

SOCIOLOGY 240
Normality and Abnormality
Tuesday & Thursday 4:30-5:50 p.m.
Scott Hall 135 (College Ave. Campus)
Spring 2015

Professor: Allan Horwitz
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Teaching Assistants:

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01	Tu2	10:05 - 11:00am	Scott 106	Raileanu
02	Tu2	10:05 - 11:00am	Frelinghuysen A4	Torkelson
03	Tu2	10:05 - 11:00am	Hardenbergh A2	Zainiddinov
04	Tu2	10:05 - 11:00am	Frelinghuysen B3	Lu
05	Tu3	11:45am - 12:40pm	Frelinghuysen B4	Raileanu
06	Tu4	1:25 - 2:20pm	Frelinghuysen B6	Raileanu
07	Tu5	3:05 - 4:00pm	Campbell A3	Torkelson
08	Tu7	6:25 - 7:20pm	Scott 203	Zainiddinov
09	Tu7	6:25 - 7:20pm	Hardenbergh A5	Murphy
10	Tu8	7:55 - 8:50pm	Scott104	Torkelson
11	Tu8	7:55 - 8:50pm	Scott 106	Zainiddinov
12	Tu8	7:55 - 8:50pm	Scott 119	Bedley
13	Tu8	7:55 - 8:50pm	Scott 203	Murphy
14	Th8	7:55 - 8:50pm	Scott 106	Murphy
15	Th8	7:55 - 8:50pm	Scott 102	Song

Description: This course examines how the sociological and evolutionary views apply to the study of normality and abnormality. Sociologists recognize that all human behavior is shaped by cultural and historical context. As such, the extent to which our beliefs, behaviors, and even appearance are considered “normal” is powerfully shaped by social context. Human evolution involves the scientific study of how people evolved from earlier forms of life. In contrast to social views, it emphasizes the universality rather than the cultural relativity of human behavior. We begin by examining the basic tenets of the cultural and evolutionary views. We then apply these concepts to specific topics including physical appearance and the body, incest, courage and cowardice, food, grief, fear, sexuality, mating, the life course, and happiness. In the final part of the course, we will explore the ways that tools such as personality testing, drugs, and medical enhancements are used to control and change normality and abnormality.

Required Readings:

Saad, Gad. 2011. *The Consuming Instinct: What Juicy Burgers, Ferraris, Pornography, and Gift Giving Reveal about Human Nature*. New York: Prometheus Books.

Available at Barnes and Noble (on campus) and New Jersey Books. Students are also required to read the book chapters and articles posted on the Sakai site <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>. Because these readings might change over the course of the semester, students are not encouraged to read too far ahead. Readings are listed below.

Class Format:

Students must attend two lectures and one discussion section each week. Power Point slides will be posted on the class Sakai website prior to each lecture. Lectures will be supplemented with video clips, movie selections, and occasional guest lectures.

Requirements and Grading:

Exams: There will be two closed-book exams that cover materials from lectures, readings, and film clips. The midterm will be held on Tuesday March 10 (regular class time) and the final exam will be held on Wednesday May 13 from 4:00 - 5:20 p.m. While the final exam is non-cumulative, you are responsible for understanding the key themes that run through this class throughout the semester. NO make-up exams will be given unless I receive notification at least three days prior to the exam, and you have a valid and documented reason for missing the scheduled exam. Exams will consist primarily of multiple choice (scantron) but may also include short definitions. Students must bring pencils to all exams for the scantron sheet. Each exam counts for 25% of your grade.

Written Assignments: There will be three writing assignments, which are outlined below. Each is worth 15% of your grade. You must hand your assignment to your TA at the beginning of discussion section during the week of each assignment’s due date.

Paper	Due Date	% of Total Grade
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1	Week of Feb 18	15
2	Week of April 1	15
3	Week of April 29	15

Attendance at Discussion Section: Attendance and active participation is required at discussion section, and accounts for 5% of your course grade. You may have up to three unexcused absences from your recitation section; additional absences will result in a penalty.

