

The Sociological Enterprise

Sociology 211
Spring 2020
Monday, Wednesday 9:55 – 10:45am
Room: Birge Hall B302

Instructor: Taylor Laemmli, MS
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Office Hours: Mondays 2-4pm

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Welcome to Sociology!

This is a course where students learn what sociology is, what it can do, and how to evaluate it. That is, it is an introduction to the field of sociology. Students will engage with classic ideas in sociology as well as many subfields within it. We cannot cover everything in sociology, but the course will provide a basic introduction to general sociological topics and some of the most popular and interesting areas of inquiry in the field.

Three important dynamics will guide our inquiry: the mind-expanding properties of the sociological perspective, the way in which sociology can help us to make sense of big changes in society, and the potential for sociology to be useful for efforts at social change.

This course is appropriate for anyone who wants to major in sociology, for anyone who is interested in sociology, and for anyone for whom it fulfills a requirement. We are glad to have you for whatever reason.

Department Learning Objectives

Beyond the specific substantive and methodological content covered in the course, the course 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 and make oral presentations 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, structure, and consider the underlying social mechanisms that may be creating a situation. They can identify evidence that may adjudicate between alternate explanations for phenomena as well as develop proposed policies or action plans in light of theory and data.
- See Things from a Global Perspective: Sociologists learn about different cultures, groups, and societies across both time and place. They are aware of the diversity of backgrounds and experiences among residents of the United States. They understand the ways events and processes in one country are linked to those in other countries.

Course Format

This is a three-credit course: in addition to two 50-minute lectures each week, you will attend one 50-minute section each week.

Lectures: Please read the material assigned *before* we meet, so that you come prepared and ready to ask questions. Lectures will draw from the readings, but they will also present material that is not in the readings, so it is important you come to class. I will post lecture slides on Canvas within the week after class. If you miss class, please be sure to get details and notes from someone else in our class.

Please use electronic equipment—computers, tablets, phones, etc.—responsibly in lecture. If electronics use becomes distracting, I reserve the right to ban the use of such equipment from the classroom entirely. I do not permit audio or video recordings of lecture.

Please feel free to ask questions in lecture, but do be sure to properly respect the primary speaker—whether it is me or someone else—by staying quiet at all other times.

Please do not pack up before the end of class. The thunderous noise of 100 students disassembling their wooden desks is distracting and mildly unnerving.

Section: Discussion section each week are for delving into sociology more deeply than we can accomplish in lecture. This is where you get to work out what you think about sociology, to dive deeply into some of the texts we're reading, and hopefully agree and disagree with your classmates in productive, interesting, and thought-provoking ways. Section attendance is also required, and you should complete all readings before section. Section will be helmed by the great Jason Nolen, who will provide his own syllabus with additional instructions.

Readings

One textbook is required for the course:

Alexander, Jeffrey C., Kenneth Thompson, Laura Desfor Edles, Moshoula Capous-Desyllas. 2017/2018. *Contemporary Introduction to Sociology: Culture and Society in Transition*. 3rd edition. New York: Routledge.

You can buy this in the bookstore, but I also suggest looking around online to cut the price down. It's a good book, more interesting than others I could find, and it saves me from assigning multiple books. It is not, however, cheap, and there is no honor (but rather, an alarming sort of bleakness) in starving so you can afford a sociology textbook. You can rent it for \$34 on Amazon, for example, or find other used copies online in the \$50 range. The book is also available on reserve in the library. Do what you need to do.

All other readings will be available online on our course Canvas page. Please make sure you can access the page right away, and let one of us know as soon as possible if you encounter any difficulties. It is your responsibility to make sure you can access all readings.

Notes: 1) Sometimes assigned readings include page numbers. If a reading selection starts or ends in the middle of the page, start or stop at the major headings. 2) I reserve the right to alter reading assignments over the course of the semester.

Grading

Your final grade will be based on:

- **One very short paper (5%)**
- **Two short papers (15% each, x 2 = 30%)**
- **Three exams (15% each, x 3 = 45%)**
- **Section attendance and participation (20%)**

The first writing assignment will be largely graded on completion and is due early in the semester (February 5th). Two additional papers of about 3 pages in length will be due later (March 11th, April 15th). Assignment instructions will be distributed later on. All papers will be submitted online via Canvas.

Three exams—all multiple choice and given in class—will help us make sure we're all on the same page. The exams are non-cumulative, meaning that each one will test a separate set of material. There is no final at the end of the course, just exam number three. The class is set up so that once classes are over, you're done for the semester! (At least for our class.)

All assignments will be graded as soon as possible, but please allow at least two weeks for paper and exam grades to be returned.

Our class will use the following grading scale:

A: 93-100, AB 88-92, B 83-87, BC 78-82, C 70-77, D 60-69, F 59 or below

At the end of the semester, borderline grades (within 0.5 of the next grade) of those students who have superb (at the instructors' discretion) attendance and participation may be bumped up to the next level.

