

Department of Sociology
Duke University
Fall 2015

SOCIOLOGICAL INQUIRY
(SOCI 110)
Social Sciences 139

Professor Chris Bail, Ph.D.

Lectures: Monday and Wednesday (3:05-3:55 PM)

Sections: Friday (various times)

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Office: 254 Soc/Psych

Office Hours: Wednesday (1:00PM-3:00PM), or by appointment

Course Websites:

Sakai:

Dropbox:

Teaching Assistants:

Simon Brauer

Office Hours: Tues (11AM-12PM) and Thursday (1PM-2PM), 143 Soc/Psych Building

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Miles Marsala

Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday (2pm-3pm), 142 Soc/Psych Building

Maria Cristina Ramos Flor

Office Hours: Monday (9:45AM-11:45AM), 142 Soc/Psych Building

COURSE OVERVIEW

Sociology is the science of human relationships. Because nearly every part of our lives is shaped by our relationships with each other, no single course can introduce you to all of sociology. Instead, this course will provide you with a survey of the types of questions sociologists ask about human relationships and the research methods they use to answer them. We begin by studying the smallest unit of analysis—interactions between individuals. We will then investigate the broader social networks, organizations, and institutions that shape patterns of interactions among individuals. Finally, we will examine how these supra-individual structures change over time by studying social movements, international development, and globalization. This course thus provides a pathway for students considering a sociology major and a survey of the discipline for those who wish to fulfill a SS, CCI, and EI general education requirements at Duke. Portions of this class will also help students prepare for the behavioral science portion of the MCAT exam.

COURSE GOALS

1. To introduce you to sociology and help you decide whether you would like to pursue further coursework in sociology at Duke.
2. To help you develop the skills to criticize an argument
3. To teach you how to develop and test your own arguments
4. To teach you how to read and write well and participate in thoughtful discussion within a university classroom.

READINGS AND RESOURCES

Required Readings

You do not have to purchase any books for this course. During the first day of class I will discuss how you can access the required readings.

Lecture Slides

Lecture slides will not be available in advance of lectures. Instead, they will be made available via on the course Dropbox at 5pm on Friday each week.

Other Resources

In this course, you will almost certainly encounter words, concepts, and phrases that you are not familiar with. When you encounter a word that you do not know, look it up in a dictionary such as <http://www.dictionary.com>. Improving your vocabulary is one of the most efficient ways to enhance your writing—and investment that will serve you well throughout the remainder of your college career and beyond.

The Thompson Writing Center (<http://twp.duke.edu/twp-writing-studio>) is another invaluable resource to help you with reading and writing skills. There, you can receive feedback on your papers and receive intensive line-by-line feedback on your writing style.

The internet contains a remarkable amount of information that can be very useful in interpreting new texts—particularly those which describe places which you have never been. At the same time, there is also considerable misinformation online—therefore, be sure to obtain multiple sources and try not to rely too heavily on sites such as Wikipedia. Some useful alternatives for studying sociology are The Society Pages (www.thesocietypages.org) and The SocioLog (www.sociolog.com).

FORMAL REQUIREMENTS

A [large systematic study](#) of college education in the United States recently concluded that college education has no appreciable impact on basic knowledge, writing skills, and critical thinking skills. The authors attribute this to the growing use of standardized tests, which create incentives for students to become passive receptors of facts instead of active producers of knowledge. Instead of testing your ability to recall basic information from the lectures and readings, this course therefore challenges you to develop an original research paper through a process known as "[active learning](#)." Each of the requirements for this class work towards this goal in a cumulative fashion.

Reading

The required readings for this course are relatively short, and do not need to be completed before the lectures. Instead, the lectures are designed to prepare you to read and fully comprehend the required readings before you discuss them during your Friday discussion section (but note that readings will not be required for several of the weeks on the syllabus because of vacations or in order to allow you to work on other course requirements).

