SOCIOPY 190, Section 2
Schools & Society

What is the Purpose of Higher Education?

FALL 2021
T/Th 2:30 – 3:45
Tarbutton Hall – Room 218

Professor: Dr. Cassidy Puckett
Email: cassidy.puckett@emory.edu
Office Hours: Online Wednesdays 4-6pm; sign up here https://calendly.com/drpuckett/office-hours for a 30-minute meeting at least 1 hour before the time you would like to meet.

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COURSE OVERVIEW
This is a Special Evidence-Focused Seminar. For more information: http://evidence.emory.edu/in-the-news/evidence-focused-courses.html

Working Definition of Evidence
Evidence: basis for belief; something that supports or challenges a claim, theory, or argument. (Adapted and synthesized from the Oxford English Dictionary and Merriam-Webster Dictionary.)

Course Description
This course examines the role of universities and colleges from a sociological perspective, while also guiding students in exploring their own path in college, using different types of evidence to inform their understanding. The course has three main objectives. First, students will learn about the role of colleges and universities from a sociological perspective. Second, students will learn about different types of evidence and how to use appropriate evidence for particular questions and issues. Third, students will improve writing and collaboration skills through a peer editing process.

Learning Objectives
1. Understand the main social structures and culture of U.S. colleges and universities. Understand how social factors influence individuals’ pathways into, through, and beyond college. (For specific topics, see the course schedule.)
2. Distinguish the types of evidence used in sociology as compared to the types of evidence used in personal decisions or in journalistic writings.
   o Distinguish between primary and secondary sources in sociology.
   o Demonstrate an understanding of different types of empirical evidence, such as survey data, qualitative interview data, and experiments.
   o Demonstrate an understanding of a broader definition of evidence and how non-empirical information is often used as evidence in other realms.
3. Locate, assess, and analyze different types of evidence.
   o Locate and analyze evidence about the purpose of higher education from diverse sources.
   o Locate sociological research articles (secondary source of evidence) on the Library databases.
   o Gather and analyze primary evidence through informational interviews with Emory alumni.
4. Evaluate evidence.
   o Evaluate the quality, credibility, and validity of the different types of evidence.
   o Determine the usefulness of evidence for different purposes.
5. Build strong written arguments based on primary and secondary evidence.
Construct a clear thesis and develop a sociological research paper based on the different types of evidence you gather over the course of the semester.

6. Assess others’ arguments and articulate how to make stronger arguments based on evidence.
   - Evaluate peers’ draft research papers and explain how they can construct stronger arguments using primary and secondary evidence gathered over the course semester.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

I. Staged Project (80% of grade): Perspectives on the Purpose of Higher Education

Over the semester, you will be introduced to various perspectives on the purpose of higher education. You will choose one perspective among these and argue for that perspective based on primary and secondary evidence. You will build to this by engaging with various arguments and forms of evidence:

1. **Personal Reflection 1 (5%) – DUE: Tuesday, Aug. 31 – Submit to Canvas & Bring to Class**
   - Write one 2-page (double spaced; ~500 word) reflection on the purpose of higher education—be sure to state the basis of your belief (i.e., what evidence you draw from to support that perspective). Further instructions will be provided.

2. **Purpose of Higher Education Analysis Papers (30% total - 10% each) - DUE: Sundays Sept. 26, Oct 10, and Oct 24 at 6pm – Submit to Canvas**
   - Write three 4-page (double spaced; ~1000 word each) papers that make an argument about the three purposes of higher education (i.e., democratic equality, social efficiency, social mobility).
   - Type of evidence you will use: Course readings and in-class materials—including secondary, empirical sociological research and primary, textual journalistic sources.
   - Summarize these primary and secondary sources of evidence.
   - Analyze how the sources support, challenge, or supplement other readings.
   - Also include a list of at least 3 questions at the end of each paper (not included in the 4 pages) that you can ask alumni about the purpose of higher education. Further instructions will be provided.

3. **“Official Narrative” and Alumni Interview Analysis Paper (10%) –ALUMNI INTERVIEWS COMPLETE: By class Nov 9; PAPER DUE: Sunday Nov 14 by 6pm – Submit to Canvas**
   - Write one 4-page (double spaced; ~1000 word) paper that makes an argument about the purpose of college based on official narratives and alumni interviews.
   - Type of evidence you will use (primary, empirical): Group meetings with Emory’s historian, Admissions staff, and Alumni Association staff during class; in-depth interviews with three alumni on the purpose of higher education outside of class.
   - Method: Informational meetings and interviews with three Emory officials (in class) and three alumni (you will choose) who studied at Emory (different jobs and/or graduation dates is fine).
   - Analyze the data for commonalities and differences.
   - Build an argument about perspective on the purpose of higher education: Build on Stages 1, 2, & 3 to discuss how this evidence supports or supplements your previous knowledge. Further instructions will be provided.