Summary of grading procedures: Course grades are based on the total number of points an individual earns on exams, written assignments, and discussion section. No extra credit opportunities are available. **FINAL GRADES ARE NOT NEGOTIABLE** and will be assigned according to the following scale.

Grade	Final Numerical Average
A	90 to 100
B+	87 to 89
B	80 to 86
C+	77 to 79
C	66 to 76
D	50 to 65
F	< 50

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

E-mail etiquette and requirements: The TAs and I will happily and promptly reply to all student email. However, you must follow a few simple rules. First, you must put “Soc 240” in the subject line. If you do not, then I have no way of knowing whether an email message from jrzygrrl@aoh.com or PhatBoy@earthlinc.net is from a Sociology 240 student, or a spam message from a Viagra vendor. I will delete all email messages from unfamiliar addresses unless “Soc 240” is in the subject line. Second, you should include your name somewhere in the body of the message. Your email addresses often do not tell me who you are.

Sakai Site: The class Sakai website includes our syllabus, course readings, outlines, notes following class, exam study guides, answer keys following exams, supplemental and/or “current event” readings, and other important announcements pertaining to class. Please check the website regularly, to keep updated of class information and any changes in class schedules.

UNIVERSITY AND DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

Academic Misconduct: Rutgers University policies state that academic misconduct may involve: cheating; fabrication; facilitating academic dishonesty; plagiarism; denying others

access to information or material. Any instances of academic misconduct will be reported to your dean. Plagiarism is using someone else's words without giving the author proper attribution. For further information on plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty see the University's academic integrity policy: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>

Class Conduct: The Sociology Department encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe and productive classroom environment. As such, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and courtesy. Behaviors that distract students and faculty is not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, discourteous remarks, and other behaviors specified by the instructor. Courteous expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, permitted. If a student engages in disruptive behavior, the instructor, following the University Code of Student Conduct, may direct the student to leave class for the remainder of the class period. Instructors may specify other consequences in their syllabi. Serious verbal assaults, harassment, or defamation of the instructor or students can lead to university disciplinary proceedings. The University Code of Student Conduct is at <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/judaff/ucsc.shtml>.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS

January 20 (Tu). Welcome and Introduction to Course

Overview of course and requirements. No readings.

January 22 (Th). Definitions of Normality and Abnormality

What do we mean by the terms “normality” and “abnormality”? An overview, contrast, and critique of three perspectives on normality and abnormality: statistical, normative, and natural views. How do we place values on normality and abnormality?

Allan Horwitz. “Normality.” *Contexts* 7 (Winter): 70-71.

Warner, Michael. *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life*. New York: Free Press. (Pp. 52-61).

January 27 (Th). Culture, Fashion, and Normality

How do cultural norms influence what we consider to be normal and abnormal? Can people easily change what they think is normal and abnormal? What do your first and last names indicate about what is normal? What about our fashion choices?

Gladwell, Malcolm. 1997. “The Coolhunt.” *The New Yorker* (March 17, 1997).

Allan Horwitz, “Herodotus and Darwin” pp. 1 - 15

Zerubavel, Eviatar. 2011. *Ancestors and Descendants: Genealogy, Identity, and Community*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 4: Nature and Culture (Pp. 53-76).

Plugged in over preppy: When Teenagers Choose Tech over Clothes:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/28/business/less-prep-more-plugs-teenagers-favor-tech-over-clothes.html?emc=eta1>

January 29 (Th). First Names

Allan Horwitz, "Names"

Conley, Dalton. 2010. "Raising E and Yo." *Psychology Today* (March 1, 2010).

Levitt, Steven D., and Stephen J. Dubner, 2005. *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything (Revised and Expanded Edition)*. New York: William Morrow. Chapter 6 (Pp. 179-204).

