laney, Central Texas College; Charles Langford, Oregon State University; Mary N. Legg, Valencia Community College, Florida; Joseph J. Leon, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona; J. Robert Lilly, Northern Kentucky University; Jan Lin, University of Houston;

Richard L. Loper, Seminole Community College, Florida; Carol May, Illinois Central College; Rodney C. Metzger, Lane Community College, Oregon; Vera L. Milam, Northeastern Illinois University; James S. Munro, Macomb College, Michigan; Lynn D. Nelson, Virginia Commonwealth University; J. Christopher O'Brien, Northern Virginia Community College; Charles O'Connor, Bemidji State University, Minnesota; Jane Ollenberger, University of Minnesota–Duluth; Robert L. Petty, San Diego Mesa College, California; Ruth A. Pigott, Kearney State College, Nebraska; John W. Prehn, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota; Adrian Rapp, North Harris County College, Texas; Mike Robinson, Elizabethtown Community College, Kentucky; Will Rushton, Del Mar College, Texas; Rita P. Sakitt, Suffolk Community College, New York; Martin Scheffer, Boise State University, Idaho; Richard Scott, University of Central Arkansas; Ida Harper Simpson, Duke University, North Carolina; James B. Skellenger, Kent State University, Ohio; Ricky L. Slavings, Radford University, Virginia; John M. Smith, Jr., Augusta College, Georgia; James Steele, James Madison University, Virginia; Michael Stein, University of Missouri–St. Louis; Barbara Stenross, University of North Carolina; Jack Stirton, San Joaquin Delta College, California; Emil Vajda, Northern Michigan University; Steven L. Vassar, Mankato State University, Minnesota; Jane B. Wedemeyer, Sante Fe Community College, Florida; Thomas J. Yacovone, Los Angeles Valley College, California; David L. Zierath, University of Wisconsin.

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