4. **Final Research Paper (30% total - 10% draft; 20% final) – DRAFT DUE: Wednesday, Nov 24 by 6pm; FINAL DUE: Thursday, Dec 16 by 6pm – Submit to Canvas**
   - Research paper on your perspective on the purpose of higher education incorporating all of your previous evidence and at least three additional readings that support your view of the purpose of education (suggestions in guidelines); synthesis of your research analyses from previous stages.
   - Identify additional evidence to support your perspective (at least three additional readings)
**Soc190-2 (Puckett)**

- Evaluate the Evidence: Compare & contrast the various types of evidence & the knowledge you have gained about perspectives on the purpose of higher education.
- Build an argument about the purpose of higher education based on your strongest evidence.
- This paper should be a **15-page (double spaced; ~10,000 words)** paper and incorporate all of the above papers. Further instructions will be provided.

**5. Personal Reflection 2 (5%) – DUE: Friday, Dec 17 by 6pm – Submit to Canvas**
- Look back to your first reflection and write a **2-page (double spaced, ~500 word)** reflection on how your perspective on the purpose of higher education has changed, if at all. Explain the basis of your current belief (i.e., what evidence you draw from to support that perspective).
- Also reflect on how you think this perspective will inform your experiences at Emory and beyond.
- You are encouraged to write this early and incorporate it into your final paper, but that is not required. Further instructions will be provided.

**II. Class Participation (20% of grade):**

**Class participation is very important.** Everyone in the class contributes to our learning community. To acknowledge this and encourage participation, participation is a part of the course grade, including:

- **Attending all class sessions and Zoom office hours once during the semester (5%).**
  - For non-COVID-19 related absences, if you miss a class you should register the absence with the university ([https://collegeconnect.emory.edu/register/self-cert-student-absence](https://collegeconnect.emory.edu/register/self-cert-student-absence)). Registered absences are covered by the university honor code (see below) and are the only excused absences. Assignments should not interfere with religious holidays (but do let me know if you see a conflict). **If you miss no more than 3 classes, you will receive 5 points on your grade. ***For COVID-19 related absences, please refer below*****
  - Office hours serve not only as a way to engage more deeply in the course and receive detailed feedback, they are also a space to talk about your interests, concerns, and goals—and to make connections with faculty. I invite you to join me during online office hours to about anything—including my favorite topics: all things tech-y (talk to me about robots!), culture, education, inequality, shiba inus, and ice cream. Sign up online ([https://calendly.com/drpuckett/office-hours](https://calendly.com/drpuckett/office-hours)) for a 30-minute meeting at least 1 hour before the time you would like to meet.

  **PLEASE NOTE: There is a password for entry, provided in the sign up.**

- **Class discussions and activities (5%).** Note that I assess participation based on **quality not quantity.**
- **Online peer editing and peer editing presentations (10%).** You will be assigned a peer-editing group and you are expected to comment on group members’ papers online and in person during class. Further instructions will be provided.

### GRADE CONVERSION

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**COURSE RESOURCES**

Course materials will be provided on Canvas: [https://classes.emory.edu](https://classes.emory.edu)

Log in, then click on SOC 190 – Section 2. This site will include most of the Readings, Assignments, and Lecture Outlines. Any important announcements will also be posted on this site.

There is one text we will read in full—this book is available at the Emory Bookstore as well as through online retail vendors:


You should purchase this text with enough time to read the first chapter for class discussion (Tues, Sept. 7).

We will also read a substantial amount of the book below (Tues, Oct 14), which is available digitally on [https://discovere.emory.edu](https://discovere.emory.edu), but you may wish to purchase at the Emory Bookstore or elsewhere (highly recommend reading the whole book):


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**TEACHING & LEARNING DURING THE PANDEMIC**

The situation with COVID-19 is an evolving one, so we will all have to be flexible as the semester progresses. Some of you may need to be off campus for some portion of the semester. I want our classroom community to thrive no matter the classroom delivery method or your individual methods of participating in class. I cannot guarantee an identical experience for students who cannot be physically in the classroom or an experience that is identical to pre-pandemic semesters, but my goal is to treat all students equitably and to ensure grading is clear, consistent, and fair for all of you.

