

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY 111 Fall 2020

TOOLS TO OBSERVE, INTERPRET, AND ACTIVELY ENGAGE IN SOCIAL LIFE

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“Revolution is not a one-time event. It is becoming always vigilant for the smallest opportunity to make a genuine change in established, outgrown responses; for instance, it is learning to address each other's difference with respect” – Audre Lorde

“There is but one coward on earth, and that is the coward that dare not know.” -W. E. B. Dubois

“Freedom is not merely the opportunity to do as one pleases; neither is it merely the opportunity to choose between set alternatives. Freedom is, first of all, the chance to formulate the available choices, to argue over them -- and then, the opportunity to choose.”

– Charles Wright Mills

WELCOME TO SOCIOLOGY 111

We are living in interesting and turbulent times. Observing and interpreting the world around us is a crucial element of participation. Sociology provides a useful toolkit for informed engagement in social life.

Consider these quotes and the kinds of questions they seek to address: What is revolution? What is cowardice? What is freedom? Each is a question about the relationship between individuals and the larger social world. These types of questions are at the core of sociology.

Sociology is the study of society and social relations. Like anthropology, economics, political science, and psychology, sociology is a social science discipline. These disciplines apply observation and analysis to phenomena of social life.

While traditional sociology focused most heavily on labor, the family, religion, and deviance, today, sociology is a discipline that is as multifaceted as social life itself.

WHAT BOOKS OR SUPPLIES DO I NEED?

Because this is an online course you will need reliable internet access and a working device (preferably a computer, laptop, or tablet). Ideally you will also have access to a functioning camera and microphone so that we can interact more freely during synchronous sessions. Headphones can be very helpful but are not required.

If you have technology concerns contact ITS. This link will take you to their student FAQ <https://www.grinnell.edu/about-grinnell/leadership-and-administration/offices-and-services/its/student-faq>

There are three required books for this class. If for any reason you are unable to access the books needed for class please contact me as soon as possible.

\$2.00 A Day – Edin and Shaefer ISBN: 9780544811959
Are Prisons Obsolete? – Davis ISBN: 9781583225813
Ten Lessons In Introductory Sociology – Gould and Lewis ISBN: 9780190663865

All other readings and video materials will be on our course site on pweb. You will find readings and videos in folders that are organized by module.

You will also find reading guides posted on pweb. ***BE SURE TO USE READING GUIDES WHILE READING***. Look at them **before** you start reading and annotate them as you read. Questions in *italics* will be useful for your journal assignment. Reading guides will also be used during challenges, activities, and discussions. Activities will be started in class but will likely take longer to complete than the time allotted in class. Be sure to allow time in your planning for completing activities.

HOW WILL THIS CLASS BE TAUGHT?

This course uses a mixture of recorded lectures, synchronous discussion, hands-on activities, writing, and media engagement—including text, film, data sets, and primary source materials to meet the course learning objectives.

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO LEARN?

In any course there are many different learning objectives. In the following lists I outline my main objectives for this class. They are divided into conceptual objectives, practical objectives, and relational objectives.

CONCEPTUAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Those who successfully complete this course will be able to answer the following questions at an introductory level:

- What is sociology?
- What is the sociological imagination?
- What are some of the common methods used in sociology?
- What are some important theories in sociology?
- What are agency and structure?
- How do sociologists think about inequality and power?
- How do sociologists think about race, gender, and sexuality?
- How do sociologists think about social norms?
- How do sociologists think about social movements, protests, and social change?

PRACTICAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Those who successfully complete this course will be able to do the following at an introductory level:

- Apply course concepts to observations of the social world

Locate sociologically relevant peer-reviewed articles using a variety of databases
Read a peer-reviewed article and draw connections to observations of social life
Access and understand data
Generate and interpret basic statistics
Read / generate data visualizations that are commonly used in sociological research
Create a literature review
Collect a data sample from publicly available social artifacts
Code data
Express ideas in clear and well-reasoned writing
Use American Sociological Association (ASA) style in formal written work

RELATIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Those who successfully complete this course will be able to do the following:

Engage in sociologically informed discussions with peers
Give thoughtful consideration to ideas that differ from their own
Approach questions and challenges collaboratively
Be generous in their analysis of writings especially those from other times or cultures
Slow the pace of their responses to allow time for thinking before speaking
Reflect on their thoughts in a way that allows them to consider how new ideas are being integrated into their thinking

WHAT ABOUT GRADES?

