

Introduction to Sociology (SC001.04)
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Gretchen Sisson
McGuinn 420
Mailbox 59

Office Hours: MW 10-11,
and by appointment.
gretchen.sisson.1@bc.edu

Sociology could be defined as the scientific study of human society, ranging from the smallest of social interactions, to the emergence of a global society. This course is designed to introduce you to the study, theory, and methods of sociology. We will examine discrete social interactions, collective behavior, and social institutions. As humans are inherently social creatures, any aspect of our lives and culture can be examined through sociological investigation.

There are many ways to study sociology and social structure, and given the length of a semester, it would be impossible to be fully comprehensive in this pursuit. For this course, we will first focus on familiarizing ourselves on theories and debates of race, class and gender, and then we will move on to looking at how these variables influence the structure, execution, and influence of seven different contemporary institutions: healthcare, education, the justice system, marriage, family, work, and religion. These are by no means all of the areas of social difference, and by no means all of the important social institutions with which we regularly interact; however, by looking at these variables and structures, we will hope to provide insight into the functioning of society as a whole, and the role of individuals within it. Furthermore, most of our readings will be primarily concerned with American dynamics and institutions. Students are encouraged to examine broader or more international perspectives in their own work, and to bring any of these insights into class discussion.

As one of the university's core course requirements in the social science, this course necessarily contains elements common to all core courses. These elements include:

1. **A concern with the perennial questions of human existence.** Many of the fundamental questions of sociology address these questions of human existence: What is society and what is the individual's place within it? How do social hierarchies and institutions develop, and how do they influence the way we see and treat ourselves and others? What are sources of inequality; how do they intersect; how do they permeate our lives? How can social change be achieved, and can sociology inform it? We will not attempt to answer these questions fully, but instead learn how sociology addresses such inquiries and how we might apply such knowledge to our own lives.
2. **A consideration of the role of history in human affairs.** Only by incorporating a historical context can we gain awareness of how our current social institutions and modes of knowledge are themselves cumulative products of sociohistorical processes. We will consider not only how contemporary society has evolved from past societies, but look to see how current constructions and events will influence future social institutions and interactions.
3. **An attention to cultural diversity.** One of the primary purposes of this course is to bring attention to the many sources of diversity in the human experience. The first section of the

course will specifically look at diversity of race, class, and gender, but readings throughout the semester will examine variations in ethnicity, sexuality, country of origin, health status, and religion. Identifying sources of difference and their intersections, deconstructing hierarchies, and recognizing both the potential and challenges inherent in organizing a diverse society will be among the primary goals of the course.

4. **An introduction to the methodology of the field.** As part of the course, you will be required to write a final paper that reflects an awareness of the methods of sociological research and knowledge production. We will consider modes of social observation and learning specifically as they apply to students' work, paying particular attention to the nature of deductive and inductive inquiry, the requirements of a social scientific investigation, and strategies for moving from data to analysis.
5. **A strong writing component.** Writing will be an essential component of this course, as the ability to develop analysis, criticism, and debate is vital to academic development. The fundamental goals of good writing will be to achieve brevity, clarity, and relevance in all arguments, and to never confuse complexity of thought with complicated writing. Students will be required to write two response papers that creatively engage the course readings, and one research paper that responds to a question of their own choosing. One class period will be devoted to a writing workshop where students will identify both strengths and areas of in need of improvement in their own writing.
6. **A contribution to the development of a personal philosophy of life.** This course is designed to challenge you to think more critically about your position in life – how your background, race, class, gender, ethnicity have influenced your family, goals, beliefs, politics, and interactions with others. You may develop a more nuanced way of thinking about this positionality and your role in society, as well a more complex way of considering how societies function and change, how individuals within society interact with one another.

Grading

Your grade in the course will be broken down as follows:

Class Participation & Attendance	10%
Response Paper (1)	20%
Response Paper (2)	20%
Discussion Lead	20%
Final Project	30% (20% for Paper, 5% each for Proposal/Presentation)

Final grades will be determined as follows: A= 100-90; B= 89-80; C= 79-70; D= 69-60; F < 60.

Class Participation: This criterion includes coming prepared to class, actively sharing your insights into the readings, and contributing knowledge you may have from other courses, current events, or relevant personal experience to the discussion. Boring discussions are boring for me, too. Speak up! You're encouraged to bring relevant news stories/editorials/blog posts to class that you think would be relevant to the day's discussion.

