

Introduction to Sociology

Soci 001, Spring, 2017

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Office hours: Tuesdays: 12:45-2 and 3:45-5:30
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“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 Department of Sociology and Criminology: Social Inequality, Health, Criminology, Urban Society, 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, 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	March 2 (in class exam)	20%
Field Trip to NMAAHC	March 4, 9:45 am - 1 pm	5%
Exam 2	April 27 (in class exam, cumulative)	25%
Sociological Biography	May 4th (due via Blackboard by 11:59 pm)	25%

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 class quizzes.

Communications

- We 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.
- The less time we 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 us 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.
- If you have questions that are not answered in class, on Blackboard, or on the syllabus, please e-mail the class TA Jesse Card. He is responsible for grading all of your work and responding to your questions.

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 10: Introduction

January 12: The Sociological Imagination

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

January 17: How to Think Sociologically

- Buechler, Stephen. 2008. "How to Think Sociologically." Pp. 3-15 in *Critical Sociology*. London: Routledge.

THE CHALLENGE OF CRITICAL THINKING

January 19: 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.

January 24: 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>).

January 26: 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.

SOCIAL STRUCTURES: CLASS

January 31: 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.

February 2: 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.
- Play the game "Spent" at <http://playspent.org/html/>

February 7: 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.

SOCIAL STRUCTURES: GENDER & SEXUALITY

February 9: 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.

February 14: Gender and Intersectionality

- Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1991. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity, and Violence Against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43:1241-1299.

February 16: Gender and Sexuality

Guest speaker: Jamelle Dooley, Howard University PhD Student, Department of Sociology and Criminology

- 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.

SOCIAL STRUCTURES: RACE

February 21: Racial Formation

- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 2015. "The Theory of Racial Formation." Pp. 105-136 in *Racial Formation in the United States*. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge.

February 23: 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.

February 28:

- 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.

March 2: Classes cancelled for Charter Day

March 4: Field trip to the National Museum of African American History and Culture, 9:45am – 1pm

March 7: Exam 1

COLONIALSIM, GLOBALIZATION & IMMIGRATION

March 9: Colonialism

- 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.

March 14 and 16: No classes (Spring Break)

March 21: 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

CRIME AND CRIMINALIZATION

March 23: Class and Criminalization

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

March 28: Race and Criminalization

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

HEALTH, SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

March 30: Environmental Inequality

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

April 4: Gender, 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.

April 6: History, culture, 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.

SOCIAL CHANGE

April 11: Progress

- Anderson, Carol. 2016. *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.
 - Prologue: Kindling
 - Ch. 4: Rolling Back Civil Rights

April 13: Black Lives Matter

- Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. 2016. "Black Lives Matter: A Movement, Not a Moment." Pp. 153-190 in *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.

April 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.

CASE STUDY

April 20:

- Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*, chapter 1 (pgs. 5-71)

April 25:

- Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*, chapters 2-3 (pgs. 71-152)

April 27: Exam 2

May 4: Sociological Biography due on Blackboard, 11:59