

University of California, Berkeley
Department of Sociology

SOCIOLOGY N1H: Introduction to Sociology

Summer Session C
Tues, Wed, Thurs 5-7pm
Barrows 56

Instructor: Mel Jeske
Email: mel.jeske@berkeley.edu

Offices hours: Wednesdays 3-5pm – Barrows 480

COURSE OVERVIEW

Sociology is the study of the social—social life, change, identity, and institutions. The primary objective of this introduction to sociology course is to introduce students to the major theories, concepts, and substantive areas of sociology with an emphasis on health and medicine. In 2015, the Association of American Medical Colleges deemed sociology to be such an important lens for understanding health that 30% of the social and behavioral section of the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) is focused on sociological material.¹ In this course, readings, lectures, and assignments have been selected with the needs of pre-health professional students in mind, consisting of three thematic units that focus on social structures and institutions, stratification and inequality, and social change. Throughout the course, we will also consider the diverse research methods used in sociological research. This course is open to all majors and there are no prerequisites.

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

This course will be broken into three thematic units. These units will introduce you to concepts and theories in sociology and how they have been taken up in social science research, including medical sociology, sociology of health and illness, medical anthropology, and science, technology, and medicine studies (STMS), to elucidate persistent health inequalities and inequities.

Each unit will cover two weeks of the course:

- Unit 1: Social Structures and Institutions (Weeks 2 & 3)
- Unit 2: Stratification and Inequality (Weeks 4 & 5)
- Unit 3: Social Construction and Social Movements (Weeks 6 & 7)

This is a thematic organization and thus, particularly for some of the core concept readings, we will be reading texts out of their historical order. While the course is organized into discrete units, we will discuss how the themes and concepts from each unit inform the other units as well as the broader sociological literature. The reading guides will provide some clarity on this, as will our in-class discussions.

By the end of the course you will:

- Develop an understanding of sociological questions and approaches;
- Learn how sociologists identify and study inequalities in norms, institutions, and policy;

¹ <http://www.asanet.org/teaching-learning/departments/department-leaders/mcat-and-sociology>

- Gain a working knowledge of key sociological concepts and theories, as well as their relevance to health and medicine;
- Learn how to identify the ways in which social structures impact life chances and opportunities; and
- Develop the ability to use critical thinking and research skills to evaluate and understand complex situations.

INSTRUCTOR EXPECTATIONS

In this course, I expect you to develop the ability to ask critical questions about the world around us. At the onset of this course, you might wonder what a course in sociology can offer you. It is my hope that upon completion of this course, you are able to apply a sociological imagination and perspective in order to reflect on the situations that you, your family, friends, and peers encounter—perhaps differentially—in everyday life.

It is expected that you will come to class prepared. This means reading all assigned readings **PRIOR** to class on the date they are assigned. Some of the readings in this course are original texts from early social theorists; it is possible that you may find some of them to be dense and difficult to understand. Early on in the course we will discuss strategies for reading academic texts, and we will work through these together. While it is possible to read secondary summaries and analyses of original texts, I believe engaging original works is highly valuable. A commitment to working through these readings will help you develop critical reading and analytic skills along with a deeper understanding of the course material.

COURSE MATERIALS

In this course, you will read excerpts from many books along with peer-reviewed articles. All readings will be made available to you on bCourses. Reading guides for *most* core concept readings (marked with an asterisk* in the course outline) will be made available in advance, and we will work through these readings together in class through lecture and discussion. Note: the reading guides made available are **not** a substitute for reading the assigned text; you should treat them as a companion. Suggested resources for reference can be found at the end of this syllabus.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

(a) Reading Comprehension Questions (RCQs) – 15%

You will have 6 RCQ assignments due throughout the course. You will be responsible for bringing a printed copy of two (2) open-ended questions and their answers about the assigned reading. The due dates for RCQs can be found in the course outline in this syllabus. I will collect these at the beginning of the class period and we will use them for discussion. Your RCQs should not overlap with questions used in reading guides. The reading guides I provide will help to ensure that you are attending to the main concepts and arguments of the reading. In the first week, you will have a practice set of RCQs due. RCQs will be graded on a credit/no credit basis, and you may miss one RCQ assignment (in other words, 5 of the 6 will be used for your grade). Late RCQs will **not** be accepted.

