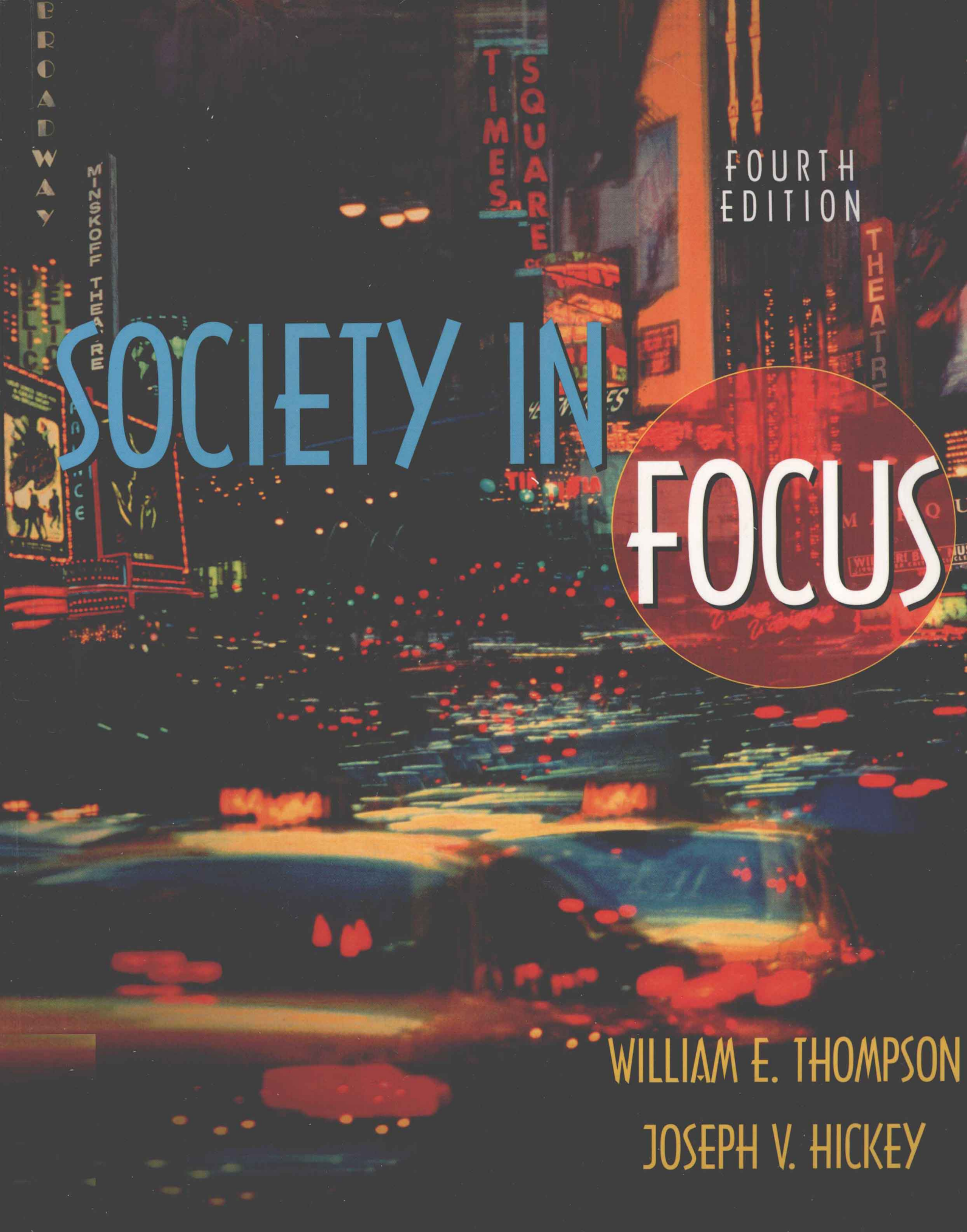

SOCIETY IN FOCUS

FOURTH EDITION

WILLIAM E. THOMPSON

JOSEPH V. HICKEY

Society in Focus

An Introduction to Sociology

FOURTH EDITION

William E. Thompson
Texas A & M University–Commerce

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Marilyn Rae
and
Mary Reith

Preface

These are exciting and challenging times for sociologists and sociology students alike. Now that we are in the twenty-first century, there is a growing consensus on campus and in the larger society that many traditional approaches to understanding our social world are no longer very useful. Changing times require new emphases in textbooks. In this Fourth Edition of *Society in Focus,* we emphasize how society and social forces affect virtually everything from international policies to our everyday lives. This makes the subject matter of this book seemingly familiar and ordinary.

