"It can be said that the first wisdom of sociology is this– things are not what they seem." -Peter Berger

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this class, we’ll go “down the rabbit hole” to investigate the social organization of the modern United States. Throughout the course, we will use our sociological imaginations to “make the familiar strange,” asking why we take certain social patterns for granted and exploring how those patterns influence our everyday lives.

How do we know which direction to face when we get on an elevator? How have new technologies, such as texting and Facebook, changed how, what, and with whom we communicate? How do social systems such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and dis/ability influence our lives? How do some behaviors come to be designated “deviant” and others designated “normal”? In this class, we will use a sociological approach as we ask, “why are things the way they are?”

The course is designed to help you develop your own sociological imagination, a process that involves:

- Applying and using sociological concepts, terms, and theories to understand everyday experiences
- Understanding your own social location and how that location influences your experiences, decisions, perceptions, and actions
- Thinking critically about your own life and experiences from a sociological perspective
- Understanding the social organization of everyday life
- Broadening your view of society beyond your own immediate experience and understanding why and how your experiences may be similar to as well as different from those of others
- Obtaining and evaluating empirical research relevant to the issues you are interested in exploring

COURSE MATERIALS

- You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist. 2nd ed. Dalton Conley.
- Supplemental readings available on e-reserve.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>REQUIREMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exercise #1: Alice in Wonderland Reflection Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercise #2: Violating a Social Norm Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercise #3: Comparing Communities Census Project</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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Exercises (3 at 15% each)
All exercises must be typed and stapled with your name, the date, the course number, and the assignment title at the top of the first page and pages must be numbered. All work should be double-spaced and use 12 point Times New Roman font and standard margins. Remember that if you reference something or use an idea or concept but do not cite it, you are in violation of the honor code. Proper citation includes both an in-text citation and a works cited page/bibliography. A hard copy of your exercise is due in class on the due dates below. I do not accept assignments by e-mail nor do I accept late papers except in the case of a documented emergency.

- On proofreading your papers: “Well, I never heard it before, but it sounds uncommon nonsense.” Remember to proofread carefully. Papers containing uncommon nonsense rarely earn high grades. I strongly suggest pairing up with a classmate and proofreading one another’s papers or using the services of the Writing Center.
- On using sociological concepts: “I don’t know the meaning of half those long words, and I don’t believe you do either!” Sociologists use concepts to make communication easier, not to confuse each other. The exercises for this course provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate your ability to appropriately apply sociological concepts. Appropriate application of concepts requires thorough understanding. Randomly sprinkling your exercises with vocabulary words demonstrates lack of mastery of the concepts.

#1: Alice in Wonderland Reflection Paper (3-5 pages) Due Feb. 20th
For this exercise, you’ll need to watch Disney’s Alice in Wonderland (2010) [available in the Music and Media Library: DVD 14306]. As you watch the film, look for ways in which Wonderland differs from modern American culture. Identify the norms that govern the various parts of Wonderland. How are these norms different from norms in modern American culture? How are these norms communicated to the viewer? To Alice? What responses do characters who violate those norms receive? What do these norms tell us about the culture and social organization of Wonderland? In your paper, identify at least three specific cultural norms present in Wonderland. For each norm, be sure to discuss whether it is similar to or different from norms about this aspect of social life in the contemporary U.S, as well as how does this norm contribute to the social organization of Wonderland?

*Note that you should also turn in your brief description (a few sentences) of the norm you intend to violate with Exercise #1.
#2: Violating a Social Norm Paper Due March 8th (2-4 pages)  
**Description of Norm Due with Exercise #1 (Feb. 20th)**

For this paper, you’ll have the opportunity to conduct sociological research. Identify a social norm that you intend to violate. You’ll turn in a brief description (no more than a few sentences) of your norm with your first exercise (Feb. 20th). When selecting a norm to violate, be sure that violating this norm won’t put you or others in danger (i.e., you can successfully complete this project without running out into traffic). When you violate the norm you have chosen, watch for how others respond. Do people respond with body language, words, or not at all? How does violating this norm make you feel? What do your own responses and those of others tell you about the importance of this norm? Why do you think this norm exists (in other words, what is its function in our society)? Is this norm the same across all social settings or does it hold only for some settings and not others (e.g. is it always appropriate to raise your hand when you want to speak?)? Is this norm the same for all people or does this norm vary according to social categories such as race, class, and gender?

