

Instructor: Brenden Beck (bbeck@gc.cuny.edu)
Section 4: 11:10 – 12:25 Mondays and Thursdays (HW 424)
Section 8: 4:10 – 5:25 Mondays and Thursdays (HW 424)
Office hours: Thursdays 3:00 – 4:00 or by appointment (HW 1636)

Soc101 (Sections 4 and 8): Introduction to Sociology

Course Description

Welcome! This course will introduce you to the sociological approach—a way of analyzing the world that looks at the social, political, and economic relationships that structure both our daily lives and world-wide events. This course will expose you to both the topics sociologists analyze and the methods we use. As in any introductory course we sacrifice depth for breadth. We will find links, however, between the seemingly disparate content areas and examine the intersections of social phenomena like class, race, gender, and sexuality.

Course Objectives

1. To think sociologically—to see the social forces behind individual actions.
2. To think critically about society—to questions and change the status quo.
3. To learn concrete research methods and writing skills.

Required Texts

Wright, Erik Olin, & Rogers, Joel (2011). *American Society: how it really works*. WW Norton & Company.

The other texts will be posted on Blackboard as PDFs under “Course Materials”.

You will need to bring that days readings to each class in hard copy or on a tablet or laptop. You will not be allowed to access the readings on a phone during class. All the readings are on Blackboard now, so my suggestion would be to print them all off as soon as you can. At a cost of 5 cents per page this is an economical solution.

Requirements and Grading

20% - Class Attendance and Participation

- 1) Students are expected to actively participate in all aspects of a day’s lesson. Participation is not only talking; it also listening to speakers and asking questions when confused.
- 2) Chronic lateness and/or absences will negatively affect your participation grade.
- 3) You are required to have read and annotated all assigned readings regardless of whether they are discussed in class. Failure to bring the readings will result in a loss of participation points for that day.

20% - Quizzes

Five to seven times throughout the semester, during the first ten minutes of class, you will complete a short quiz. The quizzes will ask questions about the readings for that day's class. You will be allowed to refer the readings during the quizzes, another good reason to annotate the readings and bring them to class. If you are absent with a legitimate excuse the day of a quiz you can make it up during my office hours in HW 1636 or schedule another make-up time.

20% - Midterm Exam

You will have a take home, essay exam that will cover multiple topics from the readings and classes. You will need to demonstrate both an understanding of the readings and a critical analysis of them in two short essays.

20% - Research paper outline and presentation

Throughout the semester you will complete two important steps of a research paper: a research question and an annotated bibliography. At the end of the semester you will present your research to the class with a five power point or prezi presentation.

20% - Final Exam

You will have a take home, essay exam that will cover all the topics covered in class (with emphasis on the second half of the course). There will be two short essays.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism of any kind will be grounds for failing the course. Review Hunter's academic honesty policies at: <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/studentaffairs/student-conduct/academic-integrity>.

Classroom Participation

Most of our class sessions will involve discussion. Good discussions require that everyone respect and listen closely to their classmates. Good discussions also require that everyone participate so be sure to "step up and step back". If you have spoken a lot, speak less, and if you haven't contributed recently, add your voice. I will cold call on students so you should be prepared to answer when called on.

You are not allowed to use your cell phone or the internet during class. If a student does use a device for purposes other than note taking, they will lose participation points for the day and no longer be able to use the device in class.

Reading

You will complete the assigned readings by the day for which they're assigned. I have selected a manageable amount of reading (about 30 pages per class), but completing it will still require considerable butt-in-chair reading time. As with any college course, most of your learning will occur outside the classroom. If you get stuck on or bored with a passage try reading out loud or setting a timer with planned breaks. Turning off the internet and phone is helpful too.

Always annotate while you read and come to class with questions and opinions about the reading. The best way to prepare for class and for the exams is to read each text at least twice.

Contacting me

I receive a lot of email and—try though I do—I cannot always respond in a timely way. Before you email me, check the syllabus. Many questions are answered herein. If that doesn't work, email a fellow student. If that is similarly fruitless, email me.

Schedule

January 27th – Introduction

Syllabus, introduction to the class, introduction to the discipline.