Beware Hurricane Snooki

http://chronicle.com/blogs/linguafranca/2014/06/30/beware-hurricane-snooki/?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

(To see how "normal" your first name is, check out: <http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/babynames/>)

(To see how "normal" your last name is among all Americans, check out:

<http://www.census.gov/genealogy/www/data/2000surnames/index.html>.)

(To see how "normal" your last name is among Rutgers students today, check out:

<http://www.njfuture.org/2011/01/31/college-students-as-a-leading-indicator-of-diversity/>)

February 3 (Tu). Evolution and Normality

What are the basic principles of evolution? To what extent does human nature guide what we think is normal and abnormal? Are many things that we think of as abnormal actually mismatches between human nature and current social environments?

Saad. 2011. Chapter 1 (pp. 11- 39); Chapter 2 (pp. 67-94); and Chapter 4 (pp. 95-114).

Allan Horwitz, Herodotus and Darwin, pp. 15 - 31

February 5 (Th). Incest

Have you ever had fantasies about having sex with a close relative? Did anyone ever teach you that you shouldn't? If not, why don't you have this desire?

Allan Horwitz, "Incest"

Feb 10 (Tu) and Feb 12 (Th) Physical Attractiveness

Are ideals of beauty and physical attractiveness universal or culturally relative? Where do our ideals of beauty/handsomeness, weight, and height come from?

Saad 2011: Chapter 8 (pp. 219-222); Chapter 10 (pp. 274-278).

Wolf, Naomi. 1991. *The Beauty Myth How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women*. New York: William Morrow. (Pp. 9-19).

Etcoff, Nancy. 1999. *Survival of the Prettiest*. New York: Anchor Books. (Pp. 3-27).

Seguy, Abigail. 2013. "Memo to Michelle: Fat-Shaming is not OK!" *Time* Dec 17, 2013.

February 17 (Tu) Food and Appetite

How do we acquire our ideas about what's normal or abnormal to eat and drink. What accounts for the steep increase in body weight in recent years? What are eating 'disorders'? How do cultural ideals and biologically natural eating propensities conflict?

Saad. 2011. Chapter 2 (Pp. 41-60).

Allan Horwitz, "Obesity"

February 19 (Th) What is Mental Illness and Why Has it Grown?

Recent decades have seen an explosive growth in the rates of almost all types of mental illness. What accounts for these increasing rates? What is mental illness and how is it different from normal, painful emotions?

Joanna Moncrieff. 2014. "The medicalization of 'ups and downs:' the marketing of the new bipolar disorder."

Alan Schwarz. 2013. The Selling of Attention Deficit Disorder. *New York Times* (December 15).

Debate Persists Over Diagnosing Mental Health Disorders, Long After Sybil

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/24/us/debate-persists-over-diagnosing-mental-health-disorders-long-after-sybil.html?emc=eta1>

February 24 (Tu) Mental Health: Grief

What accounts for the high and steadily rising rates of depression in the United States in recent decades? How do we differentiate “normal” sadness from depressive disorders? Under what conditions is it normal to feel sad? Why are some types of grief considered natural and reasonable and others pathological? Why do we experience grief? What are its functions? Should normal grief be a time-delimited experience?

Allan Horwitz, “Grief”

Bonanno, George. 2009. *The Other Side of Sadness What the New Science of Bereavement Tells Us About Life After Loss*. New York: Basic Books. (Pp. 1-9; 45-66).

Kleinman, Arthur. 2012. “Culture, Bereavement and Psychiatry.” *Lancet* 379: 608-609.

(To calculate your own depressive symptoms, see: <http://cesd-r.com/>)

Feb 26 (Th) and March 3 (Tu): Anxiety and Hoarding

Why are some sources of anxiety considered natural and reasonable, and others pathological? Does fear stem from human nature or from individually and culturally learned processes? Are many of our fears evolutionary mismatches? Are traumatic responses to abnormal situations indicative of mental disorder, or a variety of normality?

