

NOTE: THIS SYLLABUS IS FROM FALL 2023. READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

Prof. Shestakofsky (he/him/his)
University of Pennsylvania

Sociology 1000-401
Fall 2023

Lecture
Monday and Wednesday, 3:30-4:29pm
Meyerson Hall B1

Student Office Hours
Tuesdays and Fridays 4-5pm
McNeil Building 228 or Zoom

Sign up at: <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/gqrru/>
Link for Zoom sessions is on our Canvas homepage

TEACHING TEAM

TA: Sukie Yang (she/her/hers)
402: Wednesday 5:15-6:14pm WILL 301
409: Thursday 10:15-11:14am MCNB 395
Email: yangxq@sas.upenn.edu

TA: Elise Parrish (she/her/hers)
404: Wednesday 5:15pm-6:14pm WILL 321
410: Thursday 12:00-12:59pm MCNB 285
Email: elisemp@sas.upenn.edu

TA: Kathryn O'Neill (she/her/hers)
411: Thursday 1:45pm-2:44pm DRLB 4C2
412: Thursday 12:00-12:59pm GLAB 100
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TA: Matthew Sheen (he/him/his)
414: Friday 10:15-11:14am WILL 723
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COURSE OVERVIEW

Sociology is the study of social life, social change, and the social causes and consequences of human behavior. Sociologists investigate the structure of groups, organizations, and societies and how people interact within these contexts. Since all human behavior is social, the subject matter of sociology ranges from the intimate family to the hostile mob; from organized crime to religious traditions; from the divisions of race, gender and social class to the shared beliefs of a common culture.

- American Sociological Association, “What Is Sociology?”

This course is designed to introduce you to the core principles of sociology. We will also learn how sociologists systematically investigate our social world. Through reading, thinking, writing, and discussion, we will ask how individuals’ actions and life trajectories are influenced by their social contexts. We will use sociology’s analytic toolkit to discover how social structures shape dimensions of our everyday lives that we typically take for granted. And we will mobilize our understanding of social structure to understand and imagine alternative possibilities for structuring our social world.

This course fulfills the College of Arts & Sciences’ Society Sector requirement. Accordingly, the course is designed “to enable students to develop concepts and principles, test theories, and perfect tools that can be used to interpret, explain and evaluate the behavior of human beings in contemporary societies.” The course also fulfills the College’s Cultural Diversity in the U.S. requirement, according to which “through historical inquiry, the study of cultural expressions and the analysis of social data, students will develop their ability to examine issues of diversity with a focus on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class and religion.”

Course Goals

- You will learn about social structure and the power of social context to shape the behavior of individuals.
- You will learn and understand the mechanisms that create and sustain social inequality in the U.S.
- You will develop your sociological imagination to bring sociology to life in your own world and everyday life.
- You will develop your analytic skills by placing sociological theories into dialogue with one another, critically evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of an intellectual position.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There are two main components of our course: lecture meetings (twice a week) and recitation seminars (once a week, beginning the second week of class). This course is organized around close readings of texts, analytic writing, and deliberate thought and discussion. Each of the topics that we study will offer a new lens—indeed, a new language—for viewing and describing the world around us. Just like learning any language, it is impossible to fully grasp the vocabularies of sociology without speaking them! Your recitation seminars will afford you the opportunity to

build your fluency in the texts and concepts covered in the readings and lectures through exercises in which you apply concepts and engage in extended dialogue with one another. We will read both classic and cutting-edge sociological texts. The course will focus primarily on U.S. society, though at times we will compare the U.S. to other nations and discuss the relationships between societies.

Course Texts

All of our course texts will be available in both paper and digital formats. There is a large body of [research](#) in the cognitive sciences demonstrating that students who read and mark up [paper](#) copies of texts absorb more information than those who read digital copies. For this reason, I strongly encourage you to purchase the SOCI-1000 course reader.

You can purchase the SOCI-1000 reader from [Campus Copy Center](#) at 3907 Walnut Street. For those students who choose not to purchase a paper course reader, digital copies of course texts can be found in the Files section of our Canvas site.

