

Soc 190 – The Age of Anxiety: Fear in Society
University of California, Berkeley
Tuesdays 2-4pm
155 Social Sciences Building

Instructor: Edwin Lin, Spring 2024

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Office Hours, Sign-Up at <http://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/icwie>

Tuesdays 9:45-10:45am, 12:45-1:45pm, 4-5pm

Thursdays 9:45-10:45am

487 Social Sciences Building OR via Zoom online

Zoom Office Hours Link: <https://berkeley.zoom.us/j/99441395960>

Overview of Course Content:

Fear plays an increasingly important role in our society. We see it in our media and our politics. It affects our thoughts about climate change, COVID-19, and the future. We see its effects on our mental health and our relationships. As a result of this rise of fear in the 21st century, some sociologists have argued that we need a better sociological approach to understanding fear in society. In this class, we will explore the age of anxiety using sociological concepts to understand fear and anxiety and the roles they play in society.

As a sociology capstone experience, the course seeks to provide students with a partial experience of what graduate school level seminars are like—relying on student-led discussions on important reading material as well as individual projects that students will work on throughout the semester. Readings, discussion participation, and personal interest will be critical to creating a productive and successful learning environment!

The goals of this course are: 1) to expose you to a potentially growing field of sociology and its different arenas of application, 2) to provide a space for students to discuss and engage on these topics in social everyday practice, and 3) to support students in engaging in a senior capstone project that involves some form of sociological research.

Office Hours:

Feel free to come into office hours for anything, course or life related! Please sign up at the link at the top of the syllabus if you know in advance that you'd like to come in. If you do not sign up, you are still welcome to drop in, but I do sometimes step out of the office/Zoom call when there is no appointment to run a quick errand.

If office hours are full or you cannot make the times, you may email me to set up another time. If you have a very short question, you can try to drop by and sneak in before/after a student for a quick question (as not every student will use the entire 15 minutes they signed up for)—but be prepared to wait patiently as well.

Office hours can be done in-person (487 Social Sciences Building) OR online via Zoom (<https://berkeley.zoom.us/j/99441395960>).

Grade Breakdown:

Participation and Attendance	20%
Reading Memo + Outline	10%
Senior Capstone Project	70% Total
Research Question Proposal	5%
Literature Review	15%
Research Design Proposal	10%
Data Analysis Memo	10%
Poster Session	5%
Final Paper	25%

*****NOTE: Attendance is mandatory in this class. Missing more than 2 classes will result in a penalty to your overall grade; missing 4 classes is an automatic fail for the course.** No actual points are given for attendance (this is somewhat reflected in your participation grade), but attendance will be taken every class. To get credit for attending a class, you must not be more than 10 minutes late and must stay to the very end of the class; otherwise, it will be considered an absence. If you have problems with attendance due to an emergency, sports schedule, or health issue, please talk to me early in the semester to see if we can work something out so that you do not fail due to attendance.

*****If English is not your first language**, or you have trouble writing in English, there are resources on campus to help in writing your papers.

1. Visit the Student Learning Center (SLC) on UC Berkeley campus. Check out their website and their writing resources at <http://slc.berkeley.edu/writing>
2. Look on the bCourses website for our class. I have posted some resources in a folder labeled “Writing Resources.” These are some rather thorough guides written specifically by and for the Sociology department.

Participation

This class is run somewhat like a graduate seminar and/or research seminar. This means while I do give lectures and discuss assignments, I also expect you to engage with the material and to be ready to share about your thoughts on the class readings. Memos will help structure our discussions, but you will be expected to take initiative with your learning process in this class!

Please come to class prepared to discuss the week’s reading and/or topic. Your participation during class is crucial to learning, understanding, and

“Participation” does not mean simply speaking out a lot. The content, quality, and depth of your participation are just as important as how many times a week you speak. I do take notes and keep record of participation, including large group and small group discussions.

For those of you who may dislike participating in large groups or spontaneous participation, there are several options that I am happy to work out with you. If you are at all concerned about participation, please see me *early* in the semester in office hours to talk about this.

Reading Memo + Outline

During the first week of our class, we will assign students to different weeks of the course to write memos and outlines for the readings on the syllabus. The detailed instructions of the memos and short outline will be on bCourses. They will be relatively short reflections on the reading for that week, including a one-page single-spaced outline of the reading for that week.

The memo will consist of at least one example of how they see a key concept in the reading expressed in our society (e.g., in the student’s personal life, in the news, in online content, etc.). The week your memo is due, I will use your memo in class to help guide our discussion. In other words, you and your memo will act as our guide to the discussion for that week. I will ask you to share what you wrote in the memo as well as what questions you had in thinking about the reading.