#3: Comparing Communities Census Project (3-5 pages) Due April 10th

Our class meeting on April 3rd will be a lab day where I’ll show you how to obtain the data you’ll need for this assignment from the Census Project website. In this project, you’ll have the opportunity to obtain and analyze sociological data. Using the zip codes for Emory and another place you’ve lived, you’ll obtain demographic data from the U.S. Census. What are the demographic characteristics (e.g. race, ethnicity, age, sex, educational attainment, per capita income, median household income, median home value, etc.) of these areas? Why might the demographic characteristics of these two areas be similar and/or different? How do the demographics of these areas compare to the overall demographics of the U.S. population? Your paper should contain a table of demographic characteristics for Emory, the U.S., and the other location you have selected (1 page) and a 2-4 page write up discussing similarities and differences in the demographic characteristics of these areas. Using your knowledge from our readings and conversations about social stratification, you should also include a discussion of why you think the specific similarities and differences you’ve identified occur.

**Mid-term (25%) and Final (30%) Exams**

On the nature of the exams: “What is the use of repeating all that stuff, if you don’t explain it as you go on? It’s by far the most confusing thing I ever heard!” The mid-term and final exams will provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate your ability to apply sociological concepts to real world situations and data.

**COURSE POLICIES**

“Read the directions and directly you will be directed in the right direction.”

**Participation**

Preparing to Participate

- On doing the readings: “Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end, then stop.” Glancing over the first few pages of the reading or doing a quick skimming simply won’t be enough or quickly skimming The success of this class, and your success in it, depends in large part on how you prepare for our class conversations. This class requires you to prepare materials, rather than just
reading them. As you prepare for each class meeting, think about how the materials might relate to our other readings and discussions. Keep track of new concepts so that you will remember where they came from; this will be particularly helpful as you complete the exercises and exams for the course. As you prepare for each class, think of a question about the readings that would be useful for us to discuss as a group. I encourage you to bring discussion questions with you to class each day. Asking informative, insightful questions is one of the best ways to ensure you have mastered the material. Jotting questions down as you read will help you to remember what questions you want to ask when you get to class. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have read and understood course materials and you are responsible for all the assigned readings, including those that we do not cover in class.

**Participation**

- On participating in class discussions:
  
  **“See all the trouble you started?”**
  **“But I didn’t think— (Alice)”**
  **“That’s just it. If you don’t think, then you shouldn’t talk.”**

The most effective way to participate in our class conversations involves preparing the readings carefully, listening to what others have to say, and responding to others in a respectful manner. Remember that participation in discussions means responding to questions and comments your classmates contribute, not delivering monologues. Well-thought out questions, comments, and responses are integral to our class conversations.

If you choose to share personal experiences with the class (e.g. “I have a friend…” “That happened to me…” etc.), remember to link your comments directly to the course materials. Also remember that other participants in the conversation may have had different experiences and be respectful in how you share your opinions and experiences. And always keep in mind the dangers of faulty generalization; the experience of one individual neither proves nor disproves social patterns.

**Attendance**

Much of the substantive content for this course will be delivered during lecture. Frequent in-class activities, group work, mini-experiments, and active discussion will provide you with opportunities to apply course content for practice prior to the research projects and exams; thus attending and actively participating in class are critical components of your success in the course. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate; I do not provide private tutorials to students who miss class, nor do I make power points from lecture available outside of class.

- On tardiness: **“No wonder you’re late. Why, this watch is exactly two days slow!”** Slow watches, malfunctioning alarm clocks, and appearances of white rabbits are no excuse. Please be respectful of the learning environment we are creating together and arrive promptly.

**Electronic Devices**

Please remember to turn off all electronic devices (e.g. mp3 players, cell phones, etc.) before coming into class. If you have a special situation that requires you to have a cell phone or beeper on during our class (e.g. sick family member, on-call sexual assault volunteer), please notify me before class. The use of laptops is permitted only by
arrangement through the Office of Disabilities. **If I see you using an electronic device during class without having previously arranged permission with me, I will ask you to leave.**

Disability Accommodations
If you are in need of accommodation for this class, please notify me as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements that will facilitate your full participation in this course.

Honor Code/ Plagiarism
Every student enrolled in Emory College is bound by the university’s honor code, which prohibits any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarizing. Violations of the honor code will immediately be referred for a hearing in front of the Honor Council.

Office Hours and Instructor Availability
You are always welcome to use office hours or make an appointment to discuss questions or concerns about our class or any other issue that affects your life at Emory. Also remember that you can talk to a trained counseling staff member—free and confidentially—at the Emory counseling center at any point during your academic career. For more information, see [http://www.emory.edu/SCOUNSEL](http://www.emory.edu/SCOUNSEL) or call (404) 727-7450.

