

Department of Sociology  
Emory University  
Fall Semester, 2017  
Tarbutton 206; TH 1-4:00 p.m.

Dr. Frank Lechner  
Tarbutton 214  
[flechn@emory.edu](mailto:flechn@emory.edu)  
Office Hours M 2-3/TH noon-1

## **SOC 767: Teaching Sociology**

### **Goals**

What does it take to teach effectively in sociology? How can we best help undergraduate students to improve their academic skills and their understanding of society? By answering these questions, this seminar will enable you to

1. Prepare for your first teaching assignment
2. Assess different teaching styles and methods
3. Develop your own teaching philosophy
4. Enhance your communication skills

The seminar will help you to produce a substantial draft of a syllabus—i.e., a plan of action—for your first independent or co-taught undergraduate course. Along the way, it will try to convey how good teaching can be a pleasure, for both instructors and students.

### **Content**

The seminar will include many activities related to the course goals—e.g., workshop-style drafting of course materials and practice in lecturing, discussions with panels of faculty and graduate students, and observations of classroom teaching. We will also take some time to think sociologically about learning, students, and college education.

### **Readings**

All readings will be posted or linked on Canvas. I will also supply many links to online teaching resources. I recommend, and will refer to, the following optional texts that cover the main seminar topics well: Barbara Gross Davis, *Tools for Teaching* (recommended for purchase) and Donelson R. Forsyth, *College Teaching: Practical Insights from the Science of Teaching and Learning* (available [online](#) at the library)

### **Requirements**

1. Active participation in discussion and collaborative exercises
2. Timely and adequate completion of assignments, several of which will pertain to the development of a syllabus, all to be submitted via Canvas, details TBA
3. Serious preparation for in-class activities, especially practice lectures
4. Guest lecture in a regular class and observation of a peer, by 11/16, details TBA
5. Observation of/report on 2 classes taught by different faculty, by 11/16, details TBA
6. Teaching portfolio, including teaching philosophy, syllabus, draft assignments and tests, due Dec. 7.

## Grading

This is an S/U course. To receive a grade of “Satisfactory,” you must meet all requirements in a satisfactory manner—i.e., earn the equivalent of a B. Unless otherwise specified, this means that assignments need to address all prompts, with appropriate details, in clear and polished prose. In class, satisfactory performance typically requires consistent contributions to discussion and constructive feedback on the work of peers. Guest lectures and class observations should follow guidelines TBA. If any of your work during the semester is not satisfactory, I will communicate that to you. If you receive comments to improve your written work, the teaching portfolio should reflect a conscientious effort to act on them in order to earn the equivalent of a B.

## Schedule

- use Canvas to find assignment instructions and to submit assignments
- several classes will require exploring online resources (TBA via Canvas)
- items marked \* are recommended reading
- refer to relevant chapters in the recommended Davis and Forsyth texts as needed
- prepare to add components to your draft syllabus week by week, as appropriate
- we may adjust or add topics and readings as we proceed

8/24 Introduction

Assignment: describe examples of good and poor teaching

Assignment and in-class exercise: analyze and compare syllabi

8/31 How to give a great lecture or conduct a great class/How to assess teaching

Assignment: analyze an online example

\*Peter Frederick, “The Lively Lecture”

\*Davis, Chapter 15; Forsyth, Chapter 4

9/7 How to design an interesting course/How to adapt design to course level

Assignment: draft course objectives and expectations

Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins, “Understanding by Design Framework”

\*Caroline Persell et al., “How Sociological Leaders Teach”

\*Davis, Exhibit 2.1, Syllabus Checklist; Forsyth, Table 2.2, Syllabus Information

9/14 Teaching at Emory

Faculty and graduate student panels

Assignment: prepare questions about preparation, content, style etc.

9/21 Giving a lecture

Assignment: prepare and deliver a 12-minute mini-lecture (recorded)

9/28 How to use and teach writing/How to choose stimulating readings

Assignment: select several readings, with explanation

- 10/5 Teaching as performance mini-workshop/How to write good assignments  
Assignment: write two assignments
- 10/12 How to lead a good discussion  
Assignment: select and assign a short reading for discussion you will lead  
C. Roland Christensen, "The Discussion Teacher in Action"  
\*Jocelyn Hollander, "Learning to Discuss"
- 10/19 How to write good tests/How to grade and assess student work  
Assignment 1: review tests in various courses  
Assignment 2: draft test questions
- 10/26 How to teach "sensitive" topics/How to write about teaching  
Assignment 1: propose a way to handle a sensitive topic in your course  
Assignment 2: draft statement of "teaching philosophy"
- 11/2 Context: college students and higher education in the U.S.  
Wabash College, *National Study of Liberal Arts Education*  
UCLA, *The American Freshman*  
\*Derek Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges*  
\*Davis, Chapters 5-8
- 11/9 Nuts and bolts and tricks of the trade/Syllabus review  
Assignment: **draft syllabus**, including most readings, tests, assignments  
In-class exercise: review of syllabus drafts
- 11/16 How to use evaluations/Comparing notes  
Assignment: complete all written faculty and peer observations
- 11/30 Giving a lecture 2  
Assignment: Prepare/deliver a short lecture, similar to the first
- 12/7 Portfolio due**