Each professor has a different approach to grading and it is important to me that my students understand how I think about grades and assessment.

First, let me assure you that I understand that there are very good reasons for a student to focus on grades. There are risks and rewards attached to grades; this is especially true for those with scholarships. And regardless of risks and rewards, the majority of students entering college have been trained for twelve or more years to see grades as the most significant outcome of any course. **I do not believe this to be true.**

**The intellectual / personal development of my students is my primary goal in teaching.
Prioritizing grades over growth is counterproductive to this mission.**

That said, assessment and evaluation of your progress is a critical part of any class and I will be evaluating how well you meet the course objectives.

In SOC 111 conceptual objectives are assessed via all forms of student work. Basically, anything you write or say should reflect your growing understanding of the concepts we cover in class. Does this mean that you can never say something that's not accurate? Or that you can't ask questions? No. **Growth means getting things wrong and then trying again.** Wrangling with difficult concepts until they are understood is an expected part of the learning process. So ask questions and make mistakes so that your conceptual grasp of sociology can flourish.

Relational objectives are primarily assessed through student participation in discussions, group activities, and challenges. I will be looking for your ability to be collaborative, creative, and generous with others as we work together.

Practical objectives are assessed largely through your written work. Some assignments focus on helping you develop and demonstrate specific practical skills.

Here is a list to help you have a clearer understanding of how certain assignments work toward course goals.

Activity One:

- Access and understand data
- Generate and interpret basic statistics
- Read / generate data visualizations that are commonly used in sociological research
- Collect a data sample from publicly available social artifacts
- Apply course concepts to observations of the social world

Activity Two:

- Locate sociologically relevant peer-reviewed articles using a variety of databases
- Read a peer-reviewed article and draw connections to observations of social life
- Read / generate data visualizations that are commonly used in sociological research
- Use ASA style in your formal written work

Activity Three:

- Access and understand data
- Generate and interpret basic statistics
- Read / generate data visualizations that are commonly used sociological research
- Collect a data sample from publicly available social artifacts
- Apply course concepts to observations of the social world

Activity Four:

- Code data
- Collect a data sample from publicly available social artifacts
- Apply course concepts to observations of the social world

Pre-paper proposals:

- Locate sociologically relevant peer-reviewed articles using a variety of databases
- Read a peer-reviewed article and draw connections to observations of social life
- Read / generate data visualizations that are commonly used sociological research
- Apply course concepts to observations of the social world
- Use ASA style in your formal written work

Literature Review:

- Locate sociologically relevant peer-reviewed articles using a variety of databases
- Read a peer-reviewed article and draw connections to observations of social life
- Read / generate data visualizations that are commonly used sociological research
- Create a literature review
- Use ASA style in your formal written work

At the end of each module we will have a **challenge day** where I will present the class with a series of tasks to complete. These tasks will require you to demonstrate your conceptual understanding of the course materials, your ability to utilize the practical skills you've built, and an opportunity to work collaboratively with others toward a common goal.

You will also submit **journals** on challenge days. The journals are an opportunity for you to express your individual engagement with the course and to reflect on your growing understanding of sociology. Journals are also a place to consider areas you would like to improve on and to share with me any thoughts you have about how the course could help you meet your goals.

After the challenge day we will have a **research day**. These class periods are dedicated to building your final paper or project.

While I will not assign grades in the pweb grade book, I will indicate with check marks work that has been completed. I will provide you with written and/or verbal feedback on all written assignments you submit and I am happy to meet with you at any time to talk about your progress. If there is any particular assignment that you do poorly on, I will let you know immediately and provide you with an opportunity to revise and resubmit your work. Anyone who is willing to put in the time and effort will be more than capable of doing very well in this class.

