

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY - SYLLABUS: THEORIES, RESEARCH AND DISCOVERIES ABOUT SOCIETY, FOCUS ON SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE USA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course helps students develop a working understanding of the “sociological imagination” – a perspective on the **origins, components, development, and meanings** of the **institutions and social relationships** that make up what we call society.

With an eye on how and why things happen in society, the unique sociological perspective has led to discoveries about visible and less obvious processes that shape social experiences. These findings have been produced by **social research** carried out over the past two centuries in the spirit of the sociological imagination.

This sociological point of view is also expressed in the **theories** that we use to guide our investigations and analyses of features of the social world that interest and profoundly influence us.

With its origins in the upheavals in Europe associated with the industrial revolution and the transitions to post-monarchical forms of governance in the 19th century, sociology today continues to seek the advancement of the well-being of individuals, groups and society itself. Throughout this course you will learn about important **theories, discoveries and analyses, and research processes** in this field that reflect these intentions.

The sociological imagination has led scholars to develop new and powerful explanations for many features of experience that we often take for granted, which appear ordinary and unremarkable in everyday life. But they appear curious, significant, and amazingly complex when we ask questions about their origins, their purposes, and the ways they change in societies over time.

TOPICS OF STUDY IN THIS COURSE

As we deepen our understanding of the tools of sociological analysis – the social theories and methods - - we will apply them to some familiar institutions that affect us all personally, but which have larger social meanings for society itself – holding it together, bringing individuals into cooperative alignment

with one another, and enabling human communities to survive and develop over time.

Therefore, we will focus on the social significance of **families, schools, and workplaces**, both for **individuals and society** itself. In the process, we will also explore key domains of *social structure* that affect the specific characteristics of families, schools, and workplaces we observe in particular societies.

We will also go deep and explore the **quality** of the **experiences of individuals** in *institutions* like families, schools, and workplaces, mostly in the US context.

Taking a cue from studies of the complexities of American life, we will look at how systems of social differentiation embodied in the emerging **globalized division of labor** and productive system, in **the class structure, the gender system**, and the **racial order** shape the experiences and **identities** of individuals and groups through the ways they have affected family life, education, and workplaces.

AMERICAN STYLE, PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

As we explore these principles of sociology and different perspectives on familiar institutions, this course will ask that you acquire some basic sociological skills in carrying out research yourself. Under the instructor's guidance, you will design some small study projects, gather some data, and analyze it to reflect on the claims of established research on particular topics. I encourage you to examine facets of Chinese social life using tools and templates from US sociology, to discover what sociology can illuminate about Chinese life, and equally, what Chinese life shows us about the limitations and potential of US-style sociology.

The key to success in US colleges and universities is the ability to identify a problem in any field of study and develop a reasonable analysis of its origins, consequences, and significance.

Learning to apply ideas found in books to better understand the nature and dynamics of social experience in the real world is a fundamental feature of most social science courses in the US. We will apply ideas in this course in exercises aimed at creating new knowledge or new interpretations of familiar features of experience.

A related talent required for success in the US is critical analysis of scholarly materials in a field. In our course, you will take steps to identify thesis claims that writers present in their books, chapters and articles, and which they develop or support with logic or evidence from fresh observations and other studies. Please note: course materials will be resources for you to carefully use in developing your own

work. They will help you challenge established ideas, and to support new ones with convincing evidence, new findings and new interpretations of classic ideas.

This course, finally, will help you refine your skills in formal, written, academic English. It will also help find your own voice as a thinker and writer within the conventions of this scholarly field. You will develop confidence and skill in oral discussion of complex ideas, especially to defend a position that you find important or to constructively criticize and challenge those of others.

We will use course time for lectures and formal presentation by the instructor, in discussions among students, in quick reflective writings on course topics and materials, in workshops on conducting social research, and in analysis and discussions of visual and other media that illuminate course themes and features of American life.

