Introduction to Sociology

Spring, 2016
Instructor: Dr. Tracy Perkins
tracy.perkins@howard.edu (for reference only, please contact me through Blackboard for anything related to class)

Class: Tuesday/Thursday: 9:40-11
Douglas Hall 116

Office hours: Tuesdays: 11:30 - 2:30
Douglas Hall, room 210C

Final Exam: Saturday, April 30, 6pm-9pm

“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 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 text will be available for purchase at the Howard Barnes and Noble, and available for two-hour checkout from the reserves collection available at the lending desk at Founder’s Library. All other texts will be available on the course Blackboard site.
• 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:
• Come to class prepared by having done all the assigned reading and taking notes on it.
• Bring your readings (hard-copies are preferable) and notes to class every day, you will sometimes need them for 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>
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<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>
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Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>% of course grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
<td>Jan. 28</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz 2</td>
<td>Feb. 18</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz 3</td>
<td>March 10</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz 5</td>
<td>April 21</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam (cumulative)</td>
<td>April 30, 6-9pm</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attendance 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.
- Attendance will not be taken in this class. I expect you to attend class regularly, but do not need to know your reasons for any missed days. If you are absent from classes, you are still responsible for the work missed and the announcements made.
- You may not make up missed quizzes for any reason. However, as I understand students sometimes miss classes for reasons outside of their control (i.e. illness, death in the family), I will drop your lowest score from the five class quizzes.
- The final exam is scheduled on Saturday, April 30th, from 6pm-9pm. If you cannot attend this exam, you should not take this course.

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 Blackboard to send periodic class announcements via e-mail. You may set your Blackboard account to whatever e-mail account you use most frequently. Plan on checking this account 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
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

January 12: Introduction

January 14: The Sociological Imagination

January 19: How to Think Sociologically

THE CHALLENGE OF CRITICAL THINKING

January 21: Authority and Thinking for Yourself

January 26: Is Objectivity Possible?

January 28: When Science Meets Money and Politics
Quiz #1

SOCIAL STRUCTURES: CLASS

February 2: Class and Health
February 4: Class and Work
  • Play the game “Spent” at http://playspent.org/html/

February 9: Class and Power

SOCIAL STRUCTURES: GENDER & SEXUALITY

February 11: Social Construction of Gender

February 16: Masculinity
  Guest speaker: Shaneda Destine, Howard University

February 18: Case Study - Caitlyn Jenner
  Quiz #2

SOCIAL STRUCTURES: RACE

February 23: Racial Formation
February 25: Color Blind Racism
Guest speaker: Dr. Brandi Summers, Virginia Commonwealth University


March 1: Case Study: Rachel Dolezal


COLONIALISM, GLOBALIZATION & IMMIGRATION

March 3: Colonialism


March 8: Immigration and Globalization


CRIME AND CRIMINALIZATION

March 10: Class and Criminalization

Quiz #3


March 15 and 17: No classes (Spring Break)

March 22: Race and Criminalization

Guest Speaker: Dr. Bahiyyah Muhammad, Howard University

HEALTH, SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

**March 24: Individualism and Healthy Behaviors**


**March 29: Environmental Inequality**


• Look at www.voicesfromthevalley.org

**March 31: No class (Dr. Perkins attending the annual meeting of the American Association of Geographers)**

**April 5: Climate Change**

*Quiz #4*


SOCIAL CHANGE

**April 7: Technology and Social Change**


**April 12: Online Activism**


April 14: Intersectionality and Intra-Movement Politics

CASE STUDY

April 19:
• Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*, chapters 1-3

April 21:
*Quiz #5*
• Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*, chapters 5-6

Final Exam: Saturday, April 30, 6pm-9pm