The mission here is to ***stop worrying about grades and start focusing on your learning.***

WHAT COUNTS AS PARTICIPATION?

Participation can mean many things, but some examples of what I would call meaningful participation include:

- Providing an insight into the topic being discussed
- Offering a relevant example for analysis
- Contributing to an ongoing analysis
- Demonstrating logical connections between observations and interpretations
- Drawing connections to course materials
- Refraining from opinion-based commentary
- Interrogating / providing supporting evidence
- Raising relevant questions

WHAT IF I MISS A SYNCHRONOUS CLASS?

Ideally, students should come to all synchronous class meetings and participate in meaningful ways during each class session. I understand however that this may not be possible for any number of reasons.

Students can miss up to three discussion sessions without concern. If you are going to miss a challenge day, activity day, or research day please contact me as soon as possible.

WHEN IS IT DUE?

In this section you will find a very thorough outline of class meetings and assignments.

MODULE ONE : The basics [Chapters 1-3 in *Ten Introductory Lessons*]

1. Pre-class synchronous meeting introductions and survey
2. Read Ch 1 & Audre Lorde | Watch Basic Concepts and History Video(s)
3. Q and A discussion
4. Read Ch 2 | Watch Empirical Observation and Methods Video(s)
5. Activity One: Looking at data
6. Read Dubois excerpt & start Ch 3 | Watch Theory Video(s)
7. Q & A discussion | Activity Two: Databases for journals
8. Read Ch 3 & Said | Watch Socialization and Culture Videos
9. Q & A discussion and study session
10. CHALLENGE DAY ONE : JOURNAL ONE
11. TOPIC TALK | Practical Research Session

MODULE ONE CALENDAR

8/31 Pre-class synchronous meeting Intros and survey	9/1 Read Ch 1 & Audre Lorde Watch Basic Concepts and History Video(s)	9/2 Q and A discussion	9/3 Read Ch 2 Watch Observation and Methods Video(s)	9/4 Activity One: Looking at data
9/7 Read Dubois excerpt & start Ch 3 Watch Theory Video(s)	9/8 Q & A discussion Activity Two: Databases for journals	9/9 Read Ch 3 & Said Watch Socialization & Culture Videos	9/10 Q & A discussion and study session	9/11 CHALLENGE DAY ONE : JOURNAL ONE
9/14 TOPIC TALK Practical Research Session				

MODULE TWO: Institutions, Systems, and Stratification [Ch. 4-7 in *Ten Intro Lessons*]

1. Institutions Video(s) Read Ch 4 and Ch 1 \$2 A Day
2. Q and A discussion
3. Stratification and Inequality Video(s) Read Ch 5 and Ch 2 \$2 A Day
4. Activity Three: Exploring Data and Summary Statistics
5. Intersectionality Video(s) Read Patricia Hill-Collins Excerpt Ch 3 \$2 A Day
6. Q & A discussion

7. Colonialism and Race Video(s) Read Ch 6 and Ch 4 \$2 A Day
8. Q and A discussion
9. Gender and Sexuality Video(s) Read Ch 7 and finish \$2 A Day
10. Q & A discussion
11. CHALLENGE DAY TWO : JOURNAL TWO
12. PRE-PAPER PROPOSALS | About Literature Review

MODULE TWO CALENDAR

	9/15 Watch Institutions Video(s) Read Ch 4 and Ch 1 \$2 A Day	9/16 Q and A discussion	9/17 Stratification and Inequality Video(s) Read Ch 5 and Ch 2 \$2 A Day	9/18 Activity Three: Exploring Data and Summary Statistics
9/21 Watch Intersectionality Video(s) Read Patricia Hill-Collins Excerpt Ch 3 \$2 A Day*	9/22 Q and A discussion	9/23 Watch colonialism and Race Video(s) Read Ch 6 and Ch 4 \$2 A Day	9/24 Q and A discussion	9/25 Gender and Sexuality Video(s) Read Ch 7 and finish \$2 A Day*
9/28 Q and A discussion	9/29 CHALLENGE DAY TWO : JOURNAL TWO	9/30 PRE-PAPER PROPOSALS About Lit Rev		

