

**CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY (SOC 100-A)**  
**Fall 2017**

Department of Sociology & Anthropology  
DePauw University  
MWF 8:00-9:00 a.m.  
201 Asbury Hall

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is an introduction to the discipline of sociology that provides one of many windows through which we can view the world around us. Adopting a sociological perspective is a distinct way of interpreting human behavior that acknowledges the interplay between personal biography and social history. In taking such a perspective, we will challenge many of the taken-for-granted assumptions we make about social life and develop a healthy skepticism about oversimplified conceptions of society, institutions, and our own personal experience. Sociology offers us an “unfamiliar way to look at the familiar.”

We will begin the semester developing our “sociological imaginations,” learning key theories and methods that sociologists use to interpret social phenomena, and articulating a social constructionist view of reality, culture, the self, and normative deviations. Next, we will examine the larger structural processes, including the presence and persistence of inequalities in society. In particular, we will explore how society stratifies individuals and groups based on the intersectionality of social class, race/ethnicity, and gender. We will end the semester by studying social change and imagining what it will take to make our society more just and what our utopian visions for society might look like. This course fulfills the Privilege, Power, and Diversity requirement *or* a Social Science requirement.

**COURSE GOALS**

By the end of the semester you should be able to:

- a) Adopt a sociological perspective when interpreting the world around you;
- b) Understand key sociological concepts, theories and methods and be able to apply them to everyday life;
- c) Recognize the complexity of social behavior, groups, organizations and institutions and how that influences efforts at social change;
- d) Identify how society is stratified along social class, race and gender lines;
- e) Explore the interplay of power and privilege in human interactions;
- f) Analyze social issues using critical thinking and writing skills.

## REQUIRED READINGS

### **What to Read and Where to Get It:**

The following books are available at Eli's Books or on-line.

Armstrong, Elizabeth A. and Laura T. Hamilton. 2015. *Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gould, Kenneth A. and Tammy L. Lewis. 2017. *Thirty Readings in Introductory Sociology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. NY: Oxford University Press.

Ralph, Laurence. 2014. *Renegade Dreams: Living through Injury in Gangland Chicago*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Additional required readings are posted on library Reserves. You can access these either from the library homepage ("Reserves" link) or from our course Moodle page ("Library Course Reserves" link at top right).

\*\*\*Please bring your books or articles to class for discussion on the days they are assigned. Although not the eco-friendliest suggestion, I highly recommend that you print off the Reserve articles. This will allow you to mark up the articles, make notes and have them available during discussion. If you do not have your book or readings with you, I will assume you have not prepared for class.

\*\*\*You are responsible for all of the assigned readings, even those that we do not specifically discuss in class. Reading and understanding ideas on your own is part of the college experience. This does not mean you cannot ask for help when you need it. Please take advantage of my office hours (or make alternative arrangements if my hours do not work for you)!

**When to Read.** You should read each assignment and come to class prepared to discuss it on the day in which it appears on the schedule below. For example, the readings listed for Monday should be read before coming to class on Monday; the readings listed for Wednesday should be done by class time on Wednesday, etc.

**How to Read.** Develop a system of reading and note taking that will allow you to answer the following questions after each article:

1. What is the author's main point or argument?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this argument? (e.g., Does the author present sufficient evidence to back up his/her argument? Can you think of counter-evidence that the author ignores? Is the logic consistent? Does the author have a particular bias?)
3. How does this article relate to this week's topic and other readings?
4. What are the implications of this reading for your own life?

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Examinations.** There will be 3 examinations consisting of short essay questions. Exam 1 will be in class on Friday, September 15, 2017. Exam 2 is scheduled for Friday, October 13, 2017, the day before Spring Break. Do NOT take this class if you cannot begin your break when the official break begins. No early or alternative arrangements will be made. Exam 3 will be Thursday, December 14, 2017 (8:30-11:30 a.m.) during final examination week.