January 30th – Social Structure

Wright and Rogers, "What Kind of Society is American Society?" pp 10 – 32
Collins, "The Wealthy Kids Are Alright."

February 3rd – Gender

Lorber, "Night to His Day"
Stephens-Davidowitz, "Google, Tell Me. Is My Son a Genius?"
GLAAD, "Trans 101" at: www.glaad.org/transgender

February 6th – Gender and Sexuality

Wright and Rogers, "Gender Inequality" pp 301 – 333

February 10th – Economic Sociology

Wright and Rogers, "The Capitalist Market: How It Is Supposed To Work" pp 35 – 46
Madrick, "The Digital Revolution that Wasn't"

February 13th – Economic Sociology II

Wright and Rogers, "The Capitalist Market: How It Actually Works" pp 47 – 68
**Research question due via hard copy at the start of class

February 24th – Capitalism and the Environment, Transportation, Consumption, and Health Care

Choose *one* of four Wright and Rogers chapters to read:

- Chapter 5: "The Environment" pp 69 – 84
- Chapter 6: "Transportation" pp 85 – 102
- Chapter 7: "Consumerism" pp 103 – 123
- Chapter 8: "Health Care" pp 124 – 152

February 27th – Sociology of Culture

English, "Economy of Prestige" (Excerpt)
Kang and Jones, "Why Do People Get Tattoos?"

March 3rd – Class and Labor

Wright and Rogers, "Class" pp 195 – 204
Besen-Cassino, "Cool Stores, Bad Jobs"

March 6th – Researching

ASA Documentation Style

Hunter Research Paper Guidelines

Meet in the library's 7th floor computer lab

March 10th – Poverty

Wright and Rogers, "Persistent Poverty and Rising Inequality" pp 205 – 232

March 13th – Race and Ethnicity

Conley, "Race" pp 325 – 350 and 361 – 364 (Note the PDF includes other pages and is in color)

**Annotated bibliography due

March 17th – Race and Ethnicity

Wright and Rogers, "Racial Inequality" (Excerpt) pp 263 – 292.

Take the Harvard implicit assumptions test on race and at least one other test. At:

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>.

March 20th – Midterm

**Take-home midterm due by 5:00pm

March 24th – Micro sociology

Goffman, "Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life"

Davis, "The Telephone: a Highly Deficient Medium"

March 27th – Sociology of Religion

Conley, Religion pp 611 – 641 (Note PDF includes other pages and is in color)

Ali, Behind the Veil

March 31st – Crime and Social Control – Guest Professor Bronwyn Dobchuk-Land

Christie, "The Oversocialization of Criminologists"

April 3rd – Crime and Social Control – Guest Professor Bronwyn Dobchuk-Land

Muncie, "The Construction and Deconstruction of Crime"

Young, "The Legacy of C. Wright Mills"

April 7th – Crime and Social Control – Guest Professor Bronwyn Dobchuk-Land

April 10th – Urban Sociology

Katz, "Why Don't U.S. Cities Burn?"

New York Times, "Mapping America: Racial Ethnic Distribution" At:

<http://projects.nytimes.com/census/2010/explorer>

April 24th – Urban Sociology

Kornblum, "Working the Deuce"

The New York Times, "The Rebirth of 42nd Street" at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/12/03/nyregion/42nd-street-then-now.html>

New Yorker, "Inequality and New York's Subway" at:

<http://www.newyorker.com/sandbox/business/subway.html>

April 28th – The Media

Klinenberg, “Spotlighting Disaster: News Organizations and the Representations of Catastrophe”

May 1st – The Media II

Wright and Rogers, “Corporate Control of the Media” pp 396 – 411

May 5th – Sociology of food, immigration, k-12 education, and higher education

Choose one of the following readings:

Gabaccia, What Do We Eat

Alba and Nee, Rethinking Assimilation

Ravitch, Schools We Can Envy

Woessner, Academe's Persuasion Paradox

May 8th – Student Presentations

May 12th – Student Presentations

May 15th – Student Presentations

Note: I may change part of the course structure during the semester to better fit the flow of the class.