

Sociology 101: Sociological Perspectives

Instructor Details:

Alanna Gillis
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Hamilton 200
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 8:45-9:30
Tuesday & Thursday 11:15-12
And by appointment

Course Details:

Summer Session 1
MTWTF 9:45-11:15
Manning 307
Section 001

Course Goals:

I am interested in showing you how to think in a way that is sociologically mindful, not simply to teach sociology. That is, I understand that this may be the only sociology course you take and therefore I am most interested in teaching you how to apply sociological thinking to your everyday life. While I hope that after this course you will develop a passion for sociology just as I did in my first sociology course, I will be extremely happy if you leave this course having the tools and inclination to analyze the social world around you in a way that you did not before you stepped through this door.

So what does this actually mean for you as a student? While we will talk about some of the core concepts of sociology, most learning will take place in this class as a group thinking through and analyzing real social problems. *This course is fundamentally about understanding the sociological perspective and learning to address questions you might hear about in your everyday life.* For instance, is there such thing as reverse racism? What does it mean for someone to commit an act of terrorism? By the end of this course you will know how a sociologically mindful person would answer these questions, though of course it will be up to you whether you choose to accept and use sociological mindfulness in the rest of your life.

By the end of this course you should be able to:

- 1) Understand sociological mindfulness and a sociological perspective
- 2) Apply a sociological perspective to real world situations and problems
- 3) Analyze media and your own life from a sociological perspective
- 4) Evaluate the usefulness of a sociological perspective in answering questions about the social world

How We Will Learn:

To follow my philosophy that this class is fundamentally about learning a new way of thinking and not about memorizing concepts, there are no traditional exams in this class. You will have daily quizzes (see below) to give me a sense of whether you are understanding the readings and basic course content, but otherwise no assignments will ask you to regurgitate information. Instead, you will learn to apply it to social problems you read about in news articles and see in movies and respond to questions about social problems.

I assume that you all come to this class from different backgrounds. Some of you may be new to college while others may be almost done. Some may have taken many social science courses while others are simply trying to get a general education requirement or are required to take this for a health-related field you hope to pursue. Most of you are likely working jobs and have other obligations outside of this classroom. I understand and respect your different backgrounds. This class is designed largely around group work and group learning. You all will have different strengths that you bring to the class, as well as skills you may not have

developed as much as you would like yet. I hope you will use your different perspectives to make this class better—challenge course material that conflicts with experiences you have had, explain concepts your groupmates are not as familiar with, and ultimately work together through your diverse perspectives to understand and evaluate the sociological perspective.

Communicating with Me and Your Classmates:

- Office hours:
 - I will hold official office hours regularly (see above)
 - I prefer that you email before coming so that I can make sure I am prepared to discuss whatever you would like, but you also feel free to stop by any time during those hours.
 - I am on campus a lot! Let me know if you would like to meet at a different time outside of normal office hours and I will be very happy to do that.
 - Feel free to talk to me about course concerns as well as other topics on your mind. For instance, several of my college professors were great mentors to me in helping me think through my experiences in college as well as what I might want to do afterwards. I am more than happy to have those types of conversations with you or work to connect you with people who might know more about your interests than I do! You are not just a student, you are a person and I hope to live up to my goal of always treating you as such.
- The best way to communicate with me is talking to me before or after class or sending me an email. I will try to always respond within 24 hours, though I may be slower to respond on weekends and during breaks.
- In return, I also expect that you will check your email regularly in case there are any updates for the class.
 - *You will be held accountable for information disseminated over emails so please check yours daily!*
- I also hope you form good relationships with your fellow classmates. While I will break you into groups after the first few days of class, I hope you will come to feel closer to all of your fellow classmates.
 - Getting to know your peers will facilitate your learning as well as help you if you ever need to miss class.
 - *If you miss class it is your responsibility to discuss with your group members what you missed. You will be held accountable for knowing any announcements or other information missed due to absences or tardiness, including being responsible for answering review questions on the daily quizzes*
- At a minimum, I expect you to all respect each other in class discussions, contributions to group work, and all other areas of class.