Senior Capstone Project

This assignment is a large part of your grade, but it is broken down into many small assignments. Overall, the goal is to provide you with some hands-on social science research that will develop your interests while being fun and memorable—basically, I hope you learn something that you want to learn!

The first part of the project is a **research question proposal** where you will develop a clear, concise sociological research question about something you are interested in. The one limitation is that it should relate to the course’s topic of fear and anxiety in society.

The second part is a **literature review**. This is where you will do some broad-based reading trying to answer your research question through existing sociological studies. You will try to see what different scholars think about your research question and how they would approach it. This paper will require library research and skimming many academic articles.

The third part of your project is a **research design proposal**. You will choose between three designated and well-explained sociological methods: existing data research, content analysis, or in-depth interviewing. Each one will have slightly different requirements. Existing data research will require you to find statistical data on the key variables of your research question and analyze them. Content analysis will require you to choose and systematically gather content to analyze. In-depth interviewing will require you to reach out and interview different individuals about your topic area. In the proposal, you will discuss what you plan to do to gather data for your project.

The fourth part of the project is a **data analysis memo** which will consist of a short, preliminary analysis of the data you have collected so far. This will include presenting your primary data and providing a brief early analysis of it.

The fifth part is to present your preliminary ideas to the class! This will be done in our last class of the semester where we will break up into small groups and you will hold a “**poster session**” about your research and what you have found out so far. This will be done with your laptops utilizing a visual presentation (e.g., PowerPoint, Slides, etc.).

The final step is to write the **final paper**. The paper will include an introduction, literature review, methods section, data analysis or findings section, and a conclusion. It will argue what you found based on the data you collected and what you believe we can learn from your research.

Grading Scale for the Class:

A+ (98-100)

A (93-97)

A- (90-92)

B+ (88-89)

B (83-87)

B- (80-82)

C+ (78-79)

C (73-77)

C- (70-72)

D+ (68-69)

D (63-67)

D- (60-62)

F (everything below 60)

Course Policies (detailed info also available on bCourses)

Extensions are only approved for DSP accommodations and documentable emergency circumstances (e.g., hospitalization, death in the family, sickness requiring medical attention, family circumstances with documentation, mental health difficulties that required seeking professional help, etc.). All assignments will all be “handed out” and completed through the bCourses website. There is a one-hour grace period where you can still submit your assignment even though it will be considered late and may get up to a 5% grade deduction. After that one-hour grace period, the paper will be considered a day late and will have a 10% grade deduction. Each additional day a paper is late, it will be penalized an additional 5%. After being four days, the paper will no longer be accepted. Please be sure to turn things in on time and before the stated due date and time.

*NOTE: The reason I have a strict policy on extensions is because I am concerned about unknowingly participating in a system that privileges certain racial, cultural, socioeconomic, family background influences that may account for one student asking for an extension while others keep silent about their circumstances. Especially in larger classes, I feel it is important to have clear guideline to provide some equity.

That said, overall, **please communicate with me** about difficulties that may prevent you from succeeding in the class if these emergencies do come up during the semester.

- PLEASE submit your assignments early! Do not wait for the last minute, especially given the late assignment policy for the class, so please save us all some stress and extra work and submit things *at least an hour in advance of the due date and time.*
- On bCourses, you can submit assignments early and re-submit them (to override the submission) later. They will not be graded until the due date passes. So, submit assignments early to avoid last minute technological errors so that you at least get some credit in case of emergency.
- **Back-up your work!** Stolen laptops, broken laptops, etc. are a real risk of the technological era. If you encounter such a problem, ***there is NOT a guarantee of an extension.*** It is therefore your responsibility to back up your work so that you can still turn in the assignment in case a technologically related tragedy occurs.
- **If you encounter an error in submission,** please take a screenshot of the error that includes the date and time of the error (your computer’s date/time clock is good enough) and email your assignment with the screenshot attached to me. In order for your assignment to be accepted as on time, **I must receive this email before the submission due date.**
- It is your responsibility to make sure you submitted the correct assignment, and that the assignment was fully submitted, so **please after submitting your assignment, check to be sure that the correct document was successfully uploaded onto bCourses.** If you submit the wrong assignment or if it was unsuccessfully uploaded, we have no choice but to give you a 0 on the assignment.

This is the course wide policy, but I can make exceptions as I see fit.

Disabled Students' Program (DSP)

If you are part of the Disabled Students' Program (DSP) and require special accommodations, please try to make arrangements in advance—this will guarantee you access to your accommodations. If you do make arrangements last minute, we will try our best to still accommodate, but try to ask in advance, even if it's just in case.

To ask for an extension or accommodation using your DSP letter, you must first be sure that your DSP letter allows for the accommodation you are requesting. Then, send an email with your DSP letter attached to me (the instructor). If you are asking for an extension, please **suggest a reasonable due date** (allowed by your letter) to turn in the assignment.