It’s fine to use e-mail for quick questions or to let me know you will not be able to make it to class, but questions about assignments, your course performance, or concepts from lectures, discussions, and readings should take place during office hours. I check e-mail regularly and will do my best to reply to your messages promptly (usually within 48 hours). Please remember to include a subject line so that your message does not get deleted by my spam filter.

Grade Review Policy
If you feel that the grade you have earned on an assignment/assessment does not accurately reflect your performance, you may request a grade review by submitting a written explanation of why you feel your grade is not an accurate reflection of your performance along with the original graded assignment/assessment within 2 class periods from when the grade is returned to you (e.g. if I return a quiz in class on Monday, you must submit your request for review by Friday). Once I have reviewed your original grade and your written request, I will schedule an appointment with you to discuss the outcome of the review.

Syllabus Subject to Change
This syllabus is subject to change with advance notice.
GRADING SCALE

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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>Achievement outstanding relative to the course requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-87</td>
<td>Achievement significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-77</td>
<td>Achievement meeting the basic course requirements in every respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>68-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-67</td>
<td>Achievement worthy of partial credit that does not meet the basic requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>60 and below</td>
<td>Performance failing to meet the basic course requirements</td>
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COURSE SCHEDULE

Jan 16 Introductions
"Curiouser and curiouser!"

Jan 18 The Sociological Imagination
"It would be so nice if something made sense for a change."
Conley, Ch 1 p. 1-15

Jan 21 MLK Holiday Observance/ No Class

Jan 23 The Sociological Approach

Jan 25 How Do We Know What We Know?
"You don't know much, said the Duchess. And that's a fact."
Conley, Ch 2 p. 41-57

Jan 28 How Do We Know, cont’d
Conley, Ch 2 p. 57-68

Jan 30 Culture and Media
Conley, Ch 3 p. 71-72, 87-108

Feb 1 Culture and Media, cont’d
Feb 4 The Social Self

“Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise.”


Feb 6 Socialization and the Construction of Reality

“When she thought it over afterwards it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural.”

Conley, Ch 4 p. 111-127


Feb 8 Socialization, cont’d

Conley, Ch 4 p. 127-140


Feb 11 Groups and Networks

Conley, Ch 5 p. 143-155


Feb 13 Groups, cont’d

Conley, Ch 5 p. 155-173

Feb 15 Social Control and Deviance

“Who’s to say what is ‘proper’? What if it was agreed that ‘proper’ was wearing a codfish on your head? Would you wear it?”

Conley, Ch 6 p. 177-203

Feb 18 Social Control, cont’d

Conley, Ch 6 p. 203-222


Feb 20 Stratification

“There’s a large mustard-mine near here. And the moral of that is - the more there is of mine, the less there is of yours.”


Exercise #1 Due in Class

Feb 22 Stratification, cont’d
Conley, Ch 7 p. 227-228, 234-238, 246-262


Feb 25 Gender

Feb 27 Gender, cont’d
Conley Ch 8, p. 265-276, 293-304

Mar 1 Gender, cont’d

Mar 4 Gender, cont’d

Mar 6 Race
Conley Ch 9, p. 307-310, 320-352

Mar 8 Race, cont’d

Exercise #2 Due in Class

Mar 11-15 Spring Break

Mar 18 Mid-term Exam

Mar 20 Sexuality
Conley, Ch 8 p. 285-293


Mar 22 Sexuality, cont’d
Mar 25  Sexuality, cont’d

Mar 27  Class
Conley Ch 10, p. 355-383

Mar 29  Class Cancelled

Apr 1  Class, cont’d

Apr 3  Census Project in Lab

Apr 5  Family
Conley Ch 12, p. 427-444

Apr 8  Family, cont’d
Conley Ch 12, p.444-466

Apr 10  Education
“Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with, and then the different branches of arithmetic: Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision.”
Conley Ch 13, p.469-485
Exercise #3: Census Project Due

Apr 12  Education, cont’d
Conley Ch 13, p. 485-508

Apr 15  Education, cont’d

Apr 17  Work
Conley Ch 14, p. 511-516, 523-533

Apr 19  Work, cont’d
Conley Ch 14, p. 534-542
Apr 22 Work, cont’d

April 24-26 No Class/ SSS Meetings

Apr 29 Social Change

“*Alice laughed. ‘There’s no use trying,’ she said. ‘One can’t believe impossible things.’ I daresay you haven’t had much practice,’ said the Queen. ‘When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why, sometimes I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.”*


**Final Exam Wednesday, May 8th 4:30-7:00pm**