

**Sociology 181: The Sociological Enterprise**  
**Honors Introductory Seminar**  
T Th, 1:00-2:15pm

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Office Hours: Tues. 2:30-4:30pm  
Course Website: <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/240198>

“The key to understanding social life isn’t just the forest and it isn’t just the trees. It’s the forest *and* the trees and how they’re related to one another. Sociology is the study of how all this happens.”

– Alan Johnson

Why do you raise your hand before speaking in class? What motivates people to attend protests? How do doctors treat patients differently based on race? Why does climate change exacerbate social inequality? Is hookup culture good for women? Despite the fact that on the surface these questions may not seem to have much in common, sociology can help us answer all them. Sociology helps us understand the social forces and processes that shape our interactions, institutions, culture, and society. In this introduction to sociology, you will learn how to think like a sociologists and see the connections between individual experiences and larger social structures. Together, we will discuss sociological studies and theories on topics as wide ranging as race, class, gender, family, education, politics, crime, and sexuality. We will examine how social norms constrain our choices, how inequality is reproduced, and how we can enact change. Through reading, writing, and discussions with your classmates, it is my hope that you will leave the course with a curiosity about the status quo and the tools to identify the structures that uphold it.

### **Learning Objectives**

Through the work we do together over the next few months, by the end of this class you will be able to:

- Apply sociological approaches, theories, and concepts to contemporary social issues and consider the underlying social mechanisms.
- Use your sociological imagination to understand your own experiences withing broader social contexts.
- Critically evaluate information presented to you about the social world in both academic and non-academic contexts.
- Craft an argument using sociological research as evidence.

### **Course Materials**

There are two required texts for this course, both of which are available for a low cost electronically:

- Ferguson. 2020. *Mapping the Social Landscape: Readings in Sociology*.
- Sharkey, Sharp, and Kahn, 2020. *A Sociology Experiment*.

Additionally, there are a number of supplemental readings, short video clips, documentaries, and podcasts assigned throughout the semester. Those are all available on Canvas.

## COURSE POLICIES

### Virtual Classroom Environment

**The goal of our time in class is to learn from and with each other through open and honest dialogue and discussion.** To create an environment conducive to this sort of critical exploration, students are expected to be respectful at all times. While disagreement is welcome, it is crucial that all students feel intellectually and emotionally safe. As such, when expressing viewpoints, students should try to raise questions and comments that encourage learning rather than provoke defensiveness in and conflict with other students.

I know it can be hard to stay focused on Zoom, so it is my goal to plan discussions and activities that interesting and engaging to make that easier. In return, I ask that you remain on task during class time and do not use your laptop or phone for reasons outside of course content. Doing so not only gets in the way of your learning, but can be distracting to those around you; it's easy to tell even on Zoom when someone is scrolling or browsing. Improper use of electronic devices will impact your participation grade.

### Accommodations and Learning in the Time of COVID

**I am committed to making this course a meaningful learning experience for all students and your success in this class is important to me. Your mental and physical health and wellbeing are equally important to me.** If there are circumstances, personal situations, or emergencies that may impact your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible. This is the case for any circumstances that you are already aware of or that come up during the semester. The sooner you let me know, the better able we will be to work together to develop strategies to meet your needs and the course requirements. **I am here to support you as best I can.**

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. I will work either directly with you or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

### Academic Integrity

As with all courses at the University of Wisconsin, you are expected to follow the University's rules and regulations pertaining to academic honesty and integrity. For a complete description of behaviors that violate the University's standards as well the disciplinary penalties and procedures, please see the Dean of Students: <https://students.wisc.edu/student-conduct/academic-integrity>. If you have questions about the rules for any of the assignments or exams, please ask.

### Late Work Policy

In general, late papers will be docked a half a letter grade per day and will not be accepted more than one week past the due date. However, all students have **one deadline flex** that they can use for an assignment. This will push the deadline back three days without any penalty. To use your deadline flex, you must email me before the original due date. If three days is not enough or you need more time, let me know as soon as possible.

