

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

SOCI 1010 | Section 203 | Spring 2022

Professor: Dr. Stephanie M. Ortiz

Class Times: Tu/Th 2-3:15

Email: Stephanie_Ortiz@uml.edu

Class Location: COB-G30

Office: Dugan 205H

Office Hours: T 1-2; W 12-1

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology is the study of how social life—with all 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, sexuality, and gender, each week delves into how they each shape outcomes in our society.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

I take seriously the task of self-determination through education and believe that a diverse set of intellectual traditions can empower students to transform their social world. Therefore, you will:

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

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Research Presentation – 100 points/20% of course grade

During the first week of class, you will be assigned a presentation date and be provided with a list of topics to choose from. You will then prepare a **10-minute** presentation on the topic. This presentation must discuss scholarly, sociological research on the topic. You may also include analysis of media coverage of the topic in your discussion. You are welcome to show video clips, but the running time *must not exceed 3 minutes total* for all videos combined. Following this presentation, you will lead a 5-minute discussion with the class centered on your topic. You are welcome to pair up with another student who is assigned to your same week (especially if you both share an interest in the same topic) to work on one presentation together, but this is entirely optional.

Presentation Critical Reflection – 50 points/10% of course grade

You are expected to be active and engaged audience members for your classmates' presentations. At the end of each presentation day, you are to submit a 2-3 paragraph critical reflection where you (1) summarize the overarching lessons from the day, and (2) discuss additional avenues for sociological research to further address the topics.

Participation – 150 points/30% of course grade

Attendance and active participation are expected aspects of the course. I understand that the pandemic presents some challenges here, as you may become ill or need to quarantine at some point(s) during the semester. I also understand that some students feel intense anxiety around speaking up in class. If you need to miss class or do not participate during lecture/discussion, you have the option to earn participation credit by submitting a 1-2 paragraph summary of what you learned at the end of the week on *Blackboard*. You may focus this submission on lecture or on the readings.

Exams – 200 points/40%

Two take-home, open-book exams will be administered. The exams may consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Material from assigned readings/videos, lectures, discussions, and student presentations are free game and can appear on the exam. I will post the exam on *Blackboard* on Tuesday after class and students are to submit their answers by Thursday 10pm.

In addition:

- Check the *Blackboard* course page at least twice/week, as information will be posted there
- Keep copies of all completed assignments & work until final grades are posted
- Be sure to discuss grade posting omissions and errors with me immediately

GRADING

All grades in this course must be earned. You will be able to access grades in *Blackboard*.

In addition:

- I do not grade for effort
- I do not curve or offer extra credit
- I do not allow resubmissions of assignments
- I will have your assignments graded within 2 weeks of submission

Incompletes

A grade of “Incomplete” will **only** be given in cases of emergencies late in the semester, when the majority of assignments 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>
Presentation	100	20%
Reflection	50	10%
Participation	150	30%
Exam #1	100	20%
Exam #2	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

Sociology is a set of theoretical and methodological tools that we use to understand and intervene in our social world. In order for me to do my job well, I have these expectations for the class:

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. You may find some theories in this course controversial or their explanations 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.

Do The Work

Your assumptions and opinions about social institutions, practices, and organization are not necessarily the same as how the sociology defines and studies these concepts. The aim of this course is for you to learn and engage with the facts presented, understand them, and apply them in ways that demonstrate a well-rounded skillset. You can only do this if you review lecture notes and complete all readings and documentaries assigned, otherwise your submissions are merely anecdotal, with little grounding in social science research. Anyone on the street can give me an opinion about the topics we will explore. But this is a social science class—you are reading expert sources, which means **you now know more than the average person on the street.**

Keep It All In Good Faith

In addition to following the guidelines of a sociological imagination (to be reviewed Week 1), 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. 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.

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. 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

Please use your campus email address to contact me at Stephanie_Ortiz@uml.edu. Use a detailed subject line when contacting me; include the name of the course and a basic description of what you need. This will help me locate and respond to student emails first. For example: **SOCI 1010 Exam Help** or **Intro Class: Question about Lecture**.

Barring some personal catastrophe, I will respond to emails sent during workday hours (9am-5pm, Monday-Friday) within 24 hours. Please schedule online meetings with me **at least 2 days** in advance using my [Calendly link](#) on *Blackboard*.

In your emails, please 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.

