

## Introduction to General Sociology

Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays 9:00 – 9:50, White Hall 206

**Instructor: Dr. Sara Ashlee Bledsoe**

Email: sbledso@emory.edu

Office: 232

Office Hours: Thursdays 11:00-1:00, or by  
appointment

**Teaching Assistant 1: Joni-Leigh Webster**

Email: joni-leigh.webster@emory.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment

Office: B6

**Teaching Assistant 2: Melinda Dawn Johnson**

Email: melinda.dawn.johnson@emory.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment

Office: 202

### Course Objectives

This course is designed to introduce students to sociological approaches to the study of social life. The course draws on readings from classic and contemporary sociology and introduces major theoretical concepts and common methodologies, enabling students to develop their own 'sociological imagination'. Topics discussed include, but are not limited to, socialization into society, social norms and culture, deviant behavior, social structure and inequality (primarily race, class, and gender), and social institutions such as education and the family. The course is divided into three units. The first unit creates a foundation for the rest of the course. Students begin by discussing how sociology is similar to and different from other disciplines, and what it means to view the society with a sociological lens. We will then move on to research methods and theoretical frameworks commonly used within sociology. This basic understanding of methods and theory will enable students to think more critically about the research encountered in the rest of the course. Finally, the first unit concludes with readings that explore the social processes through which we come to have particular views, beliefs, tastes and habits.

The second unit explores how we as individuals both influence and are influenced by those to whom we are connected. We start with a discussion of role of norms in social life, and, relatedly, sociological perspectives on deviant (or non-normative) behavior. Next, we will explore the concept of social structure, with a particular focus on race, ethnicity, and social class. The second unit concludes with an examination of the core properties of social networks, and the ways in which they impact our lives. The third and final unit broadens our scope to examine how social structures, covered in Unit 2, intersect with major social institutions such as the economy, education, and the family. Here the concept of intersectionality, meaning that the effects of factors such as race and gender must be considered together rather than independently, will play an important role. The course concludes with an exploration of processes of social change and globalization.

Introduction to General Sociology has been designed to give students a broad understanding of key sociological concepts and introduce them to core areas of study. Student progress will be evaluated writing

assignments or activities, three non-cumulative exams, and two short papers. At the end of the course students will be able to:

- discuss how sociology differs from other disciplines
- identify major methodologies used in sociological research as well as their advantages and limitation
- identify sociological arguments for the development and spread of beliefs, values, and behaviors
- define key concepts such as social structure and social institutions and describe how their intersection relates to outcomes such as inequality and social mobility
- apply their newly acquired sociological lens to contemporary social issues, problems, or matters of importance to them as student scholars and global citizens

## Course Readings

All assigned readings should be completed **before** class to ensure active participation in class discussions and activities.

Main Text: James Henslin. Down To Earth Sociology: 14<sup>th</sup> Edition: Introductory Readings

Readings: Additional readings outside of the required text are available through the course Canvas site. These readings are indicated as (CANVAS) on the syllabus.

Power point slides: Available on course Canvas site, sorted by date

## Assignments and Grading

### Assignments and Evaluations

The assignments for this course have been designed with student's varying strengths and learning styles in mind.

- Challenge Readings: The readings for the course vary in terms of length and difficulty. Some of the more challenging readings have been marked as 'challenge readings'. For these readings students will complete a worksheet *prior to the start of class*. These worksheets will be used to guide discussion of the reading. Worksheets are available on Canvas. It is recommended that students review the worksheet before beginning the reading.
- Sociology in Everyday Life (SIEL) Papers: Learning to communicate clearly, persuasively, and efficiently through writing is important for success in college and beyond. The best way to learn how to write well is to write often. During this course you are required to complete two reflection essays which will ask you to reflect upon course material, lectures, and readings and how they relate to your everyday experiences. There will be four opportunities for students to choose from.

Papers should be 4 pages double spaced with 1" margins. Grading rubrics will be made available to students on the day the paper is assigned. Papers are due, in hardcopy, at the start of class on the day they are due. Emailed papers will not be accepted without express permission from the instructor. Please staple your papers prior to handing them in. *It is always a good idea to ensure your full name and a page number is on each page in the case that a page becomes separated.*

- **Exams:** There are a total of three exams for this course. The exams will be comprised of two sections; the first section will include true/false and multiple choice questions, the second section will include short answer questions. Exams are non-cumulative.

**No late assignments will be accepted**  
**Exams will only be administered on the scheduled dates**  
*Exceptions will only be made with a documented official university excuse*

### Grading

Final grades will be determined by the total number of points earned on exams and assignments.