Horwitz, Allan, “Fear”

Kathryn, Murphy, “The High Costs of Hoarding Disorder”

(To find out how “normal” your fears are, see:
<http://psychology.about.com/od/phobias/p/commonphobias.htm>)

March 5 (Th) Catch Up and Review

March 10 (Tu) Exam #1. Good luck!

March 12 (Th.)

Film – To be determined

March 24, 26, 31 Sexuality

Is sexuality biologically determined or culturally produced? How did the Kinsey Report influence conceptions of sexuality? Why and how have conceptions of normal sexuality undergone an enormous change in recent years?

Allan Horwitz, "Sex"

Saad, G. 2011. Chapter 9 (Pp. 231-255).

Warner, Michael. 1999. *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life*. New York: Free Press. Pp. 1-17.

Padawer, Ruth. 2012. "What's So Bad about a Boy Who Wants to Wear a Dress?" *New York Times* (August 8, 2012).

When Women Become Men at Wellesley

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/19/magazine/when-women-become-men-at-wellesley-college.html?emc=eta1>

Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt Support Shiloh's Request to be called "John"

<http://www.refinery29.com/2014/12/79896/shiloh-john-jolie-pitt-name-change>

For These Millennials, Gender Norms Have Gone Out of Style:

http://www.npr.org/2014/11/30/363345372/for-these-millennials-gender-norms-have-gone-out-of-style?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=npr&utm_term=nprnews&utm_content=2055

April 2 (Th) Mate Selection: Finding Mr. or Ms. "Right"

What factors besides love guide our romantic choices? Do men and women differ in what they're looking for? What cultural, biological, and evolutionary factors shape our partner choices?

Buss, David. 1985. "Human Mate Selection." *American Scientist* 73: 47-51.

Saad, G. 2011. Chapter 6 (Pp. 149-176)

Taylor, Kate. 2013. "Sex on Campus: She Can Play that Game too."
<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/14/fashion/sex-on-campus-she-can-play-that-game-too.html?emc=eta1>

April 7 (Tu). Normality and the Life Course (or "Acting Your Age") –Guest Lecturer Deborah Carr

What accounts for changes in conceptions of normal childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, adulthood, and old age? What is the "new" normal for young adults regarding whom they should live with, when and whether they should marry and have children, and what they should do after they have passed college age?

Furstenburg, Frank et al., 2004. "Growing Up is Harder to Do." *Contexts* 3: 33-41.

Howard, Hilary. 2012. "A Confederacy of Bachelors." *New York Times* (August 3, 2012).

Kavanagh, Shannon. 2009. "Age Norms." Pp. 19-21 in *Encyclopedia of the Life Course and Human Development*, edited by Deborah Carr. Farmington Hills MI: Gale/CENGAGE Learning.

The Luxury of Waiting Until Marriage to Have Kids
<http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/06/why-poor-women-dont-wait-for-marriage-to-give-birth/372890/>

(To calculate how long you can expect to live, see:
<http://gosset.wharton.upenn.edu/~foster/mortality/perl/CalcForm.html>)

April 9 (Th). Happiness: Can We Have Too Much?

Is it normal to be happy? When is it abnormal to be happy? What accounts for the recent emphasis on promoting happiness? Is happiness more valued in some societies than in others?

Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2009. *Bright-Sided: How Positive Thinking Is Undermining America*. New York: Picador. (Pp. 147 – 176).

Gilbert, Daniel. 2006. *Stumbling Upon Happiness*. New York: Vintage. (Pp. 212 – 233).

April 14 (Tu). Personality and Personality Testing

Is it possible to develop objective tests that can detect normality and abnormality? How are these tests used? What do they really show?

Paul, Annie Murphy. 2005. *The Cult of Personality Testing How Personality Tests Are Leading Us to Miseducate Our Children, Mismanage Our Companies, and Misunderstand Ourselves*. New York: Free Press. (Pp. 45-74 and 105-137).

Paumgarten, Nick. 2011. "Looking for Someone: Sex, Love, and Loneliness on the Internet." *New Yorker* (July 4): 37 – 49.

