

SOAN 111: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

Spring 2017

Carleton College

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Professor Wes Markofski

Class: MW 9:50-11:00am, F 9:40-10:40am (2a), Leighton 426

Office Hours: MW 3:00-4:15pm, F 3:30-4:30pm, Thurs 10-12pm or by appt.

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Sociology is a vast and unruly intellectual discipline, spanning the gap between the sciences and 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 in the study of social inequality while relating them to our own experiences and understanding of the social worlds we live in. In so doing, this course 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 social-historical forces and relations shape our individual and collective lives.

Student Learning Outcomes

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology has specified six student learning outcomes we want students to acquire before graduating. The relevant outcomes for this course are:

- Articulating the complexity of contemporary socio-cultural phenomenon in their many dimensions (e.g., temporal, structural, spatial, and symbolic).
- Applying sociological theory to analyze socio-cultural phenomena.
- Drawing upon your understanding of historical and contemporary socio-cultural phenomena to engage the world.

Course Materials

There are four required books for the course, which are available at the Carleton bookstore. Other required readings will be made available on the Moodle course website.

- Khan, Shamus Rahman. 2011. *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kathryn J. Edin and H. Luke Shaefer. 2015. *\$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Lareau, Annette. 2011. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life, 2nd Edition*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kane, Emily W. 2012. *The Gender Trap: Parents and the Pitfalls of Raising Boys and Girls*. New York: New York University Press.

Course Requirements

Your final grade for the course will be calculated as follows:

Participation 10%	[Due each class session]
Reading Questions 10%	[Due approximately once per week]
Assignment 1: Sociological Biography I 8%	[Due Monday, 4/3]
Assignment 2a: Rationalization Report 6%	[Due Monday, 4/10]
Assignment 2b: Rationalization Presentation 6%	[Due Monday, 4/10]
Midterm Exam 25%	[Wednesday, 5/3]
Assignment 3: Racial Residential Segregation 15%	[Due Friday, 5/12]
Assignment 4: Sociological Biography II 20%	[Due Wednesday, 5/31]

A = 100-93; A- = <93-90; B+ = <90-87; B = <87-83; B- = <83-80; C+ = <80-77; C = <77-73; C- = <73-70; D+ = <70-67; D = <67-63; D- = <63-60; F = <60

Policy on Late Work: Late work will be penalized one grade increment (e.g., A to A-, A- to B+) per day in the absence of clear and demonstrable extenuating circumstances (e.g., extended illness, family emergency, letter from dean's office, etc.).

Readings: To do well in this course, it is imperative that you commit to active, focused reading prior to each class meeting in order to complete the readings and reading questions and be prepared for class discussions.

Some questions to keep in mind while reading: What is the main argument of the section/text? Key concepts and definitions? What methods & evidence are used to support the authors' arguments? Make a note of concepts/arguments you find difficult to understand (to bring up in class). Make a note of things you agree/disagree with, or find plausible/implausible, exciting/problematic, etc. (to bring up in class discussions).

Reading Questions: In order to facilitate active, critical engagement with the readings, and to stimulate discussion & debate with one another (through which much of our learning will occur), each student is required to upload via Moodle at least two reading questions prior to class meeting on the day your group is assigned to do so. The class is divided into 3 groups (A, B, C); each group is

responsible for submitting reading questions approximately once per week on a rotating basis beginning Friday, March 31 as marked on the syllabus reading schedule below:

- (1) One (or more) question, comment, or critique about a main idea in the text. (*Examples: I'm surprised that social class plays such a large role in parenting styles and family life in America! Or What does Marx mean by the "dictatorship of the proletariat"? Or I think the idea that gender is socially constructed is nonsense; here's why I'm skeptical ...*)
- (2) One (or more) comment or question comparing, contrasting, or otherwise relating something from the readings to a prior reading, personal experience, or contemporary issue. (*Examples: I can't believe how much Lareau's description of "concerted cultivation" resonates with my own experiences! Or The similarities between Lareau and Khan's work on the role of schooling in the reproduction of class inequality are remarkable. Or I have a hard time believing any Americans actually live on less than \$2.00 a day; here's why I'm skeptical...*)

Reading questions should be posted by 9pm the day before the class session in which they are due. Failure to upload reading questions by this time on your group's assigned day will incrementally lower your reading question grade (e.g., A to A-, A- to B+). Reading question submissions can range from a few sentences up to a single paragraph in length.