Assignments and Ways You Will Be Assessed:

Daily Quizzes (15%): These quizzes will be taken on Sakai are **due by 8 AM the day of class**. The quizzes should primarily be understood as reading and review quizzes. If you do the readings for that class, you should find the questions moderately easy. Most will ask you to explain the main argument from the reading or list an example. Alternatively, some questions will be review from the class period before—therefore if you miss class it will be your responsibility to learn that missed material before you take the next quiz. You will be asked to sign an honor pledge before each quiz verifying that the quiz response is your own without any

help from classmates or the readings themselves, though you may use any notes you take on the readings or in class while you complete the quiz.

NOTE: Because these quizzes are taken outside of class on your own time AND I am dropping your two lowest quiz grades, there are no makeup quizzes except for in very rare extreme extenuating circumstances.

Newspaper Article Responses (20%): You will be required to write two one-page newspaper article responses (worth 10% each). These response papers ask you to be sociologically mindful about current events. I will provide you the article for the first response paper and you will choose the article for the second.

Movie Analysis Project (total 25%):

-Topics to Be Investigated, Group Write-up (5%)

-Group Presentation (15%); Evaluation of Group Members and Other Groups (2.5% each)

This project asks you to analyze a movie from a sociological perspective. As a group, you will all decide on one movie. You will need to explain how two sociological concepts and principles can be demonstrated with the movie. You must use specific examples from the movie. You will be required to present together, evaluate your group members' contributions, and evaluate other groups' presentations.

Sociological Autoethnography (15%): You will be required to choose one sociological concept, apply it to one topic, and then use an example from your own life to explain it. This short paper will require you to apply a concept and topic learned in the class to analyze from a sociological perspective something that you have personally experienced.

Group Social Problem Response (Final Assessment) (15%):

During the final exam time I will assign each group a social problem they need to explain. You can feel free to use any materials you find helpful in answering the question, including talking to other students in the class who are not in your group for the response essay. Each group will draft a response essay to the social problem. As you will be limited on time, I do not expect this to be as well written as a paper would be, though it should be well-enough organized that I can easily follow the essay's flow. You will receive more details about this later in the semester.

Participation (10%): This will be jointly determined by you and me. As the student, you will fill out your own evaluation form of your participation three times during the semester: once at the beginning, once halfway through, and once at the end. You will evaluate your self-perceived level of participation in the course—including attendance, level of preparation for each class meeting, level of participation in partner/group discussions, level of participation in full class discussions, and level of participation in other ways (i.e. office hours, going to the UNC Writing Center, study or working groups, peer editing with a partner, etc.). At the end of the semester, you will propose a grade you deserve for participation. Using your information provided, evaluations by your group members, and my own observations, I will either accept or modify that proposed grade.

Grading Scale:

		B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
A	93-100	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	60-66

A- 90-92 B- 80-82 C- 70-72 F Below 60

Class Resources and Requirements:

- Required book: Schwalbe, Michael. 2018. *The Sociologically Examined Life: Pieces of the Conversation*, Fifth Edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
 - [Note: if you do not have access to the correct edition, it is *your* responsibility to verify that the assigned chapters are the same; some content and chapters have changed across editions]
- Other readings are available on Sakai or via links on the syllabus. If any links do not work, please try to google to find the article before emailing me. Also check Sakai where most articles with links have been made into PDFs.
- You will be required to bring your laptop to class every day, though there will be times during class when I will require you to put your computer away. You will also be expected to bring a pen/pencil and paper to class to participate in class activities.

Honor Code:

As you know, UNC has an honor code regarding plagiarism and academic integrity. While many assignments or projects for this course will be done in groups, some assignments will be individual. I promise to always make it clear in assignment guidelines what types of collaboration or help from peers are acceptable and what are not. In return, you will be held to your promise as a Carolina student to always follow UNC's guidelines and policies. If you have any questions, always ask permission or clarification beforehand!

Accommodations:

While there are no traditional exams in this course, some of you may still qualify for accommodations officially through UNC. Please be sure those are on file with the appropriate offices on campus who will reach out to me to facilitate your accommodations. Some of you may need accommodations that do not fit under typical UNC policies. If you have any concerns at any time about your ability to succeed in this class, please talk to me as soon as these concerns arise so that we can try to take care of them together!

Note: The syllabus—including readings, assignment guidelines, and deadlines—is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Changes will be announced as early as possible—all will be announced verbally in class and usually via email as well.

Schedule:

Wednesday May 16:

Introductions of People, the Course, and Thinking about Social Problems

Due: About Me

Thursday May 17:

Sociological Mindfulness: What is it?

