

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL  
Fall, 2014

# Introduction to Sociology

(SOCI 101)

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Section 2 Tuesday/Thursday 9:30–10:45 Hanes 120, Gardner 106, Murphey 112

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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 in part 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*

**Ricahrd Arum and Josipa Roksa.** *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* (University of Chicago Press, 2011).

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

**Peter Marsden.** *Social Trends in American Life: Findings from the General Social Survey Since 1972* (Princeton University Press, 2012).

**CJ Pascoe.** *Dude You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School* (University of California Press, 2007).

### *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*

You will need to sign up for PollAnywhere to participate in various class activities. Please follow the directions at [http://help.unc.edu/CCM3\\_033949](http://help.unc.edu/CCM3_033949). Active polls for the class can be found at <http://pollev.com/andrewperrin>.

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.

**In-Class Assessments** There will be several unscheduled in-class assessments (quizzes and similar).

**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.

**Exams** There will be two examinations: a midterm and a final. 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. There is no specific, set length; however, about 5-7 pages (double-spaced) is an appropriate range. The paper is due **at 5:00 pm on Thursday, December 4**. 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 Prof. Perrin before embarking on this option.*

### Grading

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

Participation (3% for attendance, 12% for active engagement)	15%
In-Class Assessments	10%
Reading Response Exercises	10%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
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://studentconduct.unc.edu/students>). 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://www2.lib.unc.edu/instruct/plagiarism/> or consult a 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 19** Introduction to “Introduction to Sociology”

**August 21** Welcome to Sociology; Sociological Introductions

**August 26** Lecture: “What is a Group?”

**August 28** 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 2** Lecture: Culture, Society, Sociology

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

**September 4** **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>

**September 9** Lecture: US Culture and Politics Since 9/11

**September 11** Kurzman, Ch. 1–2

**September 16** Lecture: Religion in the US

**Reading:** Marsden, Chapter 8

**September 18** Kurzman, Ch. 4–5

**September 23** Culture and Inequality

**September 25** **Class Cancelled:** Rosh Hashanah holiday

**September 30** Research Exercise: What is Special About the South?

**Reading:** 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>

**October 2** Marsden, Chapter 4

**October 7** Interlude: Family, Gender, and Inequality.

- <http://familyinequality.wordpress.com/2011/03/02/getting-the-story-straight-on-working-moth>
- 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 9** Question and Answer Review Session

**October 14** **Midterm Examination**

**October 16** **Fall Break** – no class

**October 21** Lecture: “The University”

**October 23** Arum & Rosika Chapters 2–3

**October 28** Lecture: Education and Inequality

**October 30** Arum & Rosika Chapter 4

**November 4** Lecture: The Sociology of Politics

**November 6** Perrin, Andrew J. “Why You Voted.” *Contexts* Fall, 2008. <http://contexts.org/articles/fall-2008/why-you-voted/>

**November 11** Lecture: Sexuality and Public Opinion

**November 13** Learning From Culture Part I

- **Whole Class in Hanes 120**
- **Begin Reading Pascoe (Chapters Chapters 2–3)**

**November 18** Learning From Culture Part II

**November 20** Pascoe, Chapters 4–5

**November 25** Race, Attitudes, and Inequality

**Reading:** Marsden, Ch. 3

**November 27 Thanksgiving** – no class

**December 2** Final lecture: “The Fundamental Unit of Human Behavior is . . .”

**December 4, 5:00 pm** Final paper due

**December 9, 8:00 am Final Examination**