Sociology 110

Introduction to Sociology: Social Structure, Inequality, and Behavior

Spring 2016
MWF 11:00 – 11:50
King 323

Dr. Christie Parris
Email: christie.parris@oberlin.edu
Office: King 305A
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 2:30 – 4:00, or by appointment

SYLLABUS

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course will provide students with an overview of the sociological approach. Major theoretical concepts and methodologies will be examined and illustrated with a wide variety of classic as well as recent empirical studies. Some of the topics we'll look at include causes and consequences of social inequality (e.g., socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, gender, and sexuality), socialization, culture, and social definitions of deviant behavior.

COURSE GOALS

Through class discussions each week, students will learn how to express thoughts on complex problems in an articulate, respectful manner with fellow classmates. Students will also be able to analyze various topics through a sociological lens, and consider how sociological theory can be translated into everyday life. Throughout several writing projects, students will have the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained throughout the semester.

GENERAL INFORMATION

I expect regular class attendance. If you have more than three absences at the end of the semester, I reserve the right to lower your grade. Latecomers disrupt the class. Be on time. 3 late arrivals = 1 absence. Please talk to me beforehand if you anticipate missing a class. It is your responsibility to obtain notes from your classmates if you miss a class.

It is disruptive and unprofessional for a cell phone to go off in class. Turn them off (not on vibrate) before class starts. If your cell phone goes off in class, I reserve the right to lower your grade.
**Laptop policy:** Please ask permission if you prefer to take notes on your laptop. If I notice you navigating away from course material, I will ask that you put it away. I will also request that you send your notes to me via email so that I can verify that you are staying on task. Note: Research has found that students who take handwritten notes remember more of the material and possess a deeper understanding of the material than students who take notes via laptop. For additional information, see: [http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/](http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/)

I expect **frequent, active participation** from students. We will have class discussions about the readings every week, and therefore **I expect you to have completed the readings before we meet each class period.** Regular attendance and participation will work to your advantage and will be taken into account when determining final grades.

**Readings**

The readings we cover will certainly be cause for lively discussion regarding several sociological topics. I do not expect all of you to agree on these topics, and I will encourage you to talk through your varying viewpoints during our discussions. However, I will **not** tolerate discourteous behavior or language during class discussions. If at any point in the semester you become uncomfortable because of a comment made in class, please contact me as soon as possible.

Please complete the readings prior to class on the day they are assigned. I strongly encourage you to take notes as you read, and bring the readings and your notes to class each day. Not all readings are created equally. Some are more difficult than others. Days with more easily digestible material may require you to read up to 4 articles/chapters. As you approach sociological readings, I encourage you to ask yourself the following questions: What is the point of the article? What is the research question? What theories and methods do the author(s) rely upon? What are their findings? How does it relate to other things that we have read? Knowing the answers to each of these questions prior to class for each reading will bolster our class discussions of the material.

The required texts are available at the Oberlin Bookstore and Oberlin College Library Reserves. In addition to these texts, you will be reading numerous articles and individual book chapters. These are available through the class’s Blackboard site under the Readings tab. The Blackboard readings are denoted by an asterisk (*) below.

**Required Texts**


**Requirements**

**Written Assignments:** You will have three writing assignments throughout the semester. These assignments will involve either reflections about your own behavior or gathering some kind of information/data, and writing about the data you gather. I will hand out instructions for these assignments during the semester.

All written assignments are due at the beginning of class. You may submit them to me either via email (in a Word document) or a paper copy given to me. Late assignments will lose one letter grade per day that it is late.

**Exams:** You will have a midterm and a final exam. They are not cumulative. In order to perform well on the final exam, however, you must understand the concepts from the first half of the course. The exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

**Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>Percent of Final Grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Class Participation</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>February 26 (F)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>March 16 (W)</td>
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<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>March 28 (M)</td>
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<td>Assignment 3</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>April 22 (F)</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>May 12 (Th, 7:00 – 9:00 pm)</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>400</td>
<td>100%</td>
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**Grading Scale**

- **A+** 99-100%
- **A** 93-98%
- **A-** 90-92%
- **B+** 87-89%
- **B** 83-86%
- **B-** 80-82%
- **C+** 77-79%
- **C** 73-76%
- **C-** 70-72%
- **D** 60-69%
- **F** 0-59%
Accommodating Disabilities: *If you have or acquire any sort of condition that may require special accommodation(s), please inform me AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (i.e., not the day an assignment is due) so that we may make the appropriate arrangements.* If you need disability-related accommodations for your work in this course, please let me know. Support is available through Student Academic Services. Please contact Jane Boomer, Coordinator Office of Disability Services, (Room G27/28 Peters Hall, ext. 55588, [http://www.oberlin.edu/disability](http://www.oberlin.edu/disability)) for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs.

