

# Introduction to Sociology

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Fall 2023

RUTGERS

## Instructor

Liz Arthur (she/her)

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## Class Time

Monday/Wednesday 7:30pm – 8:50pm

Room AB1180 (Academic Building, College Ave Campus)

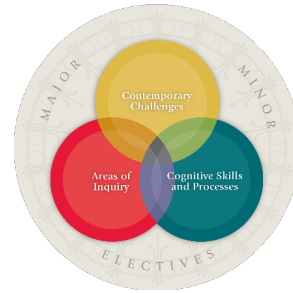
## Zoom Office Hours

Thursdays 10am – 11am or by appointment

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/3340707646?pwd=bVlGQzg4WS9EcmRRQ2xGM3pJZTVTd09>

Meeting ID: 334 070 7646

Passcode: nNpr06



## Course Description

The purpose of this course is to provide a basic understanding of sociology: its history, purpose, and main methodologies and practices. To accomplish this goal, we will be introduced to methods of sociological analysis to understand the social constructs and hierarchies of race, class, gender, and sexuality as well as important public issues, such as immigration, education, and health. We will look beyond individualistic explanations to the larger economic, social, political, and historical contexts that shape both individual and collective realities. These are what sociology aims to explain!

The goal of this class is not to memorize definitions and facts and regurgitate them onto a test, but rather to learn useful knowledge – knowledge that you can use to more fully understand the world around you and the social forces (many of which you may have never thought about) that shape your lives and the lives of the other 7 billion people with whom we share this planet. Together, we will cultivate critical thinking skills and learn how to apply our sociological imagination beyond the classroom.

*Note: This syllabus is subject to change.*

## Learning Objectives

- Introduce students to basic sociological concepts, theories, and perspectives;
- Examine the relationship between the individual and society, as well as social “constraints” on individual agency;
- Develop an understanding of how culture, institutions, and group thought shape society and individuals;
- Apply sociological analysis to current events;
- Move beyond a narrow focus on our immediate relationships to a consideration of the role of larger social forces at both the local and global level.

## Required Materials

- You do not need to purchase any reading materials for this class. All readings will be available through Canvas.
  - OPTIONAL: We will be reading some excerpts (provided by me) from chapters of *A Sociology Experiment*. The full textbook is available online here: <https://sociologyexperiment.com/>. You may create an account and purchase the complete chapters for \$1 each if you wish to further your reading, but this is not required.

## Summary of Assignments

Assignment	Due Date	% of Course Grade
Written Reflection #1	10/4	20%
Written Reflection #2	11/20	20%
Exam #1	10/25	20%
Exam #2	12/13	20%
Final Project	12/13	20%

## Grading Scale

*Please note that, once assigned, all grades are final.*

Grade	Range
A	90-100
B+	86-89
B	80-85
C+	76-79
C	70-75
D	60-69
F	59 or Below

## Assignments Overview

### Weekly Readings

You are responsible for reading/watching all of the assigned materials (book chapters, articles, videos, etc.) each week. I encourage you to review these materials *before* attending that week's lectures. I will post my PowerPoint slides to Canvas after class for you to use if you wish. It will be obvious come exam time if you have not engaged with the material, therefore I greatly encourage you to pay active attention and take good notes in class. *All assigned readings and videos are fair game for exam questions!*

### Two Written Reflections (40% of overall grade)

Twice during the semester I will ask you to write a short reflection (approx. 300 words) in response to topics covered in the course. The grading will be out of 10 points possible. Generally, I am looking for responses that:

- Fully address all aspects of the prompt(s);
- Demonstrate understanding of course concepts;
- Cite concrete evidence, with sources, to back up claims;
- Make connections between what you're reading and other examples from real life (current events, media or pop culture, your personal experiences, observations you've made, etc.);
- Compare and contrast different sociological theories or concepts;
- Critique the material covered in class, and raise any counterpoints or disagreements you may have;
- Extend the concept/analysis to other parts of social life not addressed by the material;
- Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation as much as possible;
- Show civility and be respectful of diverse viewpoints.

### *Use of AI/ChatGPT*

The launch of the text-generating software ChatGPT in the fall of 2022 was revolutionary for many students and terrifying for many teachers. During this class we will spend time analyzing how such technologies have changed societies at large, including potential benefits and consequences. *For this course, I will allow you to use ChatGPT to help complete your written assignments if you wish. However: you should never turn in a paper with large swaths of text simply copied and pasted from an AI tool. This means that I expect you to engage with and edit any AI-produced text so that you are turning in a final product that is your own. Anything less will be treated as plagiarism and reported to Rutgers administration (see below section on Academic Integrity). If you have any questions about what exactly I will consider acceptable use of ChatGPT for these assignments, feel free to meet with me individually. I also suggest checking out [this article](#) for additional information on the pros and cons of AI in the classroom.*

### *Due Date Flexibility*

Life happens, and last-minute things come up. The assignment deadlines are meant to guide you, not punish you. For this reason, all assignments have a **12-hour grace period** after the stated deadline during which you will not be penalized for turning work in late.

