

Emory University
Department of Sociology
Spring Term 2020
MWF 10-10:50; White Hall 103

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Office Hours: M 2-3:00, MW 11-11:30

Sociology 101: Introduction to General Sociology

Overview

How do our connections with other people affect us? How do groups and societies work? How are American and world society changing? With many examples, this course illustrates how sociology answers such questions. It has two main goals: to give you a new understanding of social life and to entice you to explore the field in greater depth. Across several areas of social life, we will study four themes:

1. *Puzzles*. We will see how sociologists use evidence to answer intriguing questions about society.
2. *Interaction*. We will think about how people engage in different kinds of interaction that form the building blocks of social life.
3. *American society*. We will discuss how Americans have organized institutions in distinctive ways.
4. *World society*. We will illustrate how global trends and connections across large distances affect more and more people.

Some features of this course

- This course does not focus exclusively on social issues in contemporary American society but also offers a **comparative and global perspective** on trends and institutions.
- Taking a **broad view of sociology** as the study of how societies work, the course at times will draw on relevant research done by non-sociologists, including anthropologists, historians, psychologists, and economists.
- We will consider a **variety of evidence**, both to illustrate good sociological work and to stimulate your own sociological imagination; sources we are likely to consult include ourworldindata.org, oecd.org, and pewresearch.org.
- Instead of relying on a textbook, **lectures will provide guidance** and the “big picture.” Readings will serve as illustrations, typically research-based, but generally do not contain all the main points of the class for which they are assigned. Class discussion will often **go beyond the readings**.
- Preparation for several classes will involve **short assignments**. While these will not take an inordinate amount of time, they will require a fairly regular routine of reading and writing.
- This course contains a section on health, but it is **not specifically designed to help pre-med students prepare for the MCAT**. SOC 230, Sociology of Health and Illness, fits that purpose.

Readings

All readings (see Schedule) will be available on, or linked via, Course Reserves or Canvas.

Requirements

- 1. Midterm exam on Feb. 28 (30% of final grade) and final exam on May 5 (35% of final grade).**
 - Exam material: in addition to the readings, class discussion and notes/slides are relevant exam material and will point you to key issues to study.
 - Format: exams will consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions.
 - Rescheduling: the midterm can be rescheduled only in case of documented emergencies; the final can be rescheduled only with a note from the Dean.
 - You will need to bring a **bluebook** to each exam.
 - “Will the final be cumulative?” No.
- 2. Four assignments, each worth 5% of your final grade.** Several classes, about two per unit, will involve an assignment (e.g., a response to a reading or a task that complements the class material), **to be submitted via Canvas the evening prior to the relevant class**, typically in the form of a short essay. You will receive more than 4 assignments in total; this means that you will have options and may elect to skip certain assignments. You should **finish at least two assignments prior to the midterm**. Note: You may not use additional assignments for extra credit.
- 3. One book report, worth 15% of your final grade**, about 3 pages. You may select a book from a list to be posted on Canvas, consisting of a sample of works that will be discussed in or are closely related to a particular class; most of these books will be available online through the library. Review this list, with all titles and relevant dates, early on. If you select a book to report on, **the report is due the evening prior to the class in which it will be discussed** and you should be ready to contribute to discussion. Plan ahead!
- 4. Attendance, preparation, and participation.**
 - As part of preparation, make a habit of **reading announcements** prior to each class.
 - Since we will not use a textbook, regular attendance and participation will help you grasp the material and increase your chances of earning a high grade.
 - Many classes will involve participation; if you respond well to questions and make good comments, you can earn extra points to be used to adjust ‘marginal’ grades.
 - While attendance is not required, if you miss two classes or fewer, you will earn two points and if you miss three classes you will earn one point to be added to your final score. There is no excuse policy; you do not need to report reasons for missing class.
 - Note: repeated violations of the general course expectations (see below) will cancel any extra points. We reserve the right to subtract additional points for conduct that disrupts the flow of the class.

5. **Extra credit opportunities.** Various activities in class, some unannounced, will offer chances to earn points that will be added to your final score.