## COURSE COMPONENTS

### Grading

Grades for this course will be determined through a variety of assignments and assessments. I recognize that different types of assignments and assessments match with the strengths of different students. I have designed the grading of this course to offer a range of opportunities for you to apply and show what you have learned. Your grade will be based on the following:

|                              |              |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Quizzes                      | 18% (3 x 6%) |
| Discussion Questions         | 12%          |
| Movie Analysis Paper         | 7%           |
| Position Paper               | 10%          |
| Research Paper               | 30%          |
| Podcast                      | 8%           |
| Attendance and Participation | 15%          |

### Attendance and Participation

Because this is an honors class, the class is designed to be more student-driven than the average introductory class at UW-Madison. As students in this class, you will take an active role in the learning process, rather than being passive recipients of knowledge. High levels of student engagement will be a key ingredient for making this class interesting, fun, and enriching. To that end, attendance and participation are central aspects of the class. You will be expected to show up to class ready to engage with your peers about the material for the day. Class sessions will be heavy on discussion, which will take a variety of forms and structures.

Of course I understand that sometimes things come up unexpectedly, we get sick, have to attend to family issues, or maybe need the extra hour to study for an exam in another class. **Every student gets 3 skips. You do not need to tell me when or why you are missing class and you may miss for any reason.** Any missed classes beyond 3 will impact your grade. If something serious comes up that interferes with your ability to attend class for an extended period of time, please let me know so that we can work together to figure out appropriate accommodations.

### Discussion Questions

Students will play a central role in shaping the conversations we have in class. To help encourage student-directed learning, you will be required to post **14 discussion questions** over the course of the semester. This averages out to one discussion question a week. Discussion questions should be crafted based on the readings for the day and will be **due at 8:00am on Tuesdays and Thursdays**. Because there are plenty of opportunities to post discussion questions, late posts will not be accepted. See the discussion question assignment for additional details and guidance.

### Quizzes

You will have three noncumulative quizzes over the course of the semester. The quiz will be completed on Canvas. They will be open note and open book, but must be completed independently, i.e. students may NOT work together or with tutors. Although they are open book, you will need to have consistently done the reading and engaged with the material to do well.

### **Movie Analysis Paper**

Your first paper of the semester will be a short paper in which you analyze a coming-of-age movie. In this paper, you will consider socialization, structural rules, and the resources the characters have as they navigate adolescence. You will also consider how the characters used their agency to change structural rules and influence society. Full instructions and a rubric are on Canvas. To help you start brainstorming what movie you want to analyze, some options include: *Booksmart*, *Mean Girls*, *Superbad*, *Sixteen Candles*, *Billy Elliot*, *Juno*, *Bend it Like Beckham*, *Boys Don't Cry*, and *Breakfast Club*.

### **Position Paper**

To help you practice developing and making a sociological argument, you will write a position paper. You will take a stance on a specific topic and use readings from class to support your argument. Because revision is a key component to refining writing skills, there will be a first and final draft of this paper. The first draft should be a fully-formed paper that you would feel content turning in as a final draft. You will receive feedback on your first draft to help you improve your paper and refine your writing for the final draft. Full instructions for the paper along with a rubric will be available on Canvas a few weeks before the first draft is due.

### **Research Paper**

The research paper is part of the UW-Madison Sociology curriculum. It is intended to help you develop skills in critical reading, logical thinking, and the use of evidence, as well as the use of appropriate style and disciplinary conventions in writing. The topic of the paper is of your choosing so long as it is sufficiently sociological. Just what that means will become clearer to you as we proceed. You will be given a lot of guidance on the process in and out of class and the research project is divided into a series of assignments due at different points in the semester:

Topic Statements: Due Thursday, March 11<sup>th</sup> by 1:00pm (bring to class)

Outline and Annotated Bibliography: Due Thursday, March 25<sup>th</sup>

First Draft: Due Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup>

Final Draft: Due Sunday, April 25<sup>th</sup>

### **Podcast**

Instead of an in-class presentation on your research paper, you will create a short podcast presenting your findings. This will be an opportunity to practice about synthesizing research and presenting it to a general audience. Additional instructions will be available on Canvas a few weeks in advance.