Response Papers: You will be responsible for two response papers throughout the semester; each will be 5-7 pages in length. The first (**due September 30**) will consider our initial examination of race, class, and gender and their intersections. The second, you will select at least one of the seven areas of focus and consider closely how the different social hierarchies are enacted in that setting. **You are encouraged to turn in your second paper earlier in the semester, once we have covered the focus area about which you would like to write; the paper is due, at the latest, by November 23.** More details about the papers will be provided throughout the semester.

Discussion Lead: You (either on your own or as part of a group of two) are responsible for presenting and leading a day's discussion. This does not have to (but could) include a full PowerPoint presentation, but it should include discussion questions or conversation starters that will engage your fellow classmates in consideration of the assigned readings. Make sure you either meet with me in person or discuss via email your plans before your assigned date. And, yes, you can write your second reflection paper on the topic you are also presenting. The discussion will be graded according to the following adjacent rubric. *Note: I recognize that some class sessions require a heavier reading load and/or involve more complex ideas and concepts. I will take this into consideration when evaluating class presentations.*

<u>Is the class session well organized?</u>					
Relates material to previous readings	1	2	3	4	5
Provides internal summaries and transitions	1	2	3	4	5
Maintains continuity in the discussion	1	2	3	4	5
Summarizes main points at end of presentation	1	2	3	4	5
Paces class session appropriately	1	2	3	4	5
<u>How is the content presented?</u>					
Presentation aids are useful	1	2	3	4	5
Presents background information for ideas	1	2	3	4	5
Explains difficult terms and concepts	1	2	3	4	5
Integrates readings and discussion/presentation	1	2	3	4	5
Helps clarify material	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Is the presenter credible?</u>					
Appears well-prepared	1	2	3	4	5
Understands the material	1	2	3	4	5
Is able to admit insufficient knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
Speaks audibly and clearly	1	2	3	4	5
Communicates enthusiasm	1	2	3	4	5
<u>How is the presenter's rapport with the other class members?</u>					
Encourages participation	1	2	3	4	5
Responds constructively to class members	1	2	3	4	5
Treats members equitably	1	2	3	4	5
Recognizes when others are confused	1	2	3	4	5
Shows respect for other's view points	1	2	3	4	5

Final Project: In lieu of a final examination, you will be responsible for writing a term paper (10-15 pages) on any social problem/issue/institution/question that you would like to examine more closely, using any variety of sociological methods. Because there is such a wide range of topics, you're encouraged to find something about which you're very interested, and will continue to be interested in throughout the semester. A proposal for your final project is due **October 14**, and presentations of the projects will take place in class **December 2 – 9**. The length of the presentations will be dependent upon the final number of students enrolled in the course. Additional suggestions and requirements for the paper will be discussed before proposals are due.

Readings

For this course, you will need to purchase a copy of Anne Fadiman’s *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. Copies will be available at the BC Bookstore, or used copies are available (for usually less than \$1) on Amazon. The remainder of the readings will be available in a coursepack from the bookstore or electronically on the library’s website.

You are responsible for completing all of the readings by the day to which they are assigned.

	September 9	First Day of Class – Welcome!
Thinking about Race, Class, and Gender	September 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “‘United’ We Stand: Responses to the September 11 Attacks in Black and White” (439-464) by Harlow and Dundes in <i>Sociological Perspectives</i> 47(4) ▪ “Harnessing and Challenging Hegemony: The U.S. Peace Movement After 9/11” (357-381) by Maney, et al. in <i>Sociological Perspectives</i> 48(3)
	September 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “The Promise” Chapter 1 (3-25) from Mills’ <i>The Sociological Imagination</i>
	September 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “White Privilege and Male Privilege” (1-19) by McIntosh ▪ “Loving Blackness as Political Resistance” Chapter 1 (9-20) from hooks’ <i>Black Looks: Race and Representation</i>
	September 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Doing Gender” (125-151) by West and Zimmerman in <i>Gender and Society</i> 1(1) ▪ “Waiting/Waitressing” (329-246) by Hall in <i>Gender and Society</i> 7(3)
	September 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “The Forms of Capital” Chapter 4 (96-111) by Bourdieu from <i>The Sociology of Economic Life</i> ▪ “The Meaning of Upper Class,” Chapter 2 (21-36) from Ostrander’s <i>Women of the Upper Class</i>
	September 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Past History/Present Reality” and “Is This a White Country or What?” Chapters 8-9 (145-196) from Rubin’s <i>Families on the Fault Line</i>
Social Research	September 25	Final Project Guidelines & Intro. to Social Inquiry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “A Introduction to Inquiry,” Part 1 (11-40) and “Modes of Observation,” Part 3 (85-119) from Babbie’s <i>Observing Ourselves</i>
	September 28	Yom Kippur
Medicine and Healthcare	September 30	DUE: First Response Paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “The Need for a New Medical Model: A Challenge for Biomedicine,” (129-136) by Engel in <i>Science</i> 196(4286) ▪ <i>The Business of Being Born</i> (Viewed in class)
	October 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down,” “Do Doctors Eat Brains?” and “Take as Directed.” Chapters 3-5 (20-60) from Fadiman’s <i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i>
	October 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “A Little Medicine and a Little Neeb,” Chapter 9 (106-118); “The Big One,” Chapter 11 (140-153); “The Eight Questions,” Chapter

