It is no accident that many sociology instructors and students are first drawn to sociology because they want to learn a body of knowledge that can help them make a difference in the world at large. This text is designed for this audience and aims to present not only a sociological understanding of society but also a sociological perspective on how to improve society. In this regard, the text responds to the enthusiasm that “public sociology” has generated after serving as the theme of the 2004 annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, and it demonstrates sociology’s relevance for today’s students who want to make a difference in the world beyond them.
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2: Culture and Society

3: Socialization and Social Interactions

4: Groups and Organizations

5: Deviance, Crime, and Social Control
10: Politics and the Economy

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Thumbnail: The Indian Holi Festival of Colors where people spray colors on others, dance, party; eat festival delicacies. (CC BY-SA 2.0; Steven Gerner).