

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

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

Sociology 1000-401
Fall 2022

Lecture

Monday and Wednesday, 10:15-11:14am
ANNS 110

Student Office Hours

Friday, 1-3pm

Office hours will be held via Zoom

Sign up at: <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/gqrru/>
Zoom link available on our course's Canvas homepage

TA: Carlos Aguilar (he/him/his)

402: Thursday 8:30-9:29am WILL 205

403: Thursday 10:15-11:14am WILL 205

Office hours: Monday 12:00-2:00pm

Location: Zoom or in-person by appointment

Sign up at: <https://calendly.com/carlosaguilar>

Zoom link available on our course's Canvas homepage

Email: caguigon@sas.upenn.edu

TA: Elena Van Stee (she/her/hers)

404: Thursday 12:00-12:59pm MCNB 395

405: Thursday 1:45-2:44pm WILL 421

Office hours: Thursday, 5:30-7:30pm

Location: Zoom

Sign up at: <https://calendly.com/elenavanstee/officehours>

Zoom link will be provided when you sign up

Email: evanstee@sas.upenn.edu

TA: Andres Villatoro (he/him/his)

406: Friday 8:30-9:29am WILL 319

407: Friday 10:15-11:14am WILL 25

Office hours: Tuesday 2:00-4:00pm

Location: Zoom or in-person by appointment

Sign up at: <https://calendly.com/vandrespenn/andres-fall-2022-office-hours>

Zoom link available on our course's Canvas homepage

E-mail: vandres@sas.upenn.edu

TA: Joyce Kim (she/her/hers)

408: Thursday 3:30-4:29pm GLAB 100

409: Thursday 5:15-6:14pm MCNB 309

Office hours: Monday 3:00-5:00pm

Location: Zoom or in-person by appointment

Sign up at: <https://calendly.com/joycekim/office-hours>

Zoom link will be provided when you sign up

Email: joycek@sas.upenn.edu

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.”

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, including numerous studies authored by sociologists at the University of Pennsylvania. 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.

The course reader is currently in production and is not yet ready. I will let you know when the course reader is available to purchase and will provide instructions for doing so.

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: 20%
- Take-home essay #1: 20%
- Final exam: 20%
- Final take-home essay: 20%
- Participation in recitation: 10%
- Reading responses: 5%
- Participation in lecture: 5%

Final grades will be calculated on the following basis: Grades ending with a 0-2.99 will be assigned a “minus” grade (e.g. 80-82.99 = B-). Grades ending with a 3-6.99 will be assigned an unmodified letter grade (e.g. 83-86.99 = B). Grades ending with a 7-9.99 will be assigned a “plus” grade (e.g. 87-89.99 = B+). Please note that final grades will not be “rounded” to the nearest whole number.

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.

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 10:00 am Wednesday mornings 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 cite or (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 “right” 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. You are always welcome to discuss your responses with your TA during office hours.

You will be assigned a total of 10 reading responses over the course of the semester, and 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.

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. You will receive instructions on registering for PollEverywhere so that your responses can be recorded. You can record your responses on a laptop or cellphone via apps, the web, or SMS.

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.

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

We are learning in the midst of a global pandemic. 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, you are welcome to access the PowerPoint slides on Canvas. 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. 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.

The university administration has chosen to end the classroom masking mandate and is asking individual instructors to set masking policies for their own classes. There are strong feelings on both sides of this issue. Although masks will not be required in lecture at the outset of the semester, my hope is that students will choose to continue to use them to show respect for each others’ health and comfort. This policy may change later in the semester as conditions evolve. 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. 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/>. At the specified time, you will log into my Zoom office hours page (URL 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

Who should you e-mail with questions about the course? First, please read through the syllabus before you send 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.

Over the course of the semester the instructors will receive several hundred (or more) 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. Any form of cheating or plagiarism will result in disciplinary action may result in receiving a failing grade in the course and a referral to the Center for Community Standards and Accountability.

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. If you

unexpectedly experience a life event that presents you with academic difficulties, I can 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 31

Overview and Course Objectives

- No readings assigned

September 1 and 2: No recitation

September 5: No class (Labor Day)

September 7

The Sociological Imagination

- Read through the course syllabus
- David Foster Wallace. 2005. "This is Water."
- C. Wright Mills. 1959. "The Promise." *Mapping the Social Landscape*.

