

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

SYG 1000 | Section 007



CRN 11177 | Fall 2020

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Please schedule meetings at least 24 hours in advance

Course Details

Class details: fully online & asynchronous

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites: none

Fulfills: IFP: Society & Human Behavior

Required Materials: There is no textbook. Readings available on *Canvas*

COURSE DESCRIPTION¹

Sociology is the study of how social life—with *all of its meaningful interactions, mundane routines, infuriating situations, and mind-boggling paradoxes*—is constructed, maintained, and organized. This class will challenge individualistic explanations for social phenomena by highlighting the roles of culture, networks, institutions, and structures in shaping our everyday lives. Our interrogation of social life begins with thinking about how theories shape the questions we ask, the kinds of data we collect, and the answers we find. We will explore key assumptions of the discipline and highlight debates within the field that demonstrate the multiple, and sometimes conflicting ways, sociologists understand the world. We end by examining specific institutions and applying our foundational concepts to contemporary social issues. Rather than dedicating separate weeks to race, class, and gender, each week delves into how these structures shape outcomes in our society.

¹ Official course description as listed in the catalogue: Examines the major principles, concepts, theories, and methods of sociology. This is a General Education course.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe patterns of human behavior, especially those that contribute to social inequalities and social change
2. Apply a range of sociological theories to the analysis of society
3. Analyze the relationship between human agency and the social structure
4. Evaluate arguments and explanations about the causes of, and appropriate interventions for, social issues

I HAVE TO ACKNOWLEDGE SOMETHING...

Here we are, in the midst of a pandemic. How do I teach a sociology class while our worlds are imploding? If we were meeting in person on the first day of class, I would tell you about my own educational background, marked by financial woes, academic struggles and health issues. I grew up working class, suffered the loss of my grandfather the summer before my freshman year of undergrad, and the loneliness and confusion of being a new student at a large school led to my academic probation after just one semester.

I tell you this because I'm not a person who believes that because I "made it," others should have to struggle. I don't believe that there is some character-building magic inherent in suffering; that coming out of the other side of poverty and scarcity, or abandonment and isolation, leaves us better people. I think it leaves us raw and tired. So, I've tried to teach under the assumption that students are battle-worn. Doing so allows me to meet you where you are, not where I wish you were or where others expect you to be.

What this looks like in practice is flexibility. I will set deadlines to help encourage you to stay on task, but will not deduct points for late work. Keep in mind that there are hard deadlines that I need to abide by, like enrollment verification and final grades. I won't grade on writing style or deduct points for grammatical issues. Writing assignments will not require huge word counts. This course is offered asynchronously so you can access videos and readings on your own time during the week. I also chose to assign documentaries and short, accessible readings for us to engage with.

While I do not expect my course to be the most important thing in your life, I will try to make this experience worth your time, energy, and money. This means, that at the very least, you will learn a new vocabulary to describe the world around you. Beyond that, if I'm allowed to dream here, I hope in this new understanding of society that you come to develop more questions about the world. And I hope the answers you find lead you to realize your power, and push you to enact your agency in your life.

For the time being, though, I'm perfectly fine with the bare minimum expectation that we can learn something while we all try to survive. Let's get to it!

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Critical Response (CR) Papers – 500 points/100% of course grade

I will assess your learning through critical response papers. These will require you to: analyze (by categorizing, deconstructing, comparing/contrasting); evaluate (by defending, criticizing); and create (by designing, implementing). CR papers are opportunities to more deeply engage with the course topics, as well as develop and defend a position related to sociology. Each topic has an accompanying prompt. You must choose **FIVE** prompts throughout the semester to respond to (**one due on each Friday 10pm of Weeks 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15**). It is your prerogative which papers you choose to complete, however, I encourage you to choose the prompts that most resonate with you. Each paper must be between 500 and 550 words. Rubric posted on *Canvas*.

In addition:

- Check your FAU email **daily**, because important information regarding this class will be emailed to you.
- Please keep copies of all completed assignments and graded work until final grades are posted.
- Be sure to discuss grade posting omissions and errors with me immediately.
- Unless specifically indicated otherwise, students are not to collaborate on graded work.