		17 (150-161) from Fadiman's <i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i>
	October 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Married to Medication" and "Searching for Authenticity" Chapters 3-4 (62-126) from Karp's <i>Is it Me or my Meds?</i>
	October 9	No Class
	October 12	Columbus Day
Education	October 14	DUE: Final Project Proposals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "The Savage Inequalities of Public Education in New York" (83-132) from Kozol's <i>Savage Inequalities</i>
	October 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Social Class Differences in Family-School Relationships: The Importance of Cultural Capital" (73-85) by Lareau in <i>Sociology of Education</i> 60 ▪ "Prep School and Public School Graduates of Harvard: A Longitudinal Study of the Accumulation of Social and Cultural Capital" (211-225) by Zweigenhaft in <i>The Journal of Higher Education</i> 64(2)
Social Research	October 19	Proposal Discussion & Writing Workshop <i>Readings Pending</i>
Justice System	October 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Moral Entrepreneurs," Chapter 8 (147- 162) from Becker's <i>Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance</i> ▪ "... and the Poor Get Prison" Chapter 3 (111-166) from Reiman's <i>The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison</i>
	October 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "The Ninth Floor," Chapters 2-5 (45-85) from Earley's <i>Crazy</i> ▪ "The Costs of Racial Profiling," Chapter 5 (91-128) from Harris's <i>Profiles in Injustice</i>
Marriage	October 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Grounds for Marriage," Chapter 9 (149-163) by Skolnick and "Divorce, American Style," Chapter 10 (164-172) by Rhode from Yalom and Carstensen's <i>Inside the American Couple: New Thinking/New Challenges</i>
	October 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage" (848-861) by Cherlin in <i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i> 66 ▪ "For Better or Worse: Exploring the meanings of same-sex marriage within the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community" (5-18) by Lannutti in <i>Journal of Social and Personal Relationships</i> 22(1)
	October 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "The Marriage Cure" (105-120) by Boo from <i>The New Yorker</i>, August 18, 2003 ▪ "What Marriage Means," Chapter 4 (104-138) from Edin and Kefalas' <i>Promises I Can Keep</i>
Family	November 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Families Formed Outside of Marriage," (1247-1268) by Seltzer in <i>Journal of Marriage and the Family</i> 62 ▪ "Family Cohesion in the Live of Mexican American and European American Parents" (1045-1059) by Behnke, et al. from <i>Journal of Marriage and the Family</i> 70(4)
	November 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Does Fatherhood Matter for Men?" (381-393) by Eggebeen and Knoester from <i>Journal of Marriage and the Family</i> 63(2)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Paternal Involvement with Children: The Influence of Gender Ideologies” (40-45) by Bulanda from <i>Journal of Marriage and the Family</i> 66(1)
	November 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Choice and Motherhood in Poor America,” Chapter 3 (83-113) from Dodson’s <i>Don’t Call Us Out of Name</i> ▪ “Poor Mothers and Habits of Hiding” (949-959) by Dodson in <i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i> 67(4)
	November 9	No Class
Social Research	November 11	Project Update <i>Readings Pending</i>
Work	November 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “A Life at Hard Labor’: Capitalism and Working Hours,” Chapter 3 (43-83) from Schor’s <i>The Overworked American</i>
	November 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “The Opt-Out Revolution” (1-13) by Belkin from <i>New York Times</i>, October 26, 2003 ▪ “Do Women Need Special Treatment? Do Feminists Need Equality?” Chapter 7 (205-243) from Williams’ <i>Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What to Do About It</i>
	November 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “The Production of Gender Among Black and White Men and Women: The Case of Household Labor” (171-193) by John and Shelton in <i>Sex Roles</i> 36(3/4) ▪ “Men’s Caregiving: Gender and the Contingent Character of Care” (197-217) by Gerstel and Gallagher in <i>Gender and Society</i> 15(2)
Religion	November 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Religion and World Construction” Chapter 1 (3-29) from Berger’s <i>The Sacred Canopy</i> ▪ “Is God an Accident?” (12 pp.) by Bloom from <i>The Atlantic</i>, December 2005
	November 23	DUE: Second Response Paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Jesus Camp</i> (Please view before class) ▪ “A Mighty Fortress” (1-22) by Talbot from <i>New York Times Magazine</i>, August 11, 2000
	November 25	Thanksgiving Break
	November 27	Thanksgiving Break
Politics	November 30	<i>Readings Pending</i>
	December 2	Student Presentations
	December 4	Student Presentations
	December 7	Student Presentations
	December 9	Student Presentations
	December 11	DUE: Final Papers Student Presentations

