



SOCIOLOGY 150 – MADNESS AND THE MOVIES

University of California, San Diego

Fall 2025

In-person Meetings: Thursdays, 3:30pm-4:50pm in WLH 2111

(No In-person meetings on Tuesdays; take the day to watch the required film)

Instructor: Pablo Victoria Torres, Ph.D. (pvictori@ucsd.edu)

In over ten years teaching at the college level, what I have learned is that to convey the knowledge you are sharing, you must embody it. It is my pleasure to be able to do so.

Office Hours: Fridays, 2:00pm-3:00pm and by appointment at
<https://ucsd.zoom.us/my/pablotridentsup>

(Email me beforehand with plans of attending or let me know during class :D)

Teaching Apprentice: Alejandra Fregozo Vargas (afregozovargas@ucsd.edu)

Office Hours: Mondays, 4:00pm-5:00pm at SSB 422

(Email Alejandra beforehand with plans of attending or let her know during class :D)

Course Description from the Course Catalog

Hollywood has had an ongoing obsession with mental illness. This course will examine a number of important or iconic films on this subject. By examining them against a background provided by relevant scholarly materials, we shall develop a critical perspective on these cultural artifacts.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, you should be able to:

1. Become perceptive to the sociological perspective
2. Explain what a social construct is and identify processes that make madness relative

3. Apply concepts, theories, and ideas discussed in this class to multiple socio-historical contexts and to your own biography
4. Trust your own voice while recognizing and respecting others'
5. See why society needs you to be YOU <3

Learning Material (Readings and Movies)

Readings: I will provide you with all our readings. You can find these on our Canvas page.

Movies: We will be watching a film every week. You are responsible for accessing and watching these as they appear on our course schedule below. If a movie listed below does not speak to you, you may choose one that sparks your interest as long as you can relate it to the topic of the week.

Movies and Attendance to Optional In-person Meetings on Thursdays Only

In-person class meetings will ONLY TAKE PLACE ON THURSDAYS; no in-person class meetings on Tuesdays. Films are emblematic artifacts and serve as a microcosm of society. In film classes, such as this one, I prefer to screen films during class time. But in a quarter system, it is often difficult to do so due to time constraints (unless we are operating in a MWF class in which case the screenings would take place on MW and the general discussion/lecture on the topic and film on Friday). However, this is not a MWF class, therefore you are responsible for accessing and watching the movie assigned for the week (or one of your choosing as long as you can connect it to the topic of the week) on your own before we meet on Thursday to engage in fruitful dialogue pertaining to the film(s) and topic.

Assignments

Written Reflections

Choose ONLY 5 weeks for which readings/movies are assigned (see our course schedule below) and submit a written reflection on one or two readings of your choice and/or the movie. Each Written Reflection (a TOTAL of 5 for the entire term) is to be 2-3 typed double-spaced pages in length. Leave the weeks that you are choosing NOT to submit a Written Reflection for blank. In other words, do not submit anything for the weeks you are skipping.

To guide your responses, you may address all or some of the following orienting questions:

Did you enjoy the reading(s)/movie? Why? Why not? (Taste/Interest)

Is (Are) the reading(s)/movie important? If so, why and for whom? If not, why not? (Relevance)

Can you apply the reading(s)/movie to a personal experience (past or present)? To a historical or current event? To a play or other artistic performance? To a novel or other written work? To a movie (either one assigned for this class or any other movie) or television show? (Application)

Did the reading(s)/movie inspire questioning/questions on your part? (Curiosity/Questioning)

Midterm and Final Papers

You are responsible for completing two papers this term. For each paper I will provide you with a set of prompts that you will be able to choose from. Prompts will be distributed two weeks before each paper is due. Each paper should be between 4-5 double-spaced pages long. Please submit these on Canvas.

Late and Incomplete Assignments

You are expected to maintain academic standards that reflect the highest level of honesty and integrity, including turning in your assignments on time.

Communicate with me as early as possible if meeting a deadline will be an issue.

Grading Distribution

Requirement	Percentage distribution toward final grade
1. 5 Written Reflections	50%
2. Midterm Paper	25%
3. Final Paper	25%
Final Grade	100%

Grades

I can't judge your opinion, therefore as long you voice that (your opinion) in written form via your submitted assignments, you will earn an "A" for each assignment you turn in. If you don't turn an assignment in, however, I have nothing to submit a grade for, and therefore you will receive a 0 for that assignment.