MODULE THREE: Large Systems, Multiple Publics, and Social Change [Ch. 8-10 in *Ten Intro Lessons*] ****During this time I will be meeting with each of you about your paper****

1. Global Thinking Video(s) Read Ch 8 and Ch 1 *Are Prisons Obsolete?*
2. Q and A discussion | Intro to annotated bibliographies
3. Social Change Video(s) Read Ch 9 and Ch 2 *Are Prisons Obsolete?*
4. Activity Four: Collecting and Coding Data
5. Social Movements Video(s) Read Ch 3 *Are Prisons Obsolete?*
6. Q & A discussion
7. Protest Research in Sociology Videos(s) Read Ch 4 *Are Prisons Obsolete?*
8. Q and A discussion
9. Public Sociology Video(s) Read Ch 10 and Finish *Are Prisons Obsolete?*
10. CHALLENGE DAY THREE : JOURNAL THREE
11. LITERATURE REVIEW | Drawing Connections

MODULE THREE CALENDAR

			10/1 Watch Global Thinking Video(s) Read Ch 8 and Ch 1 Are <i>Prisons Obsolete?</i> Sign up for meeting	10/2 Q and A discussion Intro to annotated bibliographies
10/5 Social Change Video(s) Read Ch 9 and Ch 2 Are <i>Prisons Obsolete?</i>	10/6 Activity Three: Collecting and Coding Data	10/7 Social Movements Video(s) Read Ch 3 Are <i>Prisons Obsolete?</i>	10/8 Q & A discussion	10/9 Protest Research in Sociology Videos(s) Read Ch 4 Are <i>Prisons Obsolete?</i>
10/12 Q & A discussion	10/13 Public Sociology Video(s) Read Ch 10 and Finish <i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i>	10/14 Q & A discussion	10/15 CHALLENGE DAY THREE : JOURNAL THREE	10/16 LITERATURE REVIEW Drawing Connections

FINAL PAPER DUE ON EXAM DAY

WHAT ABOUT...?

WHAT ABOUT ACCOMMODATIONS?

If you have an accommodation letter please check in with me early to make sure that I have received it and to discuss any concerns you might have about your participation in this course.

In general I aim to design a course that is accessible to all, but I am always learning and will be happy to work with you in any way I can if further changes need to be made.

If you have not spoken with the college about accommodations and wish to do so please contact John Hirschman at hirschma@grinnell.edu

It is important to be aware that at Grinnell you are not required to: register with disability resources; identify yourself to instructors, staff, or other students as having a disability; or

accept accommodations you do not need or want. However, if you need and want accommodations, you are responsible for contacting disability resources and completing the process for requesting accommodations.

<https://www.grinnell.edu/about/offices-services/accessibility-disability/students>

WHAT ABOUT ACADEMIC HONESTY? IS IT CHEATING IF I WORK WITH A FRIEND?

Grinnell College has a handbook on academic honesty which you can read at:

https://www.grinnell.edu/sites/default/files/documents/AcademicHonesty_2017-18.pdf

Generally in this class my expectation is that you will often treat each other as colleagues and collaborators. It is therefore 100% acceptable to work together on activities, papers, and collaborative portions of the challenge day.

Although you will be sharing ideas **it is your responsibility to write your own findings**. In other words, no two papers or activities should say the exact same thing.

If you receive support from a peer on an assignment that is not explicitly a group assignment indicate this in an acknowledgement. For example : Acknowledgements – Thank you to Jan Smith for her review and suggestions.

Citation is the other major form of acknowledgement that must be attended to in this course. Whenever you are summarizing, paraphrasing or directly quoting anything you must provide ASA formatted citation. This is a way of giving credit to the original source of the information that you are using.