Sociologist Peter Berger's admonition, "The first wisdom of sociology is this—things are not what they seem"—serves as a challenge to our teaching and provided special inspiration in writing this book. To help meet this challenge, our chapter-opening vignettes focus students on the concept that "things are not what they seem." The questioning of "common sense notions" and the "official interpretation" of issues and events have always been at the heart of the sociological enterprise, and we emphasize this in the vignettes and throughout the text. *Society in Focus* shows students that sociological thinking is much more than an ivory-tower enterprise. Because sociology is about all of us and our daily lives, it is an eminently practical discipline.

Our diverse research interests and experiences illustrate the fact that, for sociologists, all the world is a laboratory. Individually and collaboratively, our research projects include field studies of the Fulani in West Africa, American cowboys, African American settlements, ethnic communities, and the Old Order Amish in Oklahoma and Kansas. We have also worked in a beef slaughtering plant, interviewed topless dancers and morticians, and even played Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny at suburban shopping malls. Over forty years of combined experience in teaching Introduction to Sociology has taught us what "works" and what does not work in class.

In this edition, we go beyond the mere questioning of issues to take a closer look at the social world in which we live. We provide an integrated approach that uses sociological thinking to help students analyze and understand every chapter component from the opening vignette, which is the chapter focus, to theoretical perspectives, boxed material (Sociological Focus), and even the photographs, maps, and cartoons. To focus increased attention on sociological thinking and research methods, we have chosen four key areas that reviewers have told us are of greatest interest to students and instructors alike—Mass Media, Globalization, Cultural Diversity, and the Future.

This text was going to press in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. Most agree that these events will have a significant impact on societies around the world; but it is too soon to tell exactly how much and in what ways. The Internet is a perfect medium for discussing late-breaking developments, and we will use the Website for *Society in Focus* to update the text where necessary.

Features

The Mass Media and Technomedia

In earlier editions we pioneered a critical analysis of the mass media—especially television—to help students grapple with sociological concepts and methods. In this edition we continue our critical analysis of mass media in every chapter, by exploring issues such as the possible link between television violence and aggression in children (see Chapter 7) and over half a century of patriarchal portrayals of women in television

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(see Chapter 11). Virtually all sociologists today recognize student interest in this area as well as the potency of the media that broadcast a standard message to widespread audiences in shaping, defining, and influencing our social world. Most introductory textbooks have followed our lead, including a chapter or at least some examples that acknowledge the media's importance.

In this edition of *Society in Focus*, we use the term *technomedia* to better describe emerging media technologies and their special role in contemporary society. Technomedia include a host of newer, more personalized forms of information and entertainment technologies, such as personal computers, fax machines, video games, cellular phones, the Internet, and interactive television.

In Chapter 1 we introduce all forms of media and then include a section on their powerful social influence in every chapter of the book. Whether these various forms of media use technology to collect, interpret, and disseminate information, or for entertainment, they shape and give meaning to the world in which we live. Moreover, for many people the problem with media is no longer in finding information but in dealing with "information overload" and in developing the necessary critical thinking skills to make sense of diverse perspectives. For example, we look at differential access to and use of the Internet by various social classes (Chapter 8) and racial and ethnic groups (Chapter 10). We ask whether new technologies may be the solution or merely part of the problem in our educational system today and in the future (Chapter 14). We look at the blending of what some call the "old media" (radio, television, magazines, newspapers, and books) with the "new media" (cellular phones, computers, the Internet, and others). For example, today, the major television networks and major newspapers and magazines can be almost instantaneously accessed 24 hours a day around the world through the World Wide Web. We believe that any introductory sociology book that fails to acknowledge and critically examine all forms of the media is ignoring one of the most powerful and influential institutions in contemporary life.

Globalization

In the past few decades modern technology and economic development have greatly facilitated the flow of people, goods, ideas, and money across old national boundaries and from one end of the earth to the other. This process of globalization has altered social relations and societies everywhere. Today, people reside and work in geographic locations far removed from where they were born. The annual migration of more than one million immigrants into the United States—and a population shift from the rust belt to the sunbelt—is dramatically altering America's social landscape. Moreover, today's complex global economy has blurred not only the lines that once distinguished one major corporation from another, but also the political and economic boundaries that once separated nations. We explore these important developments in Chapter 9, "Global Stratification," and in Chapter 17, "The Economy and Work." In addition, we have woven comparative material from the diverse cultures of the world into every chapter to demonstrate how globalization has made all of our lives increasingly complex and interdependent.

