

Sociology 125

American Society: How It Really Works

Professor Bob Freeland
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Office hours: Thursday at 4 or by appt; 8103 Sewell Social Science. During covid, please email in advance even if coming to scheduled office hours.

Course meets in 5208 Social Science.

Course TAs: Minseo Cho (mcho66@wisc.edu)
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Course Description. What kind of society do we live in? The course provides an extended answer to that question. It also explores the implications of that answer for understanding and addressing some of the most important social problems that face the U.S. today.

The course is organized around five values that most Americans believe our society should realize:

1. *Freedom*: the idea that members of the society should be able, to the greatest degree possible, to live their lives as they wish; [L] [SEP]
2. *Prosperity*: the idea that the society's economy should generate the highest possible standard of living; [L] [SEP]
3. *Efficiency*: the idea that the economy should be maximally precise in allocating product to needs and wants, and maximally efficient in productive use of resources; [L] [SEP]
4. *Fairness*: the idea that members of the society should enjoy equal protection of the law and equal opportunity to make something of their lives; [L] [SEP]
5. *Democracy*: the idea that public decisions should reflect the collective will of equal citizens, not powerful and privileged elites. [L] [SEP]

Our central questions will be: to what extent does contemporary U.S. society realize these values, and how might it do a better job? In the process of addressing these questions, we will also ask how social scientists go about investigating and addressing such issues.

Reading. There is one required book for the course: [L] [SEP] *American Society: How it Really Works*, by Erik Olin Wright and Joel Rogers (2nd edition. W.W. Norton, 2015). It is essential to use the second edition. It is available at the University Bookstore.

You should complete the assigned reading for a given session BEFORE the lecture or section meeting covering that reading.

Exams. There are three exams in this class: two midterms and one final.

Midterm 1 will cover the course content of lectures 1-10 and accompanying section discussions; Midterm 2 will cover the course content corresponding to lectures 12-19 and accompanying section discussions;

The Final will concentrate on the course content corresponding to lectures 21-28 (roughly 60% of exam) but also include questions raised by other parts of the course. The final will be a longer exam (2 hour format vs 1 hour format)

All the exams are multiple-choice. They are not designed to test for creativity, simply your mastery of material covered in lecture and section.

The schedule for exams is:

Midterm 1 March 1, in class

Midterm 2 April 7, in class

Final Tuesday, May 10, 12:25-2:25 pm, room pending

Course Schedule and Materials

Lecture	Date	Chapter (American Society)	
1	1/25	1	Introduction to class; Perspectives and values
2	1/27	2	What kind of a country is this?
Part I: CAPITALISM			
3	2/1	3	The market: how is it supposed to work
4	2/3	4	The market: How it actually works
5	2/8	5	The environment
6	2/10	6	Transportation
7	2/15	7	Consumerism
8	2/17	8	Health care
9	2/22	9	Finance
10	2/24	10	High road capitalism
11	3/1		In-class Exam
PART II: INEQUALITY			
12	3/3	11	Thinking about fairness and inequality
13	3/8	12	Class
14	3/10	13	Persistent poverty and rising inequality
Spring Break, March 12-March 20			
15	3/22	14	Ending poverty in America
16	3/24	15	Racial inequality
17	3/29	15	Racial inequality, continued
18	3/31	16	Gender inequality
19	4/5	16	Gender inequality, continued
20	4/7		In-class exam 2
Part III: DEMOCRACY			

21	4/12	17	Democracy: how it works
22	4/14	18	Elections and voting
23	4/19	19	Taxation and the attack on the affirmative state
24	4/21	20	Corporate control of the media
25	4/26	21	Militarism and empire
26	4/28	22	Labor unions
27	5/3	23	Democracy from Below
28	5/5	24	Possible Futures

Grading. Grades for the course will be based on performance on exams and in your sections. Weighting of material is as follows:
Midterm 1 – 20% of final grade
Midterm 2 – 20% of final grade
Final exam – 30% of final grade
Section attendance and participation – 30% of final grade

Excused Exam Absences and Make-Ups. You will not be excused from any exam or permitted a scheduled make-up unless you provide:

- a. in advance of the relevant exam, written notice of absence and a compelling justification of your absence;
- b. after the relevant exam, documentation of this justification.

Additional Information

A. Course Policies. The professor adheres to all department, college, and university policies regarding accommodations for students with disabilities, religious holidays, incompletes, plagiarism, and student evaluation of the course and its instruction.