Please note that our reading list may be subject to change as the semester proceeds. This will allow us to modify our readings to adapt our ongoing discussions to your interests, to track new developments in the scholarship and in our social world, or to adjust to unanticipated disruptions in our schedule.

Grade Breakdown

- Midterm exam: 17%
- Take-home midterm essay: 21%
- Final exam: 21%
- Final take-home essay: 21%
- Participation in recitation: 10%
- Reading responses: 5%
- Participation in lecture: 5%

Final grades will be calculated on the following basis. Please note that final grades will not be “rounded” to the nearest whole number.

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| A+: 97-99.99 | B+: 87-89.99 | C+: 77-79.99 | D: 60-69.99 |
| A: 93-96.99 | B: 83-86.99 | C: 73-76.99 | F: Below 59.99 |
| A-: 90-93.99 | B-: 80-82.99 | C-: 70-72.99 | |

Exams

You will take a midterm exam and a final exam. These exams are designed to assess your comprehension of course materials. Exams will consist of multiple-choice questions. The final exam will not be cumulative in the sense that the questions will address material that has been covered since the midterm exam. However, students should be able to make comparisons between texts examined earlier and later in the course. The date and time of the final exam will

be announced by the Office of the University Registrar later in the semester. *You should not enroll in this course if you are not able to commit to being on campus during the entire final examination period. Because this is a large class, we are unable to accommodate requests from students who need to take the exam early.*

Take-Home Essay Assignments

You will complete two short take-home essay assignments (1,000-1,500 words each). These essays will ask you to synthesize course materials and/or to place them into dialogue with experiences and events in the social world. Unexcused late assignments may be penalized up to one letter grade per day.

Reading Responses

Writing is thinking! Most weeks, beginning in Week 3, you will be expected to complete a brief reading response essay of no more than 250 words. Questions will be provided to guide your responses.

These brief essays will help you synthesize, analyze, assess, and engage with the arguments and evidence presented in the readings. Reading responses are designed to provide you with a low-stakes way of deepening your engagement with the course texts in order to better prepare you to participate in lecture and recitation. Developing these skills will also help you successfully complete our essay assignments.

Your reading responses must be submitted via the Assignments page on Canvas by 3:00pm Wednesdays, shortly before class. Satisfactory responses will address the question that has been posed and demonstrate that you have read and carefully considered the assigned texts. You must (very briefly) quote one or more of our texts, including page number(s), in your response. Please use parenthetical citation, e.g. (Smith 4) to cite page 4 of the text by Smith.

Reading responses are not designed to test whether, after having read the texts on your own, you can provide the “correct” answer to the prompt. What is important is that your writing conveys that you have completed the assigned reading and given it some thought. We expect that your interpretations of the text may deepen or change after you have participated in lecture and recitation. For this reason, you should not expect to receive written feedback on your reading responses.

Reading responses will be graded by one of our course’s Learning Assistants. All of our LAs are advanced undergraduate students who have successfully completed this course. LAs will be assessing whether you have responded to the prompt, meaningfully engaged with the reading, cited a quote from the text, adhered to the word limit, and submitted the reading response on time. (Responses will be closed one week after they are due.) You are always welcome to contact your LA or TA to discuss your reading responses during office hours.

You will be assigned a reading response or equivalent assignment most weeks over the course of the semester. Your two lowest grades will be dropped. This means that students who choose to

skip up to two reading responses will still have the opportunity to receive full credit.

Classroom Expectations

Attending lecture and recitation and contributing to our discussions are vital components of your experience in this course. Your questions, comments, and ideas are what will bring our course materials to life. Additionally, [research demonstrates](#) that attendance in class is the best known predictor of college student grades.

Your contribution in our lecture meetings begins with coming to class having carefully completed and annotated the readings. Because our discussions will be grounded in these texts, it is important that you bring the assigned readings to each class session. I encourage you to briefly browse through the text and your notes immediately before class to ensure that you are ready to participate in a discussion of our course materials.

