Sociology 151: Principles of Sociology
Wake Forest University
Professor Hana Brown (brownhe@wfu.edu)
Course Time: Tuesday & Thursday from 9:30am to 10:45am
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday from 2:00pm to 3:00pm
Office Hours Sign Up: https://brownhe.youcanbook.me/
Office Location: 004D Kirby Hall
Office Phone: 336-758-3540

Course Description & Goals
Sociology seeks to understand the social origins of individual thought and action as well as the organizations, institutions, and inequalities that affect social life. This course will review the major concepts and theories in sociology, giving you a sense of the questions that guide the field and the major sub-fields of sociological analysis. The readings and assignments will give you a taste not only of the kinds of questions sociologists ask but how they go about answering them. We will read articles and books that use a wide array of research methods and take some time to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of each. Through your class assignments you will also have the chance to gain hands-on experience using these methods yourself. By the end of this course, you should have a basic understanding of:

1. What sociologists study and how they study it
2. How to read and analyze sociological research
3. How to research and write like a sociologist

Required Readings

Other readings are available on Sakai in the Resources tab.

Important Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 27</td>
<td>Homework 1 Due, 9am via Sakai</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 17</td>
<td>Homework 2 Due, 9am via Sakai</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 13</td>
<td>Midterm Exam, in class</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 20</td>
<td>Homework 3 Due, 9am via Sakai</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 27</td>
<td>Homework 4 Due, 9am via Sakai</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 24 - December 3</td>
<td>Homework 5 Due, 9am via Sakai (exact dates TBA)</td>
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<td>December 11</td>
<td>Final Exam, 2:00pm</td>
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Course Assessment

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes (5)</td>
<td>10% (2% each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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Grading Scale (Grades will not be rounded up)

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<td>B</td>
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Course Requirements

Attendance Policy & Missed Classes: I will not take attendance. Students are adults with various obligations that might require them to miss class from time to time. Also, students are people, and people sometimes get sick and need to stay home and get better. While repeated absences will affect the course participation grade and you may miss a quiz or exam, unless there is something going on in your life that will cause you to miss many classes, you do not need to get in touch with me when you are absent. If, however, you have something going on that will result in many absences, please let me know sooner rather than later.

I do not share lecture notes or provide recaps of missed classes. If you want to know what was covered in class on a day you missed, you should (i) check Sakai for new resources and announcements, (ii) ask another student for notes and updates (you can use Sakai mail to contact others even if you don’t have any personal email addresses), and (iii) come to my office hours if you have questions after that.

Participation: Your active participation is expected in class. Being an active participant means you regularly share your thoughts, observations, and questions in class. You are responsible for recording your own class participation each day, using the link provided on Sakai. YOU MUST RECORD YOUR PARTICIPATION BY 11:59PM the day of class in order to get credit.

If speaking in class is sincerely difficult for you, please come see me in office hours at the beginning of the semester and we will strategize ways to boost your class participation.

General guidelines for class include:

- Come to class on time
- Come to class having done the readings and brought them with you
- Bring your reading notes and your answers to the day’s guiding questions
Be engaged (NO texting, email, Facebook, sleeping, etc)
Ask thoughtful questions during discussions
Volunteer answers to others’ questions
Be respectful of others
Question your own assumptions

Course Readings: You are expected to keep up with the reading as outlined there, regardless of whether or not we get a chance to discuss the material in class. To guide you in the readings, I have provided reading questions for each set of assigned works. You should come to class each day prepared to discuss the questions listed for each reading below.

Homework Assignments: There are five homework assignments this semester, each listed below. These assignments typically ask you to reflect on readings recently completed and/or to apply the readings to events in the news or to life at Wake Forest. These assignments should be submitted on Sakai and are generally one to two pages in length. Additional details will be posted on Sakai. Late homework assignments are not accepted except under exceptional circumstances.