Attendance is NOT part of your grade which means it is optional to attend class on Thursdays (remember, we are not meeting on Tuesdays). As per our discussion on free will, however, even if it *were* part of your grade, it would still be optional because you never have to do anything you don't want to. :)

Expectations

You wanted this experience. I wanted this experience. You're making me a part of your journey and I'm making you a part of mine. Be responsible *because* you're passionate. Let your curiosity guide you. Don't be afraid.

UC San Diego Principles of Community

The University of California, San Diego is dedicated to learning, teaching, and serving society through education, research, and public service. Our international reputation for excellence is due in large part to the cooperative and entrepreneurial nature of the UC San Diego community. UC San Diego faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to be creative and are rewarded for individual as well as collaborative achievements.

To foster the best possible working and learning environment, UC San Diego strives to maintain a climate of fairness, cooperation, and professionalism. These principles of community are vital to the success of the University and the well being of its constituents. UC San Diego faculty, staff, and students are expected to practice these basic principles as individuals and in groups.

- We value each member of the UC San Diego community for his or her individual and unique talents, and applaud all efforts to enhance the quality of campus life. We recognize that each individual's effort is vital to achieving the goals of the University.
- We affirm each individual's right to dignity and strive to maintain a climate of justice marked by mutual respect for each other.
- We value the cultural diversity of UC San Diego because it enriches our lives and the University. We celebrate this diversity and support respect for all cultures, by both individuals and the University as a whole.
- We are a university that adapts responsibly to cultural differences among the faculty, staff, students, and community.
- We acknowledge that our society carries historical and divisive biases based on race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and political beliefs. Therefore, we seek to foster understanding and tolerance among individuals and groups, and we promote awareness through education and constructive strategies for resolving conflict.
- We reject acts of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and political beliefs, and, we will confront and appropriately respond to such acts.
- We affirm the right to freedom of expression at UC San Diego. We promote open expression of our individuality and our diversity within the bounds of courtesy, sensitivity, confidentiality, and respect.

- We are committed to the highest standards of civility and decency toward all. We are committed to promoting and supporting a community where all people can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of abusive or demeaning treatment.
- We are committed to the enforcement of policies that promote the fulfillment of these principles.

We represent diverse races, creeds, cultures, and social affiliations coming together for the good of the University and those communities we serve. By working together as members of the UC San Diego community, we can enhance the excellence of our institution.

These policies include but are not limited to Academic Personnel M015 – The University of California Policy on Faculty Conduct and the Administration of Discipline; The University of California Personnel Policies for Staff Members and UC San Diego Implementing Procedures, Appendix II – Personnel Policies for Senior Managers; the University of California, San Diego Student Conduct Code; UC San Diego House Officer Policy and Procedure Document; and applicable university collective bargaining agreements. For further information or inquiries, contact the Director of the Office of Academic Diversity and Equal Opportunity, the Director of ACCES and the office of Equal Opportunity/Staff Affirmative Action, and/or the Director of the Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination. To the extent that any information presented in this document is interpreted as being in conflict with University policies, procedures, or applicable collective bargaining agreements the terms of those University policies, procedures, and agreements shall govern.

Disability and Accessibility Accommodations

The University of California, San Diego is committed to providing a barrier-free environment for learning and an electronic environment that is accessible to everyone, including individuals with disabilities. If you have a disability and feel you need accommodations in this course, please refer to the steps delineated on the Office for Students with Disabilities website:

<https://osd.ucsd.edu/students/registering.html#STEP-1:-Schedule-an-Intake-Appo>

Privacy Practices

As your instructor, I am committed to protecting your privacy by only using university-approved course technologies and adhering to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Campus Privacy Office guidelines. This includes using your educational data only as allowed by FERPA (for example for legitimate educational purposes such as submitting your final grades to the registrar's office). Communications in this course are subject to the UC Principles of Community

UCSD Academic Integrity Policy

Academic integrity is essential for an academic community, including UC San Diego. Academic integrity is built on a foundation of honest, responsible, fair and trustworthy scholarly activity.^[1] Without it, the degrees we confer, the research we conduct, and our reputation all diminish in value.

Thus, the University expects that both faculty and students will adhere to its standards of academic integrity. The UC San Diego Academic Integrity Policy (herein the “Policy”) states the general rules associated with student integrity of scholarship. The Procedures for Resolving Alleged Violations of the Policy (herein the “Procedures”) are found at: [/media/633239/ai-procedures.pdf](https://media/633239/ai-procedures.pdf) and authorized by the San Diego Division of the Academic Senate’s Educational Policy Committee.

The rest of the Policy can be found here: <https://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/2>.