COURSE DETAILS: NEED ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

- Meeting time, Meeting Location
- Access to Course Materials
- Course Website or Communications Loop
- How to contact me

Required Work, Weighted Value, and Due Dates (W/D or week number/day number)

Reading Logs –Three, at 1 page each	10 percent	1/1	2/1	3/1
Reflective Writings – Three, 1 to 2 pages each	15 percent	A/6, ,2/4, 4/3 (Final exam)		
Cross cultural journal – Two, 1 to 2 pages each	15 percent	1 /4, 3 /4		

[a series of one page reflection pieces on how features of American life, or elements of American pedagogy you discover in class differ from or conform with what you thought or imagined about US life and education, or what you know and have experienced about Chinese life and education]

- Study Agenda and Reports on Data – Three, 1 to 2 pages each
10 percent 1/5, 2/5, 3/5

- Comparative Identity Paper midterm 5 pages **25 percent** 3/1
- Final Course Papers -- one, 5 pages **25 percent** 4/3

	Mon 1	Tues 2	Wed 3	Thurs 4	Fri 5	Sat
Week A						(3) RW 1
Week 1	RL 1			CJ 2	Study Agenda	
Week 2	RL 2			RW 3	Data R 1	
Week 3	RL 3 Midterm			CJ 4	Data R 2	
Week 4			Final Paper Due/ In Class RW 5			

GROUND RULES

- Regular Attendance
- Work Submitted on Time
- Written Work in English and Typed in Conventional American Format
- Prepare for Active Participation in Whole Class and Small Group Activities.
- Grading: On US 4.0 scale – holistic method
- All work must be submitted for credit! Skipped assignments can mean a failure. Missed work can be made up with consent of the instructor.
- Attend an office hour, alone or with other students.

Schedule of Readings and Class Topics

Materials highlighted in green will be provided electronically by the instructor.

Items with no highlights are in the course anthology: David M. Newman, Jodi O’Brien, and Michelle Robertson. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life. Readings*. 10th edition. Los Angeles: Sage, 2015.

Week A: Sociological Knowledge – Its Components, Production, Contributions

Class: Individual and Society, Structure and Agency

Discuss Preliminary Readings:

Ann Hulbert, "Re-education: Chinese Higher Education Reform." *NYTimes Magazine*. April 1, 2007.

Hanna Rosin, "The End of Men," *The Atlantic*, July/August 2010

Audiocast from NPR Talk of the Nation -- Hana Roisin and End of Men

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130190244>

CW Mills. "The Sociological Imagination." In David M. Newman, Jodi O'Brien, and Michelle Robertson. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life. Readings*. 10th edition. Los Angeles: Sage, 2015. pp. 5-9.

Class: Levels of Analysis, Themes, and Methods

Peter Berger. "An Invitation to Sociology, in David M. Newman, Jodi O'Brien, and Michelle Robertson. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life. Readings*. 10th edition. Los Angeles: Sage, 2015. pp. 10-13.

Erving Goffman. "The Presentation of Self in Everday Life: Selections. In David M. Newman, Jodi O'Brien, and Michelle Robertson. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life. Readings*. 10th edition. Los Angeles: Sage, 2015. pp.119-128.

Class: Hikikomori in Japan: A Structural Explanation

Michael Zielenziger. *Shutting out the Sun: How Japan Created Its Own Lost Generation*. New York. Vintage. 2006, pp. 15-38; 93-120; 121-145.

Week 1: Understanding Social Structure: Macro Sociology and Systems

Class: Inequality and Social Organization

Karl Marx and Friederich Engels, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), pp. 14- 21.

Max Weber. "Class Status and Party" (selections), from Chapter IX, "Political Communities," in *Economy and Society* (1922). Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978, pp 1-5.

Douglas Massey, Chapter 5, "Remaking the Political Economy." From *Categorically unequal: The American stratification system*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2007, pp. 158-210.

Class: Globalization

Joseph Stieglitz. *Globalization and Its Discontents*. New York: Norton, 2002, pp. TBA

Reich R. (1990). *The work of nations: Preparing ourselves for 21st century capitalism*. New York: Knopf, pages 171- 184; 196-224

Class: Class

Gregory Matsios, "Making Class Visible," in David M. Newman, Jodi O'Brien, and Michelle Robertson. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life. Readings*. 10th edition. Los Angeles: Sage, 2015, pp. 241-247.

Class: Gender

Heidi Hartmann (1976), "Capitalism, Patriarchy and Job Segregation by Sex." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1(3), pages 137 – 141.

David Grazian, "The Girl Hunt: Urban Nightlife and the Performance of Masculinity as a Collective Activity," in David M. Newman, Jodi O'Brien, and Michelle Robertson.

Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life. Readings. 10th edition. Los Angeles: Sage, 2015, pp. 142-150.