Grading

- Exams and assignments will be graded on a 100-point scale.
- The weights indicated above will be used to convert scores, which will be added up to produce your final score. Example: Midterm grade of 90, making up 30% of final grade, adds 27 points to the final score.
- A = 92-100, A- = 90-91, B+ = 88-89, etc.
- You will get guidelines for assignments, including grading criteria, via Canvas.

General expectations. In taking this class, you agree to

1. Be prepared—to think, engage, discuss
2. Arrive on time
 - but if you do arrive late, take out your notebook prior to entering the room and sit down quickly and unobtrusively in the front row (repeated late arrivals and disruptions will result in point deductions)
3. Abide by class etiquette. Specifically,
 - to keep our focus on the course material, do not use a laptop to take notes
 - turn off and do not use your phone, unless given specific permission (when we will use phones for educational purposes)
 - do not bring or consume any food, including gum (water and coffee are fine)
4. Follow the Honor Code, especially with regard to plagiarism. Please note:
The honor code is in effect throughout the semester. By taking this course, you affirm that it is a violation of the code to cheat on exams, to plagiarize, and to commit any form of academic misconduct. You also affirm that if you witness others violating the code you have a duty to report them to the Honor Council.

Assistance

- The TA for this course is [Stephanie Miedema](#). Her office hours are MW, 1-2:00 p.m. (Tarbutton 223).
- Both Stephanie and I welcome conversation about substantive matters. Feel free to visit us during office hours or by appointment. If there are topics, related to sociology or not, that you would like to discuss more informally, I am often available for lunch at the DCT on Fridays.
- For assistance with writing, consult the [Emory Writing Center](#).
- For assistance with access or disability issues, contact accessibility@emory.edu.
- We are willing to discuss accommodations and any related issues that arise.
- If you encounter any unexpected personal challenges during the semester, let us know, so that we can help!

Schedule

- Readings will be posted on Course Reserves or linked on Canvas (some will be available via discoverE)
- In most cases, we will read only excerpts from the sources indicated (books in italics)
- Class preparation should take no more than 90 minutes on average
- Expect assignments for several classes, both graded (to be submitted; see Requirements) and ungraded
- In case of inclement-weather closures, we may use weekend make-up days on dates TBA
- We may make minor changes in the readings as needed

Introduction

1/15 Course overview: What is sociology? What is this course about?

1. Health

1/17 Puzzle 1: How do social networks shape our health?

Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler, *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives*

1/22 Puzzle 2: Who is more likely to commit suicide?

Anna Mueller and Seth Abrutyn, "Adolescents under Pressure"

1/24 Interaction: Care as a form of interaction

John Heritage and Steven Clayman, "Patients' Presentations of Medical Issues: The Patient's Problem" [from *Talk in Action*]

1/27 American society: American health care

T.R. Reid, *The Healing of America*

Paul Starr, *Remedy and Reaction: The Peculiar American Struggle over Health Care Reform*

1/29 World society: Global health

Steven Radelet, *The Great Surge: The Ascent of the Developing World*

2. Religion

1/31 What do young Americans believe?

Christian Smith and Melinda Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*

2/3 Ritual as a form of interaction

Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*

- 2/5 American religion
David Voas and Mark Chaves, "Is the United States a Counterexample to the Secularization Thesis?"
- 2/7 Global religion
Miranda Klaver, "Hillsong Megachurch Network: Christianity in Global Cities"
Thomas Wagner, "Branding, Music, and Religion: Standardization and Adaptation in the Experience of the "Hillsong Sound""

3. Sports

- 2/10 How does sports create community?
Francisco Vieyra, "Pickup Basketball in the Production of Black Community"
- 2/12 Play and game as forms of interaction
George H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society*
Janet Lever, "Sex Differences in the Games Children Play"
- 2/14 American sports
Rachel Allison, *Kicking Center: Gender and the Selling of Women's Professional Soccer*
- 2/17 Global sports
Younghan Cho, "Toward the Post-Westernization of Baseball?"