As always, communication is important. I commit to responding to emails within 48 hours of receipt, and my intention to respond faster than that most of the time. I will likely be slower on weekends. Likewise, if your situation changes regarding health, housing, or in any other regard with respect to your ability to participate in the class, please contact the appropriate Emory student support organization first and then me as soon as feasible. It is easier for me to address your needs if I know about them as soon as they arise. This does not mean I can successfully respond to every request for consideration, but I emphasize that my goal is to treat you all equitably and do what I can to help you succeed in this course.

**Classroom safety**

Everybody must keep their face mask on at all times when they are indoors on campus, and this includes in our classroom. Your face mask must cover your nose, mouth, and chin, and should fit snugly. Due to the necessity of keeping your mask on, eating and drinking is forbidden in the classroom. Please read this [Emory advice about quality and fit of mask](https://classes.emory.edu). If you aren't complying with the masking requirement, I will have to ask you to leave the classroom to ensure my safety and the safety of your classmates. Keep in mind that some of your classmates (or instructors) may not be able to be vaccinated and/or are immunocompromised, so Emory's campus masking policy ensures everyone's safety without requiring anybody to disclose their personal situation. **We will try to hold class outside as much as possible so we can see each other on days we don’t have Zoom visitors—we’ll be sure to stay 6 feet apart in such cases.**
**Health considerations**
At the very first sign of not feeling well, *stay at home* and reach out for a health consultation. Please consult the [campus FAQ](#) for how to get the health consultation. Recognize that Emory is using several layers of safety: the vaccine mandate, the indoor face mask requirement, and contact tracing.

**Attendance policy for COVID-19 issues**
Due to the pandemic, some students might be sick or will need to go into isolation or quarantine. If you are sick, understand that I will be flexible about the general attendance policy. Please make sure to email me so that we can discuss your individual circumstances. For students in quarantine who are well, I will provide ways to keep up with the class. Please also contact me via email if you are in quarantine.

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**GENERAL GUIDELINES**

**Diversity & Inclusion**
This course embraces a multiplicity of voices and perspectives. We respect people from all backgrounds and recognize the differences among ourselves, including racial and ethnic identities, religious practices, and gender expressions. Please let me know what name you like to be called and your gender pronouns.

**Guidelines for engagement**
- Listen respectfully, without interrupting.
- Respect one another's views, even when you disagree with them.
- Criticize ideas, not individuals.
- Commit to learning, not debating.
- Avoid blame and speculation. Support your argument with evidence.
- What is said in class stays in class. Hard conversations and statements should remain between members of the class creating a brave space.
- Speak from the “I” perspective. Assume there will be differences of opinion, even among people of the same background.

**General Conduct**
Please be mindful of the general code of conduct that you would use in any classroom setting. I expect us all to be respectful of one another.
- Please do not arrive late to class.
- Once in class, please refrain from carrying on private conversations with your neighbor(s). This is distracting for everyone else in the room.
- Please refrain from texting, checking social media, or any other non-class activities during all class meetings. If engaging in these activities, you will be asked to leave.

*The use of cell phones is not permitted in this class. Please turn off all notifications on your phones before entering the classroom. If you use your phone in class without my express consent, you will be asked to leave class and it will count as an absence.*

**Missed Classes**
As noted above, our class is a learning community and everyone’s participation is expected. The only excused absences are ones registered with the university and COVID-19 related absences. If you have an excused absence, be sure to get missed material. Where possible, please get notes from one of your classmates. If you still have questions, please come to office hours.

*Late Assignments:* No late assignments will be accepted, except for extenuating circumstances.
**Extra Credit:** There are no extra credit assignments available in this course.

**Video/Audio:** You may not video or audiotape lectures without my express consent.

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**OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**Writing Center Support for Emory College Students:**
The full Emory Writing Center staff of undergraduate tutors and graduate fellows is available to support Emory College students as they work on any type of writing assignment in any field: sciences, social sciences, or humanities. Tutors can assist with a range of projects, from traditional papers and presentations to websites and other multimedia projects. They work with students on concerns including idea development, structure, use of sources, grammar, and word choice. They do not proofread for students. Instead, they discuss strategies and resources students can use as they write, revise, and edit their own work. Tutors also support the literacy needs of English Language Learners; several tutors are ELL Specialists, who have received additional training. Learn more and make an appointment at writingcenter.emory.edu. Please review tutoring policies before your visit.