If you anticipate needing to turn in an assignment more than 12 hours late, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can arrange an appropriate extension. In some cases, last minute extensions may be granted, but will require a one-on-one meeting to discuss. ***Assignments turned in more than 12 hours after the due date that have not been granted an extension will be docked 1 point for each day they are late.***

### Two Multiple-Choice Exams (40% of overall grade)

Each exam will consist of approximately 40 multiple-choice questions that pull from *both* the lectures *and* the assigned readings/videos. I will provide you with a study guide prior to the test date. The exam is in-person and open-note; when you get to class, I will provide you with a paper test copy, but you will submit your answers online through Canvas. All paper copies of the test must be returned at the end of class.

You are expected to complete exams at the date and time scheduled on the syllabus, therefore it is your responsibility to contact me if and when circumstances arise that prevent you from attending class on the day of an exam. *Make-ups for missed exams with no prior communication will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may be subject to a deduction of points or a "0" grade.*

### **Final Project (20% of overall grade)**

This exercise will give you a chance to reflect on a recent news article/current event using course materials. You will present your work in small groups during the last week of class. If for some reason you are unable to attend class on the day of presentations, you should contact me to schedule a makeup presentation. I will provide detailed instructions and a rubric separately.

### **Support and Policies**

#### *Attendance and Self-Reporting Absence*

This is an in-person course, therefore your attendance of lectures is vital for your learning experience. Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

University attendance and religious holiday policies:

[http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nb-ug\\_current/pg1433.html](http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nb-ug_current/pg1433.html)

SAS attendance policy:

<http://sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/academics/courses/registration-and-course-policies/attendance-and-cancellation-of-class>

#### *Communication*

I will post all readings, assignments, and timely announcements on our class Canvas site, so be sure to check it often. If you have a question or concern that isn't addressed on Canvas, you are welcome to speak to me after class, during office hours, or via my email address listed on the first page of this syllabus. If you do not receive a reply within 48 hours, feel free to send a follow-up email. Note that I may be slower to respond during weekends/holidays. *Do NOT email me with questions that can be answered by looking at the syllabus or on Canvas.*

If you are planning to attend my office hours, please send me an email ahead of time to be sure you don't end up having to wait behind other students. If you are unable to attend office hours during the regular scheduled time, email me and we can find a time to meet that works for you.

#### *Late Work*

All assignments have due dates as noted in the syllabus and/or Canvas. Please do your best to stick to the schedule so that I can provide timely feedback and you can stay on track. I am happy to be flexible with late work, however you must let me know *before* the deadline if you will not be able to complete an assignment on time. ***Late submissions (>12 hours after the deadline) without prior notice will be subject to a deduction of 1 point off per day late.***

It will be up to each student to keep track of due dates throughout the course, as well as their own progress and grades. If you find that you are struggling with turning in assignments, understanding the course material, or maintaining a passing grade, please make an appointment to discuss with me as soon as possible. DO NOT wait until the last week of the term to express concerns about your grades.

#### *Please Note*

We may experience interruptions this semester due to COVID-19 or other extenuating circumstances. Additionally, we are coming off of a very difficult few years of the pandemic, which has included increased

isolation, loneliness, illness, and other struggles. If your mental or physical health are suffering, you are not alone. I will make a point to be flexible and understanding given these circumstances, and I encourage you to let me know if there is anything getting in the way of your academic performance.

### **Diversity and Inclusivity**

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.

### **Additional Information**

#### *Academic Integrity*

Honesty and Integrity are essential to the mission of the academy; as such, cheating of any kind will not be tolerated. Here is the link to [Rutgers policy on academic integrity](#).

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's work, including the use of copied and pasted AI-generated text (via apps like ChatGPT). Any cases of suspected plagiarism will be investigated and reported to the university administration – no exceptions. You are expected to be aware of all [university guidelines on academic integrity](#) as well as expectations specific to this class. If you have any questions about academic integrity policies, you may set up a time to meet and discuss with me.