Students may choose to participate in lectures by responding to questions I pose to the class or asking questions of their own. All students will be expected to actively contribute to discussions of course material in small groups and to respond to brief electronic polls. You will receive lecture participation credit for attending class and responding to one or more polls during each lecture.

Poll Everywhere

This course uses a web-based polling tool called Poll Everywhere. **To make sure you will get credit in Canvas for your Poll Everywhere activities, you must take the following steps:**

1. Create a Poll Everywhere account
 - a. Go to: <https://id.polleverywhere.com/login>
 - b. Enter your UPenn email address in the format: PennKey@upenn.edu.
 - c. Click “Login with University of Pennsylvania” then enter your PennKey and password on the Weblogin screen.
 - d. Poll Everywhere may send you a confirmation email. Open the email and click the link to confirm your registration.
2. Confirm that your UPenn email address is associated with your Canvas account. It can be in the format PennKey@upenn.edu or PennKey@school.upenn.edu and does not need to be your default address in Canvas.
 - a. In Canvas go to Account > Settings > Ways to Contact
 - b. If you do not see your UPenn email address listed here, use these instructions to add it as an additional email address:
<https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Student-Guide/How-do-I-add-an-additional-email-address-as-a-contact-method-in/ta-p/412>

For more information on using Poll Everywhere, please visit [Penn’s Poll Everywhere Guide for Students](#). Please contact canvas@pobox.upenn.edu if you have any difficulties with the registration process.

I understand that everyone has reasons why they may need to miss an occasional lecture. You can miss three lectures without it affecting your lecture participation grade. If you are at lecture but experienced a problem with Poll Everywhere, please see your TA immediately after class so they can adjust your grade as needed.

Lecture Discussion Guidelines

Some students will already feel comfortable speaking in class. For others, it will require courage. My hope is that, regardless of where you start, you can use our lecture and recitation meetings to push yourself beyond your comfort zone, whether that means speaking more, becoming a more active listener, or both. The sooner you speak out in class, the easier it will be for you to continue to thoughtfully participate in our discussions.

Our course materials may be open to a variety of interpretations, and yours may differ from those of your colleagues or your instructor. *There are no “wrong” comments or questions in our class, so long as they are respectfully offered and contribute to a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere for all participants.* We are here to learn from each other and to support one another’s learning.

Classroom safety

Although your academic experience in this course is undoubtedly important, it is also important for you to prioritize your health and the health of others. You should not attend class if you are ill. You do not need to notify me if you are unable to attend lecture due to illness.

If you miss lecture, we recommend that you take the following steps:

1. Access and review the PowerPoint slides on Canvas.
2. Your TA will assign you to a study group. If you miss class due to illness, you should ask members of your study group to share their notes, and you should expect to do the same if they become ill.
3. You can also visit me or your TA during office hours to clarify any points of confusion.

Your TA will discuss the attendance policy for recitation.

Although masks will not be required in lecture, students are encouraged to choose to use them to show respect for each other’s health and comfort. In recitations, TAs will set their own masking policies. Should your TA require that you wear a mask, you must do so.

Electronic Etiquette Policy

A growing body of scientific research demonstrates that using laptops in the classroom is more often than not detrimental to student learning. A Princeton University/UCLA study has shown that taking notes by hand is [more effective](#) in promoting memory retention than taking notes electronically. A randomized trial demonstrated that use of a laptop in the classroom is correlated with [lower exam scores](#). Another recent study suggests that non-academic internet use is widely prevalent among laptop users in the classroom, and that such activities are [inversely correlated](#)

[with class performance](#). Even class-related internet use was shown to have no benefit to class performance. Simply leaving one's phone on the table has been shown to be distracting enough that it [reduces empathy and rapport](#) between conversation partners. Even momentary interruptions [reduce our cognitive capacities](#). Additionally, in recent focus groups, many Penn sociology students have reported that they find laptops to be distracting and prefer courses with rules that limit their use.