**Accommodating Disabilities:**
As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. I want every student to succeed. The Department of Accessibility Services (DAS) works with students who have disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations. It is your responsibility to request accommodations. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must register with the DAS. Accommodations cannot be retroactively applied so you need to contact DAS as early as possible and contact me as early as possible to discuss the plan for implementation of your accommodations.

For additional information about accessibility and accommodations, please contact the Department of Accessibility Services at (404) 727-9877 or accessibility@emory.edu.

**Academic Conduct:**
Emory College has established an Honor Code outlining an appropriate code of conduct with respect to academic honesty and plagiarism. Information on Emory’s Honor code can be accessed at: http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html

See more specific code on Plagiarism here: http://www.english.emory.edu/home/undergraduate/plagiarism.html

It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the policies and procedures of the university, and violation of these policies will result in referral to the Honor Council. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. You must ensure that you cite references appropriately in your written work. When you paraphrase from others, cite their work in the text, and reference the citation in your bibliography. When you use direct quotes from others, be sure to insert quotation marks around the borrowed text and cite appropriately.

Honor Code Statement: I pledge to pursue all academic endeavors with honor and integrity. I understand the principles of the Emory College Honor System, and I promise to uphold these standards by adhering to the Honor Code in order to preserve the integrity of Emory College and its individual members.
TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE (subject to change)

I. CRISIS IN THE PURPOSE OF HIGHER EDUCATION – WHAT’S THE EVIDENCE?

Week 1:

Aug 26 (Th): Introductions

Guidelines for Personal Reflection 1 handed out

Week 2:

Aug 31 (T): Crisis in Higher Education:

Deresiewicz, William. 2015. Excellent Sheep: The Miseducation of the American Elite and the Way to a Meaningful Life. [Take notes on what you’d like to ask the author.]
- Intro, Pages 1-6
- Ch. 1, “The Students” Pages 7-25.
- Ch. 5, “What is College For?” Pages 77-87.

DUE: Tuesday, Aug. 31 - Personal Reflection 1 – Submit to Canvas & Bring to Class

Sept 2 (Th): Nature of Evidence:


Deresiewicz, William. 2016. “The Best Education for All.” TEDxMtHood. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7fmjshw590 [Watch 13 min video and think about the content and evidence he uses to make his argument.]

IN CLASS: Library trip on primary and secondary sources

II. THREE PURPOSES OF HIGHER EDUCATION – OVERVIEW AND HISTORY

Week 3:


Also read and take notes on:
- The “official narrative” of Emory’s history: [http://college.emory.edu/main/about/history.html](http://college.emory.edu/main/about/history.html)
- Recent university task force on slavery and dispossession: [https://news.emory.edu/stories/2021/04/er_task_force_untold_stories_disenfranchised_populations/campus.html](https://news.emory.edu/stories/2021/04/er_task_force_untold_stories_disenfranchised_populations/campus.html)

IN CLASS: Prep for visits with TBD guest and William Deresiewicz

Guidelines for *Purpose of Higher Education Analysis Papers* handed out

**Week 4:**

**Sept 14 (T):** NO READINGS – GROUPS PREPARE QUESTIONS

Emory history discussion with TBD guest (TAKE NOTES!)

**Note:** Emory is hosting a Fall 2021 symposium on slavery and dispossession, Sept 29 to Oct 1. You are not required, but highly encouraged to attend, take notes, and use this information in your *Official Narrative* paper due in Nov: [https://libraries.emory.edu/slavery-symposium/index.html](https://libraries.emory.edu/slavery-symposium/index.html)

**Sept 16 (Th):** NO READINGS – GROUPS PREPARE QUESTIONS

IN CLASS: Course visit with William Deresiewicz (TAKE NOTES!)

**III. DEMOCRATIC EQUALITY?**

**Week 5:**


- Ch. 2, “Numbers.” Pages 31-51.
- Ch. 6, “Decisions.” Pages 184-227.

IN CLASS: Prep for group interview with Emory Admissions

*DUE:* Sunday, Sept. 26 - *Purpose of Higher Education Analysis Paper 1 & First Three Alumni Interview Questions (Democratic Equality)* - Submit to Canvas by 6pm

**Week 6:**

IN CLASS: Group Interview with Emory Admissions (TAKE NOTES!)