**Papers.** You will write three papers. The first (3-4 pp.) paper is due on Monday, September 4, 2017. The second (2-3 pp.) is due Friday, September 29, 2017. The third paper (6 pp.), which requires original data collection, is due Monday, November 13, 2017. Instructions will be distributed in class well in advance of the due dates.

**Class participation.** You will be graded on your class participation at midterm and at the end of the semester. Class participation will be assessed in terms of the quality and regularity of your participation. Simply showing up to class and having done the reading does not constitute participation. You need to orally communicate to us in a thoughtful way. Demonstrate that you have listened to others and that you have read the material. This will be somewhat tricky given the size of the class, but my lectures are designed to be interactive and class time will be devoted to a discussion of the readings. Create the opportunity for yourself.

## COURSE POLICIES

**A. How Grades are Calculated.** Grades will be determined using the following point and percentage system. In order to pass the course, students must complete all of the assignments.

Exam 1: 100 points

Exam 2: 100 points

Exam 3: 100 points

Paper 1: 25 points

Paper 2: 25 points

Paper 3: 100 points

Class participation: 50 points (25 each half)

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Total 500 points

Final Grade:

<u>letter</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>points</u>	<u>letter</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>letter</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>points</u>
A	93-100	465-500	C+	77-79	385-399	F	59 or below	299 or fewer
A-	90-92	450-464	C	73-76	365-384			
			C-	70-72	350-364			
B+	87-89	435-449						
B	83-86	415-434	D+	67-69	335-349			
B-	80-82	400-414	D	63-66	315-334			
			D-	60-62	300-414			

*A Note about Rounding:*

I do not round. For example, 449 = B+, and so forth.

**B. 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 clearly 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 satisfactorily 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, 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.

\*\*\*Please note that the above descriptions are not consistent with the common belief among students that a B is average and a C is failing.

**C. Absences and Late Work.** I expect you to be in class everyday. Absences will be counted against you in determining your class participation grade. The papers and exam due dates are firm. Exceptions will be made if I receive, in advance, an official notification that you will be off campus on university business (e.g., athletic or scholarly competition) or if I am notified, in

advance, of serious illness. Out of fairness to the entire class, no other exceptions will be made (this includes faulty alarm clocks, minor illness, job interviews, weddings, cheap plane tickets, etc.). Unexcused late papers will be penalized 50% for the first 24-hour period in which they are late. After 24 hours, I will not accept your paper and you will receive a zero. For both excused and unexcused absences from class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed from your peers. Please do not ask me for my lecture notes or for a private reenactment of the class. Find two neighbors and take down their information so you can contact them if you miss class.

Name:

Name:

email:

email:

**D. Security Measures.** Please secure a copy of your papers (hardcopy and/or electronic) in case your computer crashes the morning the paper is due. Do not put late papers in my mailbox or under my office door. It is your responsibility to contact me and make arrangements to give me your late work in person.

**E. Extra Credit.** None. No exceptions.

**F. Honor Code.** As with all courses at DePauw University, you are bound by the policy on academic integrity. I highly encourage you to reread the policy if you have not reread it this semester: <http://www.depauw.edu/handbooks/student/acadlife/app/aip/dishonesty/> Academic dishonesty includes the following: cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, plagiarism, multiple submissions, abuse of academic material, deception and misrepresentation, electronic dishonesty, and carelessness. Each of these violations is described in detail in the Student Handbook. See me if you have any questions about your obligation to uphold this policy. While I encourage you to work together in small groups and discuss the course material among yourselves outside of class, the papers should be written without collaboration and should reflect your independent ideas.

**G. Special Accommodations.** It is the policy and practice of DePauw University to provide reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. Written notification from Student Disability Services is required. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for this course, please contact Student Disability Services. Allow one-week advance notice to ensure enough time for reasonable accommodations to be made. Otherwise, it is not guaranteed that the accommodation can be provided on a timely basis. Accommodations are not retroactive. Students who have questions about Student Disability Services or who have, or think they may have, a disability (psychiatric, attentional, learning, vision, hearing, physical, medical, etc.) are invited to contact Student Disability Services for a confidential discussion in Union Building Suite 200 or by phone at 658-6267.

