SOCY 1001.01: Introductory Sociology
Summer 2016 (May 17 – June 17)

Instructor: Jared Fitzgerald
Email: jared.fitzgerald@bc.edu
Class Location/Time: TBD, T/Th 6:00 – 9:15 PM
Credit Hours: 3
Office Hours: TBD
Office: 410B, McGuinn Hall

Boston College Mission Statement

Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

Course Description

This class is an introduction to sociology. Sociology is the systematic study of human societies, focusing on social patterns and problems often taken as given in everyday life. Sociologists study a wide variety of subject matter including crime and deviance, education, the economy, politics, racial and gender inequality, poverty, the environment, and many more. This class will be a survey of these different sub-fields of sociology. The point of the class is to teach you how to view these issues from a sociological perspective to better understand how our lives are shaped by social structures beyond our individual selves.
What should I expect to get from this course?

By the end of this course, you will:

- Understand how sociologists study the world
- Be able to discuss and critically examine the various sub-fields of sociology
- Be able to evaluate ideas and discussions using a “sociological imagination”
- Understand how social structures shape the world we live in and how history plays a vital role in shaping our current social structures.
- Demonstrate knowledge across cultural settings and will learn the impact of culture, gender, race and sexuality in sociology as demonstrated by in-class discussions, written assignments and exams.
- Demonstrate understanding of ethical concerns pertaining to sociology as demonstrated by in-class discussion, written assignments and exams.

Required Book(s)


*There will also be a few additional readings on Canvas you will be expected to read.

What will I do in this class?

1. **Exams**: There will be two exams in the course. Each exam will be worth 22.5% of your final grade (225 points each). They will be a mix of multiple choice questions, short answer questions, and short essay questions.

2. **Assignments**:
   a. **First Paper**: The first paper you will write in this class is a 5 page (double-spaced) sociological autobiography. In this autobiography, you will highlight the sociological factors that have shaped your life. Some of these factors could include social class, family, religion, race/ethnicity, or other sociologically relevant topics. This paper is worth 12.5% of your final grade (125 points). There will be more specific instructions provided via Canvas as well as in class.
   b. **Second Paper**: The second paper you will write in this class will be a sociological analysis. It is 7 pages (double-spaced). As sociology is a broad area of study, you are free to choose a topic that interests you most to discuss. For instance, you could choose representations of gender in video games as your topic of discussion. This paper is worth 20% of your final grade (200 points). There will be more specific instructions provided via Canvas as well as in class.
      i. **In-Class Presentation**: You will each present on the topic you choose for your second paper. The presentation will be a short 7-10 minute presentation with a short time for questions after. The presentation is worth 3.5% of your final grade (35 points).
c. **In-Class Quizzes:** Reading prior to class is important for us to have good and informed discussion during class. As such, I expect you to come to class having read the material(s) outlined in the course schedule for that day. In order to ensure this is done, there will be quizzes given at random throughout the semester. The quizzes will not be difficult if you have done the reading, but it will be clear if you have not read. These quizzes will be worth 15% of your final grade (150 points).

i. **Discussion Leader:** You will also be required to lead two group discussions on one of the assigned readings in class. For this, you will meet with your group and lead the discussion on the assigned reading. The day prior to class you must submit a list of at least 5 discussion questions to Canvas. This is worth 4% of your final grade (20 points each).

You will submit all assignments online via Canvas unless otherwise noted.

*If you are having trouble with any of the above assignments or are having anxiety about the exams or assignments, do not hesitate to contact me. This class is designed for you to develop a sociological perspective not for you to stress out!*

**Grading and Evaluation**

1. **Exams:** 45% of final grade (450 points)
2. **Assignments:** 55% (550 points)

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<tr>
<th>Course Grade</th>
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All students can access final grades through Agora after the grading deadline each semester. Transcripts are available through the [Office of Student Services](#).

**Can I get extra credit?**

You bet you can get extra credit! There are two extra credit assignments that you can complete. Both extra credit assignments entail you selecting a magazine, a newspaper, a TV program, or a movie and discussing the sociological aspects of it. You can choose any one of the topics we cover on the syllabus as “sociological.” Each assignment is worth 25 points. Thus, you are able to get 5% extra credit in this class. There will be more specific instructions posted on Canvas.
The Fine Print

The Social Science Core:

As a core course, we will address the following issues throughout class:

I. Perennial Questions:
   a. How does society work?
   b. Who has power in society and why?
   c. Is society something shaped by people or do people shape society?

