“Sociology is… like a passion. The sociological perspective is more like a demon that possesses one, that drives one compellingly, again and again, to the questions that are its own. An introduction to sociology is, therefore, an invitation to a very special kind of passion.”
- Peter Berger

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology is a vast and unruly intellectual discipline, spanning the gap between the sciences and the humanities while often (though not always) involving itself in social policy debates, social reform, and political activism. Sociologists study a startling variety of topics utilizing a diverse array of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Still, amidst all this diversity, sociology is centered on a set of core historical theorists (Marx/Weber/Durkheim) and research topics (race/class/gender inequality) that lie at the heart of the discipline. We will explore these theoretical and empirical foundations of sociology by reading and discussing influential texts and select topics while relating them to our own experiences and understandings of the social worlds in which we live. This course thus introduces students to the study of society and what C. Wright Mills called the “sociological imagination”—a way of viewing the world, oneself, and others that reveals how larger socio-historical forces and relations shape our individual and collective lives. In so doing, this course also focuses on developing and honing students’ reading, writing, critical thinking, and group discussion skills.

COURSE GOALS

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology has specified six student learning outcomes (SLOs) that we want students to acquire. In this course, we will focus on the following three:

- Applying sociological theory to analyze socio-cultural phenomena
- Articulating the complexity of contemporary socio-cultural phenomena in their many dimensions
- Drawing upon your understanding of historical and contemporary socio-cultural phenomena to engage the world

REQUIRED TEXTS

There is one required text for this course:


Additional required readings—other than your small group’s assigned book— will be posted on Moodle.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

MEET & GREET: In order for us to get to know each other, you will be required to meet briefly with me within the first two weeks of class. You will sign up for an appointment with me on Moodle. If you absolutely cannot make any of the times listed, it is your responsibility to email me so that we can arrange an alternatively scheduled appointment. You do not need to prepare in any way for this meeting; it simply gives us a chance to become acquainted with each other. This informal “meet and greet” session is worth 1% of your final grade.

READINGS: You are expected to complete all assigned readings before the class for which they are scheduled. You are also expected to bring the assigned reading materials with you to class each day. One of the goals of this course is to sharpen our active reading skills. Some of the readings may be difficult to comprehend. You will likely do not well in the course if you read only to “finish” each assignment. Instead, I challenge you to read with the purpose of “understanding” each document. This may mean that you will read an assigned text, or parts of it, multiple times. As you read, you may find it useful to consider the following questions: (a) What is the author trying to explain? (b) What is her/his/their main argument? (c) What are the strengths and weaknesses of this argument? (d) What points along the way does the author make? (e) What evidence does the author use in his/her/their explanation? (f) Why is this text important? (g) How does this text relate to others you’ve read for this course? How does it relate to material from other courses you’ve taken? (h) How do the abstract ideas the author is illustrating apply to the current social world?

ENGAGEMENT: The success of this course depends, in large part, on YOU! Each student brings unique experiences and perspectives to class and classes are made better when such experiences and perspectives are shared. Thus, I expect you to attend all class sessions. I also expect you to arrive on time, and not leave early. Furthermore, you are expected to come to class prepared to share your thoughts, ask questions, generate ideas, and discuss the assigned readings. If you absolutely must miss a class be sure to contact one of your classmates to get caught up on what you missed. If you miss more than three class sessions during the term, you will forfeit your engagement grade in its entirety. In short, your personal success in this course demands your attendance and engaged participation. The engagement grade in this course reflects a range of productive activity including: participating in discussion, asking questions, contributing to small-group work, and sharing materials relevant to course topics. Your engagement is worth 10% of your final grade.

SHORT PAPERS/EXERCISES: There are three short papers/exercises due in this course. Every student will complete the sociological imagination exercise which is worth 6% of your final grade. After that, students may choose which other two papers/exercises they want to complete and submit. Each of these remaining options is worth 15% of your final grade. No extra credit will be given for the completion of additional papers/exercises beyond the required three. Papers will vary in length but will be between two and five pages long (typed, double-spaced, 11- or 12-point font, 1-inch margins). All short papers/exercises will be submitted via Moodle in PDF format. Any paper turned in after 5:00pm on the designated date will be considered late. A late paper/exercise will be reduced by a full letter grade (i.e., A- to B-) for each day it is late. You will receive a detailed project description of each short paper/exercise assignment closer to its respective deadline, but here is a brief description of each:

- **Sociological Imagination Exercise**
  You will apply Mills’s notion of the “sociological imagination.” You will create a timeline and then write a detailed description of the connections between the macro and the micro as it applies to your own life. Everyone must complete this exercise which is worth 6% of your final grade.

