
Introduction to Sociology

SOC 1101 A

Spring 2017

Class meets: MWF 11:05 - 11:55 a.m.
Location: D. M. Smith 105
Professor: Dr. Kate Pride Brown
Office: Old Civil Engineering Bldg., Office 135
Office Hours: W 1-3pm, or by appointment
Office Phone: 404-894-0616
Email Address: k.p.brown@gatech.edu

TA Name: Sooa Lee
TA Email: leesooa85@gatech.edu
TA Office Hours: Th 10-12
Location: OCE G42

TA Name: James Surgent
TA Email: james.surgent@ceismc.gatech.edu
TA Office : Hours: M 11-1
Location: OCE G42

Course Overview

What is sociology? Is it a science? What is the subject matter of sociology? What does it mean to think from a sociological perspective? These are the primary questions this course is designed to address. We all exist in the social world, but often the processes that make up this world are taken for granted. Sociology attempts to problematize what is so frequently assumed to be “normal” or “natural” by subjecting human interaction to empirical study using rigorous and replicable methods. Hopefully, by the end of this course, you will be able to approach the social world with a new angle of thought, to see relationships that were previously invisible, and will be able to formulate questions or problems about society at the macro and micro levels.

Because sociologists study a vast number of issues related to the social world, the breadth of topics in sociology is more than one course can comfortably cover. This introductory course will not give students a full grounding in the dominant theories of every sociological sub-field; instead, subjects are chosen so as to enhance the sociological imagination. Once enflamed, the sociological imagination may yet call you to continue to follow sociological pursuits.

Readings

The following books are required:

Methland: The Death and Life of the American Small Town, by Nick Reding

On the Line: Slaughterhouse Lives and the Making of the New South, by Vanesa Ribas

Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work, by Kimberly Kay Hoang

The Bet: Paul Ehrlich, Julian Simon, and Our Gamble over Earth's Future, by Paul Sabin

Other readings will be made available to students electronically on T-Square.

Ground Rules/Requirements

Come to class *on time* and prepared. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings and exhibit comprehension of the material in class. We will be discussing the readings in class, and hopefully the discussion will help clarify issues in the text, but students should not expect class to simply recapitulate the readings. Students should endeavor to understand the readings themselves first before coming to class.

I have tried to keep the assigned readings for each class to between 30-45 pgs. Occasionally it will be more, but only if I think it is a quick read, or if you have more time to accomplish it (i.e. after a weekend or holiday). Sometimes readings will be shorter when the class discussion will be more in-depth on a particular subject or issue.

Class time will be made of participatory lectures, discussions, and small group exercises. Because I value student participation, it is important that all students feel safe to bring forward their thoughts and opinions. Yet the learning process involves critical thought. Sometimes I might play devil's advocate, and sometimes your peers may challenge your ideas. Please embrace the opportunity to be challenged – do not be discouraged! You may occasionally be less than correct about something, but if you already knew everything, then you would have nothing left to learn, and that would be really boring. At the same time, if you were not smart enough to handle intellectually rigorous debate, then you would not be here.

All that being said, ***personal attacks or belittling another's ideas is NEVER allowed in the classroom.***

Students are responsible for knowing material that I have covered in class. To that end, if you do not understand what I have said, either because I have talked too quickly, used words that were unfamiliar to you, or if I simply was not clear, **raise your hand and ask me to clarify**. This is your responsibility. There is no shame in it. The real shame is if you are too embarrassed to ask and then miss points on a quiz or exam.

Attendance Policy

Students are responsible for material covered in class that is above and beyond what may be learned strictly from the readings. Therefore, regular attendance is necessary for successfully completing the course requirements. Although I will not be taking attendance, failure to attend class may negatively impact your grade.

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For more information on Georgia Tech's academic Honor Code, visit: www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity for investigation. But regardless of any potential penalty imparted by that body, always bear in mind the underlying premise: you are called upon to conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the knowledge and capabilities that you are striving to attain.

Accommodation of Disabilities

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Georgia Tech will provide reasonable accommodation of all medically documented disabilities. If you have a disability and would like the Institute to provide reasonable accommodations for the disability during the course, please notify the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible (www.disabilityservices.gatech.edu). Please make sure that I am provided a reasonable accommodation request letter *as soon as possible*, and definitely well in advance of any necessary accommodation.

