

Sociology 181: The Sociological Enterprise
Honors Introductory Seminar
WF 2:30-3:45pm

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Office Hours: W 10 am-12pm

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 sociologist 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, 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 curiosity about social life and the tools to identify the structures that shape it.

Sociology 181 is open only to honors students. Students must have satisfied the Comm A requirement. Students cannot previously have taken Sociology 210 or 211.

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 within 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 is one required text for this course, available online for a low cost:

Sharkey, Sharp, and Kahn, *A Sociology Experiment* (Third Edition)

Create your own account on the *A Sociology Experiment* website. Add to your cart each chapter you've been assigned. The chapters will be found on the "Chapters" page. Once you purchase each chapter, you will be able to read it on that chapter's product page. You need only purchase

the chapters you've been assigned. Each chapter costs a dollar. All other required readings are available (now or very soon) on Canvas.

Course Policies

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. When expressing viewpoints, students should try to raise questions and comments that encourage learning rather than provoke defensiveness and conflict with other students.

- Intentionality is important – what do you mean to convey?
- Never assume what others are thinking or what groups they represent; *you don't know.*
- Animosity or disrespect toward any student or teacher is not welcome.

It is my goal to plan discussions and activities that are interesting and engaging. In return, I ask you to remain on task during class time and to not use your laptop or phone for reasons outside of course content. Improper use of electronic devices will impact your participation grade.

Health Challenges

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 may 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. 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 as disciplinary penalties and procedures, please see <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 point a day (from a possible 100 points) and will not be accepted more than one week past the due date. However, all students have *one deadline flex* they can use for an assignment. This will push back the deadline by three days without any penalty. To use your deadline flex, you must email me before the original due date. If three days are 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 have designed the grading to offer a range of opportunities for you to apply and show what you have learned. I recognize that different types of assignments and assessments will match with the strengths of different students. Your grade will be determined as follows:

Movie Analysis Paper	0-10 points
American Dream Position Paper	0-10 points
Review Essay for Sociological Audience	0-20 points
Review Essay for Broader Audience	0-10 points
In-Class Presentation	0-10 points
Research Proposal	0-10 points
Class Attendance	0-10 points
Class Participation	0-20 points

Grading scale:

93-100 = A
86-92 = AB
79-85 = B
72-78 = BC
65-71 = C

Attendance and Participation

Because it is for honors students, this course is designed to be more student-driven than the typical introductory course at UW-Madison. You will take an active role in the learning process rather than be passive recipients of knowledge. High levels of student engagement will be a key ingredient for making the course interesting, enriching, and fun. Thus attendance and participation are central aspects of the course. Attendance will be taken each class meeting. 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, we have to attend to family issues, perhaps we need an extra hour to study for an exam in another course. *Every student gets 3 skips. Please do not tell me when or why you are missing class. You may miss for any reason. Any missed classes beyond the allotted 3 skips will impact your grade: specifically by 2 points for each missed class.* (Those 2 points could mean the difference between, say, an A and an AB.) If something serious comes up that interferes with your ability to attend class for an extended period of time (i.e., for longer than two class meetings), please let me know so that we can work together to figure out appropriate accommodations.

When you are in attendance, I expect you to stay in class all the way through the class meeting. Otherwise you will not get credit for having attended that day. I insist on this policy because I have found that, otherwise, students sometimes trickle out of the classroom one by one during the final several minutes, and they do so in a way that destroys our collective focus. I wish to discourage that as much as possible.

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 also will consider how the characters use their agency to change structural rules and influence society. Full instructions are on Canvas.

American Dream Position Paper

To help you practice developing 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 are on Canvas. Any deficits from a perfect grade on the first draft will be erased from your final grade provided you address the deficits in your final version. Grading can be tough for the first draft but lenient for the final one so long as you make the recommended changes.

Review Essays, In-Class Presentation, and Research Proposal

The two review essays I will ask you to write, along with a research proposal, are 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. You will be asked to do an in-class presentation as well. This in-class presentation will give you the opportunity to practice synthesizing research and presenting it verbally to an audience of your peers. Full instructions for all of the above are on Canvas in the document called "All Other Assignments."

Many thanks to Miriam Barcus for her help with this syllabus and other course materials.

The Emirbayer Rules

- (1) When you speak in class, please refer exclusively to authors and texts we happen to be reading that same day (or read earlier in the semester). Please don't mention any other authors or texts in class discussion. Let's stay focused.
- (2) Please try whenever possible to respond to the person who spoke right before you, rather than offering something completely disconnected. Let's have a genuine conversation. If you aren't able to maintain this continuity, then temporarily cede your place in line; we'll return to you a bit later.
- (3) Please be relatively succinct and to-the-point in your remarks. Let's be dialogical. It's okay to be confused when confronting challenging material, but I've found that confusion most effectively can be addressed when your comments are kept brief, so that others can respond.
- (4) One more thing: Sometimes a student has a point to make that's so urgent, so necessary, so compelling, that he or she can't bear to wait in line. If this happens, raise *both* your hands at once, and I'll (probably) call on you. Don't overuse this privilege. Let's limit it to (at most) one time per student per class meeting. (By the way, I say I'll "probably" call on you because sometimes, in the interest solely of moving the discussion along, I'll ignore upraised hands. Nothing personal!)

