
Introduction to Sociology (SOC 105)

Stony Brook University, Summer 2024

Course Information

Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays – 1:30pm – 4:55 pm

Location: Social and Behavioral Sciences Building (SBS), Floor 4, N436

Instructor: Danial Vahabli

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Office: SBS S-418

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Course Credit: 3 credits

Prerequisite: None

SBC: SBS

Course Description

A general introduction to the science of sociology, emphasizing sociological theory and methods. Students are taught what is unique about the way in which sociologists analyze human behavior and society. By combining sociological theory, methods, and concrete examples from history, contemporary debates, and popular culture this class aims to provide students with sociological insights on a wide range of topics including race, gender, environment, media, politics, and religion. Differences between the sociological perspective and perspectives of other social sciences are emphasized.

Learning Objectives

1. Gain familiarity with major sociological theories, concepts, and subject areas.
2. Apply sociological theory and concepts to real-world issues.
3. Develop an awareness of the relationship between personal biographies (including your own) and broader historical and structural trends; learn to exercise your “sociological imagination.”

Course Requirements

Item	Grade
4 Writing Assignments (15 points each)	60 points
Final Project Part 1	10 points
Final Project Part 2	30 points
Total	100 points

Grading Scale

Final Score	Grade
94-100	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
60-66	D
0-59	F

Writing Assignment (4*15 = 60 points)

The students will be assigned 5 writing assignments throughout the semester, but only 4 of them are mandatory. Students can choose to skip one assignment of their choice. Students can also submit the 5 assignments and then the assignment with the lowest grade will be dropped.

In each writing assignment, students must answer the questions in one coherent essay.

To receive full credit, students must answer the questions using the course material. They must also provide two examples in each essay, **one of which must be from the required readings**. The assignments must be between 1 to 3 pages.

The writing assignments must adhere to the following formatting guidelines: Times New Roman font, size 12, with 1-inch margins on all sides of the page and double-spaced lines.

1. **Assignment 1:** Answer the following questions in an essay: What is sociology? Is sociology a science? What are its goals? What is socialization? What are social facts and how do we study them? Provide one example for socialization and one for a social fact.
2. **Assignment 2:** Explain how the economy and the state are conceptualized in sociology. Are they dependent or independent entities? Provide two examples regarding their relation.
3. **Assignment 3:** Explain how race and gender affect individual experiences. Provide an example for each.
4. **Assignment 4:** Answer the following questions in an essay: What is the relationship between religion and state? How does religion form norms and values in society? How is deviance defined in sociological terms? How is deviance controlled through punishment? Provide two examples of deviance and how it is controlled.
5. **Assignment 5:** Explain how media and cultural products can be used as a tool in advertising beliefs and creating norms? How can activists use them to their advantage? Provide two examples.

Final Project

For the final project, students must choose a personal experience, discourse, or event (part 1) and explain what is sociological about it (part 2). The project will be developed throughout the semester in two steps:

Final Project Part 1 (10 points)

For part 1 of the project students must choose an object such as personal experience, discourse, or historic event and explain it thoroughly within 1 page. The goal is for the students to get initial approval for the object of their choice. If the object is not approved, an extra week will be given to the students to come up with a new object.

For example, the object can be a personal story about the experience of living in the US as an international student or an individual of a certain race, gender, or religious affiliation. It can also be a discourse of popular culture such as movies, albums, and video games or a historic event.

This assignment must adhere to the following formatting guidelines: Times New Roman font, size 12, with 1-inch margins on all sides of the page and double-spaced lines.

Final Project Part 2 (30 points)

For the final assignment, students must explain what is sociological about their object chosen in part 1. They should at least use one sociological theory or concept and analyze their object using a sociological lens. The final assignment can be in the form of an essay between 3 to 5 pages, a podcast, a presentation, or a video essay.

If you choose the essay, it should adhere to the following formatting guidelines: Times New Roman font, size 12, with 1-inch margins on all sides of the page and double-spaced lines. As for other media forms, the podcast should be at least 10 minutes, and video essays would be at least 5 minutes. Presentations will be given in class, and they should be between 10 to 15 minutes.

Regardless of the format of the assignment, the submission must contain the following:

- 1) A description of the object chosen in part 1 of the final project.
- 2) A summary of the sociological concept or theory used to analyze the object.
- 3) An explanation of how the object and the sociological concept are related.

Students will be graded on their ability to explain the sociological concept correctly and apply it to their object in a meaningful and logical way.

In each class session, the instructor is going to provide a variety of examples of applying sociological concepts to different objects such as personal experiences, historic events, or cultural products. It is expected by the students to follow a similar approach for their final project.

There will be no grace period for the second part of the final assignment.