(b) Unit Exams – 45%, 15% each

There will be three exams for this course, one per unit. The exams will be administered the Tuesday following each unit. Each exam will be worth 15% of your grade and will be comprised of vocabulary,

short answer, and essay questions. These exams are meant to evaluate your comprehension of the core concepts in each unit.

(c) Final Research Paper – 25%

For your final paper, you will select a medical/health topic to research in detail. You will review the literature both on the substantive issues (considering questions such as: Why is this an important health topic? When did it come about? Whom does it concern?) and its relation to social science research (Who has researched this topic? What were their findings? What other sociological issues might be relevant to consider?). In addition to using the core concepts from the course to develop your paper, you will review the substantive and peer-reviewed literature on this topic. We will discuss the progress of these papers over the course of the term. Do not turn in any work that is not your own original effort. For more information on plagiarism, see the **Academic Integrity** section of this syllabus.

We will review the final paper assignment in detail the second week of the course. Students will submit topics and sample references for instructor approval at the end of week 4 in the form of a 1-2 page proposal (due Thursday, 7/12). The proposal should suggest a paper topic, relevant course material, and four sample references. As outlined in the final paper rubric, final papers should be 8-10 pages in length inclusive of references (no more than 3,000 words), 1.5 line spaced, 12pt font (Arial, Times New Roman, Georgia), and follow ASA, APA, MLA or Chicago guidelines. Late papers will not be accepted.

(e) Participation & Attendance – 15%

Class meets three times per week. 15% of your grade is devoted to **participation** and attendance. Attendance at all sessions and participation in discussions is mandatory. Students' participation grades will reflect their efforts to participate and their preparedness. The introduction memo (see course outline) due before the first class is part of your participation grade. Our class meets a total of 24 times. Missing more than one class requires documentation. Because this is a short session with only 8 weeks of instruction, please notify me in writing by the end of the first week of the term about any known or potential extracurricular conflicts (such as religious observances, graduate or medical school interviews, or team activities). I will try my best to help you make accommodations but cannot promise them in all cases. In the event there is no mutually-workable solution, you may be dropped from the class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your grade will be comprised of the following components:

- (a) Reading Comprehension Questions (RCQs) 15%
- (b) Unit Exams 45% (15%, 3x)
- (c) Final Research Paper 25%
- (d) Participation 15%

Grade Distribution

A+ 97-100%	B+ 86-89%	C+ 76-79%	D+ 66-69%	F <60%
A 94-96%	B 83-85%	C 73-75%	D 63-65%	
A- 90-93%	B- 80-82%	C- 70-72%	D- 60-62%	

COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS BY WEEK

Week 1

INTRODUCTION

Date	Reading Assignment	Due
Tuesday 6/19	No readings – course overview	Introduction Memo
Wednesday 6/20	Smelser, Neil. 1995. “Introducing Sociology” in <i>Sociology</i> . 5 th edition. Prentice Hall Books. pp. 1-19. Henslin, 2007. “What is Sociology?” Handouts – in class	
Thursday 6/21	*Mills, C. Wright. 1969. <i>The Sociological Imagination</i> , chapters 1 and 2.	RCQs due (practice)

UNIT 1

Week 2

**SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONS
PART I – Institutions, Roles, Power**

Date	Reading Assignment	Due
Tuesday 6/26	*Parsons, Talcott. 1951. <i>The Social System</i> . Chap X: Social Structure and Dynamic Process: The Case of Modern Medicine” ONLY READ 429-439.	RCQs due
Wednesday 6/27	*Starr, Paul. 1982. <i>The Social Transformation of American Medicine</i> . New York: Basic Books. pp. 3-29.	
Thursday 6/28	In class: workshop on final paper, resources for writing research papers	

Week 3

**SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONS
PART II – Flows of Power in a Post-Structural World**

Date	Reading Assignment	Due
Tuesday 7/3	*Foucault, M. 1977. <i>History of Sexuality, Vol 1</i> . Part 5: pp. 135-145. *Zola, Irving. 1972. “Medicine as an Institution of Social Control.” <i>Sociological Review</i> . 20(4): 487-504.	RCQs due
Wednesday 7/4	NO CLASS – INDEPENDENCE DAY OBSERVED	
Thursday 7/5	Barker, K. 1998. “A Ship upon a Stormy Sea: the Medicalization of Pregnancy.” <i>Social Science and Medicine</i> 47(8): 1067-1076.	

