What is sociology? Hopefully you have some idea already, or you wouldn’t be taking this course. But if somebody asked you what sociology is, what would you say? When you are finished with this course you should know the answer that question, although if somebody asks you to tell them what sociology is, you still might find it is tricky to sum it up in a way that really covers it. If you do find it easy to sum up...well let’s just say you won’t. The discipline of sociology is broad. There are a variety of topics, opinions, approaches, methods, and theories that all fall under the [proverbial] sociological umbrella. At the edges, sociology fades into anthropology, psychology, political science, economics, English, cultural studies, media studies...the list goes on. Sociology fades into so many other social science and humanities disciplines because there is really no arena of social life that some corner of sociology does not deal with. Sociology is a way of looking at the world. It is a way of asking questions, and a way of framing answers. It is a collection of tools and ideas that can be and are applied diversely and expansively. And all of these tools and ideas revolve around the study of people in society.

In this course, I will introduce you to sociology through giving you a fairly wide – but not exhaustive – survey of the discipline and its subareas. Most weeks are on separate domains of sociology, but some topics carry over across domains. This is not a course for students who have already declared sociology as their majors, so I do not assume you have any prior familiarity with the sociology. We will start out from the very beginning. What is sociology? What is society? Where does the personal end and where does the social begin?

**The Social Science Core**

**Perennial Questions:** In this course we will discuss many broad questions about social life. What is society? What are the relationships between the individual and society? What takes place in everyday interaction that we often take for granted? How do social structures shape our lives?

**Historical Perspective:** We will discuss how the field of sociology has changed over time, and about how society is changing as different generations of people move between different broad positions in society. We will discuss how historical changes in the social structure shape and are shaped by the lived experience of individuals and groups who live within those structures and through those changes.

**Cultural Diversity:** We will discuss how differences in race, class, gender and age are portrayed in popular media; and about how social/cultural differences are accompanied by different sorts of social experiences and expectations.

**Develop a Personal Philosophy:** Students in this course will become familiar with a range of different perspectives for looking at the social world. People tend to gravitate toward certain perspectives and away from others. Students will be responsible for noticing which perspectives they identify with more strongly, and will hone this understanding further as they express their thoughts on social life through class participation and the reflection paper and final paper.

**Writing:** In total, 70% of the course grade will be based on students’ writing (in the reflection paper and final paper). Sociology as a discipline largely takes place through writing. Sociologists write and read journal articles, theoretical books, popular books, and textbooks. Sociology is influenced by lived
experience and current events, and in turn influences lived experience and policy decisions; but the discipline of sociology itself is by and large an enterprise of written communication. Students considering further study in sociology should put a lot of thought into their sociological writing.

**Course Requirements:**
1% first quiz
3% second quiz
4% third quiz
2% fourth quiz
10% attendance
10% participation
36% reflection paper (3 pages; upload to Canvas October 28 by 11:59pm)
34% final paper (5 pages; upload to Canvas December 15 by 11:59pm)

**More About Course Requirements:** The 4 quizzes will each consist of 4 multiple choice questions. I will space them roughly evenly throughout the semester, and will take place at the beginning of classes, but I will not tell students in advance exactly on what days they will happen. There will not be quizzes during the weeks when the reflection paper and final paper are due. I will take attendance each class. An attendance sheet will be passed around at exactly 12pm as class starts, for students to check off their names. I will pass around a second, “late arrivals” sheet a few minutes later. Each sheet will only go around once. If your name is not on a sheet I will count you as absent for that class. Participation in class discussion is important, but different people have different styles and patterns of contribution. Students who dominate class discussions, leaving others little opportunity to speak, do not get a gold star from me. Students who never say anything in class do not either. Each student should aim to contribute at least once during each class period, although I will not be tallying off precisely how many times so and so spoke, and when. I also consider meeting with me during office hours to count for class participation; although students should keep in mind that participating in class discussions makes class more lively and interesting, and is a good habit for students to get into.

**Grading scale**
A: 93 – 100%
A–: 90 – 92%
B+: 87 – 89%
B: 83 – 86%
B–: 80 – 82%
C+: 77 – 79%
C: 73 – 76%
C–: 70 – 72%
D+: 67 – 69%
D: 63 – 66%
D–: 60 – 62%
F: 0 – 59%

**Academic Integrity**
Students must remain honest about their own work, and not plagiarize the work of others or present others’ ideas as their own without referring to the applicable sources of the ideas. Students cannot refer
to imaginary facts or sources of information in their work. Students cannot assist others in breaches of academic integrity either. This should all be common sense, but then again, what is “common sense” really? To view the University’s full statement about academic integrity and how students are bound to it, visit: http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/integrity.html.