Discussion Participation (5 bonus points)

Engagement in class discussions is encouraged. Students will gain 5 bonus points on their final grade depending on their class engagement. We will have many discussions throughout the semester on a variety of topics, and you can join the discussions by asking questions, engaging in conversations, and providing examples from the lecture.

Remember that class participation is not about being the loudest voice in the room or having all the right answers; it's about engaging thoughtfully, learning from others, and contributing to a vibrant academic community.

Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance is optional on this course. Students have the responsibility to independently learn course content using the recommended resources if they miss a class. Lecture notes or slides will not be provided by the instructor. Although attending class is not compulsory, students who regularly participate in discussions may earn up to 5 extra points on their final grade.

Late Submissions

It is strongly recommended for students to submit their assignments by the due date. In case of a late submission for 5 writing assignments and the first part of the final project, students can submit their assignments up to 3 days after the deadline. Ten points will be deducted from their grade for each day past the deadline. After the 3-day grace period, assignments will not be accepted.

There will be no grace period for the second part of the final assignment. The deadline is final and non-negotiable.

Use of LLMs (ChatGPT, Bard, Gemini, etc.)

One of the main aims of this class is for students to practice coming up with their own idea and explain their understanding of the concepts in the best way possible. Hence, students are strictly forbidden from using ChatGPT (or any equivalent Large Language Model) for assignments and the final project. Submitting ChatGPT output as an assignment is plagiarism and the student will be reported to the university officials.

Student Accessibility Support Center Statement

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Student Accessibility Support Center, Stony Brook Union Suite 107, (631) 632-6748, or at sasc@stonybrook.edu. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and the Student Accessibility Support Center. For procedures and information go to the following website: <https://ehs.stonybrook.edu//programs/fire-safety/emergency-evacuation/evacuation-guide-disabilities> and search Fire Safety and Evacuation and Disabilities.

Critical Incident Management

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. Further information about most academic matters can be found in the Undergraduate Bulletin, the Undergraduate Class Schedule, and the Faculty-Employee Handbook.

Academic Integrity Statement

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty is required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Professions, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_integrity/index.html

Course Materials

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Assignment due
July 9	Sociology as a science, socialization, and culture	-
July 11	Individual, Action, and Identity	-
July 16	Economy and Conflict Theory, Marx Politics and State	Writing Assignment 1
July 18	No Class	-
July 23	Race and Ethnicity	Writing Assignment 2

July 25	Gender	-
July 30	Religion	Writing Assignment 3
August 1	Deviance	Final part 1
August 6	Social Movements	Writing Assignment 4
August 8	Media and Cultural Products	-
August 13	Environment	Writing Assignment 5
August 15	Presentations & Final Discussion	Final part 2

Required and Suggested Readings

July 9 - Sociology as a science, socialization, and culture - Comte & Durkheim

Required readings:

- “What’s Biology Got to Do With It?” *Contexts* 13, no. 4 (November 1, 2014): 14–23.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504214558210>.
- May, Reuben A. Buford. “Discrimination and Dress Codes in Urban Nightlife.” *Contexts* 14, no. 1 (February 1, 2015): 38–43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504214567859>.

Suggested resources:

- Openstax, Openstax. “Introduction to Sociology 3e,” 2021. – *Chapter 1 & 3 & 5*
 - *What Is Sociology?: Crash Course Sociology #1*, 2017.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnCJU6PaCio>.
 - *Sociology & the Scientific Method: Crash Course Sociology #3*, 2017.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlwyNldgJBE>.
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July 11 – Individual, Action, and Identity

Required readings:

- Sociology In Focus – A Sociology Micro Reader – Introduction to Sociology, Sociology 101, Resources for Sociology Teachers. “It Pays to Snitch: The Sociology of Cooperation Part 1 - Sociology In Focus.” Accessed November 26, 2023. <https://sociologyinfocus.com/paystofin-2/>.
- Sociology In Focus – A Sociology Micro Reader – Introduction to Sociology, Sociology 101, Resources for Sociology Teachers. “Get a Room!: The Sociology of PDA - Sociology In Focus,” September 23, 2013. <https://sociologyinfocus.com/get-a-room-the-sociology-of-pda-2/>.
- Sociology In Focus – A Sociology Micro Reader – Introduction to Sociology, Sociology 101, Resources for Sociology Teachers. “Matching Men: Tinder & The Presentation of Masculinity -

Sociology In Focus.” Accessed November 26, 2023. <https://sociologyinfocus.com/matching-men-tinder-the-presentation-of-masculinity-2/>.