Cultural Diversity

In an effort to acknowledge and affirm the rich tapestry of human culture and achievement, in this edition of *Society in Focus* we expand the emphasis on social and cultural diversity. Reflecting fundamental changes in the social composition of American cities and most other major cities of the world, we have greatly expanded our coverage of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and many other forms of cultural diversity. At the same time, we wish to illuminate social inequality and what it means to be at the margins or even outside of the cultural mainstream in various parts of the world. We have expanded coverage of the important issues of sexual orientation, disability, and problems with identity in postmodern society as well.

Here are just a few of the diversity issues that we ask you to examine in various chapters: Chapter 7 differentiates between diversity and deviance and illustrates how entire categories of people are sometimes labeled and treated as deviants and thus

become victims of prejudice, discrimination, and even hate crimes simply because of their differences. Chapter 10 raises the question: given increasing rates of interracial marriages, should the current U.S. racial classification system be changed to include new biracial and multiracial categories? In Chapter 13, you are asked to take positions for and against the long high-standing tradition of spanking children.

The Future

Our final theme is called Looking to the Future. While predicting the future is always a risky venture, we are convinced that critical thinking and sociological perspectives can vastly improve the accuracy of anyone's forecasts. We pioneered this popular feature in our first three editions, and we continue to provide cutting-edge and comprehensive sociological projections of the future in each chapter. This section also has another goal: it is designed to increase student awareness of the importance of collective action, as well as the ability of ordinary people to alter public policy and improve society. In Chapter 1, for example, we look at the future of sociology and what important issues are likely to dominate the discipline. We show how the future of sociology, and the future of society itself, are tied to a better understanding of the impact of the technomedia, globalization, and cultural diversity.

Plan of the Book

Society in Focus is designed to help students think clearly and critically about sociological issues, concepts, and methods. Questioning is at the heart of this approach and as students read this book they are encouraged to become part of the sociological enterprise—rather than remain passive observers. Every element of the text is designed to challenge students to evaluate social issues and, guided by the sociological imagination, to clearly formulate their own positions. By asking questions that demand sociological and creative thought, we want to remind students that their conclusions and decisions, as well as their nondecisions and inaction, may have important social consequences. The following features have been chosen to help students achieve these goals.

Organization

Society in Focus is divided into five parts. In Part I "The Sociological Perspective," Chapter 1, "Discovering Sociology," introduces sociology and the history of the discipline. Chapter 2, "Doing Sociology," describes the methods and theories of sociological research.

Part II, "The Social Framework," discusses the influence of "Culture" (Chapter 3), "Socialization" (Chapter 4), "Society and Social Interaction" (Chapter 5), and "Social Groups and Organizations" (Chapter 6) on individual and social behavior.

Part III, "Social Differentiation and Inequality," details how people are rewarded differentially in society. This section includes "Deviance and Conformity" (Chapter 7) and the extent to which behavior is sanctioned according to whether people conform to or deviate from established norms. Chapter 8, "Social Stratification and the U.S. Class System," discusses class inequality in the United States; and Chapter 9, "Global Stratification," examines stratification on a global scale. Chapter 10, "Race and Ethnicity," Chapter 11, "Sex and Gender," and Chapter 12, "Age and the Elderly," explore how people are treated (and rewarded) differently because of their socially defined physical attributes.

In Part IV, "Social Institutions," we discuss major social institutions and their vital roles in the social order. The traditional institutions discussed are "Families" (Chapter 13), "Education" (Chapter 14), "Religion" (Chapter 15), "Politics and War" (Chapter 16), and "The Economy and Work" (Chapter 17). Chapter 18, "Health and Medicine," looks at medicine and health care in contemporary society.

Part V, "Social Change," contains two chapters. Chapter 19 explores issues related to "Population, Urbanization, and Ecology," and Chapter 20, "Social Change and the Future," looks at collective behavior, social movements, social change, and the future.