Class Schedule

Week 1

W January 22

- Introductory Class Meeting

F January 24

- Chapter 3, “Social Structure and the Individual,” in *A Sociology Experiment*
- Mills, “The Promise” (pp. 3-11). Students find this to be the driest reading of the entire semester. But thankfully it’s fairly short and packed with useful ideas.

Week 2

W January 29

- Erik Olin Wright and Joel Rogers, “Class”
- Erik Olin Wright, “Real Utopias”
- Chapter 4, section on “Poverty and Homelessness,” in *A Sociology Experiment*

F January 31

- Matthew Desmond, selection from *Evicted*
- Matthew Desmond, methodological appendix to *Evicted*

Week 3

W February 5

- Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer, “What is Racial Domination?”

F February 7

- Chapter 6, “Gender and Sexuality,” in *A Sociology Experiment*

Sunday, February 9: Book Selection, Rank-Ordered List, Due

Week 4

W February 12

- Loic Wacquant, “Habitus”
- Annette Lareau, “Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life”

F February 14

- Shamus Khan, selection from *Privilege*

Sunday, February 16: Movie Analysis Due

Week 5

W February 19

- Chloe Hart, “Trajectory Guarding”

F February 21

- Devah Pager, “The Mark of a Criminal Record”; please note: you can stop reading at p. 962; also, there’s no need to pore over the footnotes, some of which are fairly lengthy

Week 6

W February 26

- Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, selections from *Racism Without Racists*: chs. 2-3 (entire); ch. 4 (introduction, conclusion, and the opening paragraphs of every section and subsection in between skimming the rest)

F February 28

- Elijah Anderson, selections from *Black in White Space*
- Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, “From Bi-Racial to Tri-Racial.”

Due Sunday, March 2: Position Paper First Draft

Week 7

W March 5

- Taylor Laemmli, “Class Borrowing”
- Taylor Laemmli, “Class Perks”

F March 7

- Joseph Ewoodzie, selections from *Getting Something to Eat in Jackson*: please read what’s posted in the Course Modules online as Installments 1, 2, and 4

Due Sunday, March 9: Review Essay on Your Book

Week 8

W March 12

- Matthew Desmond and Nicol Valdez, “Unpolicing the Urban Poor”

F March 14

- CJ Pascoe, selections from *Dude, You’re a Fag*: please read all of ch. 3 and then, from ch. 4, the introduction and conclusion as well as the opening paragraph or two of each section in between

Due Sunday, March 16: Position Paper Final Draft

Week 9

W March 19

- Guest Presentation: Thomas Durkin, Research Librarian
- Chapter 2, “Research Methods,” in *A Sociology Experiment*

F March 21

- Ashley Mears, selections from *Pricing Beauty*

March 26 and 28: No Class Due to UW Spring Break

Week 10

W April 2

- Ashley Mears, selections from *Very Important People*

F April 4

- Daniel Chambliss, “The Mundanity of Excellence”

Due Sunday, April 6: Presentation of Your Book to a Broader Audience

Prepare on April 7-9: Your In-Class Presentations

Week 11: In-Class Presentations

W April 9

- No Readings Today: In-Class Presentations

F April 11

- No Readings Today: In-Class Presentations

Due Sunday, April 13: First Draft of Research Proposal

Week 12: College Week

W April 16

- Lisa Wade, *American Hookup*: selections TBA

F April 18

- Elizabeth Armstrong and Laura Hamilton, selections from *Paying for the Party*. Please read the Preface and Introduction and then, as we did with one of the chapters from Pascoe's book, read the introductions and conclusions, and the opening paragraphs of each section, of chs. 5, 6, and 7. This book is electronically available through the UW-Madison library system.

Week 13

W April 23

- Discussion of Your Research Proposals
- Start Reading Assigned Selections from Arlie Hochschild's *Stolen Pride*

F April 25

- Discussion of Your Research Proposals
- Continue Reading Assigned Selections from Arlie Hochschild's *Stolen Pride*

Week 14

W April 30

- Arlie Hochschild, selections from *Stolen Pride*. Please read Parts One and Three, along with "Appendix 1: Research." This book is electronically available through the UW-Madison library system.

F May 2

- Final Class Meeting: Course Wrap-Up

Due Sunday, May 4: Final Version of Your Research Proposals