You are responsible for understanding the readings. Make use of your fellow students, the Internet, a dictionary, your T.A. and me to ensure that you understand the readings. Discussion sections will be used for substantive discussion and further exploration of the implications of the course readings, *not* for grasping basic concepts.

This syllabus is a "living document." By this I mean I reserve the right to change the reading assignments in response to your feedback as well as my own sense of our group achievement. No changes will be made without at least three weeks notice.

Participation

You are responsible for coming to discussion sections prepared to discuss the lectures and readings and complete small group exercises designed to help you write the papers for this class (described below). Your TAs will make regular assessments of the quality of your participation. We will post your participation grade on Sakai halfway through the course, but you may also receive regular updates and feedback directly from your TA. You must attend every discussion section, but you may be excused from two lectures without negatively impacting your participation grade. T.A.s will take attendance during each lecture and discussion section.

Discussion Questions

Before each Friday discussion section, you must email a discussion question about the readings to your T.A. This discussion question is designed to help you brainstorm possible topics for your research paper, and to guide conversation between you, your T.A. and your fellow students.

Your discussion questions will be graded on a four-point scale: 0, 80, 90, and 100. In order to receive the highest grade, a discussion question must a) clearly demonstrate that you have completed the reading, b) understood its central arguments, and c) thought critically about the strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument—or thought about how you might conduct another study that would build upon it. A good research question might question the author's assumptions, assess the reasonableness of the author's theoretical predictions or hypotheses, propose alternative hypotheses, or question the validity of the data or whether the article's conclusions are warranted. In other words, discussion questions should not be basic points of clarification about concepts or minor issues from the readings. The discussion question should not be more than a paragraph, and could be as little as three sentences.

Your T.A. will discuss how to receive a top grade in discussion questions during your first discussion session. In the meantime, you may review graded examples of discussion questions from previous semesters in the course Dropbox.

Papers

There is one “cumulative” research paper assignment for this class, but it is broken into three separate papers that build upon each other. You will receive detailed feedback from your T.A.s between each paper assignment that will help you improve your research paper in a step-wise fashion. The idea is to force you to think about research as a lengthy process, wherein you revisit your ideas throughout the semester and sharpen your analysis and the clarity of your writing.

Because this is an unusual assignment, I will dedicate a significant amount of lecture time to teaching you about how to excel on these papers. This will include two lectures and an entire discussion section one week before the due date of the second paper. The discussion sections will also include regular group exercises designed to help you conduct your research. A grading rubric for the paper as well as exemplary papers authored by students from previous semesters of this course are also available for your review in the course Dropbox.

Paper #1: Introductory Paper (1-2 pages)

The first paper asks a research question, explains why it is important, and gives a brief outline of how you might proceed to answer the research question. For example, your introductory paper might a) ask a question about the persistence of

heart disease among African-American males; b) explain why this question is important—both for sociological theory as well as society at large; and c) very briefly discuss the theories and research methods you might use to answer your research question.

This paper is a first draft of the “introduction” section for your final paper (described below). However, you are not locked into the research subject—some students elect to change or adjust their research question in between the first and second paper, or—more rarely—between the second and third paper. Such changes are often made in response to the comments of your T.A.’s feedback on your first or second paper or consultations with Dr. Bail, or because a student becomes interested in a new research topic during the course of the semester.

Paper #2: Introductory Paper + Hypotheses + Research Plan (5-7 pages)

The second paper, due half-way through the semester, is a 5-7 page double-spaced theoretical paper that includes a revised version of the introductory paper (in response to your T.A.’s comments) as well as a “Hypothesis” section in which you use 2-3 sociological theories discussed in lectures, class, or outside readings to develop 2-3 hypotheses designed to explain your research question. Finally, the second paper includes a “Research Plan” section where you propose a detailed research agenda that you will use to evaluate your hypotheses. You must ensure that your research plan does not do any harm to research subjects or manipulate them in an unethical manner. We will discuss this issue in lecture, but you can also consult Duke’s Institutional Review Board if you have any questions about whether your proposed research is allowable by university standards.