IV. SOCIAL EFFICIENCY?

- Ch. 4, “Mutual Subversion: The Liberal and the Professional.” Pages 71-93.
- Ch. 7, “Learning to Love the Bomb: America’s Brief Cold War Fling with the University as a Public Good.” Pages 141-158.

***START SCHEDULING INTERVIEWS FOR OCTOBER 26-NOVEMBER 8***

Week 7:

- Ch. 1, “College Cultures and Student Learning.” Pages 1-32.


DUE: Sunday, Oct. 10 - Purpose of Higher Education Analysis Paper 2 & Second Three Alumni Interview Questions (Social Efficiency) – Submit to Canvas by 6pm

Week 8:

Oct 12 (T): FALL BREAK

V. SOCIAL MOBILITY?

- Introduction, “Can Poor Students be Privileged?” Pages 1-24
- Ch. 2, “Can You Sign Your Book for Me?” Pages 79-131
**Other chapters are recommended, but not required**

Week 9:

- Ch. 8, “Upstairs, Downstairs: Relations between the Tiers of the System.” Pages 159-178.


**DUE: Sunday, Oct. 24 - Purpose of Higher Education Analysis Paper 3 & Final Three Alumni Interview Questions (Social Mobility) – Submit to Canvas by 6pm**

**START ALUMNI INTERVIEWS (3) ONCE YOU RECEIVE FEEDBACK ON ALL OF YOUR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – COMPLETE BY CLASS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9.**

**Week 10:**

**Oct 26 (T):** NO READINGS – WORK ON ALUMNI ASSOCIATION QUESTIONS & ALUMNI INTERVIEWS

IN CLASS: Prep for group interview with Emory Alumni Association Staff

Guidelines for “Official Narrative” and Alumni Interview Analysis Papers handed out

OUTSIDE CLASS: Do alumni interviews

**Oct 28 (Th):** NO READINGS – BE READY TO ASK ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

IN CLASS: Group Interview with Emory Alumni Association Staff (TAKE NOTES!)

OUTSIDE CLASS: Do alumni interviews

**VI. DATA ANALYSIS**

**Week 11:**


IN CLASS: Code “official narrative” data (Historical data, Admissions, and Alumni Association)

OUTSIDE CLASS: Do alumni interviews

**Nov 4 (Th):** NO READINGS – WORK ON “OFFICIAL NARRATIVE” CODING & ALUM INTERVIEWS

IN CLASS: Work on “official narrative” coding

AFTER CLASS: Finish “official narrative” coding & do alumni interviews

**Week 12:**

**Nov 9 (T):** NO READINGS – FINISH ALUMNI INTERVIEWS BEFORE CLASS
DUE: All 3 alumni interviews complete; bring notes to class to code

IN CLASS: Start coding alumni interview data

AFTER CLASS: Finish alumni interview coding

Nov 11 (Th): NO READINGS – Work on Official Narrative & Alumni Interview Analysis Paper

DUE: Alumni coding complete; bring “official narrative” and alumni coding to class to work on Official Narrative & Alumni Interview Analysis Paper

AFTER CLASS: Finish Official Narrative & Alumni Interview Analysis Paper

DUE: Sunday, Nov 14 - Official Narrative & Alumni Interview Analysis Paper – Submit to Canvas by 6pm

VI. CONCLUSIONS & PEER EDITING

Week 13:

  • Ch. 9, “A Perfect Mess.” Pages 179-196.

http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/09/01/poison-ivy

Guidelines for Final Research Paper handed out

IN CLASS: Movie on college life [TBD]

Nov 18 (Th): NO READINGS – WORK ON DRAFT PAPER

IN CLASS: Movie on college life [TBD]

Week 14:

Nov 23 (T): NO CLASS MEETING – WORK ON DRAFT PAPER

How to give feedback:

http://nyti.ms/14T9ph2

DUE: Wednesday, Nov. 24 - Staged Assignment 6: Draft Paper – Submit to Canvas by 6pm

PREP FOR PRESENTATIONS: Peer Editing – Read and comment on assigned papers

Nov 25 (Th): THANKSGIVING
Week 15:

Nov 30 (T): PEER EDITING PRESENTATIONS (5)

Dec 2 (Th): PEER EDITING PRESENTATIONS (5)

Week 16:

Dec 7 (T): PEER EDITING PRESENTATIONS (5)

Dec 16 (Th): Final Paper - Submit to Canvas by 6pm

Dec 17 (Fri): Personal Reflection 2 - Submit to Canvas by 6pm

Congrats on all of your hard work this semester!