- Chapter 1 TSEL: Making Sense of the World Differently
- Green, James C. 2017. "Equal Pay Bill Has a Serious Downside." *Letters to the Editor, Park Record*. <http://www.parkrecord.com/opinion/letters/letters-to-the-editor-feb-15-17-2017/>

Due: Participation Goals

Friday May 18:

Social World is a Construction

- Chapter 2 TSEL: Inventing the Social World
- Ambrosino, Brandon. 2017. "The Invention of Heterosexuality." *BBC*.
<http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20170315-the-invention-of-heterosexuality>

Monday May 21:

Social World is a Construction Continued: Race

- "Is Race Real?" Pp. 244-247. 2016. *Sociology Project 2.0*, NYU Sociology Faculty. [On Sakai]
- Panofsky, Aaron, and Joan Donovan. 2017. "When Genetics Challenges a Racist's Identity: Genetic Ancestry Testing among White Nationalists." American Sociological Association Annual Meetings, Montreal, Canada, August 14. [On Sakai]
 - Read: Abstract (1), Findings (18-33); Figure 1 (46); skim Data and Methods (12-18) for basic overview of how conducted study

Tuesday May 22:

Social World is a Construction Continued: Gender

- "Where Do Gender Differences Come From?" pp. 268-271. 2016. *Sociology Project 2.0*, NYU Sociology Faculty. [On Sakai]
- Bui, Lynh. 2018. "Fight over Ocean City's Ban on Bare Breasts Goes to Federal Court." *Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/fight-over-ocean-citys-ban-on-bare-breasts-goes-to-federal-court/2018/01/18/349ed060-fc6b-11e7-8f66-2df0b94bb98a_story.html?utm_term=.850c6837d83b

Wednesday May 23:

Social World Comes from History: Case Study Racial Discrimination in Housing

- Chapter 3 TSEL: Seeing Connections
- Edwards, Brian. 2018. "The Great Divide: 'Redlining' Kept Neighborhoods Separate, Unequal." *Montgomery Advertiser*.
<https://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/2018/02/16/great-divide-redlining-kept-neighborhoods-separate-unequal/1067941001/>

DUE: First Newspaper Article Response

Thursday May 24:

Making Choices

- Chapter 4 TSEL: Relationships, Groups, and Interdependence
- Ajaka, Nadine. 2017. "The Casualties of Women's War on Body Hair." *The Atlantic*.
https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2017/02/the-casualties-of-womens-war-on-body-hair/514983/?utm_source=atfb

Friday May 25:

Making Choices Continued: Case Study of Doctors

- Espstein, David. 2017. “When Evidence Says No, but Doctors Say Yes,” *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2017/02/when-evidence-says-no-but-doctors-say-yes/517368/>
- Park, Ryan. 2017. “Why So Many Young Doctors Work Such Awful Hours.” *The Atlantic*. https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/02/doctors-long-hours-schedules/516639/?utm_source=atfb

DUE: Mid-Course Evaluation

Monday May 28:

Memorial Day. No class!

Tuesday May 29:

Socialization

- Chapter 5 TSEL: Becoming Human
- Kane, Emily. “No Way My Boys are Going to Be Like That!: Parents’ Responses to Children’s Gender Nonconformity.” In *Mapping the Social Landscape*, edited by Susan Ferguson. [On Sakai]

DUE: Bring Newspaper Article to Class

Wednesday May 30:

Symbolic Interactionism, Culture, and Prejudice

- Chapter 6 TSEL: Behavior as a Product of Interaction
- And one of the following (assigned during previous class):
 - Kurzman, Charles and David Schanzer. 2015. “The Growing Right-Wing Terror Threat.” *The New York Times*, Opinion Pages. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/16/opinion/the-other-terror-threat.html>
 - Kurzman, Charles. 2016. “America is Holding Itself Hostage to Terrorism.” *Huffington Post*. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/charles-kurzman/america-hostage-to-terrorism_b_8814088.html
 - Kurzman, Charles. 2017. “These Numbers Show Why Trump’s Muslim Entry Limit is Absurd.” *Huffington Post*. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-muslim-entry-limit_us_58869835e4b070d8cad50935

DUE: Second Newspaper Article Response

Thursday May 31:

Symbolic Interactionism, Culture, and Prejudice Continued: Case Study Women in Workplace

