

Sociology 117: Principles of Sociology

Fall 2011

Whitman College

M 8-8:50, WF 9-9:50, Maxey 306

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What is sociology, and how will we approach the discipline this semester? Sociology is the study of human group behavior, to put it simply. But it is more complex than that. This semester, we will take a whirlwind tour of many facets of sociology, from examining how we as individuals fit into society and its institutions, to explaining how individual consumption choices are enmeshed in global society. While it may seem as if we jump quickly from topic to topic, the whole picture that emerges by the end of the semester should give you a pretty good glimpse into sociology as a discipline – its theories, concepts, and methods. We'll read sociological books and articles that cover topics relating to race, class, family life, adolescence, schools, status, gender, economics, and even roller derby. While we won't be able to cover all the topics in sociology, we'll get a glimpse at the exciting topics that sociologists study, and the theories and methods they use to study them.

What do I get to read?

Daniel Jaffee. 2007. *Brewing Justice: Fair Trade Coffee, Sustainability, and Survival*. University of California Press

Annette Lareau. 2003. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. University of California Press.

Murray Milner. 2006. *Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids: American Teenagers, Schools, and the Culture of Consumption*. Routledge.

Plus some online sources available on the Soc 117 CLEo website. To access the site, go to <https://cleo.whitman.edu/portal/> and login using your email username and password. Select SOC117 A F11 from your list of active sites and navigate to the information you want. The readings on the CLEo site are alphabetically organized by author under "Resources," then "Readings."

All books are available in the bookstore.

What am I expected to learn in this class?

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

1. Understand and describe sociology as a discipline; that is, to describe what sociologists do and explain why it is important.
2. Analyze the world sociologically, both broadly and in everyday life; that is, to utilize sociological theories and concepts to interpret the world, and to employ sociological methods in doing so.
3. Understand yourself better by examining your own life and experience using a sociological perspective and "the sociological imagination."

How do my professor and I talk to each other?

Always feel free to e-mail (janninmy) or call (x4952) me about anything concerning the course, and I will do the same. Please visit me during office hours or set up an appointment. I sometimes send messages about my classes via e-mail class listserves, including reminders, assignment modifications, and syllabus changes (for which you are responsible)– so **read your e-mail!**

As a professor, I spend my time doing 4 jobs: I teach, I do research and am involved in professional sociology, I serve on committees and do service for the college, and I am an academic adviser to students. I also have a life outside of my paid work ☺, which includes a great husband named Neal, a very precocious 7-year-old named Aaron, and a slightly psychotic dog named Maggie (all of whom

will be brought up in various lectures throughout the semester). Please be considerate of my time, and I'll be respectful of yours. If you need to talk with me, feel free to set up an appointment or come during my office hours. If you miss a scheduled in-person appointment with me, though, don't assume that I can reschedule. You can call me at home, too, preferably before 9 p.m. Email is fine, of course. I check email every day during the day, but only intermittently in the evenings and on weekends.

How will I be evaluated in this class?

Evaluation of students will come from the course requirements listed below. Students will be notified by mid-semester or thereafter if they are receiving a D or F, but any student at any time can come and see me to discuss progress.

Should I give feedback to my professor?

Feel free to provide comments at any time to me on how you think the course is going: what needs improving, what needs more emphasis, how the course is set-up, any special needs you may have, etc. This will provide you a voice to determine what you get out of the class.

If you are a student with a disability who will need accommodations in this course, please meet with Julia Dunn, Director of Academic Resources (Mem. 205, X5213, dunnjl@whitman.edu) for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs. All information about disabilities is considered private; if I receive notification from Ms. Dunn that you are eligible to receive an accommodation, I will provide it in as discrete a manner as possible.

What happens if I turn in a paper late?