Accommodations
If you are a student with a documented disability seeking reasonable accommodations in this course, please contact Kathy Duggan, (617) 552-8093, dugganka@bc.edu, at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities and ADHD, or Paulette Durrett, (617) 552-3470, paulette.durrett@bc.edu, in the Disability Services Office regarding all other types of disabilities, including temporary disabilities. Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.

Required Texts:
Ken Plummer. Sociology: The Basics
Arlie Russell Hochschild. The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling
Paul Taylor and Pue Research Center. The Next America: Boomers, Millennials, and the Looming Generational Showdown

More about readings: If the BC bookstore does not have the required texts in immediately stock, don’t panic! We will not start to use any of them until the third week of classes. All other readings will be available on Canvas.

SCHEDULE
Week 1: INTRODUCTION, September 3

Week 2: Social Interaction, September 8 and 10
Goffman. “on face-work” and “embarrassment and social organization” in Interaction Ritual

Week 3: Emotion, September 15 and 17
Hochschild. “ch 2: feeling as clue,” “ch 3: managing feeling,” ch. 4: feeling rules” and “ch 5: paying respects with feeling” in The Managed heart

Week 4: Gender, September 22 and 24
Hochschild. “ch 8: Gender, Status, and Feeling” in The Managed Heart
Nystrom. “ch 4: blood, lust, and the fe/male narrative in Bram Stoker’s Dracula (1992) and the Novel (1897)” in Draculas, Vampires, and Other Undead Forms: Essays on Gender, Race and Culture
Picart and Greek. “ch 6: when women kill: undead imagery in the cinematic portrait of Aileen Wuornos” in Draculas, Vampires, and Other Undead Forms: Essays on Gender, Race and Culture
Delaney and Madigan. “Gender and Sport” in The Sociology of Sports: An Introduction

Week 5: Race, September 29 and October 1
Taylor. “ch 6: the new immigrants” and “ch 7: hapa nation” in The Next America

Week 6: Religion & Social Movements, October 6 and 8
Taylor. “ch 9: nones on the rise” and “ch 4: battle of the ages?” in The Next America
Goode. “ch. 8: social movements” in Moral Panics: the Social Construction of Deviance
Zuckerman. “Ch 5: social life affecting religion” & “Ch 6: religion affecting social life” in Invitation to the Sociology of Religion

Week 7: Deviance and Moral Panic, October 13 and 15
Goode. “ch. 1: introduction” in Deviance in Everyday Life
Cohen. “ch. 1: deviance and moral panics” in Folk Devils and Moral Panics

Week 8: Overview of Sociology 1, October 20 and 22
Plummer. Sociology: the Basics, chapters 1, 2 & 3

Week 9: Overview of Sociology 2, October 27 and 29
Plummer. Sociology: the Basics, chapters 4, 5 & 6
REFLECTION PAPER DUE October 28 (upload to Canvas by 11:59pm)

Week 10: Health, Illness, Science and Technology, November 3 and 5
Markel. “Introduction” and “Epilogue: public health is purchasable” in When Germs Travel
Taylor. “ch 11: getting old” in The Next America
Freitas Jr. “welcome to the future of medicine” in The Transhumanist Reader

Week 11: Economy and Society, November 10 and 12
Taylor. “ch 5: money troubles” in The Next America
Hochschild. “ch 6: feeling management: from private to commercial uses” in The Managed Heart

Week 12: Family, November 17
Taylor. “ch 2: millennials and Boomers” and “ch 8: whither marriage?” in The Next America

Week 13: Work, November 24
Hochschild. “ch 7: between the toe and the heel: jobs and emotional labor” in The Managed Heart
Chester. “ch 5: positive attitude” and “ch 7: professionalism” in Reviving Work Ethic

Week 14: Overview of Sociology 3, December 1 and 3
Plummer. Sociology: the basics, chapters 7, 8 & Conclusion

Week 15: NO CLASS, December 8 and 10
WORK ON FINAL PAPERS

Week 16: NO CLASS
FINAL PAPER DUE December 15 (upload to Canvas by 11:59pm)