**H. Religious Holy Days and Observances.** In accordance with DePauw policy, I am happy to accommodate students who are adherents of a religious tradition and wish to fulfill obligations of that religious tradition on holy days. Please notify me well in advance of any planned absences.

**I. Laptops and Phones.** No laptops in class unless I specifically ask you to bring them. This means that you will need to make hardcopies of the readings posted on Reserves and/or bring in notes from the reading. Please silence your phone and put it away. No texting during class.

**COURSE SCHEDULE (approximate)**

<p><b>WEEK 1</b> August 23, 25</p>	<p><b>Part I: What is Sociology?</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday</b> <u>In class:</u> Introductions. Class exercise, “Doing Sociology.”</p> <p><b>Friday</b> No Class. RB out of town.</p>
<p><b>WEEK 2</b> August 28, 30, September 1</p>	<p><b>What You See is Not Always What you Get</b></p> <p><b>Monday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read “Introduction,” pp. 3-5 in G &amp; L Mills, “The Sociological Imagination” pp. 6-13 in G &amp; L. <u>In class:</u> Lecture, “When Conventional Wisdom is Not Enough.” Discuss readings. <b>Get Paper 1 Assignment.</b></p> <p><b>Exercising our Sociological Imaginations</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Szasz, “Shopping Our Way to Safety: How We Changed from Protecting the Environment to Protecting Ourselves,” pp. 13-26 in G &amp; L. Western, “Punishment and Inequality,” pp. 26-42 in G &amp; L. <u>In class:</u> Discuss readings.</p> <p><b>Friday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Think about a McDonald’s hamburger. <u>In class:</u> Exercise, “What is sociological about a McDonald’s hamburger?”</p>