UNIT II

Week 4

STRATIFICATION AND INEQUALITY PART I

Date	Reading Assignment	Due
Tuesday 7/10	UNIT 1 EXAM	
Wednesday 7/11	<p>*Waitzkin, Howard. 1989. "Social structures of medical oppression: A Marxist view." pp. 166-178 in <i>Perspectives in Medical Sociology</i>, 1st ed., edited by P. Brown. Belmont, CA: Waveland Press.</p> <p>*Link, Bruce & Phelan, Jo. 1995. "Social conditions as fundamental causes of disease." <i>Journal of Health & Social Behavior</i> 35 (Extra Issue): 80-94.</p>	RCQs due
Thursday 7/12	Monk, Ellis. 2015. "The Cost of Color: Skin Color, Discrimination, and Health among African Americans" <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 121(2): 396-444.	Final Paper topic & references

Week 5

STRATIFICATION AND INEQUALITY PART II – Reproduction of Inequality

Date	Reading Assignment	Due
Tuesday 7/17	<p>*Bourdieu, Pierre. 1983 [1986]. Forms of Capital. pp. 241-257 in Richardson, John (ed.) <i>Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education</i>.</p> <p>*Shim, Janet. 2010. "Cultural health capital: a theoretical approach to understanding health care interactions and the dynamics of unequal treatment." <i>Journal of Health & Social Behavior</i>, 51(1), 1-15.</p>	RCQs due
Wednesday 7/18	<p>Preparing for the Social and Behavioral Sciences Portions of the MCAT Workshop</p> <p>Guest Lecturer: Dr. Thomson</p>	
Thursday 7/19	Lareau, Annette. 2002. "Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families," <i>American Sociological Review</i> 67:747-76.	

UNIT III

Week 6

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION & SOCIAL MOVEMENTS PART I

Date	Reading Assignment	Due
Tuesday 7/24	UNIT 2 EXAM	
Wednesday 7/25	*Barker, K. 2010. "The Social Construction of Illness." In Bird (ed.) 2010 <i>Handbook of Medical Sociology</i> . Vanderbilt University Press: 147-162. *Morning, Ann. 2005. "Race" <i>Contexts</i> , 4(4): 44-46.	RCQs due
Thursday 7/26	Martin, Emily. 1991. "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles." <i>Signs</i> 16(3): 485-501.	

Week 7

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION & SOCIAL MOVEMENTS PART II

Date	Reading Assignment	Due
Tuesday 7/31	*Epstein, Steven. 1995. "The construction of lay expertise: AIDS activism and the forging of credibility in the reform of clinical trials." <i>Science, Technology and Human Values</i> 20(4): 408-37. *Brown, Phil, Stephen Zavestoski, Sabrina McCormick, Brian Mayer, Rachel Morello-Frosch, Rebecca Gasior Altman. 2004. "Embodied health movements: new approaches to social movements in health." <i>Sociology of Health and Illness</i> 26(1): 50-58.	RCQs due
Wednesday 8/1	In class film & reading "How to Survive a Plague"	
Thursday 8/2	Nelson, Alondra. 2011. <i>Body and Soul: the Black Panther Party and the Fight against Medical Discrimination</i> . Chap 2: "Origins of Black Panther Party Health Activism," pp. 49-74. Shostak, Sara. 2013. <i>Exposed Science: Genes, the environment, and the politics of population Health</i> , Chap 6: "'The Molecular is Political'" pp. 169-195.	