### **Extra Credit**

You will have the opportunity to earn up to a half a letter grade (3%) of extra credit. To earn extra credit, you can create a TikTok that explains a sociological concept, makes a sociological argument, or considers something using a sociological lens. Exactly how you approach it is up to you. You can make up to 3 TikToks, each one counting as a 1% grade bump.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### Week 1

- T January 26<sup>th</sup> ***Introduction to Sociology***
- Johnson, “The Forest, The Trees, and The One Thing.” (Canvas)
  - Miner, “Body Ritual among the Nacerima” (Canvas)

- Th January 28<sup>th</sup> ***The Sociological Imagination***
- Mills, “The Promise.” Reading 1 in *Mapping*

### Week 2

- T February 2<sup>nd</sup> ***Social Research***
- Chapter 2, “Research Methods” in *A Sociology Experiment*.
  - Podcast: “What Twins Can Tell Us About Who We Are.” *The Hidden Brain*.

- Th February 4<sup>th</sup> ***Culture***
- Becker, “Culture: A Sociological View.” Reading 10 in *Mapping*.
  - Wade, “What’s So Cultural about Hookup Culture?” (Canvas)

### Week 3

- T February 9<sup>th</sup> ***Social Structure and the Individual***
- Chapter 3, “Social Structure and the Individual” in *A Sociology Experiment*.
  - Video: “The Urgency of Intersectionality.” Kimberlé Crenshaw. TED Talk.

- Th February 11<sup>th</sup> ***Socialization***
- Kane, ““No Way My Boys Are Going to Be Like That!”: Parents’ Responses to Children’s Gender Nonconformity.” Reading 13 in *Mapping*.

### Week 4

- T February 16<sup>th</sup> ***Social Class***
- Chapter 4, “Introduction” and “Social Class” sections (page 3-14) in *A Sociology Experiment*.
  - Lareau, “Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life.” (Canvas)
  - Video: “Access Ain’t Inclusion.” Anthony Jack. TEDx Talk. (13 min.)

- Th February 18<sup>th</sup> ***Poverty***
- Chapter 4, “Poverty” section (page 23-35) in *A Sociology Experiment*.
  - Shaefer, Edin, and Talber, “Understanding the Dynamics of \$2-A-Day Poverty in the United States.” Reading 26 in *Mapping*.

**Sunday, February 21<sup>st</sup>: Movie Analysis Due**  
**Quiz I opens in Canvas**

### **Week 5**

T February 23<sup>rd</sup> ***Economic Inequality***

- Davis, “Some Principles of Stratification” with response by Moore. Reading 23 in *Mapping*.
- Shapiro, “Race, Homeownership, and Wealth.” Reading 25 in *Mapping*.

Th February 25<sup>th</sup> ***Capitalism***

- Documentary: *Inequality for All*. Created by Robert Reich.

### **Quiz I Due Sunday, February 28<sup>th</sup>**

### **Week 6**

T March 2<sup>nd</sup> ***Sex, Gender, and Sexuality***

- Chapter 6, “Gender and Sexuality” in *A Sociology Experiment*.
- Westbrook and Schilt, “Doing Gender, Determining Gender: Transgender People, Gender Panics, and the Maintenance of the Sex/Gender/Sexuality System.” Reading 28 in *Mapping*

Th March 4<sup>th</sup> ***Gender Inequality***

- Cooky, Messner, and Musto, “‘It’s Dude Time!’: A Quarter Century of Excluding Women’s Sports in Televised News and Highlights Shows.” Reading 39 in *Mapping*.

### **Due Sunday, March 7<sup>th</sup>: Position Paper First Draft**

### **Week 7**

T March 9<sup>th</sup> ***Masculinity***

- Wade and Ferree, “Men and Masculinities.” (Canvas)
- Pascoe, “‘Dude, You’re a Fag’: Adolescent Masculinity and the Fag Discourse.” Reading 29 in *Mapping*.

Th March 11<sup>th</sup> ***White Male Identity Politics***

- Documentary: *The Man Card*. Created by Jackson Katz.