<p><b>WEEK 3</b> September 4, 6, 8</p>	<p><b>Sociological Theories</b></p> <p><b>Monday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Hunter and McClelland, “Theoretical Perspectives in Sociology,” pp. 33-42 (Course Reserves) <u>In class:</u> Lecture, “‘When I Think Back on All the Crap I Learned in High School:’ Theoretical Perspectives on our Social World.” Discuss reading. <b>Paper 1 (Autoethnography) due in class.</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Rideau, “Ruination,” pp. 3-32 (Course Reserves) <u>In class:</u> Small group exercise: “Applying Theory to the Real World.”</p> <p><b>Research Methods: How Sociologists Do Sociology</b></p> <p><b>Friday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read “Methods and Theory,” pp. 43-45 in G &amp; L. Durkheim, “Suicide: A Study of Sociology,” pp. 46-51 in G &amp; L. Watch John Oliver video clip (Course Reserves) <u>In class:</u> Discuss readings and clip.</p>
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<p><b>WEEK 4</b> September 11, 13, 15</p>	<p><b>Monday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Ragin, “Conducting Social Research,” pp. 51-63 in G &amp; L; Best, “Damned Lies and Statistics,” pp. 63-74 in G &amp; L. <u>In class:</u> Discuss reading.</p> <p><b>Part II: The Individual in Context</b></p> <p><b>The Social Construction of Reality</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Levine, “The Geography of Time,” pp. 73-83 (Course Reserves) <u>In class:</u> Lecture, “A Rose is a Rose is a Rose. Really?” Discuss reading.</p> <p><b>Friday</b> <u>In class:</u> <b>Exam 1</b></p>
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<p><b>WEEK 5</b> September 18, 20, 22</p>	<p><b>Culture and Socialization</b></p> <p><b>Monday</b>  <u>Before class:</u> Read “Culture and Socialization,” pp. 77-79 in G &amp; L.;  Becker, “Doing Things Together,” pp. 79-89 in G &amp; L.  <u>In class:</u> Lecture, “You Won’t Find it in a Petri Dish: Locating Culture.” Discuss reading.</p> <p><b>Wednesday</b>  <u>Before class:</u> Read Ausdale and Feagin, “The First R: How Children Learn Race and Racism,” pp. 89-95 in G &amp; L.  <i>NYT</i> Editorial Board, “Racial Profiling in Preschool.” pp. 1-2. (Course Reserves)  <u>In class:</u> Lecture, “The Self, Socialization, and Resocialization.” Discuss readings. <b>Get Paper 2 assignment.</b></p> <p><b>Friday</b>  <u>Before class:</u> Read Schor, “Born to Buy,” pp. 95-105 in G &amp; L.  <u>In class:</u> Discuss reading.</p>
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<p><b>WEEK 6</b> September 25, 27, 29</p>	<p><b>Impression Management</b></p> <p><b>Monday</b>  <u>Before class:</u> Read Granfield, “Making It by Faking It: Working-Class Students in an Elite Academic Environment,” pp. 102-111 (Course Reserves)  <u>In class:</u> Lecture, “Please Put on a Suit and Tie: Constructing Identity and Managing Impressions.” Discuss reading.</p> <p><b>Wednesday</b>  Day of Dialogue.</p> <p><b>Friday</b>  <u>Before class:</u> Finish paper 2  <u>In class:</u> Discuss Day of Dialogue. <b>Paper 2 due at the beginning of class.</b></p>
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<p><b>WEEK 7</b> October 2, 4, 6</p>	<p><b>Impression Management (continued)</b></p> <p><b>Monday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Dyer, “Anybody’s Son Will Do,” pp. 179-185 (Course Reserves) <u>In class:</u> Class exercise: “You’ll know me. I’ll be the one who...” Discuss reading.</p> <p><b>Deviance</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Rosenhan, “On Being Sane in Insane Places, pp. 48-58 (Course Reserves). <u>In class:</u> Lecture, “Sociological Approaches to Deviance.” Discuss reading.</p> <p><b>Friday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Saslow, “The Man in the Van.” (Course Reserves) <u>In class:</u> Discuss reading.</p>
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<p><b>WEEK 8</b> October 9, 11, 13</p>	<p><b>Part III: Social Institutions</b></p> <p><b>Monday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read “Social Institutions, pp. 106-109 in G &amp; L. Derber, “Corporation Nation,” pp. 120-131 in G &amp; L. <u>In class:</u> Lecture, “Why are Sociologists Obsessed with Structure?” Discuss reading.</p> <p><b>Wednesday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Jaffe, “Brewing Justice,” pp. 356-377 in G &amp; L. <u>In class:</u> Discuss reading.</p> <p><b>Friday</b> <u>In class:</u> <b>Exam 2</b></p> <p><b>Last day to drop class with “W”</b></p>
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<p><b>WEEK 9</b> October 16, 18, 20</p>	<p><b>Fall Break!</b></p>
