

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL  
Fall, 2016

# Introduction to Sociology

(SOCI 101)

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Section 4, Version 1.4    Tuesday/Thursday 9:30–10:45    Greenlaw 101

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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 we 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*

There are no required books for this class.

### Supplementary Readings

All readings are available either on the web or on the course website. Those that are online 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>. Some materials may need to be accessed from an on-campus computer or via the library's proxy server.

### 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 your professor 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).

**Exams** There will be two examinations: a midterm and a final. You must take the examinations at the date, time, and place assigned. The midterm examination is **October 18, 9:30–10:45, in 101 Greenlaw**. The final examination is **December 13, 8:00–11:00, in 101 Greenlaw**.

**Topic Development Paper** In this short (approximately 1,000 words) paper, you should decide what topic or question you plan to explore sociologically. The paper should explain the importance of the topic or question and why it makes for a good sociological exploration. You will address this topic or question in your final paper. **Due October 27 at 9:30 am.**

**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 1,500-2,000 words is a good guideline. **Due November 22 at 9:30 am.**

Using your question or problem from the prior paper, do some combination of the below. You do *not* need to do all of these—any one, or any combination, is fine.

1. Examine and detail how at least two sociological concepts apply—or fail to apply—to it.
2. 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.*

- Design a sociological study to investigate it. You must provide a theoretical background, literature review, methodological specification, and expected results.

### Grading

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

Participation <i>(3% for attendance, 12% for active engagement)</i>	15%
In-Class Assessments	15%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Exam	20%
Topic Development Paper	15%
Final Paper	20%

## 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.

**PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSIONS AND CLASS ACTIVITIES 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

**August 23** Introductory business

**Reading:** This syllabus, in full

**August 25** Welcome to Sociology; Introduction to “Introduction to Sociology”

**In-class Exercise:** “This I Believe”

**August 30** **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 1** Whole-Class Exercise

**September 6** Lecture: Group, Culture, Society, Sociology

**September 8** Discussion: Asking Sociological Questions

**Reading:**

**Pods 1A and 1B** Conley, Chapter 2 of *You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist*, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton). [www](#)

**Pods 2A and 2B** Horace Miner, “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema.” *The American Anthropologist* 58:3 (June, 1956). [www](#)<http://www.msu.edu/~jdowell/miner.html>

**Pods 3A and 3B** Joe Bageant, “American Serfs: Inside the White Ghetto of the Working Poor.” Excerpt from *Deer Hunting with Jesus: Dispatches from America’s Class War*. <http://www.coldtype.net/Assets.07/Essays/0807.Joe.Book.pdf>

**September 13** Full-Class Workshop

**September 15** Lecture: US Culture and Politics Since 9/11

**Reading:** Kurzman, Charles. “Bin Laden and Other Thoroughly Modern Muslims.” *Contexts* Fall/Winter 2002. <http://ctx.sagepub.com/content/1/4/13.short>

**September 20** Class Exercise: Inequality

**September 22** Inequality in American Culture

**September 27** Discussions: Religion and Culture

**Pods 1A and 1B** Pitt, Richard N. “‘Killing the Messenger’: Religious Black Gay Men’s Neutralization of Anti-Gay Religious Messages.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49:1 (March 2010), 56–72. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2009.01492.x/full>

**Pods 2A and 2B** Read, Jen’nan Ghazal, and John P. Bartkowski. “To Veil or Not To Veil? A Case Study of Identity Negotiation among Muslim Women in Austin, Texas.” *Gender & Society* 14:3 (2000), 395–417. <http://gas.sagepub.com/content/14/3/395.abstract>

**Pods 3A and 3B** Evans, Michael S. “Religion and Political Decision Making.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 53:1 (2014), 145–163. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jssr.12088/full>

**September 29** Lecture: Race and Racism

**October 4** Class Cancelled: Rosh Hashanah Holiday

**October 6** Discussions: Race and Ethnicity

**Pods 1A and 1B** Mora, G. Cristina. “Cross-Field Effects and Ethnic Classification: The Institutionalization of Hispanic Panethnicity, 1965 to 1990.” *American Sociological Review* 79:2 (2014), 183–210. <http://asr.sagepub.com/content/79/2/183.short>

**Pods 2A and 2B** Ifatunji, Mosi Adesina, and Catherine E. Harnois. "An Explanation for the Gender Gap in Perceptions of Discrimination among African Americans Considering the Role of Gender Bias in Measurement." *Sociology of Race & Ethnicity* 2:3 (2016), 263–288. <http://sre.sagepub.com/content/2/3/263>

**Pods 3A and 3B** Public Religion Research Institute. "Analysis: Race and Americans' Social Networks." <http://publicreligion.org/research/2014/08/analysis-social-network/>