Technology in the Classroom

Many students use laptops or tablets in the classroom. I see this as inevitable. That being said, I dislike the practice. It is far too easy to succumb to the temptation that connectivity poses. Moreover, repeated studies have shown that students who take notes by hand retain significantly more information than those who type. My stated preference is that you take notes by hand, and I have pedagogical reasons for suggesting that you do so. But I respect your preference to use your personal electronics for course purposes, if that is what you choose to do. However, if you deviate from course purposes to watch the latest music video or scroll on Facebook, then, while I will not prevent you from using your electronic device, know that you no longer have my respect in doing so.

Cell phones are another matter. Cell phones must be silenced and put away during class. Any cell phone visible during a quiz or test is an assumed ethics violation. That student's quiz or test will be immediately collected and the student reported to the Office of Student Integrity.

Video recording of the lecture is never allowed. The classroom should be a space of free inquiry. It is a safe space where students should be allowed to take intellectual risks. No one should fear that their vulnerable moments speaking up in a classroom might find their way onto the Internet for public ridicule. Audio recording is only allowed on a case-by-case basis with the instructor's consent.

Disclaimer

The subject matter of sociology includes our lives, our values, and our belief systems. Sociology studies some of the most hotly contested issues of our time, as well as some issues that are not contested but could be. To succeed in this class, you must be open to challenge; and you must be respectful of your peers who do not think the same way you do. We all have opinions, we all have politics, but these are not in themselves pertinent in our discussions. *What* you think in this class is less important than *how* you think, and by that I mean *sociologically*. I will not ever grade you because of your political beliefs or your social values; I will only grade you on your ability to use, apply and create sociological knowledge. I ask that you grant me, your teacher, that same respect as well.

Grading and Grade Scale

Participation	10%
Quizzes	10%
Mid-term 1	25%
Mid-term 2	25%
Final exam	30%

A=100-90, B=89-80, C=79-70, D=69-60, F=59-0

Assignments and Evaluation

Participation: Regular attendance, preparedness, short assignments, in-class exercises and class discussion will together comprise the participation grade.

Quizzes: There will be six (6) quizzes, one approximately every other week. The quizzes cover basic concepts in the readings and lectures. If you read and come to class regularly, these should be relatively straight-forward. Questions will be multiple choice and true/false.

Mid-term Exams: There will be two (2) mid-term exams. The first will cover the content from the beginning of term, and the second will ONLY cover content from the period between the first and second mid-term. The mid-term will *greatly* resemble an extended version of a quiz.

Final Exam: The final exam is cumulative, covering all major concepts covered in class, but the distribution of content will favor the latter third of class. A study guide will be provided.

Extra Credit: Don't even ask. No way, no how. There are 180 of you. Please try to imagine what it would be like for me and my trusty TAs to negotiate and grade that many extra assignments. For our sanity and equity to the entire class, there is a no-extra-credit policy. (Actually, that is not entirely true. I have one exception to the "no extra credit" rule. It applies to the entire class and will be discussed later.)

Make-Up Work: I will not personally adjudicate whether your sickness was sufficiently severe, or your loss sufficiently grievous, to warrant an excused absence and the opportunity to make up missed work. If you provide a documented excused absence from the Georgia Tech central administration (a note from your doctor or parent will not suffice), then you may make up quizzes, tests or required assignments from that date. Athletes participating in approved Institute athletic activities must provide me with a signed approval notice in order to make up missed work.

Area E Approved Learning Outcome:

- Student will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior.

Explain how the course satisfies the Core Area E learning outcome:

This course focuses on general sociological theories and methods, and it provides an introduction to the sociological study of stratification and social institutions. To demonstrate that they have met the Area E learning outcome, students will be able to describe how social institutions impact individual and group behavior, compare the major theories and methods used in studying society, and posit sociological explanations for observed social outcomes.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester students should be able to:

- Analyze a social phenomenon according to several different sociological theories or perspectives (functionalism, conflict theory and symbolic interaction).
- Explain the appropriate use of and general epistemology behind various sociological methods (qualitative, quantitative and historical).
- Articulate how sociologists understand stratification and social institutions, and hypothesize how these may impact outcomes at the micro (individual), meso (sub-cultural) and macro (national/global) levels.