For these reasons, if you choose to use a laptop in class, I ask that you equip your computer with internet-blocking software that you can switch on during our course meetings (e.g. [Freedom](#)) or a privacy filter for the screen so that your activities are not a distraction to others. If you expect to use the internet or check e-mail or chat messages during class, please consider sitting in one of the back rows of the classroom. Please switch off your phone or put it in airplane mode and place it in your bag before class begins, except when medically or situationally necessary.

I will, on occasion, ask you to open an internet-connected device to respond to in-class polls via Poll Everywhere. If you choose to respond to polls on your phone, I ask that you please put your phone away immediately after taking the poll.

RESOURCES

Student Office Hours

I *strongly* encourage everybody to attend student office hours as frequently as possible, either individually or in small groups. This means you! These meetings can be used to clarify topics from readings or lectures or to discuss anything else related to the course. Even if you don't have anything pressing to discuss, a quick chat will help me get to know you better and will provide me with an invaluable opportunity to get feedback from you about how our class is going, and how well I'm doing with helping you meet our course goals.

I use a signup system for student office hours so that we can all schedule our time more effectively. To attend, please sign up for a time slot *before office hours have begun* here: <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/gqrru/>. Office hours will typically be held in-person at my office (228 McNeil), though occasionally I may have to hold office hours via Zoom. The URL for Zoom sessions is provided on our Canvas homepage. I will announce any "open" student office hours that will not require signups (typically before exams). If you are unable to attend regularly scheduled student office hours, please contact me to make alternative arrangements.

In addition to meeting with me and your TA, I also encourage you to meet with your colleagues for study groups and conversation.

E-mail Policy

I am thrilled to speak with you after class on in office hours. However, it is simply not practical for me to field all of the e-mail traffic for a large lecture course. If you have a question about the course, please check the syllabus before sending an e-mail to make sure that your question hasn't already been answered. If you still have a question, please use the following guidelines when sending course-related e-mail:

1. **Teaching Assistant:** You should first email the TA for your recitation with any question related to the recitation or the course.
2. **Professor:** You should email the professor with any questions that cannot be resolved by your TA, or to set up a meeting with the professor outside of normal office hours.
3. **Learning Assistant:** You may email the LA for your recitation if you have questions about a grade or feedback they provided on a reading response.

Over the course of the semester, the instructors will collectively receive thousands of student e-mails. We will aim to respond to all e-mails **within 2 business days**. Please include “INTRO SOC” in the subject line of your e-mail. As noted above, you *do not* need to e-mail the professor or your TA if you will miss a lecture.

If we find that many students are asking the same questions, we will assume that others have the same question and will respond via a Canvas announcement.

Academic Integrity

Please read and familiarize yourself with Penn’s Code of Student Conduct and Code of Academic Integrity: <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/>. Regarding academic dishonesty, please note that plagiarism is not limited to copying an entire paper. Using quotes without properly citing them or using ideas without acknowledging their source also constitute plagiarism, as does the submission of AI-generated text. Student work may be submitted to digital detection tools in order to ensure that student work is original and human-created. Any form of cheating or plagiarism will result in receiving a grade of zero on the assignment and a referral to the University’s Center for Community Standards and Accountability for potential disciplinary action. In some cases students may also receive a failing grade in the course.

Student Disabilities Services and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University of Pennsylvania provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities who have self-identified and been approved by the office of Student Disabilities Services (SDS): <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/sds/>. If you require accommodations through SDS, please make an appointment to meet with your TA *immediately* in order to discuss your accommodations and your needs. If you have not yet contacted SDS, and would like to request accommodations or have questions, you can make an appointment by calling (215) 573-9235. The office is located in the Weingarten Learning Resources Center at Stouffer Commons 3702 Spruce Street, Suite 300. All services are confidential.

Other Accommodations

Student athletes, parents and caregivers, and others whose commitments might affect their ability to attend class or complete assignments on time should also inform their TA *at the beginning of the semester* about potential conflicts. You should also check in with your TA as soon as possible if religious holidays that occur during the semester will require you to miss class. Student athletes in need of extensions or make-ups due to intercollegiate competition must provide a letter from Penn Athletics. If you unexpectedly experience a life event that presents you with academic difficulties, you should inform your TA as soon as possible. We can also

refer you to CaseNet to help you get the support you need:
<https://www.college.upenn.edu/casenet>.