GRADING

Grades can be accessed on *Canvas*. **I do not grade for attendance**. All grades in this course must be earned. There will be no curving or extra credit offered. A grade of "Incomplete" will only be given in cases of emergencies late in the semester, when the majority of CRs have been submitted, and when official documentation is provided. **Please inform me of any difficulties or hardships negatively affecting your class performance as soon as possible to maximize the amount of time available to manage the problem.**

Letter grades will be assigned based on total points earned. The grading scale is as follows:

<u>Grade Component</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
CR #1	100	20%
CR #2	100	20%
CR #3	100	20%
CR #4	100	20%
CR #5	100	20%
TOTAL	500	100%

<u>Course Grade</u>	<u>Point Range</u>
A	470 or more
A-	450-469
B+	435-449
B	420-434
B-	400-419
C+	385-399
C	370-384
C-	350-369
D+	335-349
D	320-334
D-	300-319
F	0-299

CLASS CONDUCT AND EXPECTATIONS

Expect to be Uncomfortable

I believe the learning process should be an empowering one, and I understand that this process can be personally challenging and uncomfortable. In this course, we will address topics that may cause strong emotional responses. You may find some theories in this course controversial or their explanation of the social world may challenge your beliefs. An understanding of sociological frameworks with which you may disagree will help you gain a competency in navigating difference, which you will continue to experience throughout your time at the university, as well as within your career. Moreover, the aim of this course is not necessarily consensus, but the development of critical thinking and writing skills. Debate, critiques of theory, and questions are not only encouraged, they are expected!

Keep It All In Good Faith

I expect all submitted work be completed in good-faith and refrain from derogatory comments and dehumanizing language about other people, cultures, and groups. While critical engagement with course material is required, interrupting, attacking and passive-aggressive trolling are not conducive to the learning outcomes. In our classroom, discussions are to be framed using rules of evidence and should always be presented in a respectful and civil manner. This is paramount to a quality educational experience. To be clear, each person in the classroom has something of value to contribute, but not all opinions are equal. Put another way, anyone on the street can give me an opinion about society. But this is a social science class—you are being provided expert sources on issues, which means you now know more than the average person on the street.² So, when completing writing assignments, you must use critical evidence that does not rely on mere personal beliefs, anecdotes, or opinions.

If a student is being disruptive or disrespectful (rude, inappropriate, and/or harmful to others) either in the classroom or during class-related communications online or in-person, they will receive one verbal warning from the instructor. However, if the behavior is viewed as seriously disruptive, no warning will be issued, and action will be taken. If negative behavior persists following a verbal warning, the instructor will request a meeting with the student and Department Chair to discuss and document a plan for changing behavior. Further infractions will immediately involve the Department Chair and the Academic Dean.

Email Etiquette

I have 200 students this semester. I need to be able to fish out students' emails to respond to from other requests/inquiries that are less time-sensitive. This means I need you to **use a detailed subject line when contacting me and your TA that includes the name of the course and a basic description of what you need.** For example: **SYG 1000 – Office Hours Zoom Meeting** or **SYG 1000: Question about Lecture**. Please schedule office hours meetings at least 24 hours in advance. Barring some personal catastrophe, I will typically respond to emails sent during workday hours (9am-6pm, Monday-Friday) within 24 hours.

Did your parent or elder ever tell you “I’m not one of your little friends” when you addressed them incorrectly? Well, the same applies here. Please do not refer to me as “Miss” or by my first name. Also aim to be respectful in tone, even if you’re frustrated by something going on. I’m solution-oriented and you’d be surprised how quickly I can hash something out if you give me the information I need, enough time, and little bit of grace.

² Dr. Michael D. Wilson | Professor American Indian Studies at UWM | AIS 101 syllabus

UNIVERSITY-WIDE POLICIES & STATEMENTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY STATEMENT

As a student at Florida Atlantic University, you are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see University Regulation 4.001.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require accommodation due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices across three of FAU's campuses – Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter – however disability services are available for students on all campuses.

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS) CENTER STATEMENT

Life as a student is physically, mentally and emotionally challenging and draining. If you find this stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services -- individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few -- offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For locations and appointments, go to <http://www.fau.edu/counseling/>

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND FACULTY

In accordance with regulations of the Florida Board of Governors and Florida law, students have the right to reasonable accommodations from the University in order to observe religious practices and beliefs with regard to admissions, registration, class attendance, and the scheduling of examinations, and work assignments. The details of this policy, as it pertains to FAU, may be found in the University Catalog and University Regulation 2.007, Religious Observances.