- **Norm Breaching Exercise**
  You will purposely violate a social norm and write a detailed report about the experience and your observations. Your objective in conducting this research is to determine the extent to which social norms influence human behavior. Thus, you will write about the reactions not only of others but also yourself. This is one of the short paper/exercise options you may choose. It is worth 15% of your final grade.

- **Babes in Toyland Exercise**
  You will visit a toy store (e.g., Toys R Us) or a toy section in a larger store (e.g., Target) and analyze and explain what the store itself as well as one specific toy of your choosing can tell us about gender and gender socialization. This is one of the short paper/exercise options you may choose. It is worth 15% of your final grade.
- News Critique Exercise
  You will first find a feature news article in the popular media that attempts to explain a social problem or social trend. You will then draw on what you have learned in this course to critique the article from a sociological perspective. This is one of the short paper/exercise options you may choose. It is worth 15% of your final grade.

GROUP BOOK REVIEW PRESENTATION: One of the drawbacks of an introductory course is that because there is so much material that can potentially be covered, it can sometimes feel as though depth has been sacrificed for the sake of breadth. This group project thus allows you to work with a small group of your peers (i.e., roughly 4-6 students depending upon the ultimate total number of students in the course) to explore a sociological topic in more depth via focusing on a book of sociological scholarship. I will assign each student to a group and to one of the following books:

- Tressie McMillan Cottom. 2019. *Thick*
- Matthew Desmond. 2016. *Evicted*
- Robin DiAngelo. 2018. *White Fragility*
- Angela J. Hattery and Earl Smith. 2018. *Policing Black Bodies*
- Shamus Rahman Khan. 2012. *Privilege*
- Faranak Miraftab. 2016. *Global Heartland*

Though I will ask for and take your book preferences into account, I cannot promise that your preferences will be met. Your group’s task is to read and discuss your book in a scholarly, book club-like fashion, and ultimately present the book and your review of it to the rest of your classmates. As a group you will need to decide how you will tackle reading and discussing the book and preparing your presentation. Presentations will be given in class during weeks 9 and 10. In thinking about your presentation, remember that a book review is not a book report. The purpose of your group presentation is to critically engage the material presented by the author. Thus, although you will indeed need to provide at least some summary of the content of the book, you want to go well beyond this by also providing an in-depth analysis of the work. Your presentation goal, then, is to tell your readers how successful the book is; you will need to articulate your critical engagement with the reading as you “unpack” the ideas and arguments you find most stimulating. Peer evaluation by classmates and group-mates will be reflected in your overall presentation grade. [You will receive more detailed information about this assignment as the course progresses.] Your group book review presentation grade is worth 15% of your final grade.

EXAMS: There will be two exams in this course: a midterm and a final. Exams serve to help you discover any confusion you may have with course material. They also serve to indicate to me how much time and effort you have devoted to your coursework. In short, exams allow you to show off all of your hard work! These exams will consist of short answer and/or essay questions. The midterm exam will take place during our class time on Friday, October 18th. The final exam, which is quasi-cumulative, will take place during our assigned final exam time, which is 8:30 to 11:00am on Saturday, November 23rd. Each exam is worth 19% of your final grade.

Please note: Missed in-class exams will result in a zero for that exam. Make-up exams will not be given, except in what I determine to be an extreme, documented circumstance. (Sleeping through an alarm or failing to set an alarm is not an extreme circumstance.) If you cannot make an in-class exam, you must contact me prior to the exam. Failure to do so will mean that you will not be able to take a make-up exam. Should an emergency come up the day of an in-class exam, you must e-mail me or call and leave a message with Tammi Shintre at 507.222.4108 before the exam period. No early exams will be given! Please be sure to plan your travel schedule accordingly.
COURSE GRADING

Meet & Greet 1% [Complete during first 2 weeks]
Sociological Imagination Exercise 6% [Due Tuesday, 9/24- 4:59pm]
Midterm Exam (in class) 19% [In Class—Friday, 10/18]
Short Paper/Exercise Option #1 15% [Deadline based on project choice]
Short Paper/Exercise Option #2 15% [Deadline based on project choice]
Group Book Review Presentation 15% [In Class—Weeks 9 & 10]
Final Exam 19% [Saturday, 11/23, 8:30-11:00am]
Engagement 10% [Ongoing]

WHAT THE GRADES MEAN

A= Work that goes beyond the requirements of the assignment by adding new insight, creativity, and/or particularly thoughtful analysis. Demonstrates a comprehensive command of the course material, an exceptional ability to apply concepts to the real world, and a superior ability to organize and express ideas.

B= Work that adequately meets the requirements of the assignment. Demonstrates a solid command of the course material, an ability to apply concepts to the real world with only minor problems, and good organization and expression of ideas.