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<p><b>WEEK 10</b> October 23, 25, 27</p>	<p><b>Part IV: Structural Inequalities</b></p> <p><b>Monday</b> Before class: No homework. In class: Lecture, “What’s Power Got Ta Do With It, Got Ta Do With It? Social Class, Gender, and Race Intersectionalities” Get Paper 3 assignment.</p> <p><b>Social Class Inequality</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday</b> Before class: Read Armstrong and Hamilton, <i>Paying for the Party</i>, pp. xi-49. (book). Read paper assignment. In class: <b>Discuss paper assignment. Important session! Do not miss!</b></p> <p><b>Friday</b> Before class: Read Armstrong and Hamilton, <i>Paying for the Party</i>, pp. 50-73. (book) In class: Discuss Armstrong and Hamilton, xi-73.</p>
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<p><b>WEEK 11</b> October 30, November 1, 3</p>	<p><b>Monday</b> Before class: Read Armstrong and Hamilton, <i>Paying for the Party</i>, pp. 74-93. (book) In class: Lecture, “Let Them Eat Cake: Social Class Inequality in America.” Film clips, “Wealth Inequality in America” and “People Like Us.” Discuss clips.</p> <p><b>Wednesday</b> Before class: Read Armstrong and Hamilton, <i>Paying for the Party</i>, pp. 94-117. (book) In class: Discuss Armstrong and Hamilton, pp. 74-117.</p> <p><b>Gender Inequality</b></p> <p><b>Friday</b> Before class: Read Armstrong and Hamilton, <i>Paying for the Party</i>, pp. 118-147. (book) In class: Lecture, “Man-Purses: The Social Construction of Femininity and Masculinity.” Film clip, “Guyland.” Discuss film.</p>
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<p><b>WEEK 12</b> November 6, 8, 10</p>	<p><b>Monday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Armstrong and Hamilton, <i>Paying for the Party</i>, pp. 148-208. (book) <u>In class:</u> Discuss Armstrong and Hamilton, pp. 118-208.</p> <p><b>Wednesday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Armstrong and Hamilton, <i>Paying for the Party</i>, pp. 209-278. (book) <u>In class:</u> Discuss Armstrong and Hamilton, pp. 209-278.</p> <p><b>Race Inequality</b></p> <p><b>Friday</b> <u>Before class:</u> No reading. <u>In class:</u> Lecture, “Why Does the Topic of Racism Produce so Much Silence?” Class exercise, “Shoe Shopping.”</p>
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<p><b>WEEK 13</b> November 13, 15, 17</p>	<p><b>Monday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Bonilla-Silva, “Racism without Racists,” pp. 158-173 in G &amp; L. <u>In class:</u> Discuss reading. <b>Paper 3 due at the beginning of class.</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Ralph, <i>Renegade Dreams</i>, pp. xvii-18 (book) <u>In class:</u> Film clips, “A Conversation on Growing Up Black,” “A Conversation with White People on Race,” “A Conversation with Asians on Race,” “A Conversation with Black Women on Race,” “A Conversations with Latinos on Race.” Discuss clips.</p> <p><b>Friday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Ralph, <i>Renegade Dreams</i>, pp. 19-52. (book) <u>In class:</u> Class exercise, “IAT.” <b>Bring your laptops to class!</b></p>
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<p><b>WEEK 14</b> November 20, 22, 24</p>	<p><b>Monday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Ralph, <i>Renegade Dreams</i>, pp. 53-83. (book) <u>In class:</u> Discuss Ralph, pp. 1-83.</p> <p><b>Wednesday</b> No class. (Thanksgiving break!)</p> <p><b>Friday</b> No class. (Thanksgiving break!)</p>
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<p><b>WEEK 15</b> November 27, 29, December 1</p>	<p><b>Monday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Ralph, <i>Renegade Dreams</i>, pp. 84-114. (book) <u>In class:</u> Lecture, "On White Privilege." Film clips.</p> <p><b>Wednesday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Ralph, <i>Renegade Dreams</i>, pp. 117-139. (book) <u>In class:</u> Discuss Ralph, pp. 84-139.</p> <p><b>Friday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Ralph, <i>Renegade Dreams</i>, pp. 141-164. (book) <u>In class:</u> Student Opinion Forms. <b>Bring your laptops to class!</b></p>
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<p><b>WEEK 16</b> December 4, 6, 8</p>	<p><b>Monday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Ralph, <i>Renegade Dreams</i>, pp. 165-184. (book) <u>In class:</u> Discuss Part 2 of Ralph, pp. 141-184.</p> <p><b>Part V: Envisioning Social Change</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Read Johnson, “What Can We Do? Becoming Part of the Solution,” pp. 673-684. (Course Reserves) <u>In class:</u> Lecture, “The Times, They Are A Changin’.” Discuss reading.</p> <p><b>Friday</b> <u>Before class:</u> Identify questions you have for the exam. <u>In class:</u> Review for exam. Final reflections.</p>
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<p><b>Final Exam Week</b> December 14</p>	<p><b>Exam 3, Thursday, December 14, 8:30-11:30 a.m.</b></p>
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