

# Soc 110 Syllabus

Survey of Sociology – Summer 2016



## Instructor

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## Email

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## Office Location & Hours

Savery 216 D – Tues/Thurs 12-1pm

## General Information

### Course Description

When sociologists tell friends and family that they study sociology, common responses include: “Are you a social worker?” “Is that like psychology?” The answer to both is no. Sociology is a unique discipline that focuses on the study of social groups. We investigate social phenomena at a variety of levels and ask a wide range of questions: How much inequality is there in the U.S., and why? Is it necessary for a functioning society to have inequality? Why do people use social media? What effect does social media have on social movement organizing? Why do we have capitalism in the U.S.? Is the news media biased? What causes crime? These are just some of the questions that motivate sociologists, but the common theme among them is that they get at **social phenomena**, meaning human behavior, and the interaction between individuals and the societies in which they live.

This course is divided into **four** segments:

1. Sociology as a discipline
2. Media and technology
3. The economy
4. The environment

We will begin with a general overview of **sociology as a discipline**. What do sociologists *do*? How do they do it? What is social theory, and how do sociologists use it? The second topic – **media and technology** – will focus on three substantive areas: science, social media, and surveillance. The third topic – **the economy** – will look at economic institutions in the U.S. Areas of interest under this topic include stratification, debt and wealth, and labor markets. Our final unit – **the environment** – will cover how sociologists investigate the relationship between human societies and the surrounding environment and climate. We will have one day during the last week of the quarter which is left open – **you get to decide the topic**. We will have a class vote during Week 7 to determine the topic to be covered. I will provide some options, and leave it open for students to make suggestions.

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Explain what the field of sociology is, what sociologists do, and how they do it
2. Apply your **sociological imagination** to understand social phenomena
3. Summarize and describe current sociological topics in media and technology, the economy, and the environment
4. Write about social phenomena using clear, concise, objective language

### Readings and Textbook

I do not require you to purchase a textbook for this course. Instead, we will be using an open-source textbook available on the web (you can also download all 500 pages as a .pdf if you want to read it offline. They will ask you for a donation, which you can provide if you'd like, but you aren't required to do so). Follow the link below and click "view online" in the upper right corner, or "download a pdf." If you prefer a hardcopy, you can order one here as well (last time I checked it was \$30).

The link to the book can be found here: <https://openstax.org/details/introduction-sociology-2e>

Although we will be using this textbook, it is meant to act as *context*, or for providing a broad, general overview of the topics we are covering. More substantive research will be found in the readings posted to Canvas (any reading not listed as "Txt" on the course calendar will be posted on Canvas under "Files -> Readings." These readings will mostly be chapters from academic books. They will average about 15-20 pages – but don't be alarmed if that seems like a lot to you. I've chosen them specifically because I think you will find them interesting and easy to read, while also providing us with the basis for good discussion. That being said, please keep on top of the readings! Don't fall behind, or it will be hard for you to catch up.

## Assignments, Evaluation, Grading

Your grade will be composed of the following:

1. Exams: 40 points
2. Short essays: 40 points
3. Participation: 20 points

The assignments are structured to be relatively low-stakes, meaning that if you do poorly on one assignment, you will have a chance to make it up elsewhere. That being said, this course requires that you be consistently engaged: do not disappear for three weeks and expect to do well in the course. Your classmates and I are counting on you to be attentive, engaged, and reflective with the topics we cover in this course. More detailed instructions for each assignment will be provided on Canvas.

### Exams: 40 points

There will be two exams in this course: a midterm and final. The exams will be a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Each exam will be 20 points of your grade, for a total of 40 points.

Please note the exam dates on the course schedule, provided below. If you will be absent on these dates (or if there is a possibility that you might), please contact me immediately. If there is an emergency the day of an exam, I will require some documentation for your absence. Exams will be rescheduled as soon as possible.