Special Features

OPENING VIGNETTES Each chapter opens with an interesting case study, anecdote, or other example to capture the reader's interest and introduce the chapter topic. The material is also meant to stimulate sociological thinking by raising a variety of important social issues and questions. Opening vignettes illustrate our theme that things are not necessarily what they seem, and introduce students to important concepts that follow, as well as set the tone for the entire chapter. For example, Chapter 1, "Discovering Sociology," begins with a vignette about surfing the Net and interaction in cyberspace between millions of people worldwide. This vignette explores the power of new media in society and introduces the concept of technomedia. More important, it shows how easily people can be deceived while interacting through cyberspace, and it raises questions that are at the very heart of the sociological enterprise. For example, is a person alone at a computer who anonymously chats online with others participating in "social interaction," as sociologists have traditionally defined the term? Who has and who should have access to these media—which raises fundamental questions of power, freedom, and equality?

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES To enhance sociological thinking, we include a comprehensive examination of what are generally considered the three major perspectives in sociology— *interactionism, functionalism,* and *conflict theory.* In addition, throughout the book, we present new paradigms, conflicting research findings, and controversial approaches. This encourages students to look beneath the surface of complex issues and recognize how the various perspectives alter both sociological questions and answers. For example, feminist theory is introduced in Chapter 1, "Discovering Sociology," and then is applied to special topics, such as "Doing Sociology" (Chapter 2), "Sex and Gender" (Chapter 11), "Families" (Chapter 13), and "The Economy and Work" (Chapter 17). In this edition, we prominently list our theoretical coverage in the Detailed Contents, as well as in each chapter outline. More important, with many more examples from contemporary social theorists, we provide new, cutting-edge models and approaches that are both interesting and accessible to students.

SOCIOLOGICAL FOCUS: CONTROVERSIAL AND THOUGHT-PROVOKING BOXES We have added many new boxes to this edition that encourage students to take a closer look at society and selected social issues. In each chapter there are two or more Sociological Focus boxes that challenge students to focus on major sociological concepts or examine contemporary social issues, such as euthanasia, abortion, genital mutilation, and capital punishment. These boxes ask students to peer beneath the surface of common sense and official views and use their sociological skills to decipher and analyze the issue in question. For example, Chapter 3, "Culture," examines female genital mutilation and asks students to decide if the custom is a universal human rights violation. One additional Sociological Focus box per chapter, with an accompanying activity, can be found on the Interactive Companion Website for this book.

PHOTOGRAPHS, MAPS, TABLES, FIGURES, AND CARTOONS Full-color illustrations, tables, figures, photographs, maps, and cartoons have been carefully selected to capture interest while visually underscoring major sociological concepts and ideas. Also, we do more than simply present these visual materials as if they offered obvious conclusions. Instead, we provide questions for students to analyze and critique. For example, in Chapter 7, a map of the United States illustrates rates of violent and property crimes in various sections of the country, and students are encouraged to think about what social and cultural variables might help explain the geographic variations in crime rates. In the same chapter, the FBI's official crime data are graphically displayed, and students are asked to analyze why these data do not necessarily give an accurate picture of crime in the United States. In Chapter 9, we present a fanciful map of the world where giant corporations have claimed regions currently dominated by nation-states. In the caption and the text, we ask students to evaluate whether giant megacorporations are indeed expanding at the expense of contemporary governments. Similar thought-provoking questions accompany visuals in each chapter throughout the entire text.

PEDAGOGICAL FEATURES There are additional aids to reinforce and expand student learning. These instructional aids are included either in the text or on the Interactive Companion Website.

- A **summary** that highlights the most important material for reflection and review is provided at the end of each chapter. Further, it helps boost sociological thinking skills by providing a thumb-nail sketch of the most important components with their logical connections within each chapter.
- **Key terms and concepts** are boldfaced and defined within the text at first mention and are listed at the end of each chapter with cross-reference page numbers. Key terms and their definition are also positioned in the margin, generally at the bottom of the page or page spread at their point of usage.
- **Suggested reading,** with a brief synopsis of each work indicating how it relates to the chapter topic, are provided on the Interactive Companion Website.
- A comprehensive **glossary** and complete **bibliography** are included on the Interactive Companion Website.
- Separate **subject** and **name indexes** are included at the end of the book.