You can find how to form an ASA citation at the following website

[https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick Tips for ASA Style.pdf](https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick_Tips_for_ASA_Style.pdf)

CAN I RECORD / SCREENSHOT / REPOST PARTS OF THIS CLASS?

No. No aspect of this course should be recorded / screenshot or shared in anyway outside of this course. This is the online version of not bringing strangers to class without getting permission. This policy is to protect the privacy and intellectual rights of all those involved.

HOW SHOULD WE WORK TOGETHER? WHAT IF A GROUP HAS A PROBLEM?

This class relies heavily on collaboration and community. Even though we are meeting in an online space it is essential that we work well together. Sociology is in many ways about connections so please prioritize making connections and developing your ideas both while engaging course materials and while engaging with each other.

Our ability to cultivate and maintain good relationships is our best chance for a just future. Remember that we must stay humble. None of us knows everything. None of us is perfect.

In this class there will be many occasions when you will be working with other people. It is critical that we all respect the time, boundaries and contributions of those we collaborate with.

If you find that you are in an unworkable situation, please contact me immediately baconjul@grinnell.edu and I will sort things out.

WILL THERE BE CONTENT WARNINGS? / WHAT ARE CONTENT WARNINGS?

Content warnings are notices that precede potentially sensitive content. Almost every issue that sociology explores i.e. race, gender, class, sexuality, social control, requires us to consider situations that are often unjust, violent, and upsetting. In other words these issues are the content of sociology. If any reading or video seems especially graphic in its depictions I will place an asterisk next to it. This is not just for your information, but could also be especially useful if you are working in an environment where young children are present.

WHAT IF I NEED HELP WITH SOMETHING?

If you need help with something specific to this course or have general questions about sociology you should email me. I will either answer your questions through email or arrange a time for us to meet online for office hours.

If you need help with writing a paper I am happy to talk with you. However, you may also benefit from working with folks at the Writing Lab. The Writing Lab offers one-on-one instruction to support student writers. They can be reached at: writing@grinnell.edu

There are a number of similar labs which may be of use to you as a student beyond this class. Here are some helpful links:

Math Lab - <https://www.grinnell.edu/academics/majors-concentrations/math-stats/math-lab>

Reading Lab - laniuska@grinnell.edu Phone (641) 269-3118

Digital Liberal Arts Collaborative (DLAC) - dlac@grinnell.edu

Data Analysis and Social Inquiry Lab (DASIL) - dasil@grinnell.edu Phone (641) 269-9734

If you need help with your computer or with a program you are running for class, reach out to Information Technology Services ITservices@grinnell.edu Phone (641) 269-4901

If you need to contact Student Health and Wellness please call SHAW at (641)-269-3230

If you need to talk to a counselor call the 24/7 Counseling Hotline – (641)-269-4404

REALLY THOUGH...WHAT ABOUT GRADES?

It's true, at the end of the term I will need to submit a grade. Here's how I will calculate your grade. In this class there are major assignments which measure your capacity to meet a large number of conceptual and practical outcomes and there are minor assignments which are focused on a few skills and tend to be less work intensive.

For every assignment you will receive feedback. If your work is meeting expectations I will give you comments and tips for enhancing your ideas and mark the assignment as complete. If the work is not yet meeting expectations (not following directions, poorly written, factually inaccurate, lacking citation etc...) I will tell you what's going wrong and how to improve. You will then have three days to revise and resubmit. If your revised work meets expectations it will be marked as complete. You may choose not to revise and in that case it will be recorded as a subpar but completed assignment

When I calculate the final grade I will count up how many assignments you have completed. I will also look at any subpar assignments.

Major assignments – challenge days, journals, final paper/project

Each missing assignment deducts one full letter grade. A → B

Each subpar assignment deducts a partial letter grade A → A-

Minor assignments – activities, final paper skills building exercises, discussions

Each missing assignment deducts a partial letter grade. A → A-

Every two subpar assignments deducts a partial letter grade A → A-