Course Schedule

Jan 9	Introduction to the Course	-----
Jan 11	What is sociology?	“Shakespeare in the Bush” by Laura Bohannon, <i>Natural History</i> 75: 28-33
Jan 13	What is sociology?	“The Promise,” [excerpt], by C. Wright Mills <i>The Sociological Imagination</i> “The Rules of Sociological Method” [excerpt], by Emile Durkheim
Jan 16	No Class – MLK Jr. Day	Read <i>Methland!!</i>
Jan 18	Class	<i>Methland</i> , by Nick Reding (Part 1)
Jan 20	Class	<i>Methland</i> , by Nick Reding (Chap 6-8)
Jan 23	Class	<i>Methland</i> , by Nick Reding (Chap 9 & 10)
Jan 25	Class	<i>Methland</i> , by Nick Reding (Chap 11 - 13)
Jan 27	QUIZ 1	<i>Methland</i> , by Nick Reding (to the end)
Jan 30	Functionalism and Conflict	“Some Principles of Stratification” by Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore, <i>American Sociological Review</i> 10: 242-249 “ Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis” by Melvin Tumin, <i>American Sociological Review</i> 18: 387-394
Feb 1	Race & Ethnicity	<i>On the Line</i> , by Vanesa Ribas (Preface, Chap 3)

Feb 3	Race & Ethnicity	<i>On the Line</i> , by Vanesa Ribas (Chap 4)
Feb 6	Race & Ethnicity	<i>On the Line</i> , by Vanesa Ribas (Chap 5)
Feb 8	Race & Ethnicity	<i>On the Line</i> , by Vanesa Ribas (Chap 6 & 7)
Feb 10	Race & Ethnicity QUIZ 2	<i>On the Line</i> , by Vanesa Ribas (Conclusion)
Feb 13	MID-TERM 1	-----
Feb 15	Gender and Symbolic Interactionism	“The Trouble with Testosterone” by Robert Sapolsky <i>Dealing in Desire</i> , by Kimberly Hoang (Chap 6)
Feb 17	Gender	<i>Dealing in Desire</i> , by Kimberly Hoang (Intro, Chap 1,2)
Feb 20	Gender	<i>Dealing in Desire</i> , by Kimberly Hoang (Chap 3)
Feb 22	Gender	<i>Dealing in Desire</i> , by Kimberly Hoang (Chap 4 & 7)
Feb 24	Gender QUIZ 3	<i>Dealing in Desire</i> , by Kimberly Hoang (Chap 5 & Conclusion)
Feb 27	Methods: Qualitative	“Thick Description,” by Clifford Geertz Appendix to <i>Dealing In Desire</i>
March 1	Crime and Punishment	“Police Accounts of Normal Force,” by Jennifer Hunt

March 3	Methods: Quantitative	"Telling the Truth about Damned Lies and Statistics," by Joel Best
March 6	Crime and Punishment	<i>Punishment and Inequality in the United States</i> , by Bruce Western (Chap 1 & 2)
March 8	Crime and Punishment	"The Mark of a Criminal Record," by Devah Pager
March 10	Crime and Punishment QUIZ 4	<i>Punishment and Inequality in the United States</i> , by Bruce Western (Chap 3)
March 13	Academic Writing	"Tips for Good College-Level Writing" on T-Square
March 15	Evaluating Sociological Knowledge	-----
March 17	MID-TERM 2	-----
March 20	Spring Break	-----
March 22	Spring Break	-----
March 24	Spring Break	-----
March 27	Methods: Historical	"Turning the Tables: How case-oriented research challenges variable-oriented research," by Charles Ragin
March 29	Environment	<i>The Bet</i> , by Paul Sabin (Intro & Chap 1)
March 31	Environment	<i>The Bet</i> , by Paul Sabin (Chap 2)
April 3	Environment	<i>The Bet</i> , by Paul Sabin (Chap 3)

April 5	Environment	<i>The Bet</i> , by Paul Sabin (Chap 4)
April 7	Environment QUIZ 5	<i>The Bet</i> , by Paul Sabin (Chap 5&6)
April 10	Education	<i>Savage Inequalities</i> , by Jonathan Kozol, (Chap 1)
April 12	Education	<i>Savage Inequalities</i> , by Jonathan Kozol (Chap 2)
April 14	Education	"The Myth of Charter Schools" by Diane Ravitch, <i>New York Review of Books</i> , November 11, 2010
April 17	Work/Technology	"They're Watching You at Work," by Don Peck, <i>The Atlantic</i> , December 2015
April 19	Work/Technology	<i>The Rise of the Creative Class</i> , by Richard Florida (excerpt) "A warning from Bill Gates, Elon Musk, and Stephen Hawking," by Quincy Larson "The Communist Manifesto, Part 1," by Karl Marx
April 21	Work/Technology QUIZ 6	"A Sociology of Steve Jobs," by Kieran Healy "The Real Legacy of Steve Jobs," by Sue Halpern, <i>New York Review of Books</i> , February 2016
April 24	Last Day of Class	-----
April 28	FINAL EXAM!	8:00am