ANCILLARY PACKAGE

Internet Resources for This Edition

- *Interactive Companion Website.* Organized around the major headings within *Society in Focus*, the Interactive Companion Website provides students with a wealth of multimedia resources that review and expand the text. For every chapter in the text, the Interactive Companion includes Internet links and activities, practice tests, interactive map activities, and flash cards for learning key terms. Critical thinking questions called "Taking a Closer Look: Thinking Sociologically," formerly in the text at the end of chapters, are now on the Web with dialogue boxes for students to enter their responses. In this section, we raise several questions that are also designed to cultivate sociological thinking. For example, in Chapter 20, we ask students to examine a current futuristic movie, magazine, or book and analyze how it portrays the future, as well as the key factors that it claims will determine that future. In the same chapter we ask if new information technologies (and surveillance technology in particular) can be used to protect the public without infringing on people's privacy and the ideal of individual freedom. Another former end-of-chapter feature, "Suggested Readings" is on the website as well. Students who purchase new copies of the text also get a free six-month subscription to ContentSelect for Sociology, a searchable online database of thousands of full-text articles from leading peer-reviewed sociology journals and selected general interest magazines like *Newsweek.* ContentSelect is a fast and reliable research tool, and subscribing is easy. Every new copy of the text includes a ContentSelect Manual, with a personal access code and instructions for using the service. **www.ablongman.com/thompsonic**
- *Online Course Management.* For instructors who want to put part or all of their course online, this text is available with two powerful course management options: Blackboard (for colleges and universities that have a locally hosted Blackboard license), and CourseCompass (powered by Blackboard, but hosted nationally by Allyn and Bacon). Both systems include the entire Test Item File for administering online tests and material to help instructors and students use *Society in Focus* with the popular telecourse, "The Sociological Imagination." **www.ablongman.com/coursecompass**

Other Instructor Supplements

- *Instructor's Manual.* The print Instructor's Manual includes learning objectives, lecture outlines, key terms and people, suggested discussion questions, and recommended videos.
- *Test Bank.* The print Test Bank includes multiple choice, true-false, matching, and essay questions for making up quizzes and exams.

- *Computerized Testing.* Allyn and Bacon Test Manager is an integrated suite of testing and assessment tools for Windows and Macintosh. Test Manager has everything you need to create and administer online tests. You can use Test Manager to create professional-looking exams in just minutes by selecting from the existing database of questions, editing these questions, or writing your own. Course management features include a class roster, gradebook, and item analysis.
- *Allyn and Bacon Interactive Video for Introductory Sociology* and *Video User's Guide.* This custom video features television news footage on both national and global topics. The up-to-the-minute video segments are great to launch lectures, spark classroom discussion, and encourage critical thinking. A user's guide provides detailed descriptions of each video segment, specific tie-ins to the text, and suggested discussion questions and projects.
- *Allyn and Bacon Video Library.* Qualified adopters may select from a wide variety of high quality videos from such sources as Films for the Humanities and Sciences and Annenberg/CPB.
- *Allyn and Bacon Transparencies for Introductory Sociology.* This package includes over 100 color acetates featuring illustrations from the text or from other sources.
- *Digital Media Archive for Sociology.* This CD-ROM for Windows and Macintosh contains a variety of media elements that you can use to create electronic presentations in the classroom. It includes hundreds of original images, as well as selected art from Allyn and Bacon sociology texts, providing instructors with a broad selection of graphs, charts, maps, and tables that illustrate key sociological concepts. For classrooms with full multimedia capability, it also contains video segments and links to sociology websites.

Other Student Supplements

- *Study Guide.* This print manual provides learning objectives, key terms, self-tests, and glossaries.
- *Technomedia and Society Reader.* This brief anthology, created specifically for this text, consists of current articles from a variety of sources that pick up on and expand one of the major themes in the text: the impact of mass media and information technology on society. This reader is packaged free with the text on request.
- *Sociology on the Net, 2002 Edition.* This reference guide, updated annually, introduces students to the basics of the Internet and the World Wide Web, and lists hundreds of URLs for sites that are useful for the study of sociology. This guide is packaged free with the text on request.
- *Careers in Sociology*, Second Edition (W. Richard Stephens, Greenville College). This supplement examines how people working as sociologists entered the field, and how a degree in sociology can be a preparation for careers in areas such as law, gerontology, social work, and the computer industry. This supplement is packaged free with the text on request.
- *Building Bridges: The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Service Learning.* This manual offers practical advice for students who have to arrange and complete a service learning project as part of their required course work. This manual is packaged free with the text upon request.