Pop Quizzes: There will be five pop quizzes over the course of the semester. All quiz questions will be about the reading assigned for that day the quiz is administered. The quiz questions will be based entirely on the guiding questions listed below although I may add extra credit questions as well. If you keep up with the readings and the guiding questions, you’ll do just fine on the quizzes. Quiz make ups are not allowed except under exceptional circumstances.

Midterm and Final Exams: This class includes a midterm and a final exam. Both must be taken in class at the scheduled exam time. The midterm exam will cover material from the first half of the semester. The final exam will be cumulative but weighted toward the second half of the semester. The exams will include a range of question types (multiple choice, short answer, and longer essay).

Extra Credit Opportunities: There will be four opportunities to get extra credit. For each day marked on the syllabus there is a talk scheduled on campus. Each speaker is either a sociologist or writes about sociological issues. To get extra credit, you must attend the talk (including the Q&A at the end) and write a one-page reflection on the talk. Your reflection should include comments on what you learned or found interesting from the talk, a critique of the talk, and/or a connection you noticed between the talk and class materials. Times and locations will be announced as the dates get closer. Each reflection will earn you 1.5 additional points on your final exam grade for a maximum of 6 points total. Reflections are due one week after the talk, except for the final opportunity (you have until Dec. 3 for that one).

Course Policies

Students with Learning Disabilities: If you have a disability that may require an accommodation for taking this course, please contact the Learning Assistance Center (758-
5929) within the first two weeks of the semester. Please also notify me within the first two weeks of class if you require modified instructional procedures.

**Cell phones** should be turned OFF during class.

**Laptops:** Laptops should be used *only for note-taking or in-class assignments.* At times, I may ask that students close their laptops and take notes with pen and paper.

**Honor Code Violations:** ANY suspected honor code violation will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs.

**Sick Policy:** If you are sick, please do not come to class. If you must miss a required assignment, quiz, or exam, visit Student Health. There you should ask for a document that excuses you from class for a specific period of time. This document is *required* to make up missed assignments or exams.

**Late Assignments:** Extensions will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. Late assignments will be penalized half a grade (five points) for each day they are late. Late homework assignments will not be accepted except in exceptional situations.

**Grade Disputes:** All grade disputes must be submitted *in writing* within one week of the day the assignment is returned to you. In your written response, you must explain – giving specific examples from your assignment and my comments – why you believe you received the wrong grade. I will re-grade the assignment, but your grade may go up or down with the re-grade.

**Winter Weather Plan:** In the event that the university closes due to snow or ice, read and study the required course materials on your own. The professor will contact you with explicit instructions on making up the missed class. In some cases, course materials (e.g. a narrated PowerPoint) may be made available online.

**Disaster Plan:** In the event that the university closes due to pandemic or other disaster, read and study the required course materials on your own. Reading quizzes (distributed over Sakai, if the internet is available, or by postal service if the internet is not available) must be completed to test your comprehension of the readings. Submit any other required assignments via Sakai or by postal mail to the professor. You will be mailed or emailed any relevant exams with explicit instructions. The return date will be specified in the mailings. If the internet is available, the professor will be available for office hours using Webex and Google messaging (brownhe).
Course Readings and Schedule

Section 1: Names and the Sociological Imagination

Tuesday, August 25 - No Class

There is no class today because I will be at a conference. You are responsible for completing the readings and homework assignment for the next class.

Thursday, August 27 - The Sociological Imagination

*The Sociological Imagination* is a foundational piece in sociology. What is the sociological imagination? Why don’t most people have one? What is the difference between troubles and issues? How might choosing a name for your baby be an public issue of social structure and not just a personal trouble?


**Homework 1**: Baby names are a surprisingly good place to look at how society shapes individual choices. For this assignment, you will do some research on your name. Full assignment details are on Sakai. Submit your answer on Sakai by 9:00am the day of class and bring your answer to class (either on your laptop or printed out).