*****COURSE SCHEDULE BELOW*****

Keep scrolling...



Almost there...

... *There you go :)*

Course Schedule

WEEK ONE			
Date	Readings and Movie	Topic	Due
Tuesday, 9/30/25	Readings: None	Introduction	Watch <i>IF</i> (2024) on your own by Thursday, 10/2/25
WEEK TWO			
Date	Readings and Movie	Topic	Due
Tuesday, 10/7/25	Readings: Mills: “The Promise”	Free Will and The Relativity of Madness – Part I	Watch <i>The Wild Robot</i> (2024) on your own by Thursday, 10/9/25
Thursday, 10/9/25	Berger: “Sociology as an Individual Pastime” Durkheim: “What Makes Sociology Different?” Ruiz and Ruiz with Janet Mills: “In the Beginning: It’s All in the Program” in <i>The Fifth Agreement: A Practical Guide to Self-Mastery</i> Ruiz and Ruiz with Janet Mills: “Symbols and Agreements: The Art of Humans” in <i>The Fifth Agreement: A Practical Guide to Self-Mastery</i> Ruiz and Ruiz with Janet Mills: “The Story of You: The First Agreement:		Written Reflection due by Sunday, 10/12/25

	<p>Be Impeccable with Your Word” in <i>The Fifth Agreement: A Practical Guide to Self-Mastery</i></p> <p>Ruiz and Ruiz with Janet Mills: “Every Mind Is A World: The Second Agreement: Don’t Take Anything Personally” in <i>The Fifth Agreement: A Practical Guide to Self-Mastery</i></p> <p>Movie:</p> <p><i>The Wild Robot</i> (2024)</p>		
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WEEK THREE

Date	Readings and Movie	Topic	Due
Tuesday, 10/14/25	Rosenhan: “On Being Sane in Insane Places”	Free Will and The Relativity of Madness – Part II	Watch <i>Captain Fantastic</i> (2016) on your own by Thursday, 10/16/25
Thursday, 10/16/25	<p>Schivelbusch: “Coffee and the Protestant Ethic”</p> <p>Glass: “Behavior Analytic Grounding of Sociological Constructionism”</p> <p>Ruiz and Ruiz with Janet Mills: “Truth or Fiction: The Third Agreement: Don’t Make Assumptions” in <i>The Fifth Agreement: A Practical Guide to Self-Mastery</i></p> <p>Ruiz and Ruiz with Janet Mills: “The Power of Belief: The Symbol of Santa Claus” in <i>The Fifth Agreement: A Practical Guide to Self-Mastery</i></p> <p>Ruiz and Ruiz with Janet Mills: “Practice Makes the Master: The Fourth Agreement: Always Do Your</p>		Written Reflection due by Sunday, 10/19/25

	<p>Best” in <i>The Fifth Agreement: A Practical Guide to Self-Mastery</i></p> <p>Ruiz and Ruiz with Janet Mills: “The Power of Doubt: The Fifth Agreement: Be Skeptical, but Learn to Listen” in <i>The Fifth Agreement: A Practical Guide to Self-Mastery</i></p> <p>Movie:</p> <p><i>Captain Fantastic</i> (2016)</p>		
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WEEK FOUR

Date	Readings and Movie	Topic	Due
Tuesday, 10/21/25	Readings:	Madness and Understanding	Watch <i>Joker</i> (2019) on your own by Thursday, 10/23/25
Thursday, 10/23/25	<p>Ruiz and Ruiz with Janet Mills: “The Dream of the First Attention: The Victims” in <i>The Fifth Agreement: A Practical Guide to Self-Mastery</i></p> <p>Ruiz and Ruiz with Janet Mills: “The Dream of the Second Attention: The Warriors” in <i>The Fifth Agreement: A Practical Guide to Self-Mastery</i></p> <p>Ruiz and Ruiz with Janet Mills: “The Dream of the Third Attention: The Masters” in <i>The Fifth Agreement: A Practical Guide to Self-Mastery</i></p> <p>Ruiz and Ruiz with Janet Mills: “Becoming a Seer: A New Point of View” in <i>The Fifth Agreement: A Practical Guide to Self-Mastery</i></p> <p>Movie:</p> <p><i>Joker</i> (2019)</p>		Written Reflection due by Sunday, 10/26/25

WEEK FIVE

Day/Date	Readings and Film	Topic	Due
Tuesday, 10/28/25	Readings: Sweet: "The Sociology of Gaslighting" Stark: "Gaslighting, Misogyny, and Psychological Oppression" Abramson: "Turning Up the Lights on Gaslighting"	The Madness of Gaslighting	Watch <i>Changeling</i> (2008) on your own by Thursday, 10/30/25
Thursday, 10/30/25	Movie: <i>Changeling</i> (2008)		Written Reflection due by Sunday, 11/2/25