Acknowledgments

Society in Focus: An Introduction to Sociology, Fourth Edition has benefited from the wisdom and friendship of many people. We are grateful to Harriet Prentiss for signing the original book, and to Alan McClare for his help on the first three editions. Additionally, we want to thank the many Allyn and Bacon staff members whose efforts enhanced the quality, timeliness, and look of the text. Special thanks go to Jeff Lasser, who served as editor for this edition. We also want to thank Karen Mason, production administrator, and Lauren Shafer, editorial-production service, for guiding the production of this edition. For their help updating maps, tables, and figures, we'd like to thank

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William E. Thompson
Joseph V. Hickey

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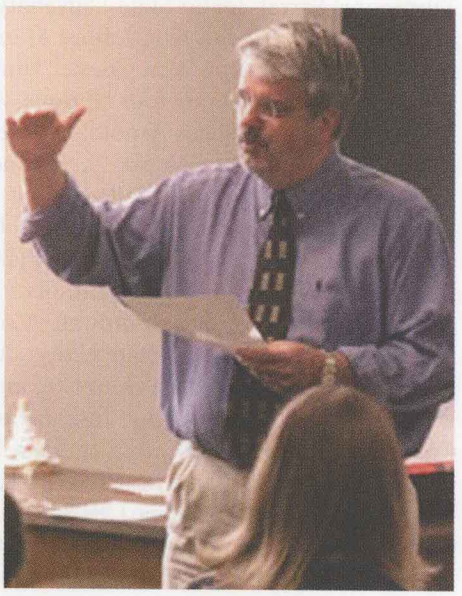
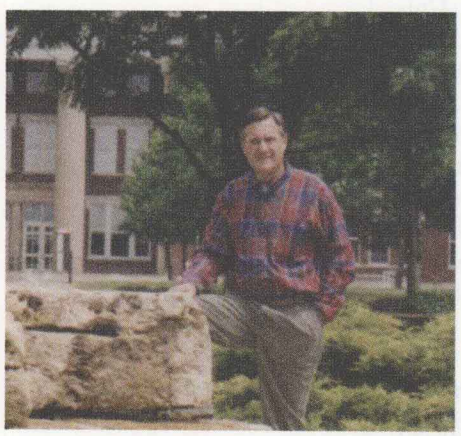
About the Authors

The cooperative writing efforts of Thompson and Hickey began more than a decade ago, when they decided to explore the mall Easter Bunny and Santa Claus as well as other "taken-for-granted" roles, social settings, and everyday social interactions.

WILLIAM E. THOMPSON was born and raised in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and was the first member of his family to receive a high school diploma. He received his bachelor's degree from Northeastern State University, a master's degree from Southwest Missouri State University, and a PhD from Oklahoma State University. Professor Thompson has authored and coauthored more than thirty articles that have been published in professional journals, including several that have been reprinted in sociology textbooks and readers. He has coauthored a textbook on juvenile delinquency that is in its fourth edition and has coedited an anthology on juvenile delinquency.



After serving as an administrator and teacher in the public school system for five years, Professor Thompson began his college teaching career at the University of Tulsa. He spent the next ten years at Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas, where he served as Chair of the Department of Sociology–Anthropology. He is currently a professor of sociology and criminal justice and Director of Mayo College, a residential learning community for first-year students, at Texas A & M University–Commerce. He has also taught in the British Studies Program at Kings College, University of London. In 1993 Thompson received an Outstanding Teaching Award from the Texas Association of College Teachers, and in 1994 he won the Distinguished Faculty Award for Research and Teaching at Texas A & M University–Commerce.



JOSEPH V. HICKEY received his bachelor's and master's degrees from George Washington University and his PhD from the University of New Mexico. A native New Yorker and Midwest transplant, Professor Hickey has won both writing and film awards. He has authored and coauthored two dozen articles and has written and produced numerous videotapes on such diverse subjects as popular culture, racial and ethnic communities, and cross-cultural studies.

Joseph Hickey is currently a professor in the Department of Sociology–Anthropology at Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas, where for more than two decades he has taught introductory courses in sociology and cultural anthropology to undergraduates.

Society in Focus

About the Cover

An earlier version of the cover for this book featured a photo-illustration of a crowd standing in a busy urban intersection, staring up at a skyscraper. It was not the World Trade Center, or even New York City, but in too many ways it was reminiscent of the events of September 11, 2001.

We selected instead this photo of a vibrant Times Square at night—a more reassuring image of a city trying to rebound from tragedy—and an appropriate symbol of many of the themes in this text.

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