This grading system is set up to make sure you learn some things and have opportunities to think creatively and critically. It is not set up to be *too* difficult—if you do the readings and think a bit, you should be fine! We want you to do well. If you are ever afraid you are not doing well, please come and talk to one of us as soon as possible.

A note on late work: Any late work will be accepted solely at the instructors' discretion and for good reason. A penalty of a 5 percentage point decrease per day late will likely be applied.

Communication: Office Hours and Email

I hold office hours on Mondays from 2-4pm. Office hours are a time when you can come and talk about the class, about sociology, your life, whatever. I am looking forward to getting to know you all, and I encourage you to come in! You do not need to have a specific question or concern to come to office hours. If you cannot make my office hours but want to discuss something, please send me an email and we can set up an appointment.

I try to respond to email within two days. That said, if you do not hear from me after two days, feel free to send another email reminding me about the last one. I get lots of email and miss the occasional message—please do not be shy about asking for a response!

Please do not raise questions and concerns about paper or exam grades with us until 48 hours after you've received your grade.

You are responsible for material and messages sent through email. Please check your own inboxes for course messages regularly, as well as the course Canvas page.

Accommodations

Please send the instructor an email by the end of the second 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.

If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for religious observances, **send an email by the end of the second 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 for details: <https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698>

Academic Honesty

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. The standards are outlined by the Office of the Dean of Students at:

<http://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/>

According to UWS 14, academic misconduct is defined as:

- seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
- assists other students in any of these acts.

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 website. If you have questions about the rules for any of the assignments or exams, please ask your instructor.

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).

This syllabus is a living document!

*I will alter it throughout the semester to better suit our needs for the course.
Please be sure to refer to the syllabus posted on Canvas for the most current version.
I reserve the right to alter this syllabus at any time.
(I promise not to do so capriciously and only with fair warning.)*

Part I: What is Sociology?

Week 1

W January 22: Welcome and Introduction

Week 2

M January 27: Theory I

- Chapter 1 of Alexander et al., "Sociological Stories and Key Concepts"
- Mills, C. Wright. 1959. Pp. 3-11 of "The Promise." In *The Sociological Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.

W January 29: Theory II

- Du Bois, W. E. B.. 1999. "Of Our Spiritual Strivings." Pp. 9-16 in *The Souls of Black Folk*, edited by H. L. Gates, Jr. and T. H. Oliver. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Week 3

M February 3: Sociological Methods/Sociology as Science

- Chapter 2 of Alexander et al., "Sociological Methods"
- Goffman, Alice. 2009. "On the Run: Wanted Men in a Philadelphia Ghetto." *American Sociological Review* 74(3):339-357.
- Brayne, Sarah. 2014. "Surveillance and System Avoidance: Criminal Justice Contact and Institutional Attachment." *American Sociological Review* 79(3):367-391.

W February 5: Social Interaction

- Goffman, Erving. 2016 [1959] "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life," selections, pp. 67-75 in *SAGE Readings for Introductory Sociology*, edited by K. McGann. Boston: Sage.

-----Paper 1 Due-----

Week 4

M February 10: Socialization I

- Chapter 6 of Alexander et al., "Socialization and the Life Cycle"
- Lareau, Annette. 2016 [2011]. "Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life." Pp. 241-251 in *SAGE Readings for Introductory Sociology*, edited by K. McGann. Boston: Sage.

W February 12: Socialization II

- In class film:
Garmon, Linda. 2007. *Secret of the Wild Child: The Revealing Story of Genie*. DVD. Boston, MA: WGBH Boston Video.

Week 5

M February 17: Deviance

- Chapter 5 of Alexander et al., “Deviance, Crime, and Social Control”
- Becker, Howard. 1953. “Becoming a Marihuana User.” *The American Journal of Sociology* 59(3):235-242.

W February 19: Punishment

Guest Chloe Haimson

Week 6

M February 24: Culture

- Chapter 3 of Alexander et al., “Cultural Structures”
- Peterson, Richard A. 2002. “Roll Over Beethoven, There’s a New Way to be Cool.” *Contexts* 1(2):34-39.

W February 26

-----Exam 1-----

Part II: Social Stratification

Week 7

M March 2: Social Class I

- Chapter 9 of Alexander et al., “Social Class and Inequality”
- Wright, Erik O. and Joel Rogers. 2010. “Class,” pp. 195-204 in *Contemporary American Society: How it Really Works*. New York: W.W. Norton.

W March 4: Social Class II: The Landscape of Class

- Sherman, Rachel. 2017. “How to Be Rich and Morally Worthy: The Dilemma of Wealthy New Yorkers.” Excerpt from *Uneasy Street: The Anxieties of Affluence*, appearing in *The Guardian* (<https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/sep/18/how-to-be-rich-and-morally-worthy-the-dilemma-of-wealthy-new-yorkers-rachel-sherman-uneasy-street>).
- Silva, Jennifer. 2014. “Working Class Growing Pains.” *Contexts* 13(2):26-31.