Participation: Your personal success in this course (as well as its collective success) depends on your active and sustained engagement throughout the entire term. I expect everyone to participate at a high level; however, I recognize we don't all have the same personalities or learning styles. While participation includes asking questions and contributing vigorously (yet respectfully) to class discussions and small group work, it also involves consistent presence and attentiveness to others throughout the term. Active participation also means refraining from non-course related use of electronic devices during class time. You may miss two class sessions without consequence; beyond that, each missed class will incrementally lower your participation grade.

Sociological Biography I Assignment: A 2-page paper, due Monday, Apr 3, analyzing a life event or experience from the perspective of the sociological imagination.

Rationalization Report and Presentation: A fieldwork exercise, due Monday, Apr 10, involving individual fieldwork observations and a group presentation exploring Weber's idea of rationalization.

Midterm Exam: The exam will cover material discussed up to and including the Friday, Apr 28 class session. Short-answer and essay questions will be used to assess your understanding of course material. The May 3 date is firm. Without formal documentation from a legitimate source (i.e., dean of students), no last-minute special accommodations will be provided for students who want to reschedule the test.

Residential Racial Segregation Assignment: A 6-page paper, due Friday, May 12, examining residential racial segregation in the United States and writing a paper about your findings.

Sociological Biography II Assignment: An 8-page paper, due Wednesday, May 31, analyzing your life through the lens of the sociological imagination.

Paper Formatting: All papers must be uploaded to Moodle in either a Microsoft Word or PDF file format and use APA, MLA, or ASA citation styles.

Important Note: If at any point in the term you become concerned about your grade, a particular assignment, classroom participation or classroom climate issues, falling behind, or anything else, *please don't wait to come visit me during office hours or otherwise contact me!* The sooner we identify potential problems and concerns, the more effectively we will be able to work together to address them.

Academic Integrity

In line with Carleton's policy on academic integrity, 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 or see me if you have questions. <http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/>

Academic Support

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Services office (Burton Hall 03) 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, sensory, or physical), please contact Chris Dallager, Director of Disability Services, by calling 507-222-5250 or sending an email to cdallager@carleton.edu to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

Technological Resources for Students with Disabilities: The Assistive Technology 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.

Library: 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. Librarians help students find and evaluate articles, books, websites, statistics, data, government documents, and more. For more information, visit the Gould Library website at go.carleton.edu/library.

The Writing Center: 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. You can reserve specific times for conferences in 420 4th Libe by using their online appointment system. Walk-ins are welcome, 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 x5998, 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.

Class Presentations and Public Speaking: 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: go.carleton.edu/speakeasy.

Time Management, Test-Preparation Strategies, and Study Skills: All Residential Life Area Directors are trained to work with you to improve your time management and academic skills. Their goals are to heighten your awareness of your personal strengths and skills and to offer different ways you can approach your academic work so you're more efficient and effective. Meetings are by appointment; you simply need to email one of them to arrange a visit. For details and resources: Academic Skills Coaching website.

Course Outline and Reading Schedule

* Please read the selections in order as they are listed on the syllabus, and be sure to bring the day's readings with you to class. Stop and start your reading at the obvious place (section beginning/end, first/last paragraph, etc.) unless otherwise noted.

INTRODUCTION

Mon 3/27 (Week 1)

Course Introduction & What is Sociology?