Attendance

I expect you to come to class prepared and ready to participate, but as we are still neck-deep in a pandemic, I'm offering an option to earn participation credit if you have to miss class. You do not have to email me to inform me of your absence, nor do you have to provide me with documentation explaining your absence. The only exception to this is for exam days and on your scheduled class presentation; if you are sick and need to miss class on these occasions, you must email me ASAP. I highly recommend pairing up with another student with whom you can share notes with if either of you need to miss class.

Keep Me In The Loop

It is your responsibility to inform me as soon as possible if you are having any difficulties or challenges completing work. I will regularly check-in about your progress/missing work, so responding to those messages helps me know if you need extra time or extra help. You may also set up an appointment or chat with me before or after class. Not waiting until the final week of class (or after final grades are submitted) to contact me for help makes the overall process much easier for everyone.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: WELCOME!

Tuesday, January 18 – Welcome! Syllabus review; expectations; Q&A

Thursday, January 20 – Lecture

Week 2: THEORY

Tuesday, January 25 – Lecture

Thursday, January 27 – Lecture | Please read:

- Hunter, Marcus Anthony. "Du Boisian sociology and intellectual reparations: for coloured scholars who consider suicide when our rainbows are not enuf." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39, no. 8 (2016): 1379-1384.
 - Hooks, Bell. "Theory as liberatory practice." *Yale JL & Feminism* 4 (1991): 1-12.
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Week 3: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

Tuesday, February 1 – Lecture

Thursday, February 3 – Discussion Day

- Martin, Karin A. "Normalizing heterosexuality: Mothers' assumptions, talk, and strategies with young children." *American Sociological Review* 74, no. 2 (2009): 190-207.
 - Dynes, Russell R., and Havidán Rodríguez. "Finding and Framing Katrina: The Social Construction of Disaster" in *The Sociology of Katrina: Perspectives on a Modern Catastrophe*. (2010).
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Week 4: CULTURE

Tuesday, February 8 – Lecture | Please read:

- Buyukozturk, Bertan. "Reproducing the Gaming Gender Hierarchy." *Symbolic Interaction* (2021).

Thursday, February 10 – Presentations! Possible Topics: The Misinformation Surrounding CRT;

Cultural Appropriation on Social Media; Gaming Culture; Doing Gender and Drag; The Social Construction of the "Illegal" Immigrant

Week 5: POVERTY

Tuesday, February 15 – Lecture

Thursday, February 17 – Discussion Day

- Woodward, Kerry. "The multiple meanings of work for welfare-reliant women." *Qualitative Sociology* 31, no. 2 (2008): 149-168.
 - Purser, Gretchen. "The circle of dispossession: Evicting the urban poor in Baltimore." *Critical Sociology* 42, no. 3 (2016): 393-415.
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Week 6: RELIGION

Tuesday, February 22 – Lecture | Please read:

- Perry, Samuel, Andrew L. Whitehead, and Joshua B. Grubbs. "'I Don't Want Everybody to Vote': Christian Nationalism and Restricting Voter Access in the United States." *Sociological Forum*. (2021).

Thursday, February 24 – Presentation Day! Possible Topics: Race and Poverty; Religious Extremism and Conversion Therapy; The Impact of COVID-19 on Hunger; Residential Segregation in Massachusetts; Islamophobia and The War on Terror; Gender, Sexuality, and Homelessness

Week 7: EXAM WEEK

Tuesday, March 1 – In-class review for Exam #1

Thursday, March 3 – Submit answers to Exam #1 by 10:00pm

Week 8: SPRING BREAK

Week 9: EMOTIONS

Tuesday, March 15 – Lecture

Thursday, March 17 – Discussion Day

- Ahmed, Sara. "The Organization of Hate" **and** "The Affective Politics of Fear" in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. (2013).
- Tichavakunda, Antar A. "Black Students and Positive Racialized Emotions: Feeling Black Joy at a Historically White Institution." *Humanity & Society* (2021): 01605976211032929.

Week 10: EDUCATION

Tuesday, March 22 – Lecture | Please read:

- Ray, Ranita. "School as a hostile institution: How Black and Immigrant Girls of Color Experience the Classroom." *Gender & Society* (2022).

Thursday, March 24 – Presentations! Possible Topics: The Role of Emotions in Social Movements; Microaggressions in College Classrooms; Race, Gender, and Emotional Labor in Retail Work; Sexual Assault and Greek Life; Discipline and Punishment in Schools

Week 11: MEDIA

Tuesday, March 29 – Lecture

Thursday, March 31 – Discussion Day

- Vasquez-Tokos, Jessica, and Kathryn Norton-Smith. "Talking back to controlling images: Latinos' changing responses to racism over the life course." *Ethnic and racial studies* 40, no. 6 (2017): 912-930.
- Gray, Kishonna L. "Intersecting oppressions and online communities: Examining the experiences of women of color in Xbox Live." *Information, Communication & Society* 15, no. 3 (2012): 411-428.