**October 11** Class Cancelled: University Day

**October 13** Discussion/Review: What do we know by now?

**October 18** Midterm Examination

**October 20** Fall Break – no class

**October 25** Lecture: Health and Health Care

**October 27** Whole-class discussion: Social Construction

**Topic Development Paper due before class**

**Reading for class:** Armstrong, Elizabeth M. "Diagnosing a Moral Disorder: The Discovery and Evolution of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome." *Social Science & Medicine* 47:12 (December, 1998): 2025–2042. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953698003086>

**November 1** Discussions: Medicine and Society

**Pods 1A and 1B** King, Marissa D., Jennifer Jennings, and Jason M. Fletcher. "Medical Adaptation to Academic Pressure: Schooling, Stimulant Use, and Socioeconomic Status." *American Sociological Review* 79:6 (2014), 1039–1066. <http://asr.sagepub.com/content/79/6/1039.abstract>

**Pods 2A and 2B** Best, Rachel Kahn. "Disease Politics and Medical Research Funding: Three Ways Advocacy Shapes Policy." *American Sociological Review* 77:5 (October, 2012): 780–803. <http://asr.sagepub.com/content/77/5/780.abstract>

**Pods 3A and 3B** Throop, Elizabeth M., Asheley Cockrell Skinner, Andrew J. Perrin, Michael J. Steiner, Adebowale Odulana, and Eliana M. Perrin. "Pass the Popcorn: 'Obesogenic' behaviors and stigma in children's movies." *Obesity* 22:7 (July, 2014): 1694–1700. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/oby.20652/abstract>

**November 3** Research Design Exercise: Health and Health Care

**November 8** Lecture: The Sociology of Politics

**November 10** Discussion: Politics

**Pods 1A and 1B** Brown, Hana. 2013. Racialized Conflicts and Policy Spillover Effects: The Role of Race in the Contemporary U.S. Welfare State, *American Journal of Sociology* 119(2): 394–443.

**Pods 2A and 2B** Perrin, Andrew J. "Why You Voted." *Contexts* Fall, 2008. <http://contexts.org/articles/fall-2008/why-you-voted/>

**Pods 3A and 3B** Laurison, Daniel. "The Willingness to State an Opinion: Inequality, Don't Know Responses, and Political Participation." *Sociological Forum* 30:4 (December, 2015): 925–948. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/socf.12202/abstract>

**November 15** Lecture: Education and the University

**November 17** Discussion: Education

**Pods 1A and 1B** Tyson, Karolyn, William Darity Jr., and Domini R. Castellino. "It's not 'a Black Thing': Understanding the Burden of Acting White and Other Dilemmas of High Achievement." *American Sociological Review* 70:4 (2005), 582–605 <http://asr.sagepub.com/content/70/4/582.short>

**Pods 2A and 2B** Domina, Thurston, Andrew M. Penner, and Emily K. Penner. “‘Membership Has its Privileges’: Status Incentives and Categorical Inequality in Education.” *Sociological Science* May 6, 2016. <https://www.sociologicalscience.com/articles-v3-13-264/>

**Pods 3A and 3B** Mann, Allison, and Thomas A. DiPrete. “The Consequences of the National Math and Science Performance Environment for Gender Differences in STEM Aspiration.” *Sociological Science* July 12, 2016. <https://www.sociologicalscience.com/articles-v3-25-568/>

**November 22** Class Exercises: Fix K-12 Education  
**Final Paper Due before class**

**November 24 Thanksgiving** – no class

**November 29** Discussions: What’s Wrong With College?

**Pods 1A and 1B** Laura Hamilton and Elizabeth A. Armstrong. “The (Mis)education of Monica and Karen.” *Contexts* Fall, 2012. <https://contexts.org/articles/the-miseducation-of-monica-and-karen/>

**Pods 2A and 2B** Laura Hamilton. “The Partnership Between Colleges and Helicopter Parents.” *The Atlantic* May 13, 2016. <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/05/the-partnership-between-colleges-and-helicopter-parents/482595/>

**Pods 3A and 3B**

- Josipa Roksa and Richard Arum. “The State of Undergraduate Learning.” *Change Magazine* 43:2 (2011), 35–38. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00091383.2011.556992>
- George Leef. “Grades Just Keep on Inflating; Why Does It Matter?” John William Pope Center for Higher Education Policy, April 20, 2016. <http://www.popecenter.org/2016/04/grades-just-keep-on-inflating-why-does-it-matter/>

**December 1** Taking Stock: What do we know by now?

**December 6** Final lecture: “The Fundamental Unit of Human Behavior is...”

**December 13, 8:00 am Final Examination**