Tuesday, September 1 – Names and Social Structure

Now it’s time for you to tackle an article published in a major sociological journal. What is Lieberson and Bell’s research question? What method do they use to answer it? What is their main finding?


Thursday, September 3 – Names and the Culture of Individualism

What is individualism? What is the paradox of individualism? How do baby name trends reflect this paradox? What evidence does Bellah give that individuals are made by society and not the other way around?


Tuesday, September 8 - History, Social Structure, and Childhood

Why does Mintz title this piece the “social construction” of childhood? How has childhood changed over the last 400 years and why? How does Mintz’s article help us understand the proliferation of name diversity in the last decades? How does the increase in name diversity exemplify Mills’ argument about the intersection of biography, history, and social structure?


Cohen, Philip. 2009. “On Naming Diversity, or Why We Never Asked if Mary Had Jumped the Shark” The Huffington Post, May 12.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/philip-n-cohen/on-naming-diversity-or-wh_b_201525.html.

Section 2: Sociological Research Methods

Thursday, September 10 – The Basics of Sociological Research & Experiments

Sociology is a research-based discipline. That is, sociologists draw their conclusions from actual research. As you read these three articles, pay careful attention to what we can and can’t learn from each research method.


Tuesday, September 15 - Research Methods and Causality

This article is an example of quantitative sociological research. What is the research question? What data do the authors use to answer it? What is their conclusion? How convinced are you by the authors’ arguments about the relationship between virginity pledges and first intercourse?

Section 3: Socialization, Social Roles, and Deviance

Thursday, September 17 – Gender Socialization

Socialization is a key concept in sociology. What is it? What is gender? How do we learn gender identities and roles as young children? How does this article help us understand that gender is a social construction? What does it mean to “do” gender?


Homework 2: Use key concepts or arguments from Lorber’s article and our class discussion on Tuesday to analyze one aspect of gender at Wake Forest. For example, what are the gender roles at a fraternity party? What are the gender roles in the dorm? How do people perform or “do” gender on campus? Your analysis should be no longer than two pages, double spaced (or one page single spaced). Full assignment details are on Sakai. Submit your answer on Sakai by 9:00am the day of class.

Tuesday, September 22 – Gender Roles

What is Leidner’s research question? What method does she use to answer it? What is her main finding? What do these findings tell us about the importance of gender roles in society?


Thursday, September 24 – Authority and Obedience

One of the most challenging things to understand is why people commit what seem to be heinous and unethical acts. Kelman and Hamilton analyze the My Lai Massacre to understand its origins. What are the social causes of the massacre? Can you apply their argument to understand other major crises or calamities?


Thursday, September 24: Extra Credit Opportunity

Tuesday, September 29 – Social Roles, Institutions, and the Self

Although Goffman’s research examined the social life of patients in a mental hospital, his observations can help us understand the social origins of the self and how institutional environments create the self. What is a total institution? What is mortification?

*BRING YOUR READING TO CLASS TODAY!*

**Thursday, October 1 – Social Roles, Institutions, and the Self**

What are primary and secondary adjustments? What are some examples of each? Can you think of primary and secondary adjustments that students make when they enroll at a university?


*BRING YOUR READING TO CLASS TODAY!*

**Tuesday, October 6 – Labeling and Deviant Behavior**

What is deviance? What did Rosenham find when he conducted his study? What do his results tell us about the power and influence of labels? After reading his study, move on to the next two. What lessons do they teach us about labeling and deviant behavior?