II. Cultural Diversity:
   a. In this course, we much of the focus will be on understanding different types of inequality within society. Thus, we will discuss how race and ethnicity play an important role in how people experience life. For instance, a person born male and heterosexual into a wealthy white family automatically has more opportunities in life than a person born female and homosexual into a poor black family. These are stark contrasts, and there are certainly levels between these, but only through understanding these structural barriers to equality (and eschewing the notion that individuals make their own paths independent of outside forces) can we begin to address inequality in society.

III. Historical Perspective:
   a. History plays a crucial role in society. In line with the above discussion on life chances, history shows us that these social forms have developed over time. The structural benefits of being a heterosexual white male do not simply arise by default. Rather, this has developed over time. To be sure, we will not just focus on the micro-level (individuals) in this class. We will also consider the different ways that inequality has developed on a macro-level (country) as well. Much of this understanding will come through learning about theoretical perspectives in sociology.

IV. Methodology:
   a. As sociology is a social science, there are specific ways in which research can be conducted. There are various methodologies that sociologists use to study the social world and we will briefly examine these. Beyond understanding the basic methodologies utilized in sociology, though, we will focus on critically examining not only social research but also our thinking in everyday life (i.e. not taking any information as a given, but critically examining it).

V. Writing:
   a. Throughout the course, you will utilize the information and understandings from class for your written assignments. Throughout your life it will be important for you to be able to form arguments and to express your thoughts clearly. Doing these writing assignments will help you with both of these things.

VI. Creating a Personal Philosophy:
   a. This class will push you to engage with your previously held notions and prejudices. You will be compelled to think about a variety of issues including what sorts of privileges or disadvantages you have had in life, how you fit into society and the different ways in which you could change society for the better.
Class Policies:

I. **Class Attendance:** Attending class is an important component of learning, and is especially important in a shortened summer session. You are expected to attend all class sessions. If you must miss a class, let me know beforehand. In most cases, if there is a quiz you will get a zero for it. In the rare case that you are physically unable to attend class due to illness you will need to provide a doctor’s note indicating this. If you miss class for other important reasons discuss this with me beforehand.

II. **Late to Class:** Although I am somewhat lenient, I expect that you will attend class on time. If you arrive after the quiz has been given, you will not have an opportunity to take it after others already have.

III. **Late Assignments:** You are able to turn in assignments late. However, you will be deducted 10% of the grade per day until it is turned in. Thus, if you turn it in 3 days late, you will be deducted 30% on top of whatever your regular grade would have been.

IV. **Email Response:** I am generally pretty quick with my email responses. As a rule, though, you can expect a response to your emails within 24 hours so long as the email comes between Monday and Friday. On weekends, it may take longer for a response.

**Academic Integrity:**

Your work must be your words and ideas. When writing papers, use quotation marks around someone else’s exact words and identify whose words they are. If you come across a good idea, by all means use it in your writing, but be sure to acknowledge whose idea it is. Failure to comply will result in (a) automatic failure of the assignment, and (b) a report to the Dean and the Committee on Academic Integrity. For further information, please review the College’s policies on academic integrity here: [http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/offices/stserv/academic/integrity.html](http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/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.

**Textbook Support:**

If you need support to buy books, please contact the Montserrat Coalition—go to Brock House at 78 College Road, call 617-552-8865, or e-mail Paula Dias at paula.dias@bc.edu.
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Reading(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1: May 17</td>
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<td>Introductions&lt;br&gt;The Sociological Imagination</td>
<td>Conley, Ch. 1&lt;br&gt;Mills</td>
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<td>Week 1: May 19</td>
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<td>Theory&lt;br&gt;Methods&lt;br&gt;Culture and Media</td>
<td>Conley, Chapters 1, 2, 3&lt;br&gt;Davis&lt;br&gt;Miner</td>
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<td>Socialization&lt;br&gt;Networks and Groups</td>
<td>Conley, Chapters 4, 5&lt;br&gt;Goffman</td>
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<td>Social Control/Diavance&lt;br&gt;Stratification (Class)</td>
<td>Conley, Chapters 6, 7&lt;br&gt;Loewen</td>
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<td>Race&lt;br&gt;Gender</td>
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<td>Armstrong, et. al&lt;br&gt;Feagin</td>
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<td>Week 4: June 7</td>
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<td>Religion&lt;br&gt;Authority and the State</td>
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