### **Due Thursday, March 11<sup>th</sup>: Topic Statement Due**

### **Week 8**

T March 16<sup>th</sup> ***The Construction of Racial Categories***

- Chapter 7, "Race and Ethnicity" in *A Sociology Experiment*.
- Desmond and Emirbayer, “What is Racial Domination?” Reading 31 in *Mapping*

Th March 18<sup>th</sup> ***Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration***

- Chapter 12, "Immigration" and "Concentrated Poverty and Racial Segregation" (page 12-29) in *A Sociology Experiment*.
- Podcast: "Status Update." *Codeswitch*

**Due Sunday, March 21<sup>st</sup>: Position Paper Final Draft**

**Week 9**

T March 23<sup>rd</sup> ***Crime and Punishment***

- Chapter 13, "Deviance, Crime, and Violence" (page 17-33) in *A Sociology Experiment*.
- Documentary: *The 13<sup>th</sup>*

Th March 25<sup>th</sup> ***Whiteness***

- Collins, "What is White Privilege, Really?" (Canvas)
- McIntosh, "Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack." (Canvas)

**Due Thursday, March 25<sup>th</sup>: Research Paper Outline and Annotated Bibliography**

**Quiz II Opens Sunday March 28<sup>th</sup>**

**Week 10**

T March 30<sup>th</sup> No Class – Paper Conferences

Th April 1<sup>st</sup> No Class – Paper Conferences

**Quiz II Due Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Week 11**

T April 6<sup>th</sup> ***Families***

- Chapter 8, "Sociology of Families" in *A Sociology Experiment*.
- Parreñas, "Mothering from a Distance: Emotions, Gender, and Intergenerational Relations in Filipino Transnational Families." (Canvas)
- Watch: "The Myth of the Absent Black Father" (9 min)

Th April 8<sup>th</sup> ***Gender, Work, and the Family***

Choose two of the following articles/podcasts about gender, work, and the family during the pandemic:

- Hesse, "The Pandemic Didn't Create Working Moms' Struggle. But it Made it Impossible to Ignore." *The Washington Post*.
- Listen: Arnold, "'Incredibly Scary:' Single Moms Fear Falling Through Holes in Pandemic Safety Nets." *NPR*.
- Listen: Horsely, "'My Family Needs Me': Latinos Drop Out of Workforce at Alarming Rates." *NPR*.

## **Due Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup>: Research Paper – First Draft**

### **Week 12**

T April 13<sup>th</sup>      ***Work***

- Selection from Erenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. (Canvas)
- Gerstel and Clawson. “Normal Unpredictability and the Chaos in Our Lives.” (Canvas)
- 

Th April 15<sup>th</sup>      ***Education***

- Chapter 9, “Sociology of Education” in *A Sociology Experiment*
- Crow Dog and Erdoes, “Civilize Them with a Stick.” Reading 50 in *Mapping*.

### **Week 13**

T April 20<sup>th</sup>      ***Health and Medicine***

- Dobransky and Kargittai, “People with Disabilities During COVID-19.” (Canvas)
- Listen: Martin and Montagne, “The Last Person You’d Expect to Die in Childbirth.” *NPR* in partnership with *Propublica*
- Listen: Martin and Montagne, “Black Mothers Keep Dying After Giving Birth. Shalon Irving’s Story Explains Why.” *NPR* in partnership with *Propublica*.

Th April 22<sup>nd</sup>      ***The Media***

- Thakore, “Must-See TV: South Asian Characterizations in American Popular Media.” Reading 38 in *Mapping*

## **Due Sunday, April 25<sup>th</sup>: Research Paper – Final Draft**

### **Quiz III Opens Sunday, April 25<sup>th</sup>**

### **Week 14**

T April 27<sup>th</sup>      ***Social Change***

- Goodwin and Rojas, “Revolutions and Regime Change.” Reading 56 in *Mapping*.
- Video: “#MeToo is a Movement, not a Moment.” Tarana Burke TED Talk.

Th April 29<sup>th</sup>      ***Bringing Sociology with You***

- Palmer, “What to Take Away from Your Sociology Class.” (Canvas)

### **Quiz III Due Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>**

### **Due Wednesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>: Final Podcast**