Grading Philosophy:

I believe that the grade you get is the grade ***you earn***. I also believe that your final grade in the course should reflect an accurate assessment of the entire body of work you submit for the class. If something unexpected or tragic occurs with one assignment (e.g. you do much worse on an assignment due to personal circumstances, you were unable to turn it in on time and received a 0, etc.), I will still evaluate the rest of your coursework to see what grade you deserve for the entire course—in other words, focus on the other assignments and show you deserve an A in the course in spite of one major slip-up. You will never receive a grade **lower** than what you earned by sheer point calculation, but you may receive a grade **higher** if your work proves it (e.g. improvement, exceptional final exam, etc.).

I review every grade submitted at the end of the course and will handle things like borderline grades, rounding, etc. based on the performance of your work as a whole. I even (sometimes) re-read your already graded work to see if you should be bumped up from a B+ to an A- if you are on the borderline. These are done for **every** student, regardless of whether you email me or not (to ensure a fair playing field for all my students), so there is no need to “advocate” for yourself—just focus on the work and prove you deserve (i.e. earn) the grade you are hoping for.

Re-grade Policy:

If you want a re-grade, please follow the following steps. You have two weeks after receiving your grade to initiate the beginning of this process. I do not do re-grades after this two-week cut-off (to avoid people asking for re-grades at the end of the semester because their grades are borderline).

1. Meet with me to discuss why you got the grade you got.
2. Write a cover letter to me that explains how you understand my perspective and why you still have an issue with the grade (what you thought was mis-graded).
3. I will re-grade your work (the entire thing) and whatever grade you get becomes the final grade (either higher or lower).

Keep in mind, I will have graded all the assignments in this class. I probably have a sense for how your assignment compares to other people in the class. But, at the same time, grading many assignments could allow for mistakes, so while that is possible, please have **sober judgment** over your own work and really consider my perspective. Regardless of how much time or effort you put into the assignment, if it simply did not meet the requirements or if you did not adequately communicate what was in your head, you may still have gotten a lower grade (keep in mind, I do not necessarily know how much time you spent on the assignment and I am not evaluating effort, but the expectation of the assignment).

Reading List and Semester Schedule

Readings should be completed before class the date they are assigned. All readings are available on our bCourses site. Assignments that are “handed out” are done so completely on bCourses and will be explained in class that day.

Most weeks have two assigned readings. The first one listed is generally a larger overview—for example, dealing with big picture or theoretical understandings of the topic for that week. The second one listed is generally more specific, like a case study or example of that topic area. Note this for the way you approach each reading.

Sensitive Material

At times this semester we will be discussing events and issues that may be disturbing, even traumatizing, to some students. If you ever feel the need to step outside during one of these discussions, either for a short time or for the rest of the class session, you may always do so without academic penalty. (You will, however, be responsible for any material you miss. If you do leave the room for a significant time, please plan to get notes from another student or see me individually)

Our discussions in class will heavily revolve around the readings, so please come to class with some thoughts, questions, ideas about them—you should be taking notes on each reading as well as jotting down your wonderings.

List of Important Due Dates:

Research Question Proposal due	Tuesday, January 30
Literature Review due	Tuesday, February 20
Research Design Proposal due	Tuesday, March 5
Data Analysis Memo due	Tuesday, April 9
Poster Session due	Tuesday, April 23
Final Paper due	Friday, May 10

Week 1 (1/16)

Introduction: Sociology of Fear / Syllabus + Course Structure
- Bude, Heinz. (2018) “Fear as a principle,” in *Society of Fear*. Polity Press: Cambridge, pp. 1-14.

Handout via bCourses: Research Question Proposal due Tuesday, January 30

Week 2 (1/23)

Literature Review: Fear Research
- Furedi, Frank. (2018) “Introduction,” in *How Fear Works: Culture of Fear in the Twenty-First Century*. Bloomsbury Continuum: London, pp. 1-33.
- Glassner, Barry. 1999. “Introduction: Why Americans Fear the Wrong Things,” in *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans Are Afraid of the Wrong Things*. Basic Books: New York.

Week 3 (1/30)

Sociological Theoretical Foundations of Fear/Anxiety

- Tudor, Andrew. (2003). "A (macro) sociology of fear?" *The Sociological Review*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd.: Oxford.
- Sik, Domonkos. (2020). "Towards a social theory of fear: A phenomenology of negative integration," *European Journal of Social Theory*. Vol. 23(4): 512-531.