Email Policy: Email is the best way to reach me, although please allow 24 hours for responses. I do not respond to emails between 8 pm and 8 am. For substantial discussions, please see me during office hours or set up an appointment to see me.

Oberlin Honor Code: This course will follow the policies described in the Oberlin College Honor Code and Honor System. Please include the statement “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment” and your signature in all written work. Please contact me if you have any questions about citation/referencing, or the relationship of the Honor Code to your work in this course. For more information on the Honor Code, see [http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html).

Other Issues: If you are encountering difficulties, academic or otherwise, that are negatively impacting your performance in this class, please speak with me as soon as possible. I can only help you if I know there is a problem, and the earlier I know this, the better. You have excellent resources at your disposal here at Oberlin, including your class deans, the Counseling Center, and the Office of Student Academic Services. For more information, see the following: [http://new.oberlin.edu/parents/student-life/support-services.dot](http://new.oberlin.edu/parents/student-life/support-services.dot)
## CLASS SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1  What is Sociology?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date (Day)</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 1 (M)</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
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| Feb 3 (W)  | *Allan G. Johnson. The Forest and the Trees.*  
*Sharon Begley. When DNA is Not Destiny.*  
*Joel Charon. Should We Generalize about People?* |
| Feb 5 (F)  | C. Wright Mills. The Promise. (Ferguson Ch 1)  
Donna Gaines. Teenage Wasteland. (Ferguson Ch 2)  
Mary Romero. Intersections of Biography and History. (Ferguson Ch 3) |

### WEEK 2  Theories and Research Methods in Sociology

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<tr>
<th>Date (Day)</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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| Feb 8 (M)  | Chris Hunter and Kent McClelland. Theoretical Perspectives in Sociology. (Ferguson Ch 4)  
Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Manifesto of the Communist Party. (Ferguson Ch 5) |
| Feb 10 (W) | **END OF ADD/DROP**  
Michael Schwalbe. Finding Out How the Social World Works. (Ferguson Ch 7)  
*Howard Schumann. Sense and Nonsense about Surveys.*  
*Philip Meyer. If Hitler Asked You to Electrocute a Stranger, Would You? Probably.* |
| Feb 12 (F) | *Patricia A. Adler and Peter Adler. The Promise and Pitfalls of Going into the Field.*  
*Mitch Duneier. A Statement on Method.* |
WEEK 3  Social Structure


   Patricia A. Adler and Peter Adler. *Peer Power: Clique Dynamics among School Children.* (Ferguson Ch 18)

Feb 17 (W):  In-Class Film: *Quiet Rage: The Stanford Prison Study.*

   Craig Haney, W. Curtis Banks, and Philip G. Zimbardo. *Interpersonal Dynamics in a Simulated Prison.* (Ferguson Ch 8)

Feb 19 (F):  Craig Haney, W. Curtis Banks, and Philip G. Zimbardo. *Interpersonal Dynamics in a Simulated Prison.* (Ferguson Ch 8)

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WEEK 4  Culture

Feb 22 (M):  Howard S. Becker. *Culture: A Sociological View.* (Ferguson Ch 10)

Feb 24 (W):  Barry Glassner. *The Culture of Fear.* (Ferguson Ch 11)

   *Jen'nan Ghazal Read. *Muslims in America.*

   *Brent Staples. *Just Walk on By: Black Men and Public Space.*


Feb 26 (F):  **PAPER ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE**

   Haunani-Kay Trask. *Lovely Hula Hands.* (Ferguson Ch 12)

   *Katie J.M. Baker. *A Much-Needed Primer on Cultural Appropriation.***


   *Tressie McMillan Cottom. *When Your (Brown) Body is a (White) Wonderland.*

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WEEK 5  Socialization


   Debra Van Ausdale and Joe R. Feagin. *Using Racial and Ethnic Concepts.* (Ferguson Ch 14)
Robert Granfield. *Making It by Faking It*. (Ferguson Ch 15)