Week 8

M March 9: Gender I

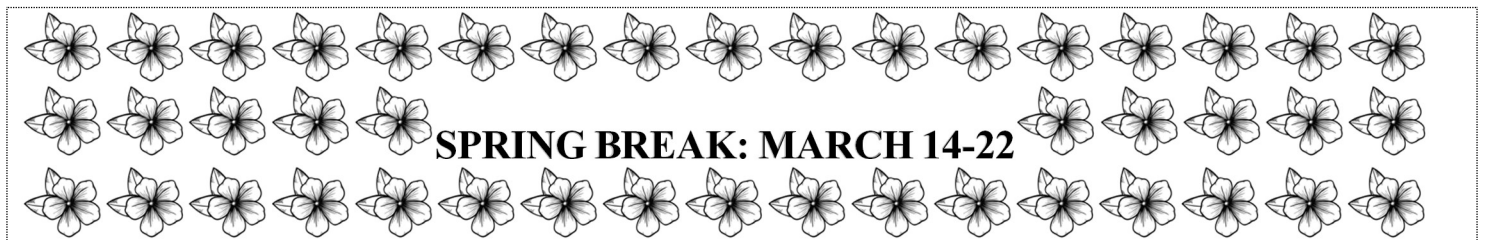
Guest Jaclyn Wypler

-Chapter 7 of Alexander et al., “Sex and Gender”

W March 11: Gender II—Intersectionality, Gender at Work

-Jacobs, Jerry A. 2003. “Detours on the Road to Equality: Women, Work and Higher Education.” *Contexts* 2(3):32-41.

-----Paper 2 Due-----



Week 9

M March 23: Race I

-Chapter 10 of Alexander, Race and Ethnicity

-Anderson, Elijah. 2015. “The White Space.” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 1(1):10-21.

W March 25: Race II: Race and States

In class film:

Pollack, Ricardo. 2011. “Haiti & the Dominican Republic: An Island Divided,” in *Black in Latin America*. DVD. United States: PBS Distribution.

Week 10

M March 30: Space and Stratification

-Selections from Ehrenreich, Barbara and Arlie Hochschild, editors. 2002. *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

W April 1

-----Exam 2-----

Part III: Social Institutions

Week 11

M April 6: Education

- Chapter 13 of Alexander et al., “Education”
- Khan, Shamus. 2010. “The Ease of Privilege.” Pp.77-113 in *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul’s School*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

W April 8: Work

- Chapter 12 of Alexander et al., “Work and the Economy”
- Vargas, Tracy L. 2017. “Employees or Suspects? Surveillance and Scrutinization of Low-Wage Service Workers in U.S. Dollar Stores.” *Journal of Labor and Society* 20:207-230.

Week 12

M April 13: Marriage and Family

- Chapter 11 of Alexander et al., “Marriage and Family”
- Coontz, Stephanie. 2016 [1996]. “The Way We Weren’t: The Myth and Reality of the “Traditional” Family.” Pp. 133-141 in *SAGE Readings for Introductory Sociology*, edited by K. McGann. Boston: Sage.

-----Paper 3 Due-----

Week 13

M April 20: Alternative Institutions, Culture, Inequality

In class film:
Sidewalk documentary, Part 1. (Duneier, Mitchell. 2010. *Sidewalk*. DVD. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.)

- Selections from Duneier, Mitchell. 1999. *Sidewalk*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux

W April 22: Alternative Institutions, Culture, Inequality

In class film:
Sidewalk documentary, Part 2.

- No additional reading—make sure you’ve finished the *Sidewalk Reading*, catch up on everything else.

Week 14

M April 27: Health

- Chapter 14 of Alexander et al., Health and Medicine
- Reich, Jennifer A. 2018. "When the Personal is Political—and Infectious." *Contexts* 17(3):34-39.
- Tiger, Rebecca. 2017. "Race, Class, and the Framing of Drug Epidemics." *Contexts* 16(4):46-51.

W April 29: Environmental Sociology

Guest Laura Hanson Schlachter

- Movement Generation. 2013. "The Work of Love and the Love of Work: Resilience-Based Organizing as a Path Forward."

(<https://movementgeneration.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/WorkOfLoveAndLoveOfWork.pdf>).

Week 15

M May 4: Sociological Futures

- Selections from Alexander et al:
 - Skim pages 566-577 for main ideas—do not read for detail
 - Read pages 587-591
- Wright, Erik Olin. 2011. "Real Utopias." *Contexts* 10(2):36-42.
- Selections from Tolentino, Jia. 2019. *Trick Mirror: Reflections on Self-Delusion*. New York: Random House.

W May 6 (last day!)

-----Exam 3-----