Introduction to Sociology
Syllabus v. 3

Fall, 2015
Instructor: Dr. Tracy Perkins
tracy.perkins@howard.edu (for reference only, please contact me through Blackboard for anything related to class)
Class: Monday/Wednesday/Friday: 2:10 - 3:00
Douglass Hall 205
Office hours: Fridays 10:30-1:30
Douglass Hall, room 210C

“The challenge of modernity is to live without illusions and without becoming disillusioned.”
- Antonio Gramsci

The aims of this course are to:
• Learn about the field of sociology. What do sociologists study? How has sociology changed over time? How is sociology useful?
• Learn how to apply the sociological imagination to your personal life and to contemporary events.
• Learn how to analyze the world through the lens of inequalities resulting from social structures of race, class, gender and sexuality.
• Learn about the core areas of expertise in Howard’s Sociology and Anthropology Department: Social Inequality, Health, Criminology, and the Environment.
• Improve reading comprehension of scholarly and popular texts.
• Create a productive, respectful and creative learning environment and intellectual community in class.

Required Readings
The following texts will be available for purchase at the Howard Barnes and Noble. All other texts will be available on the course blackboard site.
• Social Things: An Introduction to the Sociological Life, by Charles Lemert
• Between the World and Me, by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Class Time
Our class time will take a variety of formats, including lecture, large group discussion, small group discussion, film, class activities, and time for individual written reflection. I encourage you to ask questions during lectures. A few guidelines:
• Please do not use laptops or other digital devices unless you have requested permission from me ahead of time.
• Come to class prepared by having done all the assigned reading and taking notes on it.
• Bring your readings and notes to class every day, we will sometimes refer to them in small-group work.

Names and Gender Pronouns in the Classroom
As we will learn in this course, many people’s gender identity does not match what society would otherwise impose upon them. On the first day of class every student will fill out an index card that includes, among other things, your preferred name and gender pronoun (he, she, they, zie, etc). For example, my name is Dr. Perkins, and my preferred gender pronouns are “she” or “her.” Share whatever pronoun you feel most comfortable being used in a classroom setting, and feel free to inform me if you would like to change it partway through the course.

What You Should Expect During the Discussion (from Nathan Palmer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You should expect</th>
<th>You should not expect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People waiting to be called on before speaking.</td>
<td>People blurting out their thoughts, interrupting one another, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People actively listening to whomever is speaking.</td>
<td>People disrespecting the speaker by ignoring them or having side conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty, but honesty that is also respectful of others.</td>
<td>Honesty that is said in a way to hurt others or attack another’s truth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People sharing their experiences.</td>
<td>People trying to invalidate, disprove, or dismiss the experience others have had.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People using “I statements” to share their experiences.</td>
<td>People starting statements with “they,” “we,” “you,” or otherwise trying to speak on behalf of or stereotype others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People showing respect to speakers with their body language &amp; non-verbal responses.</td>
<td>People rolling their eyes, making faces, or otherwise disrespecting the speaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People talking about their experiences with frank, honest, and powerful words.</td>
<td>Anyone using curse words, racial slurs, or any other kind of epithet to talk about themselves or others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>% of course grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pop Quizzes</td>
<td>Announced at random in class</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>October 16 (in class exam)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>Dec. 11 (in class exam)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociological Biography Essay</td>
<td>Dec. 2 (due via Blackboard before class)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Attendance, Late Policies and Missed Exams

- All students are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly. It is especially important to attend the FIRST meeting of each class. It is there that you will receive much of the information critical to your success in the class – syllabi, handouts, names of textbooks, instructor contact information, class format, etc. If you are absent from classes, you are still responsible for the work missed.
- Late assignments (in this class, the Sociological Biography essay) can be turned in anytime between the end of the class in which they are due and 48 hours after the end of class for reduced credit of one full letter grade. You do not need to ask my permission to take advantage of this opportunity. Late assignments will not be accepted after this 48-hour period.
- There are no make-ups for pop quizzes.
- If you miss a scheduled exam, you must obtain your instructor’s approval to take a substitute exam before the exam occurs, or you will receive a grade of zero for the exam.

### Communications

- Please do not e-mail me directly. Instead, sign into our class Blackboard site and contact me there. That way I will be sure to see your e-mail. If you e-mail me directly, your e-mail may get lost in the flood of daily e-mails I receive.
- The less time I spend responding to individual e-mails, the more time I have to prepare for leading a high-quality class. To that end, before you send me a question via e-mail, first check my syllabus to see if the information you want is listed there. Also, I will not respond to questions about the concepts covered in class via e-mail. These are best asked in class or office hours.
- I will use your Howard e-mail account for any outside of class communication with you. You are responsible for checking this account regularly. If you do not check it daily, I suggest you set your Howard account to forward to the account that you do check daily.