### Short Essays: 40 points

There will be **four** short essays that you will write throughout the quarter; one paper for each segment (the sociological imagination; media and technology; the economy; the environment). The goal of the papers is to develop your *sociological imagination* – meaning that I want you to connect concepts from lecture and the readings to your everyday experiences. The prompts ask you to combine personal reflection with ideas from class.

The papers will be used as a basis for class discussion, and you will be sharing what you wrote with your peers. That means that you should put some effort and thought into the essays, and not write them at the last minute. Each paper is worth 10 points, for a total of 40 points. The due dates for each of the short essays are listed on the course schedule.

On the day the paper is due, please bring a hard copy to class. You will be discussing your paper in small groups, and then synthesizing ideas with the entire class. After discussion, you will spend 10 minutes in class reflecting and writing a brief response. The response will be attached to your paper, which will be turned in at the end of class.

Short papers will be graded for thoroughness, thoughtfulness, reflectiveness, and grammar and sentence structure. The in-class portion of the assignment will be graded on a pass/fail basis: if you do not complete the activity, or if the quality of your in-class reflection is poor, you will lose 1 point.

## Participation: 20 points

Participation will be made up of two components: (1) in-class assignments, and (2) discussion-based participation.

### In-class assignments

On random days throughout the quarter, you will be given a brief in-class quiz or writing assignment. Some of these will be announced ahead of time; others will not. You can expect about 4-5 in class assignments throughout the quarter (**not** including the reflections you will write based on your short papers). The assignments will be graded on a pass/fail basis. In total, these assignments will be worth half of your participation grade, or 10 points.

### Participation

I realize that everyone comes to this class with various comfort levels regarding participating in class. That being said, you can demonstrate participation in a variety of ways:

- Asking questions during lecture
- Responding to questions posed by the instructor
- Being engaged and attentive during group discussions
- Coming to office hours
- Sending questions via email, if you are not comfortable asking during lecture

A combination of the above factors will be considered when assigning participation grades. Thus, I hope everyone can find a way to engage with the course that matches their comfort level. However, I do expect everyone to attend lecture regularly. If you are not in class on a consistent basis, there is no chance you will receive full participation credit, because you have to be **present** to participate. Total, your participation makes up half of your overall participation grade, or 10 points.

## Grading Policy

If you would like clarification on a grade you received, or would like to dispute your grade, I require that you arrange for an in-person meeting by appointment. Appointments can be made no earlier than **24 hours** after you receive your grade. This is to ensure that you have time to reflect on the grade that you received, and consider why you want to dispute or clarify the grade. That being said, please contact me after the 24 hour waiting period to discuss any grades.

## Grade Conversion Scale

There are a total of 100 points you can earn in this course. The following scale will be used to translate your numerical score to UW's 4.0 scale.

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<b>98</b>	4.0	<b>90</b>	3.6	<b>82</b>	3.2	<b>74</b>	2.8
<b>96</b>	3.9	<b>88</b>	3.5	<b>80</b>	3.1	<b>72</b>	2.7
<b>94</b>	3.8	<b>86</b>	3.4	<b>78</b>	3.0	<b>70</b>	2.6
<b>92</b>	3.7	<b>84</b>	3.3	<b>76</b>	2.9	<b>68</b>	2.5

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## **Classroom Expectations**

We have a very diverse group of students in our classroom, and I expect everyone to be respectful and understanding. Demeaning, hateful, or dehumanizing language will not be tolerated. There will be times when a peer will say something that you disagree with. Please make every effort to be patient and respectful, and engage in debates on the basis of the concepts being discussed, without making personal attacks. We all come from different backgrounds and have different experiences, and these need to be respected.

It is very important that you come to class on-time. Although I understand that we all have other obligations and responsibilities, entering class late is disruptive and contributes to a poor learning environment. Please make every effort to arrive to class on-time.