**Thursday, October 8 – Final Preparations for Midterm Exam**

Readings and homework TBA

**Tuesday, October 13 – Midterm Exam**

Midterm Distributed In Class
Section 4: Social Inequality

Thursday, October 15 – Class Inequality: Perspectives

_Davis and Moore make a “functionalist” argument about social inequality. What is their argument about why some jobs offer more monetary reward than others? Why does Tumin have a problem with this argument?_


**Monday, October 19: Extra Credit Opportunity**

Tuesday, October 20 – Class Inequality at the Extremes (Poverty)

_Do this piece support or challenge Davis and Moore’s argument about social inequality? What about Tumin’s rejoinder?_

Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2002. _Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America._ (Ch. 1)

_Homework 3: After reading Ehrenreich’s article, go to [http://playspent.org/](http://playspent.org/). Play the game and complete the written assignment following the guidelines on Sakai. Your assignment is due 9am on Sakai the day of class._

Thursday, October 22 – Class Inequality at the Extremes (Wealth)

_Do this piece support or challenge Davis and Moore’s argument about social inequality? What about Tumin’s rejoinder?_


Tuesday, October 27 – Class Inequality Recap

There are no readings today, but be sure to do the homework.

_Homework 4: Watch the film “Born Rich” and answer the questions on Sakai. The film is available on Hulu: [http://www.hulu.com/watch/174635](http://www.hulu.com/watch/174635). Your assignment is due 9am on Sakai the day of class._

Thursday, October 29 - Reproducing Inequality – Family Life

_What is Lareau’s research question? Her research method? According to Lareau, what are the two different childrearing strategies currently employed by American parents? How do these differences help reproduce social inequalities?_

Tuesday, November 3 – Reproducing Inequality – Institutions & Public Policies

*These readings examine the institutional forces that drive and ameliorate social inequality. How have college admissions procedures and rules affected access to higher education in the United States? What public policies have affected social inequality in the United States?*

http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/10/10/getting-in

Thursday, November 5 – Health Inequalities

*Health has what sociologists call a “gradient.” The higher your class position, the better your health. In what ways do we see this trend reflected in Scott’s article? In Velasquez-Manoff’s? In class, we’ll also talk about how social inequality affects entire societies, not just individual people.*


Tuesday, November 10 - Race as a Social Construction

*Do the authors believe that racial disparities in intelligence tests reflect racial differences in intelligence? What are the three ways in which subordination leads to poor performance on tests? What examples do the authors give to show us that racial differences in test scores are not the product of innate abilities?*


Thursday, November 12 – Racial Inequality and Discrimination

*Racial inequality is still extremely prevalent in the United States today, as is interpersonal discrimination. What evidence do these two studies give us that people still discriminate based on race? What were the authors’ research methods and findings?*


**Thursday, November 12: Extra Credit Opportunity**
Tuesday, November 17 – The Origins of the Racial Wealth Gap

Coates’ piece, while ostensibly about reparations, is fundamentally a story about the policies and practices that created contemporary racial wealth inequalities. What is his main argument? What effects have public policies had on racial inequality?


Wednesday, November 18: Extra Credit Opportunity

Thursday, November 19 – No Readings

We will meet today but there will be no readings. Class activity will be announced in advance.

Section 5: History, Social Structure, and Gang Life

*Homework 5: You will have one homework assignment during these last three classes. For that assignment, each student will be assigned a chapter. Your job is to read your chapter and submit two questions for the class to discuss about your chapter. Guidelines will be posted on Sakai. Chapter assignments will be made by Friday, November 13.**

Tuesday, November 24 – Social Life in a Gang, Part 1

In this book, sociologist Sudhir Venkatesh recounts his time researching the Black Kings, a crack dealing gang in Southside Chicago. What aspects of social structure affect the biographies of gang members? In what ways does the gang operate like a mainstream business?


Thursday, November 26 – No Class

Enjoy your Thanksgiving break!

Tuesday, December 1 – Social Life in a Gang, Part 2

In what ways does the gang provide stability and order in the Robert Taylor Homes? How has social structure affected Autry’s biography? What is the relationship between cops and the gang? What does Sudhir learn from his time as gang leader?

Thursday, December 3 – Social Life in a Gang, Part 3

Why are residents fearful of the police? How do history and social structure affect the life chances and options of the different residents in the Robert Taylor Homes upon the implementation of demolition plans?


*Final Exam: December 11, 2015 at 2pm
In Our Regular Classroom*