Once again, you will receive detailed feedback from your T.A. about your second paper. For example, your T.A. may recommend adding or modifying a hypothesis, improving the clarity of the writing, defining key concepts more clearly, or all of the above. Your T.A. will also offer comments about the feasibility of your research plan, or possible alternatives.

Paper #3: Introduction Paper + Hypothesis + Research Plan + Findings + Conclusions (10-15 pages)

The third and final paper once again revises your work according to your T.A.’s feedback and adds two new sections: findings and conclusions. These two new sections present your original research. Examples of original research may include: a small survey of 20-30 Duke students; in-depth interviews with 5-7 people; ethnographic observation of a site near Duke for 1-2 days; a meta-analysis that reviews the findings of at least 15 previous studies; or a content analysis of 30-40 texts such as newspaper articles, magazine articles, or blog posts/social media messages.

Surveys

I regularly conduct mandatory anonymous surveys of your experience in this class. I urge you to take this opportunity to share with me anything you would like about how the course might be improved, or how I might help you learn about sociology more effectively. You can submit anonymous feedback to me about the class at any point via the following link: <http://goo.gl/forms/pv29uHDseK>

Grading

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

Participation	15%
Discussion Questions	15%
Paper #1 (Introductory Paper)	15%
Paper #2 (Hypotheses Paper)	25 %
Paper # 3 (Final Research Paper)	30%

Your T.A. will grade each assignment, and Dr. Bail grades a random set of assignments each week. Dr. Bail meets with the TAs every Monday after class in order to coordinate grading standards and ensure grades are assigned fairly and consistently.

COURSE POLICIES

Assignments are due on the dates listed

Make sure you give yourself sufficient time to finish assignments by their due dates. You will lose one letter grade per day between the due date and the date the paper is received. You can therefore make your own decision about whether your work will improve enough in the extra time to outweigh the grade reduction. In truly exceptional cases such as a documented medical emergency or death of an immediate family member I will grant you an extension.

Academic Integrity

Understand and follow the Duke Community Standard. Cheating or other violations will be dealt with according to University policy. All student assignments will be processed by plagiarism detection software.

Inform me in advance of excused absences

Attendance and participation are the most vital components of this course. If you have a University-excused reason to miss please follow the [proper procedure](#) for letting your TA know about it. You are responsible for knowing and acting in accordance with University policy.

You may miss one Friday discussion section if you have an important event that cannot be rescheduled—however, you must submit a 2-3 paragraph reading response instead of a usual discussion question. This response will count towards your participation grade for that day.

Laptop Policy

Numerous studies indicate students learn more effectively if they do not use a laptop during lectures or small group discussions (for example, see <http://news.yorku.ca/2013/03/13/multitasking-on-laptop-impedes-classroom-learning-york-u-study-shows/>). While I therefore recommend that you do not use a laptop during lectures or small group discussions, you are permitted to do so, provided you use it only for the purpose of taking notes. You should have your laptop available in all classes and discussion questions, however, because we will occasionally perform in-class exercises that will require you to download software and/or do research on the internet.

Classroom Behavior

Uncivil behavior such as engaging in personal conversations during lectures or discussion sections, browsing internet sites not relevant to classroom discussions, and cell phone usage will negatively affect your participation grade.

Extra-Credit Policy

There will be no extra credit or make-up assignments.

Grade Changes

I take great care designing grading standards and ensuring that they are consistently applied by T.A.s before grades are delivered to you. If you believe that your work was graded unfairly, you must submit a formal request to me using the form in our course Dropbox entitled “Request for Grade Change.” Once I receive this grade, I will discuss it with the entire teaching staff during our weekly Monday meetings in order to make a determination about whether a grade change is warranted.

Office Hours

If you have any questions or concerns about this class, please visit your TA or Dr. Bail during the office hours listed above. You must sign up for an office-hours visit using the “sign up” tool on Sakai.