For every day a paper is late, beginning just after the time it is due, I take off 2% (out of 100%). Often, it is worth losing 2 percentage points if it means you will be turning in a more polished paper a day late. You decide what would work best for you. For those of you on the opposite end of the "turning-things-on-time" spectrum, **I'll gladly accept and make comments on drafts of papers at least 72 hours (*that's 3 full days*) before the due date. Because of the size of this class, I am unable to read drafts carefully enough unless they are given to me according to that timeframe, so please don't ask ☺. But do feel free to come and discuss ideas for papers with me, no matter what stage of the writing process you are in.**

What are my course requirements?

1. Research Poster Project [done in sections] (300 points)
 2. Sociological Autobiography (200 points)
 3. Midterm exam (150 points) and Final exam (200 points)
 4. In-Class (150 points)
- Total points: 1,000

At the end of the semester, how can I tell what grade I will get?

930-1000 points= A	900-929 = A-	880-899 = B+	830-879 = B
800-829 = B-	780-799 = C+	730-779 = C	700-729 = C-
600-699 = D	599 and below = F		

Can you tell me more about all of these exciting course requirements?*

* General grading criteria for all writing assignments include items such as: turned in on time, typed and formatted correctly, includes all necessary components of assignment, is written sociologically, has correct spelling and grammar, shows insight, creativity, and ability to make sociological connections.

Research Project (300 points total)

This semester you will be doing a large project that is based on both individual and group efforts. After coming up with a topic and individually writing a literature review/annotated bibliography on that topic, you will conduct original research with a partner or two on one or your topics (in the form of surveys), analyze the data, and present a write-up (in Power Point form) to the class in a “mini-conference” on one of the last class days. To begin, you will write an individual literature review on a topic that will be arranged with Professor Janning. Then, you will begin your group work on survey design, data collection, analysis, and project write-up with one or two people who are working on a similar topic. The desired goal of completing this empirical research in one semester requires collaboration. Here’s how the total of 300 points breaks down:

Individual Literature Review: 100 points (individual grade)

Application for Research and Survey Design: 50 points (group grade)

Group Project and Presentation: 150 points (100 points group grade, 50 points individual presentation grade)

Each group will consist of 2 or 3 students. The survey data will be collected in our class. All surveys will be written and distributed in paper form (no online surveys). General topics from which to choose your specific topics will be provided. More details will follow as each step is introduced.

Sociological Autobiography (200 points): This 3-4 page assignment will present an opportunity to see how you see yourself within society, how, as C. Wright Mills put it, your *biography* fits in with *history*. It will also be a way for you to apply theory to everyday life. Details about this assignment are on the last page of this syllabus. **Re-writes will not be allowed, so please meet with me if you have questions.**

Midterm exam (150 points) and Final exam (200 points): A midterm exam is scheduled for Wednesday, October 19th. A final exam, scheduled for Friday, December 16 from 9-11 a.m., will cover material from classes after the midterm, plus any methods and major theoretical concepts from the first part of the semester. Exam format will be a combination of objective components and essay questions. Exams may not be made up if missed, unless there is a college-approved excuse (this requires an excused absence from the Dean of Students Office).

Participation (150 points): Class participation – do it. Your grade will be much better if you do... This includes attendance (tell me if you’re going to be absent; if I notice you’re absent often, I reserve the right to subtract points from your final participation grade – most likely one letter grade for each absence after 3 unexcused). This also includes active listening and engagement in class discussions, participation within and/or outside of class (via e-mail or office visits – for those of you who prefer to be less vocal in class), making productive comments that are not tangential, being prepared if called upon, and various in-class assignments and small group tasks. You will get an A in participation if: you don’t have more than 3 unexcused absences, you actively speak in class (or meet with me outside of class or via e-mail to discuss things), you respect other students’ opinions, you actively listen and do not dominate discussion, you show a genuine engagement with the subject matter, you complete all in-class/small writing assignments and small group work effectively and well. Be exceptional in all of these areas, and you’ll do fine in terms of participation. Be less than exceptional, and your grade will reflect that accordingly. *Even if you are rarely absent and regularly listen attentively -- if you rarely or never make productive comments in our large-class discussions, rarely or never e-mail or meet with me to discuss concepts in place of large-class participation, and/or only participate when you are in a small group, do not expect higher than a B in participation.* In class, please respect others’ voices and present your views productively in order to make this class interesting, engaging, and intellectual. Part of the participation grade will be:

- *Reading Summaries/Presentations:* We will be reading 3 books this semester, two of which are Lareau’s *Unequal Childhoods* and Milner’s *Freaks, Geeks and Cool Kids*. With these two

books, one day will be devoted to discussing large portions of reading. These multiple chapters will be divided among you, so that you'll have the opportunity to synthesize material in small groups. For these lengthier reading assignments, students will work in small groups to present the material to classmates in both written and oral form. In these cases, you will not be responsible for reading the other chapters, *although you may be tested on material that is discussed in class about those chapters*. More details will follow.

Please staple all of your papers. Please save all of your papers electronically in case the paper copy gets lost in the shuffle.



SOC 117 (FALL 2011) SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASS

W 8/31

CLEo readings (Reading from Everyday Sociology Blog TBA; Becker "Culture: A Sociological View")

SOCIOLOGY: KEY QUESTIONS, PARADIGMS, AND CONCEPTS

F 9/23 Sociological Practice & Public Sociology

F 9/2 How do Sociologists Think?
CLEo readings (Berger "Sociology as Individual Pastime;" Mills "The Sociological Imagination")

M 9/5 What Makes a Sociological Research Question Unique? (Brewing Justice) Jaffee Introduction, Chapter 1 and Appendix (yes, read the appendix!)

W 9/7 Why Do History and Geography Matter for Sociology? (Brewing Justice) Jaffee Chapters 2-3

F 9/9 What Does Group Comparison Look Like? (Brewing Justice) Jaffee Chapter 4 & Conclusion
Note: if you are interested in economic sociology, immigration, or environmental issues, you should read the rest of Jaffee's book!

M 9/12 History, Concepts, and Theories
CLEo readings (Macdonis "Sociology: Perspective, Theory, and Method" [note - this is in 3 parts on the CLEo site])

W 9/14 Structural Functionalism
CLEo readings (Merton "Manifest and Latent Functions;" Gans "The Uses of Poverty: The Poor Pay All")

F 9/16 Conflict Theory
CLEo readings (Wikipedia "Conflict Theory"; Marx & Engels "Manifesto of the Communist Party")

M 9/19 Symbolic Interactionism
CLEo readings (Wikipedia "dramaturgy (sociology);" "Symbolic Interactionism" website)

W 9/21 Socialization, Ritual & Culture

RESEARCHING SOCIOLOGY, PART I

M 9/26 Introduction to Research Methods
CLEo reading (Kanagy & Kraybill "The Methods of Sociology")
Sociological Autobiography due at classtime - STAPLED PAPER COPY PLEASE

W 9/28 Information Literacy - no reading
MEET IN MAXEY COMPUTER LAB (last names A-J)
Topic Chosen for Research Project (A-J)
(See Assignments folder on CLEo)

F 9/30 Information Literacy - no reading
MEET IN MAXEY COMPUTER LAB (last names K-Z)
Topic Chosen for Research Project (K-Z)
(See Assignments folder on CLEo)

RACE, SOCIAL CLASS, AND FAMILIES

M 10/3 Race and Status

W 10/5 Social Class
Lareau Chapter 1

F 10/7 Unequal Childhoods
Lareau Chapter 2 & Appendices A & B

M 10/10 no class

W 10/12 Unequal Childhoods
Lareau Chapters 3-5

F 10/14 Unequal Childhoods
Lareau Chapters 6-7

M 10/17 Unequal Childhoods

One Chapter from Lareau Chapters 8-11 [TBA]
+ Chapter 12
**Chapter summary due at classtime -
PAPER COPY PLEASE**