## **Academic Code of Conduct**

This course will follow University of Washington's Student Conduct Code. This includes academic honesty policies. Plagiarism will result in a zero on the assignment, and possibly a failing grade in the course. Per UW's policy, all allegations of plagiarism and academic dishonesty are subject to formal investigation and possible sanction by the UW Office of Student Affairs. Be aware that sustained findings of plagiarism or academic dishonesty can result in your suspension or dismissal from UW. For more information, please visit the following:

<http://www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html>

<http://depts.washington.edu/grading/issue1/honesty.htm>

## **Disability Accommodations**

If you would like to request accommodations for a permanent or temporary disability, please contact Disability Resources for Students (DRS):

- Mary Gates Hall, 011
- Phone: 206-543-8924
- Email: [uwdrs@uw.edu](mailto:uwdrs@uw.edu)

If you already have a letter from DRS indicating that you require accommodations, please provide this to me as soon as possible so I can make appropriate arrangements.

## Course Schedule

Topic	Week	Date	In-class	Due: readings, assignments
<b>Introduction to sociological concepts</b>	1	Tues June 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions; syllabus</li> <li>• What is sociology? What do sociologists do?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read syllabus</li> </ul>
		Thurs June 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to basic sociological concepts</li> <li>• Begin social theory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Txt: Ch 1: “Introduction to Sociology” [first page of the chapter]</li> <li>• Txt: Section 1.1: “What is Sociology?”</li> <li>• Txt: Section 1.2, “The History of Sociology”</li> </ul>
	2	Tues June 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finish social theory</li> <li>• Discuss “The Promise”</li> <li>• Review Paper 1 prompt and rubric</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C. Wright Mills: “The Promise,” p. 3-13</li> <li>• Txt: Section 1.3, “Theoretical Perspectives”</li> </ul>
		Thurs June 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group work activity #1</li> <li>• Sociological methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Short paper #1 due</b></li> <li>• Txt: Section 1.4, “Why Study Sociology?”</li> </ul>
<b>Media and technology</b>	3	Tues July 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science</li> <li>• Review Paper 2 prompt and rubric</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Txt: Section 19.1: “The Social Construction of Health”</li> <li>• Shim: “Constructing Race,” p. 405-419</li> </ul>
		Thurs July 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• boyd: “It’s Complicated,” p. 77-99</li> </ul>
	4	Tues July 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group work activity #2</li> <li>• Digital labor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Short paper #2 due</b></li> <li>• No readings</li> </ul>
		Thurs July 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveillance</li> <li>• Midterm review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angwin, Larson, Mattu, and Kirchner: “Machine Bias”</li> </ul>
		Tues July 19	<b>MIDTERM</b>	

Topic	Week	Date	In-class	Due: readings, assignments
<b>The economy</b>	5	Thurs July 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Film: The One Percent</li> <li>• Mid-quarter reviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Txt: Section 18.3, “Work in the United States”</li> </ul>
	6	Tues July 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labor in the new economy</li> <li>• Working for – and interacting with - businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ehrenreich, “Nickel and Dimed” p. 22-49</li> </ul>
		Thurs July 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wealth and debt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Txt: Section 9.1, “What is Social Stratification?”</li> <li>• Txt: Section 9.4, “Theoretical Perspectives on Social Stratification”</li> <li>• Oliver and Shapiro, “White Wealth/Black Wealth,” p. 285-299</li> </ul>
<b>The environment</b>	7	Tues Aug 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group work activity #3</li> <li>• Poverty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Short paper #3 due</b></li> <li>• Desmond, “Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City.” Pages TBD</li> </ul>
		Thurs Aug 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to sociology of the environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Txt: Section 20.3 (“The Environment and Society”)</li> </ul>
	8	Tues Aug 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sociology of food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Winson, “The Industrial Diet,” p. 95-110</li> </ul>
		Thurs Aug 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group work activity #4</li> <li>• Pollution, climate change, migration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Short paper #4 due</b></li> <li>• Boer et. al., “Is there Environmental Racism?” p. 793-810.</li> </ul>
<b>Wrap-up</b>	9	Tues Aug 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic TBD</li> <li>• Final review</li> <li>• Course evaluations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading TBD: depending on which topic we choose to cover</li> </ul>
		Thurs Aug 18	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	