4. Crime and law

- 2/19 How does race affect crime and crime affect employment?
Ellis Monk, "The Color of Punishment"
Devah Pager, "The Mark of a Criminal Record"
- 2/21 Violence as a form of interaction
Randall Collins, *Violence: A Microsociological Theory*
- 2/24 American crime and law
Michelle Phelps and Devah Pager, "Inequality and Punishment: A Turning Point for Mass Incarceration?"
- 2/26 Global crime and violence
Steven Pinker, "A History of Violence"
- 2/28 **Midterm exam**

5. Economy

- 3/2 How do people manage emotions at work?
Arlie Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*
Ashley Mears, *Pricing Beauty: The Making of a Fashion Model*
- 3/4 Exchange as a form of interaction
Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*; Georg Simmel, "Exchange"
- 3/6 American economy
Timothy Carney, *Alienated America: Why Some Places Thrive While Others Collapse*
Rachel Dwyer and Erik Wright, "Low-Wage Job Growth, Polarization, and the Limits and Opportunities of the Service Economy"
- 3/9-3/13 Spring Break
- 3/16 Global economy
Aimee Carillo Rowe et al., *Answer the Call: Virtual Migration in Indian Call Centers*
Smitha Radhakrishnan, *Appropriately Indian: Gender and Culture in a New Transnational Class*

6. Inequality

- 3/18 How does where you live affect how well you live?
Robert Sampson, "Neighbourhood Effects and Beyond: Explaining the Paradoxes of Inequality in the Changing American Metropolis"
- 3/20 Ranking as a form of interaction
Cecilia Ridgeway, *Status: Why Is It Everywhere? Why Does It Matter?*
- 3/23 American inequality 1: income and wealth
Matthew Stewart, "The 9.9 Percent Is the New American Aristocracy"
Robert Putnam, *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*
- 3/25 American inequality 2: race
William Julius Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions*
Karyn Lacy, *Blue-chip Black: Race, Class, and Status in the New Black Middle Class*
- 3/27 American inequality 3: gender
Paula England, "The Gender Revolution: Uneven and Stalled"
Paula England et al., "Do Highly Paid, Highly Skilled Women Experience the Largest Motherhood Penalty?"

- 3/30 Global inequality
Ho-fung Hung and Jaime Kucinkas , "Globalization and Global Inequality: Assessing the Impact of the Rise of China and India, 1980–2005"

7. Education

- 4/1 What accounts for gaps in test scores across groups?
Sean Reardon et al., "The Geography of Racial/Ethnic Test Score Gaps"
- 4/3 Learning as a form of interaction
David Diehl and Daniel McFarland, "Classroom Ordering and the Situational Imperatives of Routine and Ritual"
- 4/6 American education
Elizabeth Armstrong and Laura Hamilton, *Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality*
- 4/8 Global education
Vanessa Fong, *Paradise Redefined: Transnational Chinese Students and the Quest for Flexible Citizenship in the Developed World*

8. Culture and media

- 4/10 How does cultural consumption shape our social ties and position?
Omar Lizardo, "How Cultural Tastes Shape Personal Networks"
- 4/13 Performance as a form of interaction
Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis*
Anne Heider and R. Stephen Warner, "Bodies in Sync: Interaction Ritual Theory Applied to Sacred Harp Singing"
- 4/15 American media
Frank Lechner, *The American Exception*
William and Denise Bielby, "All Hits Are Flukes"
- 4/17 Global culture
Christopher Bail et al., "Prestige, Proximity, and Prejudice: How Google Search Terms Diffuse across the World"

9. Family

- 4/20 How do families transmit social (dis)advantages?
Annette Lareau, "Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families"
- 4/22 Love as a form of interaction
Aziz Ansari and Eric Klinenberg, *Modern Romance*
- 4/24 American family
Sara McLanahan, "Family Instability and Complexity after a Nonmarital Birth: Outcomes for Children in Fragile Families"
Pilar Gonalons-Pons and Christine Schwartz, "Trends in Economic Homogamy: Changes in Assortative Mating or the Division of Labor in Marriage?"
- 4/27 Global family
Göran Therborn, *Between Sex and Power: Family in the World, 1900-2000*
- 5/5 **Final exam (8-10:30 a.m.)**