C= Work that partially meets the requirements of the assignment. Demonstrates acceptable command of the course material, a basic ability to apply concepts to the real world with some gaps and problems, and moderate skill in the organization and expression of ideas.

D= Work that marginally meets the requirements of the assignment. Demonstrates little command of the course material, a minimal attempt to apply concepts to the real world, and limited ability to organize and express ideas.

F= Work that does not meet the requirements of the assignment. Demonstrates no command of the course material, unable to appropriately or consistently apply concepts to the real world, and insufficiently organizes and expresses ideas.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

If you have not already done so, please familiarize yourself with the Carleton College Academic Integrity Policy: http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/. In line with Carleton’s policy, it is assumed that a student is the author of all coursework submitted by that student. Please refer to Carleton’s full policy for additional information and/or see me if you have questions.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Services office (Henry House, 107 Union Street) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, vision, hearing, mobility, or speech impairments), please contact disability@carleton.edu or call Jan Foley, Student Accessibility Specialist (507.222.4464) or Chris Dallager, Director of Disability Services (507.222.5250) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations. Please note I will make reasonable accommodations only after I have received official notification.
TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: The Assistive Technologies program brings together academic and technological resources to complement student classroom and computing needs, particularly in support of students with physical or learning disabilities. Accessibility features include text-to-speech (Kurzweil), speech-to-text (Dragon) software, and audio recording Smartpens. If you would like to know more, contact aztechs@carleton.edu or visit go.carleton.edu/aztech.

COURSE MATERIALS ASSISTANCE: I recognize the potential financial burden of course materials and travel costs. If you are in need of assistance to cover course expenses, please speak with me.

LIBRARY ASSISTANCE: Ask a librarian for help with your research in this class. You can drop by the library’s Research/IT desk to ask any question you have, at any point in your process, or chat with a librarian online 24/7. Librarians help students find and evaluate articles, books, websites, statistics, data, government documents, and more. For more information on hours and librarians, visit the Gould Library website at go.carleton.edu/library.

WRITING ASSISTANCE: The Writing Center, located in 420 4th Libe, has peer writing consultants who can work with you during any stage of the writing process (brainstorming to final proofreading). Hours and more information can be found on the writing center website (https://apps.carleton.edu/writingcenter/). You can reserve specific times for conferences in 420 4th Libe by using their online appointment system. Walk-ins are welcome, too, though writers with appointments have priority.

WRITING ASSISTANCE FOR STUDENTS WHOSE FIRST LANGUAGE IS NOT ENGLISH: If you are a second language writer and believe you might benefit from working individually with a writing consultant on a regular basis this term, email Renata Fitzpatrick, Multilingual Writing Coordinator, call her at 507.222.5998, or stop by her office in 420D 4th Libe. She can arrange once- or twice-a-week meetings between you and a specific writing consultant throughout the term.

PUBLIC SPEAKING ASSISTANCE: Speech coaching is a student-staffed resource designed to assist you with class presentations, comps talks, and other speech-related events. Your coach can assist you with speech & communication skills including clarity, organization, articulation, projection, body language, eye contact, and effective use of aids (e.g., notes, PowerPoint, Keynote, etc.). Depending on your goals, your coach can also work with you on the content of the presentation: organization, voice, clarity, and, ultimately, persuasive impact. For more information, visit https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/asc/speakeasy/.

TIME MANAGEMENT, TEST PREPARATION, & STUDY SKILLS ASSISTANCE: Oscar Alvarez, Academic Skills Coach, is eager to help you develop learning strategies that work in the Carleton context. His goals are to heighten your awareness of your personal strengths and to offer different ways you can approach your academic work so you’re more efficient and effective. For details and resources, see https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/asc/academicskillsconsulting/. If you prefer to learn these skills and strategies on your own, visit the “Helpful DIY Resources” page at https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/asc/academicskillsconsulting/usefulresources/.

HEALTH & WELLNESS ASSISTANCE: Carleton College urges you to make yourself—your own health and well-being—your priority throughout this ten-week term and your career here. It is important to recognize stressors you may be facing, which can be personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, and/or academic. Sleep, exercise, and connecting with others can be strategies to help you flourish at Carleton. If you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, feel free to contact me and/or pursue other resources, such Student Health and Counseling (https://apps.carleton.edu/studenthealth/) or the Office of Health Promotion (https://apps.carleton.edu/healthpromotion/).