Week 12: HEALTH

Tuesday, April 5 – Lecture | Please read:

- Braksmajer, Amy, and Robert T. Cserni. "It's just a matter of playing the odds': Navigating

risks associated with sexual behaviour in the COVID-19 era." *Sociology of Health & Illness* (2021).

Thursday, April 7 – Presentations! Possible topics: Suicide among College Students; Pornography Addiction; The Social Construction of Obesity; Racial Representation in Pixar Movies; Racism and Chronic Stress; Race, Gender, and Media Framing of Serial Killers; COVID-19 and Mental Health

Week 13: VIOLENCE & REPRESSION

Tuesday, April 12 – Lecture

Thursday, April 14 – Discussion Day

- Hlavka, Heather R. "Speaking of stigma and the silence of shame: Young men and sexual victimization." *Men and Masculinities* 20, no. 4 (2017): 482-505.
- Sobieraj, Sarah. "Bitch, slut, skank, cunt: Patterned resistance to women's visibility in digital publics." *Information, Communication & Society* 21, no. 11 (2018): 1700-1714.

Week 14: EXAM WEEK

Tuesday, April 19 – In-class review for Exam #2

Thursday, April 21 – Submit answers for Exam #2 by 10pm.

Week 15: SOCIAL CHANGE

Tuesday, April 26 – Lecture | Please read:

- Hill Collins, Patricia. "The new politics of community." *American Sociological Review* 75, no. 1 (2010): 7-30.
- Lorde, Audre. "The transformation of silence into language and action." *Identity politics in the women's movement* (1977): 81-84.
- Clark-Parsons, Rosemary. "'I see you, I believe you, I stand with you': #MeToo and the performance of networked feminist visibility." *Feminist Media Studies* 21, no. 3 (2021): 362-380.

Thursday, April 28 – Presentations! Possible Topics: #BLM; #MeToo; Youth Gun Prevention; Online Trolling; Voter Suppression; Healing-Centered Care; Mutual Aid Networks; Body Positivity

UNIVERSITY-WIDE POLICIES & STATEMENTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY STATEMENT

All students are advised that there is a [University policy regarding academic integrity](#). Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work.

DISABILITY SERVICES

If you have a documented disability that will require classroom accommodation, please notify me as soon as possible, so that we might make appropriate arrangements. Please speak to me during office hours or send me an email, as I respect, and want to protect, your privacy. Visit the Student Disability Services webpage for further information. Additionally, Student Disability Services supports software for ALL students. Read&Write Gold is literacy software that allows you to read on-screen text aloud, research and check written work, and create study guides. You can download the software from the IT Software webpage on the UML website: [IT Software page](#)

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We are a campus that cares about the mental health and well-being of all individuals in our campus community, particularly during this uncertain time. If you or someone you know are experiencing mental health challenges at UMass Lowell, please contact [Counseling Services](#). They will be offering free in-person counselling for all students.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The safety and health of the UMass Lowell community is our shared priority. In seeking to provide the fullest academic and campus life experience possible, UMass Lowell will rely on all members of our community to act responsibly. For the latest updates on UMass Lowell's COVID policies, please visit www.uml.edu/coronavirus.

UMass Lowell has implemented reasonable health and safety protocols in accordance with national and state public health guidelines. These standards apply to anyone who is physically present on campus or participating in a UMass Lowell-sponsored activity.

- **Daily Symptom Checker:** All campus community members should use the [daily symptom checker](#) (www.uml.edu/alert/coronavirus/COVID-19-symptom-review.aspx) every day prior to leaving your home, apartment or room.
- **Vaccination:** COVID-19 vaccination is required for ALL students (with rare and approved exceptions). Please visit Mass. Vaccine Finder (vaxfinder.mass.gov) to find vaccine locations.
- **Face Coverings:** Face coverings are required for all faculty, staff, students, vendors and visitors regardless of vaccination status in nearly all indoor common spaces, including classrooms, instructional laboratories, meeting rooms, work areas, break rooms, hallways, elevators and restrooms. Face coverings are not required outdoors. Faculty may opt to remove face coverings when teaching.