

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL
Fall, 2011 (Rev. 9/25/11)

Sociology@Carolina

Introduction to Sociology

(SOCI 101)

Section 2 Tuesday/Thursday 9:30–10:45 Peabody 218

Professor Andrew Perrin

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COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is designed to give you a dynamic introduction to the field of sociology, with special attention paid to issues, ideas, and facets of American culture and society. It focuses on sociological research and writing done at UNC to highlight the new knowledge produced by UNC sociologists. If you and I do our jobs correctly, you'll walk away with an appreciation of the ideas and methods of sociological inquiry, an understanding of how sociological knowledge is developed, and a sense of where the field is today.

This course has four broad goals:

1. To introduce sociology and its ideas

You should have a sense of the kinds of issues with which sociology grapples, the tools it brings, and the ideas upon which it is built.

2. To survey several fields of contemporary sociology

Where is sociology going today? What do sociologists do?

3. To encourage critical approaches to social claims

Claims about the nature of society are made daily in the press, popular and business books, and elsewhere. After this class, you should be able to evaluate these claims critically and think about how they might be tested sociologically.

4. To write well

Social science is, fundamentally, a written art. Writing well is integral to good sociology. Your writing will be evaluated for clarity of thought, language, structure, and grammar.

READINGS AND RESOURCES

Required Books

Charles Kurzman. *The Missing Martyrs* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Lisa Pearce and Melinda Lundquist Denton. *A Faith of Their Own* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

John Shelton Reed. *The Enduring South* (UNC Press, 1986).

Karolyn Tyson. *Integration Interrupted* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Supplementary Readings

All other readings are available either on the web or on the course website. These are marked with the [www] symbol. Those available on the web are linked from the course website. The course website is available through <http://sakai.unc.edu>.

Other Resources

Have a dictionary close at hand to look up words you don't know. You can find an adequate one at <http://www.dictionary.com> if you prefer using an online version.

The UNC Writing Center (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb>) can help you with writing clearly and correctly.

There is an astonishing amount of information available on the World Wide Web. A significant proportion of that information—though by no means all—is true and relevant. By all means, use the Web to supplement your reading and knowledge, but use it critically and make sure you know the source of the information.

FORMAL REQUIREMENTS

The requirements of this course are as follows:

Reading You must complete all the course readings. *You are responsible for understanding the readings*—make use of your fellow students, your dictionary, the Internet, your TA, and me to make sure you understand the readings. Course time is to be used for substantive discussion and further exploration of the implications of course readings, *not* for grasping the basic contents.

Participation You must attend, and participate in, all class discussions and small group exercises. You are also responsible for the information contained in course lectures.

Reading Comments You must turn in two 2-page reflective discussions of readings of your choice. These are due *at the beginning of* the class during which the readings are discussed.

Vocabulary Exercises You must turn in two short (one page or less) exercises in which you explore a word in one of the class readings whose meaning you did not previously know. You should note the word, its definition, and its meaning in the context of the reading.

Exams There will be two examinations. You must take the examinations at the date, time, and place assigned.

Final Paper The final paper is your opportunity to synthesize what you have learned during the class with outside interests and experiences. Your final paper must develop a sociological argument using appropriate sources. It is an academic paper and, as such, must be written in an appropriate style. The paper is due **at 5:00 pm on Thursday, December 1**. Select an assignment from these four options:

1. Find some issue, situation, or paradox of interest to you and compare how at least two sociological concepts apply—or fail to apply—to it.
2. Find some issue, situation, or paradox of interest to you and review and evaluate sociological research and writing on it. For this project you must provide a broad introduction to the field of interest and a sense of the similarities, differences, and relationships among sociological approaches. *This is not simply an annotated bibliography.*

3. Find some issue, situation, or paradox of interest to you and design a sociological study to investigate it. You must provide a theoretical background, literature review, methodological specification, and expected results. (This option is probably of greatest interest to those interested in the craft of social scientific research.)
4. You may choose to do a different assignment, appropriate for a final paper in a sociology course. *You must check with me before embarking on this option.*

Grading

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

Participation	10%
Small-Group Exercises	5%
Reading Response Exercises	10%
Vocabulary Exercises	5%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	25%
Final Paper	25%

COURSE POLICIES

YOU ARE AN ADULT. As a student in this class, you are provided with a set of resources for learning the class's contents, and you are expected to fulfill a series of requirements designed to evaluate the depth and breadth of your knowledge of those contents. Your grade, therefore, is a reflection of your success in utilizing the resources you have at your disposal. There will be no in-class quizzes or writing assignments, and there will be no extra credit or make-up assignments.

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INFORMATION IN THE READINGS AND GIVEN DURING LECTURES. If you do not understand something I say in a lecture, ask me during the lecture, during a later class, or privately via e-mail or office hours.

ON DAYS WHEN DISCUSSIONS ARE SCHEDULED, participation is mandatory. Some discussions will be full-class; others will be in small groups. Your participation will be useless—and graded as such—if you have not done the reading.

ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE ON THE DATES LISTED. Make sure you give yourself sufficient time to finish assignments by their due dates. You will lose roughly one letter grade per day between the due date and the date the paper is received. You may make the calculation yourself as to whether your work will improve sufficiently in the extra time to make up for the grade reduction. In exceptional cases, I may grant an extension; you *must* discuss this with me in advance.

YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS COURSE IS COVERED BY THE UNC HONOR CODE (see <http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/studinfo.html>). I take academic dishonesty—including, but not limited to, plagiarism—very seriously. There will be no excuses or second chances; if you have plagiarized the *ideas* or *words* of someone else without giving credit, you will be referred to the Student Attorney General. If you have questions as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, check <http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/plagiarism.html> or <http://library.unc.edu/plagiarism> or consult your TA or me.

ADEQUATE COMPLETION OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CLASS WILL EARN YOU A B-. Work whose quality clearly exceeds these requirements will earn a B, B+, A-, or A. Work whose quality is in one or more ways less than adequate will earn you a grade of C+ or below.

COURSE SCHEDULE

I. Introduction to the Course

August 23 Welcome to Sociology; Sociological Introductions / “This I Believe” exercise

August 25 Introduction to “Introduction to Sociology”

August 30 Small group exercise: formulating sociological questions

Reading: Conley, Chapter 2 of *You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist*, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton). [WWW](#)

September 1 Lecture: “What is a Group?”

September 6 Small group exercise: Unfamiliar cultures. Horace Miner, “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema.” *The American Anthropologist* 58:3 (June, 1956). [WWW](#) <http://www.msu.edu/~jdowell/miner.html>

September 8 Thinking Causally. Peter S. Bearman and Hannah Brückner. “Promising the Future: Virginity Pledges and First Intercourse.” *American Journal of Sociology* 106:4 (2001). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/320295>

II. Culture, Region, Religion

September 13 Reed, *The Enduring South*, Chapters 1, 2, 3

September 15

Larry J. Griffn. “‘Generations and Collective Memory’ Revisited: Race, Region, and Memory of Civil Rights.” *American Sociological Review* Aug 2004. Vol. 69, Iss. 4; p. 544 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/info/3593064>

September 20 Reed, *The Enduring South*, Chapters 5–7

September 22 Reed, *The Enduring South*, Chapter 8; Christopher A. Cooper and H. Gibbs Knotts, “Declining Dixie: Regional Identification in the Modern American South.” *Social Forces* Volume 88, Number 3, March 2010. <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/sof/summary/v088/88.3.cooper.html>

III. Religion in American Life

September 27 Pearce and Denton, *A Faith of Their Own*, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2

September 29 Class Cancelled: Rosh Hashanah holiday

October 4 Pearce and Denton, Chapters 3, 4, and 5

October 6 Pearce and Denton, Chapter 6 and Conclusion

October 11 Richard Pitt, “Killing the Messenger: Gay Black Men’s Negotiation of Anti-Gay Religious Messages.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (2010)

October 13 Midterm Examination

IV. Interlude

October 18 Interlude: Family, Gender, and Inequality.

- <http://familyinequality.wordpress.com/2011/03/02/getting-the-story-straight-on-working-mothers-and-fathers/>
- Geist, Glaudia, and Philip N. Cohen. “Headed Toward Equality?: Housework Change in Comparative Perspective.” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 73:4 (August, 2011). <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00850.x/abstract>

October 20 Fall Break – no class

October 25 Observation Lab: Region and Religion

Optional but Recommended: Visit the exhibit *Race: Are We So Different?* at the North Carolina Museum of Life and Science in Durham. See <http://www.lifeandscience.org> for more information.

October 27 Observation Lab: Region and Religion

V. Race and Education

November 1 Tyson, *Integration Interrupted*, Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2

- November 3** Tyson, *Integration Interrupted*, Chapter 3
November 8 Tyson, *Integration Interrupted*, Chapter 4 and Conclusion
November 10 Observation Lab: Race and Education

VI. Politics

- November 15** Kurzman, *The Missing Martyrs*, Chapters 1, 2, 3
November 17 Kurzman, *The Missing Martyrs*, Chapters 5 and 6
November 22 Perrin, Andrew J. "Why You Voted." *Contexts* Fall, 2008. <http://contexts.org/articles/fall-2008/why-you-voted/>

VII. Wrapping up

- November 24 Thanksgiving** – no class
November 29 Lecture: "What's Missing?"
December 1 Final lecture: "The Fundamental Unit of Human Behavior is the Group"
Final Paper Due in class
December 6 Final comments, course evaluations
December 15, 8:00 am Final Examination

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

These are only a few suggestions-contact me for more in your areas of interest.

- Textbooks
I have not assigned a traditional textbook for this class. If you'd like to look at one for reference, I recommend Conley's *You May Ask Yourself*; Giddens' *Introduction to Sociology*; or Coser et al.'s *Introduction to Sociology*.
- Social Theory
 - Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*.
 - Coser, *Masters of Sociological Thought*.
 - Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals*
- Individual and Society
 - Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart*. University of California Press.
 - Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.
 - Whyte, *The Organization Man*. Simon and Schuster.
- Sociology of Work
 - Nippert-Eng, *Home and Work*. University of Chicago Press.
 - Newman, *No Shame in My Game*. Vintage.
- Inequalities
 - Bowen and Bok. *The Shape of the River*. Princeton University Press.
 - Skrentny. *The Ironies of Affirmative Action*. University of Chicago Press.
 - Ferguson, *Bad Boys*. University of Michigan Press.
 - Fischer et al., *Inequality by Design*.
 - Conley, *Being Black, Living in the Red*.
- Politics and Democracy
 - Eliasoph, *Avoiding Politics*
 - Perrin, *Citizen Speak*