*****Research Question Proposal DUE TODAY, Tuesday, January 30*****

Handout via bCourses: Literature Review due Tuesday, February 20

Week 4 (2/6)

Rising Fears: Fear in Contemporary Society

- Bader, Christopher; Joseph O Baker; L Edward Day and Ann Gordon, "The Sum of All Fears," *Fear Itself: The Causes and Consequences of Fear in America*, NYU Press: 2020, pp. 13-30
- Mertens, Gaetan et. al. (2020). "Fear of the coronavirus (COVID-19): Predictors in an online study conducted in March 2020." *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*. Vol. 74(2020): 102258.

Week 5 (2/13)

Politics of Fear: Terrorism and 9/11

- Mueller, John. (2006). "Introduction: Overblown," and "The Limited Destructiveness of Terrorism," in *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why We Believe Them*. Free Press: New York, pp. 1-28.
- Mueller, John. (2006). "Dates of Infamy: Pearl Harbor and 9/11," in *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why We Believe Them*. Free Press: New York, pp. 51-66.

Week 6 (2/20)

Politics of Fear: Nativism and Xenophobia

- Wodak, Ruth. (2015). "Theories and Definitions: The Politics of Identity," in *The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean*. Sage: Los Angeles, pp. 25-45.
- Wodak, Ruth. (2015). "Populism and Politics: Transgressing Norms and Taboos," in *The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean*. Sage: Los Angeles, pp. 1-24.

*****Literature Review DUE TODAY, Tuesday February 20*****

Handout via bCourses: Research Design Proposal due Tuesday, March 5

Week 7 (2/27)

Fear and the Economy: Crime

- Hale, C. (1996) "Fear of Crime: A Review of the Literature," *International Review of Victimology*. Vol 4, pp. 79-121, 127-132 (skim aggressively).
- Williams, Dave and Jobuda Ahmed. (2009). "The relationship between antisocial stereotypes and public CCTV systems: exploring fear of crims in the modern surveillance society," *Psycholog, Crime & Law*. Vol. 15(8): 743-758.

Week 8 (3/5)

Fear and Socioeconomic Class

- Schmitz, Andreas, Flemmen, Magne, and Lennart Rosenlund. (2018). "Social class, symbolic domination, and Angst: The example of the Norwegian social space," *The Sociological Review*. Vol. 66(3): 623-644.
- Silva, Jennifer M. (2013). "Coming Up Short: Working-Class Adulthood in an Age of Uncertainty," *Oxford Scholarship Online*, Oxford University Press.

*****Research Design Proposal DUE TODAY, Tuesday March 5***
Handout via bCourses: Data Analysis Memo due Tuesday, April 9**

Week 9 (3/12)

Fear in the Workplace

- Gibaldi, C., & Cusack, G. (2019). Fear in the Workplace. *Review of Business*, 39(1).
- Gill, Michael J. and Robin Burrow. (2018) "The Function of Fear in Institutional Maintenance: Feeling frightened as an essential ingredient in haute cuisine." *Organization Studies*. Vol 39(4): 445-465.

Week 10 (3/19)

Fears in the Family: Parenting and Children

- Newman, Katherine S. (2012). "The Slippery State of Adulthood," in *The Accordion Family: Boomerang Kids, Anxious Parents, and the Private Toll of Global Competition*. Beacon Press: Boston, pp. 1-36.
- Payne, Elizabeth and Melissa Smith. (2014). "The Big Freak Out: Educator Fear in Response to the Presence of Transgender Elementary School Students," *Journal of Homosexuality*. Vol. 61: 399-418.

SPRING BREAK (3/26) NO CLASS**Week 11 (4/2)**

Social Anxiety Disorder

- Gilbert, P. (2001). "Evolution and social anxiety: The role of attraction, social competition, and social hierarchies." *Psychiatric Clinics*, 24(4), 723-751.
- Jefferies, Philip and Michael Ungar. (2020) "Social anxiety in young people: A prevalence study in seven countries," *PLOS ONE* 15(9): e0239133.

Week 13 (4/9)

(Social) Media and Fear

- Altheide, D. L. (2013). "Media logic, social control, and fear." *Communication Theory*, 23(3), 223-238.
- Roberts, J. A., & David, M. E. (2020). "The Social media party: fear of missing out (FoMO), social media intensity, connection, and well-being." *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, 36(4), 386-392.

*****Data Analysis Memo DUE TODAY, Tuesday April 9*****

Week 14 (4/16)

Fear and Social Action

- Furedi, Frank. (2005). "Foreword," and "Disengagement—and its Denial," in *Politics of Fear*. Continuum International Publishing Group: London, pp. 1-4, 28-48.
- Kleres, Jochen and Asa Wettergren. (2017) "Fear, hope, anger, and guilt in climate activism," *Social Movement Studies*. Vol 16(5): 507-519.

Handout via bCourses: Poster Sessions due Tuesday, April 23

Week 15 (4/23)

Poster Sessions in Small Groups

Handout via bCourses: Final Paper due Friday, May 10