Academic Resources

Penn students are extremely fortunate to have access to an extensive network of academic resources. A majority of Penn students take advantage of one or more of these resources during their college careers, and I strongly encourage you to do so as well. The Office of Learning Resources provides professional consultation services in university-relevant skills such as academic reading, writing, study strategies, and time management. [PENNCAP](#) supports the success of a diverse group of academically-talented students, many from low-income and first-generation backgrounds. The Tutoring Center offers Penn undergraduate students **free**, accessible, and convenient options to supplement their academic experience. For more information, visit <https://www.college.upenn.edu/support>.

Additional Writing Resources

The Marks Family Writing Center operates under the assumption that all writers, regardless of their experience and abilities, benefit from informed, individualized, and personal feedback on their writing. The program's professional staff and trained peer specialists work with writers engaged in any stage of the writing process—from brainstorming paper topics, to formulating and organizing arguments, to developing editing skills. Appointments and drop-in hours are available. For more information, visit <http://writing.upenn.edu/critical/wc/>.

Additionally, the UC Berkeley Department of Sociology has published a writing guide to promote sociologically informed college writing. It includes useful tips for composing strong and effective analytic papers and for improving your general writing skills. The writing guide is [available for free online](#).

Well-Being, Stress Management, & Mental Health

If you (or someone you know) are experiencing personal, academic, or relationship problems and would like someone to talk to, reach out to Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) on campus. For more information about CAPS services, visit: <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/caps/about.php>.

COURSE OVERVIEW

UNIT 1: WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY, AND WHAT DO SOCIOLOGISTS DO?

August 29

Overview and Course Objectives

- No readings assigned

August 30 and 31: No recitation

September 4: No lecture (Labor Day)

September 6

The Sociological Imagination

- Please read the course syllabus (in the Files section of our Canvas page)
- Please follow the instructions on page 5 of the syllabus to set up your Poll Everywhere account.
- David Foster Wallace. 2005. "This is Water."
- C. Wright Mills. 1959. "The Promise." *Mapping the Social Landscape*.

September 5, 6 and 7: Recitation meetings begin

September 11

Sociological Research Methods

- Lisa Wade. 2021. "A Guide to Sociological Research." Appendix B in *Terrible Magnificent Sociology*.

September 13

Social Structure and the Individual

- Charles Lemert. 2011. "The Mysterious Power of Social Structures." Chapter 7 in *Social Things: An Introduction to the Sociological Life*, 5th edition.
- Russell Sage Foundation. 2023. Excerpts from "RSF Journal Contributors Discuss the Role of Status in Creating and Maintaining Inequality."

September 18

Culture

- Howard S. Becker. 1982. "Culture: A Sociological View." *Mapping the Social Landscape*.
- Lauren Rivera. 2015. "Beginning the Interview: Finding a Fit." Chapter 6 in *Pedigree: How Elite Students Get Elite Jobs*. Chapter 6.

UNIT 2: DEVIANCE AND DIFFERENCE

September 20

Deviance

- Erving Goffman. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Excerpts from Chapters 1, 2, and 4, pp. 1-25, 37-42, 48-51, 66-68, 73-74, 80-87, 126-130.

September 25

Race and Ethnicity

- Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer. 2009. "What is Racial Domination?" *Mapping the Social Landscape*.
- Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. 2017. Excerpts from "The Strange Enigma of Race in Contemporary America." Chapter 1 in *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*, pp. 1-4 and 8-10.

September 27

Racism: Interpersonal and Institutional

- Brent Staples. 1986. "Black Men and Public Space." *Harper's Magazine*.
- Melvin L. Oliver and Thomas M. Shapiro. 2006. *Black Wealth / White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality*. 2nd edition. Pp. 1-23 and 35-54.

October 2

Crime, Punishment, and Social Control

- Michelle Alexander. 2020. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. 2nd edition. Pp. 1-23, 121-144.