W 10/19
Midterm exam

SCHOOLS, STATUS, AND CONSUMPTION

F 10/21 Adolescence and Status
Milner Chapters 1-2 and Appendix II

M 10/24 Adolescence and Status
Milner Chapters 3-4; CLEo reading (England
"Hooking Up and Forming Romantic
Relationships on Today's College Campuses")

W 10/26 Adolescence and Status
Milner Chapters 5-7
**Literature review due at classtime
(individual assignment for the poster
project) - PAPER COPY PLEASE**

F 10/28 Adolescence and Status
One Chapter from Milner Chapters 8-10 [TBA]
**Chapter summary due at classtime -
PAPER COPY PLEASE**

RESEARCHING SOCIOLOGY, PART II

M 10/31 Sampling, Survey Design, and
Ethics
CLEo reading (Babbie "Survey Research")

W 11/2 Research Project Overview

GENDER & SOCIETY

F 11/4 Gender Definitions
CLEo reading (Andersen "The Social
Construction of Gender")
**Application for Research/Survey Design
due at classtime- PAPER COPY PLEASE**

M 11/7 Gender and Childhood
Socialization
CLEo reading (Thorne "Boys and Girls
Together...")

W 11/9 Applying Gender Concepts: Roller
Derby
CLEo reading (Carlson "The Female
Significant...")

F 11/11 Gender and Sport
CLEo reading (Ezzell "Barbies on the Pitch...")

M 11/14 Gender and Intimate
Relationships
CLEo reading (Armstrong et al. "Sexual Assault
on Campus...")

W 11/16 Gender, Work, and Family
CLEo reading (Baxter "The Joys and Justice of
Housework")

F 11/18

STUDENT RESEARCH POSTER PRESENTATIONS

M 11/28 Data Analysis overview

W 11/30 Work day for posters

**Note: the next 4 sessions may run 15-
20 minutes late - be advised!**

F 12/1 Research Project presentations

M 12/5 Research Project presentations

W 12/7 Research Project presentations

F 12/9 Research Project presentations

**Final Exam Friday, December 16 9-11
a.m.**

Sociology 117: Sociological Autobiography Fall 2011

This paper is worth 200 points. About 3-4 pages, double spaced, 11 or 12 point font. Please turn in a stapled PAPER COPY **during class time** on the date it is due – Monday, September 26.

How does sociological theory apply to your everyday life? Define one of the following theoretical paradigms: structural functionalism, symbolic interaction, conflict theory. Include in your definition at least two terms that are part of the theoretical paradigm, terms that stem from readings and/or lectures. Explain how this theory (including the two additional terms) applies to some experience or set of experiences from your everyday life. Finally, in one paragraph, define the sociological imagination and provide evidence that you utilize this skill in your paper.

For example, how might a symbolic interactionist, using terms such as dramaturgy and role-taking, interpret a wedding or funeral or sporting event? How might a functionalist interpret your involvement with Facebook (including terms such as manifest/latent function and collective consciousness)? How might a conflict theorist understand someone's involvement in an environmental activist organization, using terms such as false consciousness and praxis? For any of these, then, how would writing about your experience viewing a wedding or using Facebook or being an activist demonstrate that you are using your sociological imagination?

You can format this paper in many ways – first do the definitions, then apply the theory and terms to your life, then talk about the sociological imagination. Or, you could start with the sociological imagination, then talk about your experiences and provide the conceptual definitions within this narrative. Or some combination of these.

If you'd like to apply theory to a book that you have read, or movie that you have seen, or some other media consumption experience, that'd be fine.

No outside readings are required, but if you utilize ideas from course readings, please cite them according to style and citation guidelines from the American Sociological Association, which can be found under Resources on the Soc 117 CLEo site. Include page numbers or url addresses for direct quotes. If you cite lecture notes, just include the date.