WEEK SIX

Date	Reading	Topic	Due
Tuesday, 11/4/25	Readings: Acosta: "How Could You Do This To Me?: How Lesbian, Bisexual, and Queer Latinas Negotiate Sexual Identity With Their Families"	The Madness of Unacceptance	Watch <i>La Mission</i> (2009) on your own by Thursday, 11/6/25
Thursday, 11/6/25	van Bergen, Wilson, Russell, Gordon, and Rothblum: "Parental Responses to Coming Out by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Pansexual, or Two-Spirited People across Three Age Cohorts" Warner, Colaner, and Park: "Political Difference and Polarization in the Family: The Role of (Non)accommodating Communication for Navigating Identity Differences"		Written Reflection due by Sunday, 11/9/25

	Movie: <i>La Mission</i> (2009)		
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WEEK SEVEN

Date	Reading	Topic	Due
Tuesday, 11/11/25 (Veterans Day – No Classes) https://caps.ucsd.edu/about/about.html	Readings: Snow: “Identity Work Among the Homeless: “The Verbal Construction and Avowal of Personal Identities” Callero: “The Sociology of the Self” Ridgeway: “Framed Before We Know It: How Gender Shapes Social Relations”	The Madness of Blind Adherence	Watch <i>Barbie</i> (2023) on your own by Thursday, 11/13/25
Thursday, 11/13/25	Movie: <i>Barbie</i> (2023)		Written Reflection due by Sunday, 11/16/25

WEEK EIGHT

Date	Reading	Topic	Due
Tuesday, 11/18/25	Readings: Voleker, et al.: ‘My Body Loves Me, So I Should Love it Back’: A Qualitative Evaluation of the Bodies in Motion Program with Female Collegiate Athletes”	The Madness of Not Loving One’s Body	Watch <i>The Substance</i> (2024) on your own by Thursday, 11/20/25
Thursday, 11/20/25	Peters and Phelps: “Body Image Dissatisfaction and Distortion, Steroid Use, and Sex Differences in College Age Bodybuilders”		Written Reflection due by Sunday, 11/23/25

	<p>Williams, Weinberg, and Rosenberg: “Trans Men: Embodiments, Identities, and Sexualities”</p> <p>Barnett and Sharp: “Maladaptive Perfectionism, Body Image Satisfaction, and Disordered Eating Behaviors Among U.S. College women: The Mediating Role of Self-compassion”</p> <p>Movie:</p> <p><i>The Substance</i> (2024)</p>		
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WEEK NINE

Date	Reading	Topic	Due
Tuesday, 11/25/25	Readings: Rigoni, et al.: “Happiness In Action: The Impact of Positive Affect on the Time of the Conscious Intention to Act” Cooley: “Looking Glass Self” Blumer: “Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method”	The Madness of not living YOUR Best Life	Watch <i>Legally Blonde</i> (2001) on your own by Sunday, 11/30/25
Thursday, 11/27/24 (No Class)	  Movie: <i>Legally Blonde</i> (2001)		Written Reflection due by Sunday, 11/30/25

WEEK TEN

Date	Reading	Topic	Due
Tuesday, 12/2/25	Readings:	I Left the Madness of the World	Watch <i>Silver Linings</i>

Thursday, 12/4/25 https://lgbt.ucsd.edu	<p>Johnson and Weigert: "Frames in Confession: The Social Construction of Sexual Sin"</p> <p>Summit, et al.: "Unraveling the Slut Narrative: Gender Constraints on Adolescent Girls' Sexual Decision-Making"</p> <p>McDavitt and Mutchler: "'Dude, You're Such a Slut!' Barriers and Facilitators of Sexual Communication Among Young Gay Men and Their Best Friends"</p> <p>Vilkin and Sprott: "Consensual Non-Monogamy Among Kink-Identified Adults: Characteristics, Relationship Experiences, and Unique Motivations for Polyamory and Open Relationships"</p> <p>Movie: <i>Silver Linings Playbook</i> (2012)</p>	behind when I found Me	<p><i>Playbook</i> (2012) on your own by Thursday, 12/4/25</p> <p>Written Reflection due by Sunday, 12/7/25</p>
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FINALS WEEK

Date	Reading	Topic	Due
12/6-13/25	None	Finals Week	Final Paper Due by Saturday, 12/13/2025