COURSE POLICIES

IN-CLASS ETIQUETTE: I would like us all to work together to create an inclusive and respectful classroom. I believe each student brings unique experiences and perspectives to class and classes are made better when such experiences and perspectives are shared. I believe our individual differences enrich and enhance our understanding of one another and of the world around us. I will strive to make this class one that welcomes diversity; I trust you will join me in welcoming the perspectives of people of all nationalities, regions, ethnicities, races, genders, sexes, sexual orientations, religions, ages, abilities, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES: Except when I have expressly asked you to use them and/or when we are doing a close reading of a specific text in class, I prefer that all cell phones, laptops, e-readers, pagers, mp3 players, and all other electronic devices are turned off and put away. Browsing the Internet, using social media, texting, and/or answering your phone during class is disrespectful and disruptive. Please refrain from inappropriate use of electronics. If I have to remind you more than once, I may ask you to leave class for the day. Repeated offenses will result in a full letter grade drop for your final grade. Laptops are also distracting. Educational research consistently points to negative associations between student learning and laptop use (Fried 2008, Hembrooke & Gay 2003). If you believe you need to use a laptop (or some other electronic device) during class, please arrange to meet with me privately during the first two weeks of class to discuss this policy.

LATE WORK: Get your assignments completed and submitted on time. In general, I do not accept late work and I do not give makeup exams.

INCOMPLETES: In accordance with college policies, I typically will not grant an incomplete. Students who feel they have faced extreme hardship and are therefore requesting an incomplete must submit that request in writing.

OFFICE HOURS: I am happy to meet with you! If you cannot make my scheduled office hours, please send me an e-mail to schedule an appointment (ebowman@carleton.edu). I expect your written communication to be professional. Do not expect an immediate response to email messages as I typically check email only once or twice each day.

FERPA

You should be aware of your rights regarding the privacy of your educational records. The provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 prohibit the college from releasing grades or other information about academic standing to parents unless the student has released such information in writing. In line with FERPA restrictions, I cannot publicly post grades by student name, student identification number, or social security number without first receiving your written permission. In general I will not discuss how students are doing in class with parents or guardians.

MANDATORY REPORTING

One of my responsibilities as a faculty member at Carleton College is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. It is my goal to create a classroom environment and working relationship in which you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, written work, and one-on-one meetings. It is also my goal to keep information you share with me private to the greatest extent possible. However, as an employee of the college I am a mandatory reporter, meaning that I cannot keep all information confidential. I am required to report information regarding sexual assault or sexual misconduct. I am also required to report students who may pose a danger to themselves or others. If you want to speak confidentially about these matters, you should speak with a counselor at Student Health and Counseling at 507.222.4080 or with one of the Chaplains at 507.222.4003.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Below is the tentative course schedule. I reserve the right to alter it depending on the pace of the class. Unless instructed otherwise, you are expected to have read the assigned readings by the beginning of class on the date listed. Readings other than those from the Passmore book will be posted on Moodle.

Rather than providing a complete reading schedule from the beginning, I have provided specific information about readings for the first two weeks of class. This allows us some flexibility in the course so as to be able to respond to the pace this particular class takes. However, please note that I do not intend to change the major assignment deadlines.
WEEK 1
M (09.16)  **Introductions**
Sign up for Meet & Greet Appointment on Moodle!
Read the Syllabus!

W (09.18)  **Sociology and the Sociological Imagination**
Mills, excerpts from *The Sociological Imagination*
Gaines, “Teenage Wasteland”

F (09.20)  **An Invitation to Sociology**
Berger, excerpts from *Invitation to Sociology*
Miner, “Body Ritual of the Nacirema”

WEEK 2
M (09.23)  **Sociological Theory 101: Marx (and Engels)**
Engels, “Working-Class Manchester”
Marx & Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party”
Drew, “Manifestadoon” (YouTube Video)
Marx, “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law”

Tu (09.24)  **SOCIIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION EXERCISE DUE! Upload PDF to Moodle by 4:59pm!**

W (09.25)  **Sociological Theory 101: Weber**
Weber, excerpts from *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

F (09.27)  **Sociological Theory 101: Weber**
Weber, “Bureaucracy and Legitimate Authority”
Ritzer, excerpts from *The McDonaldization of Society*

WEEK 5
Tu (10.15)  **SP/E OPTION: NORM BREACHING EXERCISE DUE! Upload PDF to Moodle by 4:59pm!**

F (10.18)  **MIDTERM EXAM (In-Class)**

WEEK 6
Th (10.24)  **SP/E OPTION: BABES IN TOYLAND EXERCISE DUE! Upload PDF to Moodle by 4:59pm!**

WEEK 9
Th (11.07)  **SP/E OPTION: NEWS CRITIQUE EXERCISE DUE! Upload PDF to Moodle by 4:59pm!**

WEEK 10
Sa (11.23)  **FINAL EXAM (In-Class) 8:30-11:00am**