#### *Sociology Department Resources*

Undergraduate Director: Dr. Jeffrey Dowd: [ug-dir@sociology.rutgers.edu](mailto:ug-dir@sociology.rutgers.edu)

Undergraduate Administrative Assistant: Carissa Nadonley: [undergrad-soc@sociology.rutgers.edu](mailto:undergrad-soc@sociology.rutgers.edu)

#### *Learning Resources*

Learning Centers: <https://rlc.rutgers.edu/>

Academic Advising for SAS students: <https://sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/advising/advising>

Online Learning Tools from Rutgers University Libraries including Rutgers RIOT, Searchpath and

RefWorks: <http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/tutorials>

#### *Current Academic Integrity Policy*

Summary: <http://nbacademicintegrity.rutgers.edu/home-2/academic-integrity-policy>

Resources for Students: <https://nbprovost.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-students>

#### *Technology*

Please visit the Rutgers Student Tech Guide page for resources available to all students. If you do not have the appropriate technology for financial reasons, please email Dean of Students

[deanofstudents@echo.rutgers.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@echo.rutgers.edu) for assistance. If you are facing other financial hardships, please visit the Office of Financial Aid at <https://financialaid.rutgers.edu/>.

#### *Disability Services*

(848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines> . If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services

office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/getting-registered>.

*Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)*

(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/>

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professionals within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community, and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Crisis Intervention: <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/crisis-intervention/>

Report a Concern: <http://health.rutgers.edu/do-something-to-help/>

*Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)*

(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 [www.vpva.rutgers.edu/](http://www.vpva.rutgers.edu/)

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

## Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
9/6	What is Sociology?	
9/11	Sociological Imagination	1. Excerpt from <i>A Sociology Experiment</i> (Khan, Sharkey, and Sharp) pp. 1-6 2. Excerpt from: <i>Invitation to Sociology</i> (Berger)
9/13	Social Psychology	1. Excerpt from <i>The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life</i> (Goffman)
9/18	Theory	1. Excerpt from <i>A Sociology Experiment</i> (Khan, Sharkey, and Sharp) pp.7-20
9/20	Research Methods	1. Excerpt from: <i>Damned Lies and Statistics</i> (Best) 2. "Trick or Treat Sadists – A Halloween Urban Legend"
9/25, 9/27	Culture	1. "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema" 2. Excerpt from: <i>Talk of Love: How Culture Matters</i> (Swidler)
10/2, 10/4	Stratification, Class & Inequality <b>Writing Assignment #1 Due by 11:59pm 10/4</b>	1. Excerpt from chapter: "Social Class, Inequality, and Poverty" (Kaufman and Schoepflin) pp. 1-22
10/9, 10/11	Race & Ethnicity	1. Chapter: "Race and Ethnicity" (Ray, Sharkey, and Clair) 2. "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack"
10/16, 10/18	Sex, Gender & Sexuality	1. Excerpt from chapter: "Gender and Sexuality" (Barian, Schoepflin, and Brown) pp. 4-9 2. Excerpt from: <i>Sexing the Body</i> (Fausto-Sterling)
10/23	Video & Discussion	
10/25	<b>Exam #1</b>	
10/30, 11/1	Knowledge & Technology	1. "Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?" 2. "Why the past 10 years of American life have been uniquely stupid"
11/6, 11/8	Crime & Deviance	1. Excerpt from: "The Saints and the Roughnecks" 2. Excerpt from: "Is Prison Necessary?"
11/13	Education	1. "How School Suspensions Push Black Students Behind"
11/15	Health	1. Excerpt from: <i>Deviance and Medicalization: From Badness to Sickness</i> (Conrad and Schneider) 2. "Why America's Black Mothers and Babies Are in a Life-or-Death Crisis"

11/20	Video & Discussion <b>Writing Assignment #2</b> <b>Due by 11:59pm 11/20</b>	
11/22	<i>No Class</i>	
11/27	Immigration	1. "None of us deserve citizenship" 2. "What a Fire in the Bronx Says About Immigrant Life in New York"
11/29	Environment	1. Excerpt from chapter: "Environmental Sociology" (Fisher and Jorgenson) pp. 6-13 2. Watch: <a href="https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-stuff/">https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-stuff/</a> Available in Spanish: <a href="https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/la-historia-de-las-cosas-2/">https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/la-historia-de-las-cosas-2/</a>
12/4	Politics	1. Excerpt from chapter: "Political Sociology" (Rojas) pp. 9-24 2. "Political Polarization in the American Public"
12/6	TBD (Class votes)	
12/11	Final Project Presentations	
12/13	<b>Exam #2</b> <b>Final Project Due (hand in to me in class)</b>	