October 4

In-class midterm exam

October 4, 5 and 6: No recitation

October 9

Gender

- Judith Lorber. 2008. *Paradoxes of Gender*. Chapter 1, pp. 13-30.
- Schilt, Kristen. 2006. "Just One of the Guys? How Transmen Make Gender Visible at Work." *Gender and Society*. Pp. 465, 475-482.

October 11

Sexuality

- Lisa Wade. 2017. Excerpts from "American Hookup." *Readings for Sociology*.
- Tony Silva. 2021. "Straight Men's Same-Sex Behavior." *Contexts*.

October 11, 12, and 13: No recitation (Fall Break)

UNIT 3: SOCIAL CLASS AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

October 16

Theorizing the Division of Labor, Part I

- Adam Smith. 1776. *The Wealth of Nations*. Vol. I, Book I, Chapters 1-2 and excerpts from Vol II, Book V, Chapter 1. Pp. 4-19 and 263-266.

October 18

Theorizing the Division of Labor, Part II

- Karl Marx. 1891[1849]. "Wage Labour and Capital." Pp. 203-217 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*.

October 23

Social Class, Economic Mobility, and Poverty

- Matthew Desmond. 2023. *Poverty, by America*. Chapters 1, 3, and 7.

October 25

How Did We Get Here? Inequality in the "New" Economy

- Neil Irwin. 2017. "To Understand Rising Inequality, Consider the Janitors at Two Top Companies, Then and Now." *New York Times*.
- Arne L. Kalleberg. 2011. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs: The Rise of Polarized and Precarious Employment Systems in the United States, 1970s-2000s*. Chapter 2: "Economic Transformation and the Decline of Institutional Protections."

October 30

Work

- Richard Edwards. 1979. Excerpt from *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century*.
- Sarah Mason. 2019. "Chasing the Pink." *Logic Magazine*.

November 1

Technology and Society

- Cathy O'Neil. 2016. *Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy*. Chapters 1 and 7.

November 6

No class. Mid-term essay due at 10:00am.

UNIT 4: INSTITUTIONS, SOCIAL REPRODUCTION, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

November 8

Markets

- Steven K. Vogel. 2018. "The Marketcraft Thesis." Chapter 1 in *Marketcraft: How Governments Make Markets Work*.

November 8, 9 and 10: No recitation

November 13

Family

- Annette Lareau. 2002. "Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families." *American Sociological Review*.

November 15

Education

- Motoko Rich, Amanda Cox, and Matthew Bloch. 2016. "Money, Race and Success: How Your School District Compares." *The New York Times*.
- Anthony Abraham Jack. 2019. *The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges Are Failing Disadvantaged Students*. Pp. 1-52, 75-78.

November 20

Health and Illness

- David A. Ansell. 2021. "American Roulette," "Structural Violence and the Death Gap," and "The Three Bs: Beliefs, Behavior, and Biology." Chapters 1, 2, and 5 in *The Death Gap: How Inequality Kills*.

November 22, 23, 24: No lecture or recitation (Thanksgiving Break)

November 27

Politics, Social Movements, and Social Change

- Aldon Morris. 2021. "From Civil Rights to Black Lives Matter." *Scientific American*.
- Zeynep Tufekci. 2022. "I Was Wrong About Why Protests Work." *New York Times*.

November 29

Climate Change and the Environment

- Rebecca Elliott. 2021. *Underwater: Loss, Flood Insurance, and the Moral Economy of Climate Change in the United States*. Excerpt from "Introduction: Insurance and the Problem of Loss in a Climate-Changed United States" (pp. 1-10).

December 4

Course Wrap-up: What is Sociology For?

- Michael Burawoy. 2004. "Public Sociologies: Contradictions, Dilemmas, and Possibilities." *Readings for Sociology*.

December 6

Buffer day: No lecture planned

- Additional office hours will be held during our normal lecture meeting time.
- You may use this time to prepare for the final exam and/or get started on the final essay assignment.
- If lectures are canceled during the semester due to unforeseen circumstances, we may use this time to catch up.

December 11

Final Exam

Final Essay: Due Monday, December 18th at 10:00am