Mar 2 (W): In-Class Film: *Killing Us Softly*

Mar 4 (F): Emily W. Kane. *No Way my Boys are Going to be Like That!* (Ferguson Ch 13)

*Peggy Orenstein. *What’s Wrong With Cinderella?*

*Sharon Begley. *Math is Hard, Barbie Said.*

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<th>WEEK 6</th>
<th>Deviance, Crime, and Social Control</th>
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<tr>
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<td>David L. Rosenhan. <em>On Being Sane in Insane Places.</em> (Ferguson Ch 6)</td>
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<td>Penelope A. McLorg and Diane E. Taub. <em>Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia.</em> (Ferguson Ch 20)</td>
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<td>Mar 11 (F):</td>
<td><em>Devah Pager. The Mark of a Criminal Record.</em></td>
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<td>Ann Arnett Ferguson. <em>Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity.</em> (Ferguson Ch 52)</td>
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<th>WEEK 7</th>
<th>Midterm Exam</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 14 (M):</td>
<td>Exam Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 16 (W):</td>
<td><strong>Midterm Exam</strong></td>
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<td>Mar 18 (F):</td>
<td>No Class – Happy Spring Break!</td>
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<th>WEEK 8</th>
<th>MARCH 21—25 NO CLASSES—SPRING BREAK!!!</th>
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<th>WEEK 9</th>
<th>Social Class: Power, Privilege, and Poverty</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 28 (M):</td>
<td><strong>PAPER ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE</strong></td>
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G. William Domhoff. *Who Rules America?* (Ferguson Ch 24)

C. Wright Mills. *The Power Elite.* (Ferguson Ch 35)


Apr 1 (F): *Douglas Massey. Remaking the Political Economy.*

*Patricia Cohen. Wealth Inequality Rising Fast, Oxfam Says, Faulting Tax Havens.*

*Eduardo Porter. The Myth of Welfare’s Corrupting Influence on the Poor.*

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**WEEK 10**  
**Social Class: Education and Ideology**

Ch 1 and 2

Ch 3 and 4

Apr 8 (F): *Heather Beth Johnson. The American Dream and the Power of Wealth.*  
Ch 5, 6, and 7

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**WEEK 11**  
**Race and Ethnicity**


Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer. *What is Racial Domination?*  
(Ferguson Ch 31)

*Metta, John. I, Racist.*

Apr 13 (W): Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer. *What is Racial Domination?*  
(Ferguson Ch 31)

*Metta, John. I, Racist.*


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**WEEK 12  Race and Ethnicity**

**Apr 18 (M):**  *Dalton Conley. Wealth Matters.*

Thomas M. Shapiro. *Race, Homeownership, and Wealth*. (Ferguson Ch 25)

*Ta-Nehisi Coates. The Case for Reparations.*

**Apr 20 (W):**  Katherin M. Flower Kim. *Out of Sorts*. (Ferguson Ch 33)

Evelyn Nakano Glenn. *Yearning for Lightness*. (Ferguson Ch 34)


**Apr 22 (F):**  **PAPER ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE**

*Tim Wise. Born to Belong.*

*Tim Wise. On White Pride and Other Delusions.*

*Peggy McIntosh. White Privilege and Male Privilege.*

*Elon James White. White Privilege, Joe Biden Style.*

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**WEEK 13  Gender**

**Apr 25 (M):**  Barbara Risman. *Gender as Structure*. (Ferguson Ch 27)

Betsy Lucal. *What it Means to be Gendered Like Me* (Ferguson Ch 28)

**Apr 27 (W):**  Meika Loe. *Working at Bazooms*. (Ferguson Ch 9)


Adia Wingfiled. *Racializing the Glass Escalator*. (Ferguson Ch 42)

**Apr 29 (F):**  Ayres Boswell and Joan Z. Spade. *Fraternities and College Rape Culture*. (Ferguson Ch 21)

Kevin Bales. *Because She Looked Like a Child.* (Ferguson Ch 30)

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**WEEK 14  Sexuality and Intersectionality**

May 2 (M):  C. J. Pascoe. *Dude, You’re A Fag?* (Ferguson Ch 29)

*Judith Stacey. *Gay and Lesbian Families are Here.*


*Woods. The Black Male Privilege Checklist.*

*Combahee Women’s Collective. The Combahee River Collective Statement.*

May 6 (F):  Review for Final Exam

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**May 12 (Th):  7:00 – 9:00 p.m.  FINAL EXAM**

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