Wed 3/29 (All)

The Sociological Imagination (*Sociological Biography I Assignment distributed*)

- C. Wright Mills, "The Promise," pp. 3-11 in *The Sociological Imagination*

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Fri 3/31 (Group A)

Emile Durkheim

- *Emile Durkheim: Sociologist of Modernity*, pp. 1-8, 283-293, 31-49

Mon 4/3 (Week 2) (Group B)

***** *Sociological Biography I Due* *****

Karl Marx

- “Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels” and “Mode of Production”
- *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 681-682, 469-491, 431-438, 700-717

Wed 4/5 (Group C)

Max Weber (1) (*Rationalization Assignment distributed*)

- “Max Weber and Marianne Weber”
- *The Essential Weber*, pp. 1-3; 312-314 (stop at section 4), 329 (from section 2)-331 (stop at “Social relationship”); 13-15 (stop at “Reading 2”), 25-34; 17-18 (stop at “This is, however”), 55-59 (stop at “Within the religious ethic”), 68 (from “The differing and valued states”)-70 (stop at “The irrational elements.”)

Fri 4/7

Max Weber (2)

- *The Essential Weber*, pp. 171, 245-249
- George Ritzer, “McDonaldization and its Precursors.”

Mon 4/10 (Week 3)

***** *Rationalization Report & Presentations Due* *****

Max Weber (3)

POVERTY IN AMERICA

Wed 4/12 (Group A)

§2.00 A Day (1)

- Introduction, Chapters 1-2

Fri 4/14 (Group B)

§2.00 A Day (2)

- Chapters 3-4

Mon 4/17 (Week 4) (Group C)

§2.00 A Day (3)

- Chapter 5, Conclusion

GENDER IN AMERICA

Wed 4/19 (Group A)

The Gender Trap (1)

- Introduction and Methodological Appendix

Fri 4/21 (Group B)

*****NO CLASS*****

The Gender Trap (2)

- Chapters 1-2

Mon 4/24 (Week 5) (Group C)

The Gender Trap (3)

- Chapters 3-4

Wed 4/26 (Group A)

The Gender Trap (4)

- Chapters 5-6

Fri 4/28 (Group B)

The Gender Trap (5) (*Midterm Course Evaluations*)

- Conclusion

Mon 5/1 (Week 6)

Midterm Break

Wed 5/3

*****Midterm Exam*****

RACE & NEIGHBORHOOD SEGREGATION IN AMERICA

Fri 5/5 (Group C)

Racial Residential Segregation (*Racial Residential Segregation Assignment distributed*)

- Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid*, pp.17-59

- John Elingon and Robert Gebeloff, "Affluent and Black, and Still Trapped by Segregation," <http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/08/21/us/milwaukee-segregation-wealthy-black-families.html?mwrsm=Facebook&r=1&referer=https://m.facebook.com/>

Mon 5/8 (Week 7) (Group A)

Code of the Street

- Elijah Anderson, *Code of the Street*, Introduction
- Ross Matsueda et al., "Race and Neighborhood Codes of Violence."

CLASS, RACE, & FAMILY LIFE IN AMERICA

Wed 5/10 (Group B)

Unequal Childhoods (1)

- Chapters 1-2, Appendix A & B (skim Appendix C & D)

Fri 5/12 (Group C)

****** Racial Residential Assignment Due ******

Unequal Childhoods (2) (*Sociological Biography II Assignment distributed*)

- Chapters 3 & 5 (plus introduction to Part I)

Mon 5/15 (Week 8) (Group A)

Unequal Childhoods (3)

- Part II (Chapters 6-7 plus introduction to Part II)

Wed 5/17 (Group B)

Unequal Childhoods (4)

- Chapters 8, 10, 12 (plus introduction to Part III)

Fri 5/19 (All)

Social Class in America

- *Unequal Childhoods*, pp. 335-343
- Documentary Film, Christopher Dillon Quinn, "21 Up America." (*in class*)

PRIVILEGE IN AMERICA

Mon 5/22 (Week 9) (Group C)

Privilege (1)

- Introduction, Chapter 1

Wed 5/24 (Group A)

Privilege (2)

- Methodological and Theoretical Reflections, Chapter 2

Fri 5/26 (Group B)

Privilege (3)

- Chapters 3-4

Mon 5/29 (Week 10) (Group C)

Privilege (4)

- Chapter 5, Conclusion

CONCLUSION

Wed 5/31

****** Sociological Biography II Assignment Due 5:00pm ******

Conclusion (TBA) (*Final Course Evaluations*)