

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)

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

Grading

	Due date	% of course grade
Pop Quizzes	Announced at random in class	25%
Exam 1	October 16 (in class exam)	25%
Exam 2	Dec. 11 (in class exam)	25%
Sociological Biography Essay	Dec. 2 (due via Blackboard before class)	25%

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://undergraduatestudies.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://undergraduatestudies.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

- Mills, C. Wright. 2000. "The Promise." Pp. 1-11 in *The Sociological Imagination*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.

Aug. 28: Applying the sociological imagination

- Romero, Mary. 2002. "Intersection of Biography and History: My Intellectual Journey." Pp. 31-46 in *Maid in the U.S.A.* New York: Routledge.

THE CHALLENGE OF CRITICAL THINKING

August 31: Authority and Thinking for Yourself

- Kelman, Herbert C. and V. Lee Hamilton. 2015. "The My Lai Massacre: A Crime of Obedience?" New York: W. W. Norton and Company. Pp. 34-52 in *Readings for Sociology*, edited by G. Massey.

September 2: Is Objectivity Possible?

- Freedman, David H. 1992. "New Theory on How the Aggressive Egg Attracts Sperm." *Discover Magazine*, June 1. Retrieved August 23, 2015 (<http://discovermagazine.com/1992/jun/theaggressiveegg55>).

September 4: When Science Meets Money and Politics

- Shearer, Christine. 2011. "Blueprint for Denial." Pp. 13-33 in *Kivalina: A Climate Change Story*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.

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**

- Scott, Janny. 2005. "Life at the Top in America Isn't Just Better, It's Longer." Pp. 27-50 in *Class Matters* by Correspondents of *The New York Times*. New York: Times Books.

September 21: Class and Work

- Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2012. "Nickel and Dimed: On Not Getting By in America." Pp. 278 to 291 in *Mapping the Social Landscape: Readings in Sociology*, edited by S. J. Ferguson. New York: McGraw Hill.

September 23: Class and Power

- Domhoff, G. William. 2010. "Class and Power in America." Pp. 1-23 in *Who Rules America? Challenges to Corporate and Class Dominance*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

GENDER & SEXUALITY**September 25: Social Construction of Gender**

- Lorber, Judith. 1994. "Night to His Day: The Social Construction of Gender." Pp. 13-36 in *Paradoxes of Gender*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

September 28: Masculinity

Guest speaker: Shaneda Destine

- Kimmel, Michael S. 2000. "Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity." Pp. 213-219 in *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice: An Anthology on Racism, Antisemitism, Sexism, Heterosexism, Ableism, and Classism*, edited by Maurianne Adams, Warren J. Blumenfeld, Rosie Castaneda, Heather W. Hackman, Madeline L. Peters, Ximena Zuniga. New York, NY: Routledge.

September 30: Case Study - Caitlyn Jenner

- Burkett, Elinor. 2015. "What Makes a Woman?" *The New York Times*, June 6. Retrieved Aug. 23, 2015 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/07/opinion/sunday/what-makes-a-woman.html>).

- Allen, Samantha. 2015. "Caitlyn Jenner is Pissing Off Feminists and Bigots: Good for Her." *The Daily Beast*, June 9. Retrieved Aug. 23 (<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

- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 2015. "The Theory of Racial Formation." Pp. 105-136 in *Racial Formation In the United States*. New York: Routledge.

October 5: Color Blind Racism

- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2014. "The (Color-Blind) Emperor has no Clothes: Exposing the Whiteness of Color Blindness." Pp. 301-315 in *Racism without Racists: Color blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in America*. Oxford, UK: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

October 7: Politics of the social construction of race

- HoSang, Daniel Martinez. 2010. "'Dare We Forget the Lessons of History?'" Ward Connerly's Racial Privacy Initiative, 2001-2003." Pp. 243-263 in *Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

October 9: Black Bodies at Risk

- Martinot, Steve. 2014. "On the Epidemic of Police Killings." *Social Justice* 39(4):52-75.