- MacNell, Lillian, Adam Driscoll, and Andrea N. Hunt. 2015. “What’s in a Name: Exposing Gender Bias in Student Ratings of Teaching.” *Innovative Higher Education* 40: 291-303. [on Sakai]

Friday June 1:

Methods: Doing Social Research

- Conley, Dalton. 2015. “Chapter 2: Methods.” Pp. 43-66 in *You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist*. New York: W.W. Norton. [Sakai]

DUE: Movie Analysis Project, Topics to be Investigated

Monday June 4:

Contingency and Cause

- Chapter 8 TSEL: Contingency and Cause
- Johnson, Allan G. 2012. "Why Is There Poverty?" Excerpt from *The Forest and The Trees: Sociology as Life, Practice, and Promise*. Allan G. Johnson Blog. <http://www.agjohnson.us/essays/poverty/>

Due: Participation Mid-Course Evaluation

Tuesday June 5:

Contingency and Cause Applied: What Causes Religious Conversions in College Students?

- Gillis, Alanna, and Laura Krull. 2018. "I was there for the free food': Accidental Religious and Cultural Conversions in College." *Working Paper* [Sakai]

Wednesday June 6:

Stereotypes and Representation

- Chapter 9 TSEL: Images, Representations, and Accounts
- Debate about Confederate Statues (assigned one to read):
 - Signer, Michael. 2017. "I'm a Progressive Mayor: Here's Why I Voted No on Removing My City's Confederate Statue." *Washington Post: Opinion*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2017/05/24/im-a-progressive-mayor-heres-why-i-voted-no-on-removing-my-citys-confederate-statue/?tid=sm_fb&utm_term=.11851d63050f
 - Landrieu, Mitch. 2017. "Mitch Landrieu's Speech on the Removal of Confederate Monuments in New Orleans." *The New York Times: Opinion*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/23/opinion/mitch-landrieus-speech-transcript.html>

Thursday June 7:

Power

- Chapter 10 TSEL: Understanding Power in Social Life

Friday June 8:

Group Presentations; Evaluation of Other Groups

DUE: Movie Analysis Project, Group Presentations and Evaluations

Monday June 11:

Case Study of Power and Inequality: The Criminal Justice System

- Pager, Devah. 2004. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *Focus* 23(2): 44-46. <http://www.irp.wisc.edu/publications/focus/pdfs/foc232i.pdf>
- Video: Oliver, John. 2015. "Municipal Violations." *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO)*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UjpmT5noto>

Tuesday June 12:

When the Social Impacts the Natural and the Natural Impacts the Social

- Chapter 12 TSEL: Seeing the Social in the Natural
- Achenbach, Joel. 2017. "Life Expectancy Improves for Blacks, and the Racial Gap Is Closing, CDC Reports." *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/to->

your-health/wp/2017/05/02/cdc-life-expectancy-up-for-blacks-and-the-racial-gap-is-closing/

Wednesday June 13:

Systematic Inequality vs. Differences

- Chapter 11 TSEL: Differences and Inequalities
- Williams, Christine. 1992. "The Glass Escalator: Hidden Advantages for Men in 'Female' Professions." *Social Problems* 39(3). Only read pages 255-263.
http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic155590.files/Williams_TheGlassEscalator.pdf

Thursday June 14:

Case Study of Systematic Inequality vs. Difference: Myth of Reverse Racism

- Scime, Robert. 2011. "Race Should Not Be a Factor in College Admissions." *The Oracle*.
<http://www.usforacle.com/news/view.php/689300/Race-should-not-be-a-factor-in-college-a>

DUE: Sociological Autoethnography

Friday June 15:

Social Changes over Time

- Chapter 13 TSEL: Unpacking Process
- Katz, Josh. 2017. "You Draw It: Just How Bad Is the Drug Overdose Epidemic?" *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/04/14/upshot/drug-overdose-epidemic-you-draw-it.html?smid=fb-nytimes&smtyp=cur&r=0>
- Video: Oliver, John. 2016. "Opioids." *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO)*.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pdPrQFjo2o>

Monday June 18:

Last day of class!

Bringing It All Together

- Chapter 14 TSEL: Studying and Changing the Social World

Due: Participation Final Evaluation

Wednesday June 20:

Final Exam 8 AM: Group Social Problem Response