Why the Myers-Briggs Personality Test is Meaningless:

<http://www.vox.com/2014/7/15/5881947/myers-briggs-personality-test-meaningless>

(The "Big 5" is a widely used personality assessment. You can evaluate yourself here: <http://www.outofservice.com/bigfive/>)

April 16 (Th), April 21 (Tu), and April 23 (Th). Drugs and Normality

Why are some drugs valued and considered to be normal while others are stigmatized and harshly punished? How do these processes change over time? We draw on examples including alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, heroin, the opiates, Prozac and Ritalin. How do drug therapies secure conformity to standards of normality?

Allan Horwitz, "Drugs"

Tone, Andrea. 2008. *The Age of Anxiety: A History of America's Turbulent Affair with Tranquilizers*. New York: Basic Books. (Pp. 175-202).

Yen, Hope. 2012. "Teens' Views on Dangers of Pot Fall to 20-year Low." *Washington Times* (December 19).

Schwarz, Alan. 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/15/us/one-drug-or-2-parents-see-risk-but-also-hope.html?module=Search&mabReward=relbias%3Ar%2C{%221%22%3A%22RI%3A7%22}&r=0>

Anahad C' Connor. 2013. Increasing Marijuana Use in High School Is Reported. *New York Times* (December 18, 2013).

E-cigarettes top smoking among youth: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/17/science/national-institute-on-drug-abuse-e-cigarette-study.html?emc=eta1>

April 28 (Tu). Enhancing Normality: The Quest for Human Perfection?

Can enhancement therapies make people “super-normal”? What problems arise when people use enhancements? What counts as “enhancement” in the first place? We will discuss examples of cognitive, physical, and appearance enhancements.

Conrad, Peter. 2007. “Enhancement.” Pp. 70-96 in *On the Transformation of Human Conditions into Treatable Disorders*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Greely, Harry et al. 2008. “Toward Responsible Use of Cognitive Enhancing Drugs by the Health.” *Nature* 456: 702-705.

Schwarz, Alan. 2012. “Risky Rise of the Good Grade Pill.” *New York Times* (June 9, 2012).

When Doping Isn’t Cheating

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/30/opinion/sunday/when-doping-isnt-cheating.html?emc=eta1>

April 30 (Th). The Future of Normality

What changes can we expect in future conceptualizations of normality and abnormality? What sorts of things that are currently normal are likely to become abnormal? What kinds of things that are currently abnormal are likely to become normal?

Zerubavel, Eviatar. 2011. *Ancestors and Descendants: Genealogy, Identity, and Community*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 7 The Future of Genealogy (Pp. 115 – 131).

The Brave New World of Three Parent IVF: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/29/magazine/the-brave-new-world-of-three-parent-ivf.html?emc=eta1>

May 13 (Wednesday)

Final exam 4:00 – 5:20 pm Scott Hall Rm. 135

***** *Have a wonderful summer break!* *****

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Papers should be about three to five pages long, typewritten and double spaced. You should use Times Roman Font with font size 12 and one inch margins. Proper grammar and spelling are expected. Papers must be handed in to your teaching assistant at your discussion section during the week when they are due. Your teaching assistant will tell you whether you should submit papers via hard copy or email attachment. Late papers will not be accepted. Each will account for 15% of your overall class grade.

FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT: due week of February 17 (15% of course grade)

For a one-week period in your life, record your observations of when you thought something was abnormal (if you have too many, just use the most important ones). These can range from ordinary social interactions with strangers, friends, and relatives, the content of television programs or social media, or any other phenomenon that made you think of abnormality. What made you think the phenomena were abnormal (or normal)? Were your feelings based on moral considerations, cultural norms, idiosyncratic personal reasons, or something else? Is there some objective basis for your belief that the activities were abnormal?

Grading is based on the clarity of your presentation and reasoning, not on the contents of what you observed.