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

October 14: Case Study: Rachel Dolezal

- Harris, Tamara Winfrey. 2015. "Black Like Who? Rachel Dolezal's Harmful Masquerade." *The New York Times*, June 16. Retrieved Aug. 23, 2015 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/16/opinion/rachel-dolezals-harmful-masquerade.html>)
- Hobbs, Allyson. 2015. "Rachel Dolezal's Unintended Gift to America." *The New York Times*, June 17. Retrieved Aug. 23, 2015 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/17/opinion/rachel-dolezals-unintended-gift-to-america.html>)

October 16

In Class - Exam 1

CRIME AND CRIMINALIZATION

October 19: Class and Criminalization

- Chambliss, William J. 2015. "The Saints and the Roughnecks." Pp. 241-254 in *Readings for Sociology*, edited by G. Massey.

October 21: Prisons and the New Caste System

- Alexander, Michelle. 2011. "Introduction." Pp. 1-19 in *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press.

October 23: Incarceration and Families

Guest Speaker: Dr. Muhammad, Howard University

- Readings TBA

HEALTH

October 26: History and Health

- Norgaard, Kari Marie. 2011. "A Continuing Legacy: Institutional Racism, Hunger, and Nutritional justice on the Klamath." Pp. 23-46 in *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class and Sustainability*, edited by A. H. Alkon and J. Agyeman.

October 28: Individualism and Healthy Behaviors

- Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2009. "Smile or Die: The Bright Side of Cancer." Pp. 15-44 in *Bright Sided: How the Relentless Promotion of Positive Thinking Has Undermined America*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

October 30: Environmental Health

- Perkins, Tracy, ed. 2015. *In Her Own Words: Remembering Teresa De Anda, Pesticides Activist, 1959-2014*. Retrieved Aug. 23, 2015 (<http://www.rememberingteresa.org>)

COLONIALSIM, GLOBALIZATION & IMMIGRATION

November 2: Colonialism

Election day - don't forget to vote!

- Hall, Stuart. 1996. "The West-and-the-Rest: Discourse and Power." Pp. 184-227 in *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies* edited by Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert and Kenneth Thompson. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

November 4: Immigration and Globalization

- Holmes, Seth. 2013. "Introduction. Pp. 1-29 in *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

November 6: Immigrant Rights

Last day to withdraw from the course/university

- Bloemraad, Irene, Kim Voss and Taeku Lee. 2011. "The Protests of 2006: What They Were, How Do We Understand Them, Where do We Go?" Pp. 3-43 in *Rallying For Immigrant Rights: The Fight for Inclusion in 21st Century America*, edited by K. Voss and I. Bloemraad. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

November 9: Climate Change

- McKibben, Bill. 2012. "Global Warming's Terrifying New Math." *Rolling Stone*, July 19. Retrieved Aug. 23, 2015 (<http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-20120719>)

November 11: Veteran's Day, no classes

November 13: Environmental Inequality

- Patterson, Jacqui. 2010. "Climate Change is a Civil Rights Issue." *The Root*, April 23. Retrieved Aug. 23, 2015 (http://www.theroot.com/articles/culture/2010/04/climate_change_is_a_civil_rights_issue_2.html)
- Perkins, Tracy and Julie Sze. 2011. "Images from the Central Valley." *Boom: A Journal of California* 1(1):70-80. Retrieved on March 30, 2015 (<http://www.boomcalifornia.com/2011/03/images-from-the-central-valley/>)

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

- Packer, G. 2013. Change the World: Silicon Valley transfers its slogans—and its money—to the realm of politics. *The New Yorker*. May 27.

November 20: Online Activism

- White, Micah. 2010. "Clicktivism is Ruining Leftist Activism." *The Guardian*, Aug. 12. Retrieved Nov. 17, 2015 (<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/aug/12/clicktivism-ruining-leftist-activism>)
- Williams, Stereo. 2015. "The Power of Black Twitter." *The Daily Beast*, July 6. Retrieved Nov. 17, 2015 (<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/07/06/the-power-of-black-twitter.html>)

November 23: Intersectionality and Intra-Movement Politics

Guest speaker: Dominique Hazzard

- Braswell, Kristin. 2014. "Not all the Black Freedom Fighters are Men: An interview with Black Women on the Front Line in Ferguson." *The Feminist Wire*, Oct. 3. Retrieved Nov. 17, 2015 (<http://www.thefeministwire.com/2014/10/fergusonfridays-black-freedom-fighters-men-interview-black-women-front-line-ferguson/>)
- More, Darnell L. 2014. "Black Freedom Fighters in Ferguson: Some of us Are Queer." *The Feminist Wire*, Oct. 17. Retrieved Nov. 17, 2015 (<http://www.thefeministwire.com/2014/10/some-of-us-are-queer/>)

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