Honor Statement

Within this setting of this course, we will be operating on an honor system. Boston College, as an institution, does not codify academic integrity in this way, but I believe it to be a fundamental way of ensuring that all participants within the course are turning in work that is wholly their own. Consequently, it is a requirement of the course that all enrolled students read, consider, sign, and follow the following statement, which is drawn from information available on www.bc.edu/integrity.

The Honor Statement is designed to promote academic integrity as a priority for all participating in the course and to ensure that students who are honest are not placed at an unfair disadvantage.

As a student enrolled in this course, I acknowledge the following:

1. I understand that integrity is essential to the academic setting and that upholding the integrity of the classroom environment is one of the requirements of this course.
2. I acknowledge the following definitions of dishonorable behavior, and affirm that I will not engage in any such behaviors in the context of this course:

Cheating is the fraudulent or dishonest presentation of work. Cheating includes but is not limited to: the use or attempted use of unauthorized aids in examinations or other academic exercises submitted for evaluation; fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of data, results, sources for papers or reports; manipulating or altering data or other manifestations of research to achieve a desired result; selective reporting, including the deliberate suppression of conflicting or unwanted data; falsification of papers, official records, or reports; copying from another student's work; actions that destroy or alter the work of another student; unauthorized cooperation in completing assignments or during an examination; the use of purchased essays or term papers, or of purchased preparatory research for such papers; submission of the same written work in more than one course without prior written approval from the instructors involved; dishonesty in requests for make-up exams, for extensions of deadlines for submitting papers, and in any other matter relating to a course.

Plagiarism is the act of taking the words, ideas, data, illustrations, or statements of another person or source, and presenting them as one's own. Each student is responsible for learning and using proper methods of paraphrasing and footnoting, quotation, and other forms of citation, to ensure that the original author, speaker, illustrator, or source of the material used is clearly acknowledged.

Collusion is defined as assistance or an attempt to assist another student in an act of academic dishonesty. Collusion is distinct from collaborative learning, which may be a valuable component of students' scholarly development. Acceptable levels of collaboration vary in different courses, and students are expected to consult with their instructor if they are uncertain whether their cooperative activities are acceptable.

3. If I believe a fellow student is breaching the honor code, I recognize that the following responses are available to me:

I may discuss my concerns with the student whom I suspect of a violation, recognizing that direct contact by another student may be the best means of resolving the problem. Repeated demonstration of student concern for academic integrity will in the long run build a peer-regulated community, which is the primary goal of participating in the honor code system.

If I believe the incident to be a major violation or part of a repeated pattern of violations, I will bring my concerns to the attention of the instructor, or to the appropriate department chairperson or associate dean. Suspected violations by students reported to members of the faculty or to an associate dean will be handled according to the procedures set on www.bc.edu/integrity.

4. If I have serious concern that the instructor is not living up to her responsibility to safeguard and promote academic integrity, I will speak with the faculty member directly, or bring my concern to the attention of the department chairperson or associate dean.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____