SECOND WRITING ASSIGNMENT: due week of March 31 (15% of course grade)

In order to understand the ways that conceptions of normality change across generations, you will conduct an in-depth interview with one person who is at least 65 years old. A suggested list of questions is presented below. These questions should provide you with sufficient guidelines for your conversation. **You need not ask every question listed. You should feel free to tailor the interview in such a way that you capture the experiences and information that are most pertinent to your subject's life.** It's fine to interview someone who doesn't speak English, but you must translate all responses and ensure that the final paper is submitted fully in English.

Your interviewing will be most effective if you tape record the interaction. It is not mandatory that you tape the interview, however. You are not expected to have full quotations in your paper. The limitations of simply taking notes are that you might lose important information and that you might not be able to concentrate on the information being conveyed during the interview.

The paper will have three parts. The first part is an **introduction**, which provides the background for your analysis. In this section, you will provide a brief and general discussion of how conceptions of normality change across different generations and subgroups. The second part of the paper is your biography, or **case study**. Here, you will write the life history of your subject. The third part of the paper is your **analysis and discussion**; this is the most important part of the

paper. Here, you will discuss and interpret your subject's conceptions of normality. Are they more similar or different than your own conceptions? What accounts for any differences that you see? In particular, given the information you acquired in your interview, what have you learned about how age-based norms change over time? How have these norms changed from your subject's life time to your life time? How might your subject's life experiences be different if he or she was growing up today?

GUIDELINES AND POSSIBLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Demographic Characteristics

Relevant demographic data would include age; race/ethnicity; religion; country of birth; educational attainment; main occupation; marital status; number of children.

Childhood, Adolescence, Young Adulthood

1. When were you born? Where? What did your parents do at that time? How many brothers and sisters, if any, do you have?
2. When you were a child, what were your favorite activities? What were your children's favorite activities? Your grandchildren's?
3. What sorts of clothes did you wear? How are they different than what people wear today? What about hairstyles? Do you think they were better or worse than today?
4. What kind of music did you listen to? Do you think it was better or worse than music today? How about television shows?
5. If you were young now, are there certain kinds of things that you think you would do that you couldn't do when you were actually young because they would have seemed too strange back then?
6. What are the major types of technology that you currently use? Are these more similar to or different than the kinds you used growing up? Do you use email? A smartphone? Facebook? Twitter? In general, do you think technology is better or worse than what it was when you were growing up?
7. When you were growing up, did you ever think you were abnormal in any way? If so, what ways? What made you think you were abnormal?

Marriage and Family

1. How did you meet your husband/wife? How did your children meet their spouses or partners? How did you decide this was the person you wanted to marry? How long did you know each other before you got married?
2. When did you move out of your parents' home for the first time? Where did you move to? Whom did you live with? Why did you decide to move? Did you ever live with anyone without being married to them? Did your children? What did you think about that?
3. How many children, if any, did you have? When were your children born? How do you think their views about what's normal are different than or the same as yours?
4. How many grandchildren, if any, do you have? How do you think their views about what's normal are different than or the same as yours?

Views of Normality/Abnormality

1. What do you think of as the most important changes in what's considered normal and abnormal that have happened over your life? Why do you think they have happened?
2. Which of these changes do you think has been a good thing?
3. Which of these changes do you think has been a bad thing?
4. How have your own attitudes toward what's normal and abnormal changed over the course of your lifetime?
5. If you could live your life over, would you rather live it during the time that you have or would you rather start over and be a young person in the current era?
6. When you look back at your life, do you think American society has changed for the better or worse? Why? What has changed?

THIRD WRITING ASSIGNMENT: due week of April 28 (15% of grade)

Take some phenomenon or behavior that is currently considered to be normal that you think will become viewed as abnormal in the future. Second, take some phenomenon or behavior that is currently considered to be abnormal that you think will come to be viewed as normal in the future. In each case, give your reasons for your predictions. Finally, for each case indicate whether you think the changes you discuss will be good or bad transformations.