LECTURE SCHEDULE

* This denotes that the author of an article or a book is a member of the Duke faculty

PART 1: WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY?

Week #1: INTRODUCTION

8/24: Overview of Syllabus and Course Requirements

8/26: What is Sociology?

Conley, Dalton. 2011. Chapter 1, "Introduction" from You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. pgs. 3-39

WEEK #2: RESEARCH METHODS

8/31: Quantitative Research Methods

9/2: Qualitative Methods

Mark Regnerus. 2012. "How different are the adult children of parents who have same-sex relationships? Findings from the New Family Structures Survey" *Social Science Research*, 41: 752-770.

***Hint for discussion questions: most sociologists agree that this is a deeply flawed study- can you figure out why?**

PART II: IDENTITIES, INTERACTIONS, AND INSTITUTIONS

WEEK #3: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

9/7: Identity and Interaction

9/9: Emotions and Groups (Guest Lecture by Dr. Lynn Smith-Lovin)

Ridgeway et al. "How Easily Does a Social Difference Become a Status Distinction? Gender Matters" American Sociological Review, Vol. 74(2): 44-62.
Note: this reading includes some complicated discussion of statistical interpretation of experimental methods on pgs. 50, 55, 56, and 58—please skim these sections and focus on the introduction, theoretical section, and conclusion

Riessman, Catherine Kohler. 2000. Stigma and Everyday Resistance Practices: Childless Women in South India. Gender and Society Vol. 14(1): 111-135.

WEEK #4: EDUCATION

9/14: Race and Education (Guest Lecture by Dr. Richard Pitt)

9/16: Class and Education

Harris, Angel L. and Kris Marsh. 2010. "Is a Raceless Identity an Effective Strategy for Academic Success Among Blacks?" Social Science Quarterly, 91: 1242:1263*

Annette Lareau. 2002. "Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families" American Sociological Review, 67(5): pgs. 747-776

WEEK #5: DEVIANCE & CRIME

9/21: Why study deviance?

9/23: Race and Policing

Alice Goffman. 2009. "On the Run: Wanted Men in a Philadelphia Ghetto" American Sociological Review, 74: 339-357.

Becker, Howard S. 1953. "Becoming a Marijuana User." American Journal of Sociology 59(3):235-242.

WEEK #6: THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

9/28: The Social Determinants of Health

9/30: Health Disparities (Guest Lecture by Dr. Linda George)

Van Ryn and Fu. 2003. "Paved with Good Intentions: Do Public Health and Human Services Providers Contribute to Racial Ethnic Disparities in Health?" American Journal of Public Health 93(2): 248-255.

Abraido-Lanza, Ana et al. 2005. "Do healthy behaviors decline with greater acculturation?" Implications for the Latino mortality paradox" Social Science and Medicine, 61: 1243-1255

No discussion questions are due this week, but bring an outline of your first paper to your discussion section for an in-class exercise

10/4: First Paper due by 5pm (via Sakai)

PART III: SOCIAL NETWORKS, GROUPS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

WEEK #7: SOCIAL NETWORKS (Part I)

10/5: From Small Groups to Social Networks

10/7: Dyads, Triads, and Homophily

Charles Kadushin. 2010. Making Connections: An Introduction to social network concepts and findings, Oxford: Oxford University Press pgs. 1-12 and 13-26 (read carefully, there are a lot of key concepts introduced in this short passage)

Cristakis, Nicholas and James Fowler, "Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How they Shape Our Lives" (Chapter One)

No discussion questions are due this week, instead, you will learn how to use the Social Network Analysis Software "[Gephi](#)" in your section

WEEK #8: SOCIAL NETWORKS (PART II)

10/12: No Class, Fall Break

10/14: The Shape of Networks and the Strength of Weak Ties

Granovetter, Mark S. "The Strength of Weak Ties," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 78(6): 1360-1380.