Hilary Levey-Friedman, "Tiger Girls on the Soccer Field," in David M. Newman, Jodi O'Brien, and Michelle Robertson. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life. Readings*. 10th edition. Los Angeles: Sage, 2015, pp. 107-116.

Leta Hong Fincher. *Leftover Women*. London: Zed Books, 2014, pp. 14-43.

Class: Race

Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "Racial and Ethnic Formation," in David M. Newman, Jodi O'Brien, and Michelle Robertson. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life. Readings*. 10th edition. Los Angeles: Sage, 2015, pp. 271-278.

Mary Romero, "Life as the Maid's Daughter," in David M. Newman, Jodi O'Brien, and Michelle Robertson. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life. Readings*. 10th edition. Los Angeles: Sage, 2015, pp. 93-101.

Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres, "Watching the Canary," in David M. Newman, Jodi O'Brien,

and Michelle Robertson. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life. Readings*. 10th edition. Los Angeles: Sage, 2015, pp. 187 – 190.

Maxwell Leung, “Jeremy Lin’s Model Minority Problem,” in David M. Newman, Jodi O’Brien, and Michelle Robertson. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life. Readings*. 10th edition. Los Angeles: Sage, 2015, pp.303 – 312.

Sucheng Chan. “Asian American Struggles for Civil Rights,” in Wu, Jean Yu-wen Shen and Chen, Thomas C, eds., *Asian American Studies Now: A Critical Reader*. Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010, pp. 213 – 238.

Week 2: Formation of Social Individuals: Culture, Religion, Families

Class: Culture

Emile Durkheim. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. New York Free Press, 1995. Introduction and Chapter 1.

Class: Religion, Ideology, Art

Bourdieu, Pierre. “Artistic Taste and Cultural Capital” in Jeffrey Alexander and Steven Seidman, *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press p. 205 – 215

Pew Research Center, “America’s Changing Religious Landscape,” May 12, 2015, pp. 1-33.

Class: Families

Stephanie Coontz, “The Radical Idea of Marrying for Love,” in David M. Newman, Jodi O’Brien, and Michelle Robertson. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life. Readings*. 10th edition. Los Angeles: Sage, 2015, pp. 153-163.

Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. (1983). Split household, small producer, dual wage earner: An analysis of Chinese American family strategies. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 45(1): pages 35-46.

Class: Families

Annette Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race and Family Life*. Berkeley: University of

California Press, 2001. (excerpts)

Class: Education

Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou. *The Asian American Achievement Paradox*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2015. 93-114; 179-199.

Week 3: Education, Technologies, Workplaces

Class: Education

Erving Goffman, "The Moral Career of a Mental Patient," *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. Chicago: Aldine, 1961, pp. 127-169.

Shamus Khan, *Privilege. The Making of An Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. Ch 1 and ch 2.

Pedro Noguera (2003) *City schools and the American dream*. New York: Teachers College Press, ch 2, pages 23-41.

Class: Education

Sean F. Reardon. "The Widening Academic Achievement Gap Between the Rich and the Poor: New Evidence and Possible Explanations," in *Whither Opportunity? Rising Inequality, Schools, and Children's Life Chances*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2011.

Class: Technologies

Danah Boyd, *It's Complicated: The Social Life of Networked Teens*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014, Introduction, pp. 19-28; Chapter 1, "Identity: Why do Teens Seem So Strange On-Line," pp. 29-53

Shenyang Zhao, "The Digital Self Through the Looking Glass of Telecopresent Others." (in O'Brien, pp. 153-161).

Class: Technologies

Antonio Garcia Martinez, *Chaos Monkeys: Obscene Fortune and Random Failure in Silicon Valley*. New York: Harper Collins, 2016. TBA

Class: Workplaces

William Greider, "These Dark Satanic Mills," in David M. Newman, Jodi O'Brien, and Michelle Robertson. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life. Readings*. 10th edition. Los Angeles: Sage, 2015, pp. 215-224.

John Van Maanen, "The Smile Factory: Work at Disneyland, in David M. Newman, Jodi O'Brien, and Michelle Robertson. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life. Readings*. 10th edition. Los Angeles: Sage, 2015, pp. 225-233.

Week4: Workplaces and Presentations*Class: Student Presentations:*

What you found, what it means, and why it matters?

Class: Student Presentations:

What you found, what it means, and why it matters?

Class

In class, Reflective Writing

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