

## Sociology 1: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

Fall 2023  
MOS 0113  
Tuesday/Thursday 2:00-3:20 PM

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SSB 490  
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Office Hours: Tues. 3:30-4:30; Thurs 3:30-4:30 PM  
or by appointment

Sociology is the broadest and most inclusive social science. It can provide “big picture” understandings of economic, political, and cultural systems, and also micro-analyses of social interaction. Sociology uses both the most advanced quantitative methods and also rich, qualitative techniques involving interviews and ethnography. This course is designed to introduce students to the field of sociology, and to use contemporary social issues and everyday life to explore key concepts and questions that are central to the sociological project: social order, inequality, power, culture and institutions, agency, and social change.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### The basis of your grade:

*Two in-class exams* (mix of very short and longer answers/essays): Exam 1 is worth 25% of the grade, and Exam 2 worth 30% of the grade. Do not take this course if you will have to miss the exams. Make-up exams will only be given in extreme and unusual circumstances that must be documented in a verifiable way before the exam.

*Class participation* (faithful completion of the reading assignments, and regular and informed participation in discussion sections) is 15% of the final grade. Class participation is your chance to clarify issues, explore them more deeply, develop skills of oral expression. Though there will be ample opportunity for participation in lecture, most of the participation grade will be determined by regular attendance and informed participation in *sections*. Attendance will only be taken in sections, and participation graded there. Students who miss four or more sections lose all credit for participation. Doctor’s note needed for exceptions.

We will not take attendance in lectures. Please come only if you want to learn the most that you can. Lectures will go over readings and also contextualize them and add new material. I believe in connecting with the class through interaction and discussion, and you may be called on to share your views in lecture on a particular topic.

*Interview project:* As an exercise in sociological thinking, students will do a small interview project on why people go to college. The final report will be 10-15 double-spaced pages, but different parts will be due throughout the quarter, so you won’t be writing the whole report at once. These projects may be done alone or with up to 4 team members (with more interviews for larger teams); all team members will receive the same grade. 30% of the final grade.

Laptops and phone use: Everyone knows that taking a call in a class would be disruptive and should never be done. But few realize that laptops and smart phones can also be distracting when used for anything other than note taking. To those of you who need to use these devices, I ask that you please sit in the back rows of the room so as not to disrupt the concentration of others.

Classroom ethics: Sociology is the study of society, and we will discuss many sensitive issues. Some topics may appear to be unpleasant, ugly, or disturbing. In this class, we will be reading, discussing and writing about topics including, but not limited to: violence, racial conflict, sex, extreme poverty, cultural differences, religion, and others. I encourage you to challenge yourself in dealing with these, but if you find some topics to be very difficult personally, you may want to avoid this course.

In classroom discussion, I encourage all of you to draw on your own unique perspective on issues, though this may be uncomfortable for many. Disagreements in classroom discussions are to be resolved with evidence or logic, and not personal attacks. A lack of courtesy will get you dismissed from the day’s class or more. This is a serious issue.

Academic integrity: Students must submit only their own work unless working in authorized teams. Attempting to use someone else's work as your own is cheating. If you are caught cheating, all university procedures will be used to protect the integrity of the class and the university—and your own education.

Required texts:

All readings are available as free electronic copies available through the course site on Canvas. *Readings may change somewhat from the list below.*

COURSE SCHEDULE

Sept. 28, Oct. 3: Understanding the sociological vision: Concepts for making the social world intelligible

- 1) Patrick House, "What People Cured of Blindness See," *The New Yorker* August 28, 2014
- 2) Sociology 1: "Basic Concepts"
- 3) Bonnie Erickson, "Social Networks: The Value of Variety," *Contexts* 2(2003): 25-31

Oct. 5, Oct. 10: Why go to college?