<i>SIEL Papers (2 @20 pts ea)</i>	40
<i>Challenge Readings (3 @ 12pts ea)</i>	36
<i>Exams (3 @ 44 pts ea)</i>	132
<b>Total</b>	<b>208</b>

A >93%	C+ 77-79%
A- 90-92%	C 73-76%
B+ 87-89%	C- 70-72%
B 83-86%	D 60-69%
B- 80-82%	F <60

## Expectations and Policies

### Attendance

While I don't take attendance, attendance *does* factor into your grade as material presented in class will appear on exams and will aid in your completion of other graded assignments. If you miss class you are still responsible for the reading due on that day, and for getting notes from a classmate; I will not provide lecture notes to students. Additionally, office hours are not to be used as regular review sessions. Finally, missing class puts students at risk of missing graded in-class assignments and activities, which cannot be made up.

**Participation**

Students who participate in class not only enjoy their experience in the course more, but also tend to learn more and earn higher grades. Other students benefit from others' participation as well; the student who is participating gets the answers they need and others in the class gain a better understanding of something they might also need help with. I will not evaluate you directly on your participation, but I do strongly encourage you to find ways to stay tuned in. If you need me to slow down or to go over something again, please raise your hand and let me know. If you have a question, please ask. And if you have an example that may better illustrate something we are talking about, please share it- you and your classmates will benefit from the discussion.

**Class Conduct**

Please do your best to get to class on time. Coming in late, stepping out, and leaving early are distracting to your fellow classmates. Please don't read, talk with your friends, or pass notes during class. These activities are distracting to the learning environment, disrespect me and your classmates, and limit your ability to pay attention and stay engaged during class.

**Canvas:**

We will use the Canvas site for this course regularly. Please check the site regularly in order to ensure that you are aware of class announcements and so forth. Readings marked with (CANVAS) on the syllabus can be found on Canvas under course reserves.

**Extra Credit**

Extra credit opportunities are at the discretion of the instructor. No extra credit will be given on an individual basis. That is, all opportunities for extra credit will be made available to the entire class.

**Honor Code:**

The Honor Code is in effect throughout the semester. By taking this course, you affirm that it is a violation of the code to cheat on exams, to plagiarize, to deviate from the teacher's instructions about collaboration on work that is submitted for grades, to give false information to a faculty member, and to undertake any other form of academic misconduct. You agree that the instructor is entitled to move you to another seat during examinations, without explanation. You also affirm that if you witness others violating the code you have a duty to report them to the honor council.

The Emory University honor code applies fully to this course. When you sign an exam or submit your assignments, you are pledging to the honor code. For reference, please consult [http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor\\_code.html](http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor_code.html).

**Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (<http://www.ods.emory.edu/>; 727-6016) to obtain proper documentation if accommodations are needed. Please do this early in the semester in order to make sure that everything is in order. Students requiring accommodations for exams are required to receive approval for their accommodation *for each exam*. If the exam is to be taken at ADSR it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the instructor is made aware of the date and time the student will be taking the exam.

**Email:**

Email is the best way to reach me. While I generally respond quickly, please allow at least 24 hours for replies to emails Monday – Friday, and longer over the weekends. It is helpful, though not required, if you put the course name or number in the subject of the email. Email **should not** be used to submit assignments unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.

**Course Outline**

Modifications may occur as the course progresses

**UNIT 1**

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Thursday<br>Aug. 24 | Getting to know you/ What is Sociology?   |
| Friday<br>Aug. 25   | What is Sociology Part II: A Brief History  |
| Tuesday<br>Aug. 29  | The Sociological Imagination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Promise</i> (pp.20-28)</li> <li>• <i>Body Ritual Among the Nacirema</i> (87-92)</li> </ul>   |
| Thursday<br>Aug. 31 | Research Methods in Sociology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How Sociologists Do Research</i> (pp.35-47)</li> <li>• <i>Would You Hire an Ex-Convict?</i> (pp.63-72)</li> </ul>   |
| Friday<br>Sept. 1   | Research Methods in Sociology Con't <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No reading due today</li> </ul>  |
| Tuesday<br>Sept. 5  | Social Construction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Have You Ever Tried to Sell a Diamond?</i> (CANVAS)</li> </ul>  |
| Thursday<br>Sept. 7 | Intro to Major Theoretical Frameworks Part I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Reflection Paper Assigned</li> </ul>  |
| Friday<br>Sept. 8   | Intro to Major Theoretical Frameworks Part II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theoretical Perspectives in Sociology--an introduction to the primary theories used in sociology</i> by Hunter and McClelland (CANVAS)</li> </ul> |
| Tuesday<br>Sept. 12 | Socialization Part I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Becoming a Marijuana User</i> (CANVAS)</li> <li>• <i>Extreme Isolation</i> (pp. 151-160)</li> </ul>  |