B. Accommodations. Please send me an email by the end of the third week of the course if you are eligible for special arrangements or accommodations for testing, assignments, or other aspects of the course. This may be the case if English is your second language or you experience a physical or psychological condition that makes it difficult for you to complete assignments and/or exams without some modification of those tasks. Accommodations are provided for students who qualify for disability services through the McBurney Center. Their website has detailed instructions about how to qualify: <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>. Provide a copy of your accommodations request (VISA) to the instructor by the end of the second week of class. We try to reserve rooms and proctors by the third week in class, so we must know of all accommodations by then. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for **religious observances**, send an email by the end of the third week of the course stating the specific date(s) for which you request accommodation; campus policy requires that religious observances be accommodated if you make a timely request early in the term. See the university's [web page](https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698) for details:
<https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698>

C. Writing Center. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the resources and classes offered by the Writing Center (located at 6171 Helen C. White Hall) to help with organization, thesis statements, grammar, sentence structure, and appropriate citations. See: <http://www.writing.wisc.edu>. Before submitting your short paper, you are expected to be familiar with the guidelines on the Writing Center website about "Quoting and Paraphrasing Sources" (see: <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>). See next section regarding 'Academic Integrity.'

D. Academic integrity. By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison's community of scholars in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/.

E. Sexual harassment and misconduct. Professional conduct and appropriate behavior are critical to create a safe learning environment for students and instructors alike. Here is a statement about sexual harassment from the University: ^{[[SEP]]}**What is Sexual Harassment?** ^{[[SEP]]}Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- submission to such conduct is a condition of employment, academic progress, or participation ^{[[SEP]]}in a university program; or
- submission to or rejection of such conduct influences employment, academic or university ^{[[SEP]]}program decisions; or
- the conduct interferes with an employee's work or a student's academic career, or creates an ^{[[SEP]]}intimidating, hostile or offensive work, learning, or program environment.^{[[SEP]]}

Tangible Action or Quid Pro Quo (This for That) Sexual Harassment and Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment are both illegal and unacceptable. ^{[[SEP]]}One practical implication is that instructors (faculty or graduate students) may not date students to whom they will be assigning grades. If you believe that you have been harassed, contact the chair of the Department of Sociology (socchair@ssc.wisc.edu), The Title IX office (TitleIX_Coordinator@wisc.edu), or see this link for confidential sources (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/campus-procedures/reporting/complainant/>).

F. Departmental notice of grievance and appeal rights. The Department of Sociology regularly conducts student evaluations of all professors and teaching assistants near the end of the semester. Students who have more immediate concerns about this course should report them to the instructor or to the chair, 8128 Social Science (socchair@ssc.wisc.edu).

G. Course learning outcomes. Beyond the specific substantive and methodological content covered in this course, it has been designed to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities by the Department of sociology:

- *Critically Evaluate Published Research.* Sociology graduates will be able to read and evaluate published research as it appears in academic journals and popular or policy publications.
- *Communicate Skillfully:* Sociology majors write papers that build arguments and assess evidence in a clear and effective manner.
- *Critical Thinking about Society and Social Processes:* Sociology graduates can look beyond the surface of issues to discover the "why" and "how" of social order and structure and consider the underlying social mechanisms that may be creating a situation,

- identify evidence that may adjudicate between alternate explanations for phenomena, and develop proposed policies or action plans in light of theory and data.
- *Prepare for Graduate School and the Job Market:* Students use their social research skills to identify opportunities for employment or further study, assess their qualifications for these opportunities, and identify strategies for gaining the necessary knowledge and experience to improve their qualifications. Students are encouraged to develop and maintain portfolios of their written work and educational experiences to aid them in preparing applications and to learn how to present their.

H. Institutional statement on diversity: "Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world." <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>

I. Intellectual Property. Lecture materials and recordings for Sociology 125 are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or share lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitute copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

COVID-19 Policies



STUDENTS' RULES, RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

During the global COVID-19 pandemic, we must prioritize our collective health and safety to keep ourselves, our campus, and our community safe. As a university community, we must work together to prevent the spread of the virus and to promote the collective health and welfare of our campus and surrounding community.

UW-MADISON FACE COVERING GUIDELINES

While on campus all employees and students are required to wear appropriate and properly fitting face coverings while present in any campus building unless working alone in a laboratory or office space.

Face Coverings During In-person Instruction (COVID-19) Individuals are expected to wear a face covering while inside any university building. Face coverings must be worn correctly (i.e., covering

both your mouth and nose) in the building if you are attending class in person. If any student is unable to wear a face-covering, an accommodation may be provided due to disability, medical condition, or other legitimate reason.

Students with disabilities or medical conditions who are unable to wear a face covering should contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center or their Access Consultant if they are already affiliated. Students requesting an accommodation unrelated to disability or medical condition, should contact the Dean of Students Office.

Students who choose not to wear a face covering may not attend in-person classes, unless they are approved for an accommodation or exemption. All other students not wearing a face covering will be asked to put one on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear face coverings appropriately or adhere to other stated requirements will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards and will not be allowed to return to the classroom until they agree to comply with the face covering policy. An instructor may cancel or suspend a course in-person meeting if a person is in the classroom without an approved face covering in position over their nose and mouth and refuses to immediately comply.

QUARANTINE OR ISOLATION DUE TO COVID-19

Student should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms and get tested for the virus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. Student should reach out to instructors as soon as possible if they become ill or need to isolate or quarantine, in order to make alternate plans for how to proceed with the course. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with their instructor concerning their illness and the anticipated extent of their absence from the course (either in-person or remote). The instructor will work with the student to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.