- 1) William Beaver, "A Matter of Degrees," *Contexts* 8(2009): 22-26
- 2) April Yee, "Degree by Default," *Contexts* 11(2012): 46-50
- 3) Karin Fischer, "The Return of College as a Common Good," *Chronicle of Higher Education* Oct. 3, 2022

Oct. 12: The practice of sociological research: The interview assignment

Oct. 17, 19: Understanding attraction and conflict

- 1) Kathleen E. Hull, Ann Meier and Timothy Ortyl, "The Changing Landscape of Love and Marriage," *Contexts* 9(2010): 32-37
- 2) Molly Goin, "Looking for Love in Hookup Culture," *The Society Pages*, January 10, 2014
- 3) Lisa Wade, "American Men's Hidden Crisis: They Need More Friends!" *Salon*, December 8, 2013
- 4) Matthew Clair and Jeffrey S. Denis, "Sociology of Racism," In *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd edition, Volume 19, edited by James D. Wright. Elsevier.
- 5) Bart Bonikowski, "Ethno-Nationalist Populism and the Mobilization of Collective Resentment," *British Journal of Sociology*, 68 (2017): 181-213

Oct. 24, 26: Sociology and everyday life: Food and fashion

- 1) Janine Chi, "Consuming Rice, Branding Nation," *Contexts* 13(2014): 50-55
- 2) Jeffrey M. Pilcher, "Was the Taco Invented in Southern California?" *Gastronomica* 8(2008): 26-38
- 3) Patrik Aspers and Frédéric Godart, "Sociology of Fashion: Order and Change," *Annual Review of Sociology* 39(2013): 171-192

**October 31: EXAM 1**

Nov. 2, 7: Inequality, mobility, and aspirations

- 1) Douglas B. Downey and Benjamin G. Gibbs, "How Schools Really Matter," *Contexts* 9(2010): 50-54
- 2) "You're Paid What You're Worth and Other Myths of the Modern Economy (In Conversation with Jake Rosenfeld)" *Washington Center for Equitable Growth*
- 3) Chris Farrell, "The Shortage of Home Care Workers: Worse Than You Think" *Forbes* April 18, 2018
- 4) Shelley J. Correll, "Constraints into Preferences: Gender, Status, and Emerging Career Aspirations," *American Sociological Review* 69(2004): 93-113

November 9, 14: Understanding poverty and homelessness

- 1) Jennifer Price Wolf, "Sociological Theories of Poverty in Urban America," *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* 16(2007): 41-56
- 2) David A. Snow and Leon Anderson, "Street People," *Contexts* 2(2003): 12-17.
- 3) Kathryn Edin and Joanna M. Reed, "Why Don't They Just Get Married? Barriers to Marriage among the Disadvantaged," *The Future of Children* 15(2005): 117-137

November 16, 28 (No class Nov. 21 and 23: Thanksgiving): The nature of work in the modern economy

- 1) Ofer Sharone, "Engineering Overwork: Bell-Curve Management at a High-Tech Firm," in Cynthia Fuchs Epstein and Arne L. Kalleberg, eds., *Fighting for Time: Shifting Boundaries of Work and Social Life* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2004), pp. 191-218
- 2) Antonio Garcia Martinez, "How Mark Zuckerberg Led Facebook's War to Crush Google Plus," *Vanity Fair*, June 3, 2016
- 3) Anna North, "The Death of the Job: What If Paid Work Were No Longer the Centerpiece of American Life?" *Vox*, August 24, 2021

***Project final report due November 16***

Nov. 30, Dec. 5, 7: Understanding big social changes: modernization, secularization, decline in mental health

- 1) Peter L. Berger, "Further Thoughts on Religion and Modernity," *Society* 49(2012): 313-316
- 2) Liam Farrell (interviewing Phil Cohen), "6 Reasons to Drop the Generation Labels," *Maryland Today*, Nov. 10, 2021
- 3) David Voas and Mark Chaves, "Is the United States a Counterexample to the Secularization Thesis?" *American Journal of Sociology* 121(2016): 1517-56
- 4) Eric Levitz, "4 Explanations for the Teen Mental-Health Crisis," *New York: Intelligencer* March 27, 2023

FINAL EXAM: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 3-4:30 PM