- Thursday Socialization Part II  
 Sept. 14
- *On Becoming Male...* (pp.161-172)
  - *On Becoming Female...* (pp. 173-179)
- Friday Socialization In Everyday Life  
 Sept. 15
- No reading due
  - **SIEL Paper Opportunity 1 Assigned**
- Tuesday Impression Management: The Def. of the Situation  
 Sept. 19
- *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (pp. 135-144)
  - **Challenge Reading Worksheet 1 Due**
- Thursday Impression Management: Tactics  
 Sept. 21
- *Handling the Stigma of Handling the Dead* (pp.249 – 263)
- Friday Impression Management Wrap Up  
 Sept. 22
- No reading due
  - **SIEL Paper Opportunity 1 Due**
- Tuesday Wrap up and review for Exam 1  
 Sept. 26
- No reading due
- Thursday **Exam 1**  
 Sept. 28

## UNIT 2

- Friday An Introduction to Norms and Values Part I  
 Sept. 29
- No reading Due
  - **Second SIEL Paper Assigned**
- Tuesday An Introduction to Norms and Values Part II  
 Oct. 3
- *Eating Your Friends is the Hardest* (pp.277-286)
  - *The Argument for Eating Dog* (CANVAS)
- Thursday Deviance and Labeling  
 Oct. 5
- *The Saints and the Roughnecks* (299-315)
  - *On Being Sane in Insane Places* (322-334)
- Friday Deviance and Social Control  
 Oct. 6
- *The Pathology of Imprisonment* (315-221)
  - *If Hitler Asked you to Electrocute a Stranger...* (269-278)
  - **Second SIEL Paper Due**
- Tuesday **Fall Break: No Class**  
 Oct. 10

- Thursday In Class Viewing of The Devil's Playground  
Oct. 12
- No Reading
- Friday Complete viewing of The Devil's Playground, Introduction to Social Structure  
Oct. 13
- No Reading
  - **Third SIEL Paper Assigned**
- Tuesday Social Structure: Race and Ethnicity  
Oct. 17
- *Racial Measurement in the US Census* (CANVAS)
  - **Challenge Reading Worksheet 2 due**
- Thursday Social Structure: Race and Ethnicity  
Oct. 19
- *Showing My Color* (360-68)
  - *The Racist Mind* (369-375)
- Friday Social Structure: Introduction to Social Class  
Oct. 20
- No Reading
  - **Third SIEL Paper Due**
- Tuesday Social Structure: Social Class  
Oct. 24
- *The Uses of Poverty* (376-382)
  - *Wealth, Power, Privilege* (395-406)
- Thursday Social Structure: Social Structure and Culture  
Oct. 26
- *Moving Up from the Working Class* (383-394)
  - *Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing...* (CANVAS)
  - **Challenge Reading Worksheet 3 Due**
- Friday Social Structure: Social Structure and Culture  
Oct. 27
- No Reading
- Tuesday Wrap up and review for Exam 1  
Nov. 31
- No reading due
- Thursday **Exam 2**  
Nov. 2

### UNIT 3

- Friday Social Institutions: Education  
Nov. 3
- *School Rules* (CANVAS)
  - **Challenge Reading Worksheet 3 due**
- Tuesday Social Institutions: Education  
Nov. 7
- *The (Mis)education of Monica and Karen* (CANVAS)

- Thursday Social Institutions: The Economy  
Nov. 9
- No Reading, In class activity
- Friday Social Institutions: The Economy  
Nov. 10
- *Social Institutions & Nickel and Dimed* (407-424)
- Tuesday Social Institutions: Marriage and Family  
Nov. 14
- *The American Family* (425-431)
  - **Fourth SIEL Paper Assigned**
- Thursday Social Institutions: Religion  
Nov. 16
- *India's Sacred Cow* (pp. 461-69)
  - *Social Change Among the Amish* (pp. 508-517)
- Friday Social Change: An Introduction  
Nov. 17
- *Social Change* (493-496)
  - *The McDonaldization of Society* (497-507)
- Tuesday **Class Canceled**  
Nov. 21
- Thursday **Thanksgiving Recess: No Class**  
Nov. 23
- Friday **Thanksgiving Recess: No Class**  
Nov. 25
- Tuesday Social Change: Globalization  
Nov. 29
- *Globalization and McDonaldization* (CANVAS)
  - **Fourth SIEL Paper Due**
- Thursday Social Change: Impacts of Globalization  
Dec. 1
- *Leasing the Rain* (CANVAS)
- Friday In Class Film: FLOW The Movie  
Dec. 2
- No reading due
- Tuesday In Class Film: FLOW The Movie & Debrief  
Dec. 6
- No reading due
- Wednesday **Final Exam: 8:00 to 10:30**  
Dec. 13