### Plagiarism

- Any act of academic misconduct, such as cheating or plagiarizing on exams, is a serious violation of the University’s norms of conduct. Students who plagiarize or cheat on assignments or exams receive an F in the course and will be reported to the Dean of the College of Arts and Science for further sanctions, including possible suspension from the
University. Read the Academic Code of Student Conduct for more information: https://www.howard.edu/policy/academic/student-conduct.htm

**Writing**
Writing is an essential tool for thinking and communicating in virtually every discipline and profession. Therefore, in this course I expect you to produce writing that is not only thoughtful and accurate, but also organized, clear, grammatical, and consistent with the conventions of the field. If your writing does not meet these standards, I may deduct points. For assistance with your writing, go to the student section of the Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) website, http://www.cetla.howard.edu/wac/students.aspx.

**Disability**
Howard University is committed to providing an educational environment that is accessible to all students. In accordance with this policy, students who need accommodations because of a disability should contact the Dean for Special Student Services (202-238-2420) as soon as possible after admission to the University or at the beginning of each semester. Please document and discuss your disability with me during the first week of classes. Find more information about how to get academic accommodations here http://www.howard.edu/specialstudentservices/.

**Resources**
- Tutoring for General Education classes http://undergraduatesudies.howard.edu/cae/tutor-clearinghouse
- Writing tutoring for any class: http://www.coas.howard.edu/writingcenter/
- How to get tested for a learning disability: https://www.howard.edu/specialstudentservices/DisabledStudents.htm
- Howard University Counseling Service https://www.howard.edu/services/counseling/nav%20links/services.html
- Academic counseling and choosing a major http://undergraduatesudies.howard.edu/cae/
- For your questions about using Blackboard https://itsupport.howard.edu/sims/helpcenter/common/layout/SelfHelpHome.seam?inst_name=howard
- For help finding information, ask a librarian! http://library.howard.edu/content.php?pid=485081&sid=3987279#14737326
- Tips on how to study effectively http://www.howtostudy.org/index.php
Class Schedule

THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

Aug. 24: Introduction

Aug. 26: The sociological imagination


Aug. 28: Applying the sociological imagination


THE CHALLENGE OF CRITICAL THINKING

August 31: Authority and Thinking for Yourself


September 2: Is Objectivity Possible?


September 4: When Science Meets Money and Politics


Sept. 7: Labor Day, no class

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

September 9:

- Lemert, Ch. 4: Sociology and the Lost Worlds of a New World Order 1848-1920

September 11:

- Lemert, Ch. 5: Sociology Becomes a Science of Worldly Structures: 1920-1960
September 14:
• Lemert, Ch. 6: Sociology Reaches into the World: 1968-2000s

SOCIAL STRUCTURES: RACE, CLASS, GENDER & SEXUALITY

September 16:
• Lemert Ch. 7: The Mysterious Power of Social Structures

CLASS

September 18: Class and Health

September 21: Class and Work

September 23: Class and Power

GENDER & SEXUALITY

September 25: Social Construction of Gender

September 28: Masculinity
Guest speaker: Shaneda Destine

September 30: Case Study - Caitlyn Jenner
(http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/06/09/caitlyn-jenner-is-pissing-off-feminists-and-bigots-good-for-her.html)

**RACE**

**October 2: Racial Formation**

*Yardfest, no class meeting*


**October 5: Color Blind Racism**


**October 7: Politics of the social construction of race**


**October 9: Black Bodies at Risk**


**October 12: Columbus Day/Indigenous People’s Day – No Class**

**October 14: Case Study: Rachel Dolezal**

(http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/16/opinion/rachel-dolezals-harmful-masquerade.html)


**October 16**

*In Class - Exam 1*

**CRIME AND CRIMINALIZATION**
October 19: Class and Criminalization

October 21: Prisons and the New Caste System

October 23: Incarceration and Families
Guest Speaker: Dr. Muhammad, Howard University
• Readings TBA

HEALTH

October 26: History and Health

October 28: Individualism and Healthy Behaviors

October 30: Environmental Health

COLONIALISM, GLOBALIZATION & IMMIGRATION

November 2: Colonialism
Election day - don’t forget to vote!

November 4: Immigration and Globalization

November 6: Immigrant Rights
Last day to withdraw from the course/university


SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

November 9: Climate Change


November 11: Veteran’s Day, no classes

November 13: Environmental Inequality


November 16

Guest speaker: Leslie Fields, Sierra Club

- Lemert, Ch. 11: Global Things on a Fragile Planet

SOCIAL CHANGE

November 18: Technology and Social Change


November 20: Online Activism

November 23: Intersectionality and Intra-Movement Politics  
*Guest speaker: Dominique Hazzard*


CASE STUDY

November 25: no class
- Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*

Nov. 27: Thanksgiving Holiday, no class
- Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*

November 30
- Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*

December 2  
*Due: Sociological biography essay*  
- Lemert, Ch. 12: Living Against the Conclusion

Wednesday, December 9: 2-4 pm (Finals Period): *Exam 2*