September 8 and 9: First recitation meetings

September 12

Sociological Research Methods

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

September 14

Social Structure and the Individual

- Charles Lemert. 2011. "The Mysterious Power of Social Structures" and "The Lively Subjects of Dead Structures." Chapters 7 and 8 in *Social Things: An Introduction to the Sociological Life*, 5th Edition.

September 19

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*.

UNIT II: DEVIANCE AND DIFFERENCE

September 21

Deviance

- Erving Goffman. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Excerpts from Chapters 1, 2, and 4, pp. 1-37, 38-42, 48-51, 66-68, 73-74, 80-97, 126-130.

September 26

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 28

Institutionalized Racism

- Thomas M. Shapiro. 2006. "Race, Homeownership, and Wealth." Chapter 25 in *Mapping the Social Landscape*.
- Ta-Nahesi Coates. 2014. "The Case for Reparations." (Audio version available at <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>)

October 3

Crime, Punishment, and Social Control

Guest lecture: Carlos Aguilar

- Michelle Alexander. 2010. "The New Jim Crow." *SAGE Readings for Introductory Sociology*.
- Roberto G. Gonzales. 2011. "Learning to Be Illegal: Undocumented Youth and Shifting Legal Contexts in the Transition to Adulthood." *American Sociological Review*.

October 5

In-class exam #1

October 6 and 7: Fall Break, no recitation

October 10

Gender

- Kristen Schilt. 2006. "Just One of the Guys? How Transmen Make Gender Visible at Work." *Gender & Society*.

October 12

Sexuality

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

UNIT 3: SOCIAL CLASS AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

October 17

Theorizing the Division of Labor, Part I

- Adam Smith. 1776. *The Wealth of Nations*. Vol. I, Book I, Chapters 1-3 and excerpts from Vol II, Book V, Chapter 1. Pp. 4-19 and 263-266.

October 19

Theorizing the Division of Labor, Part II

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

October 24

Social Class, Economic Mobility, and Poverty

Guest Lecture: Andres Villatoro

- Ken-Hou Lin and Megan Tobias Neely. 2020. "The Social Question." Excerpt from Chapter 2 in *Divested: Inequality in the Age of Finance*, pp. 28-33.
- Claude S. Fischer, Michael Hout, Martín Sánchez Jankowski, Samuel R. Lucas, Ann Swidler, and Kim Voss. 1996. "Inequality by Design." *The Inequality Reader*.
- Timothy M. Smeeding. 2008. "Poorer by Comparison: Poverty, Work, and Public Policy in Comparative Perspective." *The Inequality Reader*.

October 26

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*.
- Paul Osterman. 1999. "The Changing Structure of the American Labor Market." Excerpt from Chapter 2 in *Securing Prosperity—The American Labor Market: How It Has Changed And What To Do About It*.
 - o Skim pp. 50-63, skip pp. 68-70

October 31

Work

- Annie Lowery. 2020. "Don't Blame Econ 101 for the Plight of Essential Workers." *The Atlantic*.
- Richard Edwards. 1979. Excerpt from *Contested Terrain*.
- Sarah Mason. 2019. "Chasing the Pink." *Logic Magazine*.

November 2

Technology and Society

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

November 7

No class. Essay due at 10:15am.

UNIT 4: INSTITUTIONS, SOCIAL REPRODUCTION, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

November 9

Markets

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

November 10 and 11: No recitation

November 14

The Family and Social Reproduction

Guest Lecture: Elena Van Stee

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

November 16

Education

Guest Lecture: Joyce Kim

- Douglas B. Downey and Benjamin G. Gibbs. 2010. "How Schools Really Matter." *Contexts*.
- Anthony Abraham Jack. 2019. "Can Poor Students Be Privileged?" and "'Come With Me to Italy!'" Introduction and Chapter 1 from *The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges Are Failing Disadvantaged Students*.

November 21

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 and 23: No recitation

November 28

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 30

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), and Chapter 2: "Losing Ground: Values at Risk in an American Floodplain" (pp. 70-102).

December 5

Course Wrap-up: What is Sociology For?

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

Recitation will be held as usual on December 8 and 9

December 7 and 12

Buffer week: No lecture planned

- Additional office hours will be held during our normal lecture meeting time
- Use this time to prepare for the final exam and 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.

Final Exam: Date and time to be announced by the Office of the University Registrar

Final Essay: Due Monday, December 19th at 10:00am