Uzzi, Brian and Jarret Spiro. 2005. "Collaboration and Creativity: The Small World Problem" American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 111(2): 447-504. (Note: This is a complex article, you should skim the "methods" section and focus upon the introduction, the theory, and the findings)

WEEK #9: ORGANIZATIONS (Part I)

10/19: How Diseases Spread through School Networks (Guest Lecture by Dr. James Moody)

10/21: Entrepreneurship, Embeddedness, and Structural Holes

Peter Bearman, James Moody, and Katherine Stovel. 2004. "Chains of Affection: The Structure of Adolescent Romantic and Sexual Networks," American Sociological Review, Vol 110: 1 (pgs. 44-91). (Note: This is a complex*

article, you should skim the “methods” section and focus upon the introduction, the theory, and the findings)

Ronald Burt. “Structural Holes and Good Ideas” American Journal of Sociology, 110:2 (pgs. 349-399). (Note: This is a complex article, you should skim the “methods” section and focus upon the introduction, the theory, and the findings)

WEEK #10: ORGANIZATIONS (Part II)

10/26: Executives in U.S. Corporations (Guest Lecture by Dr. Martin Ruef)

10/28: Religious Organizations in the United States (Guest Lecture by Dr. Mark Chaves)

Chu, Johan S. G. and Mark S. Mizruchi, “Elites,” in Robert A. Scott and Stephen M. Kosslyn (eds.), Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences, San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2015:1-13

Voas, David and Mark Chaves. Forthcoming. “Is the United States a Counterexample of the Secularization Thesis?,” American Sociological Review (Note: because this manuscript is unpublished it is only available in the course dropbox)*

WEEK #11: WRITING YOUR TWO REMAINING PAPERS

11/2: Asking a Research Question and Developing Hypotheses

11/4: Testing your Hypotheses (Guest Lecture by Cary Moskovitz from the Thompson Writing Center)

Lynn Smith-Lovin and Cary Moskovitz*. (forthcoming), “The Oxford Very Brief Guide to Writing in Sociology.” Oxford University Press, (read the introduction and the chapter on writing a research paper).*

No discussion questions are due this week

11/8: Second Paper Due by 5PM (via Sakai).

PART IV: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, GLOBALIZATION, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

WEEK #12: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS & THE MEDIA

11/9: Why do People Protest? The Diffusion of the Civil Rights Movement

11/11: Terrified: How anti-Muslim Fringe Organizations Became Mainstream

Andrews, Kenneth T. and Michael Biggs. 2006. "The Dynamics of Protest Diffusion: Movement Organizations, Social Networks, and News Media in the 1960 Sit-Ins (Note: This is a complex article, you should skim the "methods" section and focus upon the introduction, the theory, and the findings)

Bail Christopher A. 2012 "The Fringe Effect: Civil Society Organizations and the Evolution of Media Discourse about Islam," American Sociological Review, 77(6): 855-879 (Note: This is a complex article, you should skim the "methods" section and focus upon the introduction, the theory, and the findings)

WEEK #13: GLOBALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

11/16: International Development, Gender, and Politics

11/18: Guest Lecture by Gary Gereffi on Globalization and Markets

Kathleen Fallon, Liam Swiss, and Jocelyn Viterna. "Resolving the Democracy Paradox: Democratization and Women's Legislative Representation in Developing Nations, 1975-2009" American Sociological Review, 1-29

Gerrefi, Gary. 2014. "Global value chains in a post-Washington Consensus world" Review of International Political Economy, 21(1): 9-37.*

WEEK #14: WILL BIG DATA CHANGE THE WORLD?

11/23: Big Data and the Globalization of Culture

11/25: *No Class, Thanksgiving*

No discussion questions are due this week because sections will not meet due to holiday

WEEK #15: THE FUTURE OF SOCIOLOGY

11/30: Internet.Org (A Guest Lecture by Dr. Michael Corey of Facebook Data Science)

12/2: What is the Future of Sociology?

No discussion questions are due this week so that you may focus on your Final Paper

12/6 Final Papers due by 5pm (via Sakai)