Suggested resources:

- Openstax, Openstax. “Introduction to Sociology 3e,” 2021. – *Chapter 4*

July 16

Economy and Conflict Theory, Marx

Required readings:

- Dreier, Peter, and Daniel Flaming. “Working for the Mouse: Inequality at Disneyland.” *Contexts* 19, no. 1 (February 1, 2020): 24–29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504220902198>.
- Jack, Anthony Abraham. “I Was a Low-Income College Student. Classes Weren’t the Hard Part.” *The New York Times*, September 10, 2019, sec. Magazine. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/09/10/magazine/college-inequality.html>, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/09/10/magazine/college-inequality.html>.
- Parreñas, Rhacel Salazar, and Rachel Silvey. “Domestic Workers Refusing Neo-Slavery in the UAE.” *Contexts* 15, no. 3 (August 1, 2016): 36–41. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504216662235>.

Suggested resources:

- Openstax, Openstax. “Introduction to Sociology 3e,” 2021. – *Chapter 9 & 10 & 18*
- Wu-Tang Clan - C.R.E.A.M. (Cash Rules Everything Around Me) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBwAxmrE194>
- *Social Class: WTF? Introduction to Bourdieu and Marx on Class*, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7eWLDuWnEbw>.
- “Social Class & Poverty in the US: Crash Course Sociology #24 - YouTube.” Accessed November 18, 2023. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8PEv5SV4sU&list=PL8dPuualjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA&index=26.

Politics and state

Required readings:

- Eppard, Lawrence M., Noam Chomsky, Mark R. Rank, and David Brady. “On Culture, Politics, and Poverty.” *Contexts* 16, no. 4 (November 1, 2017): 8–11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504217742382>.
- Blee, Kathleen. “How Grassroots Groups Lose Political Imagination.” *Contexts* 14, no. 1 (February 1, 2015): 32–37. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504214567854>.
- Matthews, Morgan C. “Women in State Political Parties.” *Contexts* 19, no. 3 (August 1, 2020): 68–70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504220950405>.

Suggested resources:

- Openstax, Openstax. "Introduction to Sociology 3e," 2021. – *Chapter 17*
- "Politics: Crash Course Sociology #30 - YouTube." Accessed November 18, 2023.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCs_hyI15R8&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA&index=32.

July 18 – No Class

July 23 – Race and Ethnicity

Required readings:

- Seamster, Louise. "Black Debt, White Debt." *Contexts* 18, no. 1 (February 1, 2019): 30–35.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504219830674>.
- Beaman, Jean. "But Madame, We Are French Also." *Contexts* 11, no. 3 (August 1, 2012): 46–51.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504212456182>.
- Lee, Jennifer, Frank D. Bean, and Kathy Sloane. "Beyond Black and White: Remaking Race in America." *Contexts* 2, no. 3 (May 1, 2003): 26–33. <https://doi.org/10.1525/ctx.2003.2.3.26>.

Suggested resources:

- Openstax, Openstax. "Introduction to Sociology 3e," 2021. – *Chapter 11*
- Michael Jackson - Black Or White (Official Video – Shortened Version)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2AitTPI5U0>
- "Race & Ethnicity: Crash Course Sociology #34 - YouTube." Accessed November 18, 2023.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7myLgdZhjzo&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA&index=36.
- "Dubois & Race Conflict: Crash Course Sociology #7 - YouTube." Accessed November 18, 2023.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wny00Az3g8&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA&index=9&t=6s.

July 25 – Gender

Required readings:

- Rigney, Debra. "Boys vs. Girls." *Contexts* 10, no. 4 (October 1, 2011): 78–79.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504211427893>.
- Williams, Christine. "Got Power?" *Contexts* 11, no. 2 (May 1, 2012): 80–80.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504212446471>.
- Way, Niobe. "The Hearts of Boys." *Contexts* 12, no. 1 (February 1, 2013): 14–23.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504213476241>.

- Malmrose, Ellie. "Closeted Womanhood." *Contexts* 16, no. 4 (November 1, 2017): 82–83. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504217742402>.

Suggested resources:

- Openstax, Openstax. "Introduction to Sociology 3e," 2021. – *Chapter 12*
- Queen Latifah - U.N.I.T.Y.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8cHxydDb7o&t=62s>
- "Gender Stratification: Crash Course Sociology #32 - YouTube." Accessed November 18, 2023. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yb1_4FPtziI&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA&index=34.

July 30 – Religion

Required readings:

- Cassino, Dan. "Emasculation, Conservatism, and the 2016 Election." *Contexts* 17, no. 1 (February 1, 2018): 48–53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504218766551>.
- Hingley, Liz. "Under Gods: Stories from Soho Road." *Contexts* 10, no. 4 (October 1, 2011): 54–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504211427870>.
- Williams, Roman R. "Religion, Migration, and Change in a European City." *Contexts* 15, no. 4 (November 1, 2016): 48–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504216685130>.
- Altıok, Özlem. "Reproducing the Nation." *Contexts* 12, no. 2 (May 1, 2013): 46–51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504213487698>.

Suggested resources:

- Openstax, Openstax. "Introduction to Sociology 3e," 2021. – *Chapter 15*

August 1 – Deviance

Required readings:

- Contreras, Randol. "Becoming a Stickup Kid." *Contexts* 14, no. 4 (November 1, 2015): 20–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504215609299>.
- "Everyday Sociology Blog: Rehab, Labeling, and Deviance." Accessed November 18, 2023. <https://www.everydaysociologyblog.com/2008/12/rehab-labeling-and-deviance.html>.
- Fields, Jessica, Laura Mamo, Jen Gilbert, and Nancy Lesko. "Beyond Bullying." *Contexts* 13, no. 4 (November 1, 2014): 80–83. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504214558226>.

Suggested resources:

- Openstax, Openstax. "Introduction to Sociology 3e," 2021. – *Chapter 7*

August 6 – Social Movements

Required readings:

- Buck-Coleman, Audra. “Anger, Profanity, and Hatred.” *Contexts* 17, no. 1 (February 1, 2018): 66–73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504218766540>.
- “Understanding ‘Occupy.’” *Contexts* 11, no. 2 (May 1, 2012): 14–16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504212447925>.
- Charrad, Mounira M., Amina Zarrugh, and Hyun Jeong Ha. “The Arab Spring Protests.” *Contexts* 20, no. 1 (February 1, 2021): 58–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504221997871>.
- Mahmoudi, Hoda. “Freedom and the Iranian Women’s Movement.” *Contexts* 18, no. 3 (August 1, 2019): 14–19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504219864953>.
- Kramer, Rory, Brianna Remster, and Camille Z. Charles. “Black Lives and Police Tactics Matter.” *Contexts* 16, no. 3 (August 1, 2017): 20–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504217732048>.

Suggested resources:

- Openstax, Openstax. “Introduction to Sociology 3e,” 2021. – *Chapter 21*
- “Essential Protest Songs.” Accessed November 5, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1525/ctx.2006.5.1.10>.

August 8 – Media and Cultural Products

Required readings:

- Magazine, Contexts. “What Do Memes Tell Us about Self and Time during the Pandemic? - Contexts.” Accessed December 9, 2023. <https://contexts.org/articles/what-do-memes-tell-us-about-self-and-time-during-the-pandemic/>.
- Schoon, Eric, and Cindy L. Cain. “Facebook’s Boundaries.” *Contexts* 10, no. 2 (May 1, 2011): 70–71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504211408925>.
- Albertson, Cory. “The New Wonder Woman.” *Contexts* 15, no. 3 (August 1, 2016): 66–69. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504216662253>.
- Stover, John A. “Framing Social Movements Through Documentary Films.” *Contexts* 12, no. 4 (November 1, 2013): 56–58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504213511218>.

Suggested resources:

- Openstax, Openstax. “Introduction to Sociology 3e,” 2021. – *Chapter 8 and Chapter 21 Section 2*
- *Social Media: Crash Course Navigating Digital Information #10*, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5YKW6fhlss>.
- *The Myth of a Free Press: Media Bias Explained*, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-8t0EfLzQo>.

- *Marxist Literary Criticism: WTF? An Introduction to Marxism and Culture*, 2018.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nsKGt92da0>.
- *Hegemony: WTF? An Introduction to Gramsci and Cultural Hegemony*, 2017.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LI_2-qsovo.

August 13 – Environment

Required readings:

- Laszewski, Chuck. "The Sociologists' Take on the Environment." *Contexts* 7, no. 2 (May 1, 2008): 20–25. <https://doi.org/10.1525/ctx.2008.7.2.20>.
- Tabishat, Tala. "How Clothes Harm the Environment." *Contexts* 21, no. 1 (February 1, 2022): 54–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15365042221083011>.
- Schrank, Zach. "Visualizing the Anthropocene from Above." *Contexts* 21, no. 2 (May 1, 2022): 44–51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15365042221107661>.
- Brulle, Robert J., and J. Timmons Roberts. "Climate Misinformation Campaigns and Public Sociology." *Contexts* 16, no. 1 (February 1, 2017): 78–79.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504217696081>.

Suggested resources:

- Openstax, Openstax. "Introduction to Sociology 3e," 2021. – *Chapter 20*

August 15 – Presentation Day

- No Readings
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Additional Open Access Resources

The following resources can be used by the students if they miss a class, or they want to learn a concept from different resources. The book is an open-access book so you should be able to easily download it for free. The few listed YouTube channels are full of educational videos on related concepts. Students are advised to use these resources to gain a better understanding of the course material.

Books:

- Introduction to Sociology 3e – Openstax
<https://openstax.org/details/books/introduction-sociology-3e?Book%20details>

YouTube:

- Crash Course Sociology:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA

- What the Theory – Tom Nicholas:
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIVcDWpMT7Kd3O0eq8b6fMOwvK26vpiWE>
- The School of Life:
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwxNMb28XmpcoeCDO0VnGUavcLUFiNcAl>