Week 8

SOCIOLOGY IN THE WORLD

Date	Reading Assignment	Due
Tuesday 8/7	UNIT 3 EXAM Burawoy, Michael. 2004. "Public Sociologies: Contradictions, Dilemmas, and Possibilities," <i>Social Forces</i> 82(4): 1603-18.	
Wednesday 8/8	Roberts, Dorothy. 2010. "The Social Immorality of Health in the Gene Age." In <i>Against Health</i> , edited by Jonathan Metzl and Anna Kirkland. pp 61-71. New York University Press. Sherman, Rachel. 2017. "What the Rich Won't Tell You" New York Times Op-ed. (5 pp) Torres, Stacey. 2014. "Old MacDonald's" New York Times Op-ed. (3 pp)	
Thursday 8/9	Final Paper due – in class and online	Final Paper

EMAIL

Before emailing me with a question about the course, please first make sure that your answer is not answered in the syllabus. I am happy to discuss course material, should you have a question, during office hours. If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting notes from a classmate. Do not email me asking what you missed – course content and structure are outlined in the syllabus, and you are responsible for making up that work.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Do not turn in any work that is not your own effort and thinking; plagiarism is a serious offense and will be treated as such. Any suspected offense will be investigated, and if necessary reported to the Office of Student Affairs. Find more information about plagiarism guidelines here:

<https://sa.berkeley.edu/conduct/integrity/definition>

You are a member of an academic community at one of the world's leading research universities. Universities like Berkeley create knowledge that has a lasting impact in the world of ideas and on the lives of others; such knowledge can come from an undergraduate paper as well as the lab of an internationally known professor. One of the most important values of an academic community is the balance between the free flow of ideas and the respect for the intellectual property of others. Researchers don't use one another's research without permission; scholars and students always use proper citations in papers; professors may not circulate or publish student papers without the writer's permission; and students may not circulate or post materials (handouts, exams, syllabi, or any class materials) from their classes without the written permission of the instructor. Any test, paper or report submitted by you and that bears your name is presumed to be your own original work that has not previously been submitted for credit in another course unless you obtain prior written approval to do so from your instructor. In all of your assignments, including your homework or drafts of papers, you may use words or ideas written by other individuals in publications, web sites, or other sources, but only with proper attribution. If you are not clear about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or examination, be

sure to seek clarification from your instructor beforehand. Finally, you should keep in mind that as a member of the campus community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors and will be evaluated on your own merits. The consequences of cheating and academic dishonesty—including a formal discipline file, possible loss of future internship, scholarship, or employment opportunities, and denial of admission to graduate school—are simply not worth it.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Please see me as soon as possible if you need particular accommodations, and we will work out the necessary arrangements.

A NOTE ON THIS SYLLABUS

A syllabus provides a roadmap for a given course for both the students and the instructor. The instructor reserves the right make changes to the syllabus—including due dates and content—as necessary. Students will be notified right away and given an updated version.

H*E*A*L*S

In the event that something comes up in class (verbally or otherwise) that you feel is offensive or taken out of context, please bring this to the attention of the class right away. Should you prefer, you can always talk to the instructor after class, or bring it up anonymously at a later time. These conversations are important and help everyone in the class learn how to create a more inclusive environment. The HEALS framework, developed at the UCSF School of Nursing, can help us have a productive class discussion about the situation. More information here: <https://nursing.ucsf.edu/about/DIVA-HEALS>

Halt - the discussion.

Engage - with the issue - Who is/could be affected?

Allow - trading opinions/stories/perspectives/articles/reactions

Learn - Listen to one another

Synthesis - Why does this discussion matter?

WRITING RESOURCES

Writing is crucial to your success in school and in your future career. As you will be writing a final paper for this course, I expect you to use this as an opportunity to hone your writing skills. One basic resource I continue to find useful is *Elements of Style: The Classic Writing Guide* by E.B. White and William Strunk.

Additionally, UCB has a writing center where you can work with writing tutors online and in person to improve your papers. For more information: <https://slc.berkeley.edu/writing>

RESOURCES ON SOCIOLOGY CONCEPTS

You might find some of the readings in this course to be dense and rife with jargon. The reading guides provided throughout the course should help to make the readings more digestible. Should find yourself looking for more resources, here are some suggestions:

Bird, Chloe, Peter Conrad, Allen Fremont, and Stefan Timmermans. Eds. 2010. *The Handbook of Medical Sociology, 6th Edition*. Vanderbilt University Press.

Lemert, Charles. Ed. 2010. *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings*. Westview Press.

Scott, John. 2014. Ed. *A dictionary of sociology*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Smelser, Neil. 1995. *Sociology*. 5th edition. Prentice Hall Books.