ATTENDANCE POLICY STATEMENT

Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled University classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor. The effect of absences upon grades is determined by the instructor, and the University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of non-attendance. Students are responsible for arranging to make up work missed because of legitimate class absence, such as illness, family emergencies, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations or participation in University

approved activities. Examples of University-approved reasons for absences include participating on an athletic or scholastic team, musical and theatrical performances and debate activities. It is the student's responsibility to give the instructor notice prior to any anticipated absences and within a reasonable amount of time after an unanticipated absence, ordinarily by the next scheduled class meeting. Instructors must allow each student who is absent for a University-approved reason the opportunity to make up work missed without any reduction in the student's final course grade as a direct result of such absence.

COVID-19 STATEMENT

All students in face-to-face classes are required to wear masks during class, and students must sanitize their own workstations upon entering the classroom. Taking these measures supports the safety and protection of the FAU community. Students who do not adhere to these rules will be asked to leave the classroom and/or be removed from the course. Students experiencing flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath), or students who have come in contact with an infected person should immediately contact FAU Student Health Services (561-297-3512).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Subject	Readings/Videos
1 Aug 24-28	Welcome to the Course! Syllabus review How to think like a sociologist	Mills. "The Promise."
2 Aug 31-Sept 4	Theorizing What is theory? Key sociological theories	1. Nelson & Giroux. "Theory Toolbox." 2. hooks. "Theory as Liberatory Practice."
3 Sept 7-11 CR #1 due Friday 9/11 @ 10pm	Methodologies Developing research questions and collecting data Ethical considerations	Best. "Audiences Evaluate Statistics."
4 Sept 14-18	Social Constructionism The creation of our reality Race, gender, and class as social constructs	Chavez. "The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation."
5 Sept 21-25	Culture Material and nonmaterial cultures inclusion, exclusion, boundaries	1. Bailey. "Butch Queens Up in Pumps: Gender, Performance and Ballroom Culture in Detroit." 2. Watch "Why Japanese Women are Dressing like Chicanas." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1LqF03UUdc

Week	Subject	Readings/Videos
6 Sept 28-Oct 2 CR #2 due Friday 10/2 @ 10pm	Socialization How we learn what is “normal”	Watch <i>The Mask You Live In</i> on Kanopy
7 Oct 5-9	Stratification The unequal distribution of resources social mobility and reproduction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch <i>It's Criminal: Women Discuss Privilege, Poverty, and Injustice in America</i> on Kanopy 2. Harrington. “How Wealthy People Protect Their Money.”
8 Oct 12-16	Religion The role of religion in group formation religious extremism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mohamed and O’Brien. “Ground Zero of Misunderstanding.” 2. Watch “Living Through Gay Conversion Therapy.” https://youtu.be/wD4sWQG2DnQ
9 Oct 19-23 CR #3 due Friday 10/23 @ 10pm	Family Family structures and dynamics	McDougal III and George III. “I Wanted to Return the Favor: The Experiences of Black Social Fathers.”
10 Oct 26-30	Education How schools address and reproduce inequalities	Watch <i>Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in School</i> on Kanopy

Week	Subject	Readings/Videos
11 Nov 2-6	Media Hegemony mass media and social media	1. Watch <i>Dreamworlds</i> on Kanopy. 2. Gray et al. "Blurring the boundaries: Using Gamergate to examine "real" & symbolic violence against women in gaming culture"
12 Nov 9-13 CR #4 due Friday 11/13 @ 10pm	Work Race, gender, and occupations the realities of low-wage work <i>University closed Nov. 11</i>	1. Watch <i>Care</i> on Kanopy 2. Valdez et al. "Precarious Entrepreneurship: Day Laborers in the U.S. Southwest."
13 Nov 16-20	The Environment Exploitation of natural resources how corporations evade culpability	Haltinner & Sarathchandra. "Climate Skeptics."
14 Nov 23-27 <i>Fall Break Nov 26-29</i>	Social Movements Contentious politics #BLM, #MeToo, and far-right activism online	Meyer. "How Social Movements Matter."
15 Nov 30-Dec 4 CR #5 due Friday 12/4 @ 10pm	Where We've Been Course wrap-up Catch-Up on CRs	OPTIONAL: Practice meditation https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBoAquxhspA