

Introduction to Sociology

Dr. Audrey Devine-Eller
Office: Carnegie 116C
Office phone: x4894
devineau@grinnell.edu

Office Hours:
2-3 pm MWF;
Lunch @ JRC, by
arrangement;
or by appointment

Writing Mentor:
Natalie Seger [segernat]

The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. That is its task and its promise.
- C. Wright Mills

Required Books

in the order we'll read them:

- ANY recent intro soc textbook—find online for ~\$5
- Edin & Kefalas, *Promises I Can Keep* (2011), ISBN-10: 0520248198
- Conley, *Being Black, Living in the Red* (1999), ISBN-10: 0520216733
- Klinenberg, *Heat Wave* (2003), ISBN-10: 0226443221
- Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, (1983/2003), ISBN-10: 0520239334
- Pascoe, *Dude You're a Fag* (2007), ISBN-10: 0520271483
- Khan, *Privilege* (2010), ISBN-10: 0691145288

Fall 2015
Grinnell College
4 credits

MWF
1-1:50 pm
ARH 131

So what's this class about?

Welcome. An introductory sociology class is intended to give you a glimpse into the field, some working knowledge of what sociologists do, and most importantly, the ability to analyze your world through a sociological lens – what we call the *sociological imagination*. Sociology is the systematic study of society and human behavior. Sociologists seek answers about how society works and how individuals interact. We look at the *structural determinants* of individual action, asking questions like:

- Why do Protestants commit suicide at a higher rate than Catholics?
- Why do poor children score lower on average on achievement tests than middle-class children?
- Why do women earn lower wages

Readings

You can see that there are a surprising number of books required for this class. That's because we will be exploring real sociological research together, in depth. Almost all of it is very recent, all of it is highly regarded by sociologists, and I hope all of it is interesting to you.

These books are available

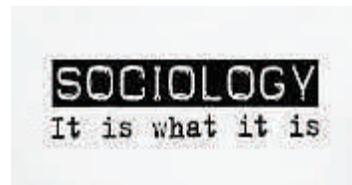
from the College Bookstore, though you may find them for much cheaper used online, or in Kindle edition. A copy of each is also on reserve at Burling Library.

You are REQUIRED also to have access to an intro textbook. I don't care which one you use, as long as it's been published within the past 5

and salaries on average than men?

- Why you're likely to marry another Grinnell alum?

The primary goal of this course is to introduce you to the sociological viewpoint and teach you how to think conceptually and critically about society. We will study some - but by no means all - of the important concepts currently used by sociologists. A great deal of sociology investigates inequalities in our world, and this class will explore three major axes of inequality: race, class, and gender. We'll do this by reading, discussing, and writing analytically about some exciting, current sociology research.



(Image from <http://shop.cafepress.com/sociology>)

years. Try to borrow one from a friend, or get one online for cheap. If you find that my lectures and your text disagree, ask me about it.

PLEASE NOTE: Supplemental (short, electronic, required) readings will be added as we go.

Assignments & Grading

How will this book thing work?

The intellectual material of this course will be primarily centered on core sociological books and articles. Class time will be primarily centered on discussion of the text.

I've chosen our books, and their order, to get us started. But much of the structure of the class will come from you. That is, in this class you are going to learn how to read an academic text (a very important and probably new skill), and you are going to learn how to identify what information you need to know in order to appreciate the text's contributions to sociology. By definition, along the way, you will get a good introduction to the field of sociology.

Here's how that will work in practice. The first day we discuss the text, you will have done a quick "Strategic Read" of the book (Don't worry, I'll teach you how!), and you will come prepared to discuss it. But then we'll spend another 2-3 days of class talking about the book in more detail, so you walk away with BOTH a good sense of the overall argument AND of the building blocks of the argument and the book's relationship with the field of sociology.

We will intersperse discussion of the book with shorter readings (on PWeb) and mini-lectures which will fill in your sociological knowledge and help you digest the book. Mini-lectures will be intense and brief, so you'll want to be well-prepared to take notes.

When we're done with the major text, we'll start again on the next one. You'll get better at identifying what you need to know, and the best plan of attack, with each new text. And you'll begin to see how they relate to one another and how they cumulatively build sociological knowledge. What fun!

Since we'll be coordinating our reading schedule together, it is all the more important that you complete the assigned readings prior to the class for which they are assigned, so that you will be able to fully participate in class discussions.

I'll keep the reading assignment schedule current at <http://tinyurl.com/111readingsFall2015> —please check that link frequently.

Exams

You'll write a midterm and a final exam in this class. These will be focused on drawing together themes and ideas across the books/articles. The midterm will focus on material before the break, and the final will focus on material after the break. The format will be discussed as we draw closer.

I think it generally true that sociology does not discover what no one ever knew before, in this differing from the natural sciences. Rather, good social science produces a deeper understanding of things that many people are already pretty much aware of. But I should say that whatever virtue this analysis has does not come from the discovery of any hitherto unknown facts or relations. Instead, it comes from exploring systematically the implications of the ... concept.—Becker, *Art Worlds*

Formatting

References should be formatted in ASA style (see <http://www.isu.edu/sociology/pdf/asalite.pdf> or http://www.asanet.org/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick_Tips_for_ASA_Style.pdf), including citations and bibliographic lists.

Papers missing page numbers or word counts will not be graded. Your word processor will count the words for you; just put the count in brackets at the end of the paper, like I've done with this item. [38]

Book Guides

Navigating each of our books will be a big task, and so each of you will act as a "Book Guide" for one book this semester. Book guides, in groups of 3-4, will be in charge of leading us through one day of each book. They should prepare to:

- Lead a class session of their choice on a section

of the book

- Meet with me & provide me, in advance, with an outline of activities
- Introduce and contextualize the book's authors
- Take leadership roles in discussion for the book as a whole

- Create a list of terms & concepts, with definitions, in hand-out form, for the class
- Lead a discussion on the connections and tensions with other readings, during the last session
- Write a short reflection evaluating each others'

contributions to the group. I will take these, and peer ratings, into account when assigning individual grades.

Assignments & Grading

Papers

You will write several short papers in this class. Each will help you put sociology to use in your lives outside the classroom, will help you to demonstrate your understanding of and ability to apply sociological analysis, and will help you learn how to express and communicate your thoughts in writing. You will be graded on your clarity of writing, your demonstration of knowledge of the relevant terms and concepts, and the insightfulness of your analysis.

First, a group membership paper (that is, a paper that sociologically analyzes a group you belong to, NOT a paper you work on with other people in the class).

Second, an article review in which you write a summary and critique of a recent sociological journal article. This is basically the strategic reading notecards in expanded form. You'll revise this paper in meetings with our writing mentor, and you'll briefly present your article to the class.

Third, you will prepare an annotated bibliography to answer a sociological question of your design. After developing the question, you will do research (via sociological journal articles) and prepare notecards for 6-8 source articles. At the end, you will prepare an approximately 100 word preliminary answer to your question. You'll also briefly present your findings to the class. In other words, it's a research paper without the paper. At each step, you will meet with the writing mentor for advice, direction, and support. More details about each paper will be distributed in class.

Peer-review process: Each of these assignments will be written in multiple drafts, with feedback along the way. Good writing necessitates re-writing, and the earlier and oftener you get feedback on your writing, the better it will be. This format allows you to practice writing and revising, and allows you to get better at a particular kind of writing across the semester.

We are lucky to have a Writing Mentor who will facilitate much of this revision process. You can email them anytime.

I'm happy to read drafts during office hours, well in advance of due dates.

Attendance & Participation

Attendance is required.

Learning is about the interaction of minds and ideas in the classroom. Especially, since this course is structured around discussion, it's critical that you attend class. You have the option to use, without penalty or question, **two**

"personal days". You might choose to save these for when you're sick; you might need to use them when you travel for athletics; you might wish to observe religious holidays; you might just want to go sledding or sleep in. You don't even have to tell me which. I

Strategic Reading Notes

Part of education is learning what you don't know, and identifying what you need to learn. Your **Strategic Reading Notes** grade will be based on your completion of 10 short, HIGHLY STRUCTURED, reading summaries, due in class at the beginning of the period. You will complete these for each of the major books & articles (5 points each, 1/2 credit if late within the class periods we are still discussing the work).

The format will be like a 3x5 notecard (and, indeed, can be actually formatted like one, but should be typed), and include:

- Formal citation, in ASA style
- Methods: >100 words summarizing author's methods
- Key arguments: >100 words summarizing key arguments of the piece
- Key concepts, two parts (just list, not definitions):
 - ~5 terms or concepts that are important to the book
 - ~5 terms or concepts that are key in sociology
- Important quotes: anything you'd like to keep track of here
- Critique/weaknesses: >50 words summarizing shortcomings of the piece

It is my deliberate opinion that the one essential requisite of human welfare in all ways is scientific knowledge of human nature.
— Harriet Martineau

You are welcome to write using clear abbreviations and the like; the point is to give you a clear, concise summary of the book. In sum, each strategic reading "notecard" should be **no more than 1 page**, typed, and turned in at the beginning of the class.

suggest choosing carefully.

You don't, of course, have to use all of them, and I strongly recommend against using them on days when you're a Book Guide.

After two absences, each additional absence will cost you 3% of your final grade. If you miss more than 5 days, you will not pass the

class. Students who have need of special accommodations or encounter emergency situations during the class should talk to me ASAP.

Lively and respectful participation is expected; if you have concerns about this, please come talk to me for ideas about how to contribute.

Classroom Policies

Classroom Atmosphere

Be respectful of me, of your classmates, of the College personnel and facilities. This means, at a minimum, turning off your cell phones and minimizing disruptive behavior in class, generally paying attention in class, arriving on time, and staying for the full class period.

Please choose your words carefully. The classroom must be a place in which everyone can participate. This means that every person must feel safe enough to express their opinions without fear of ridicule or intolerance. Remember that in good discussions, people critique ideas and not other people. The more heated the political issue we discuss, the more important it is to keep this in mind. It is normal to be or become emotionally connected to the concepts we discuss, and it is normal to have personal experiences related to those concepts. It is also normal for those experiences to be in conflict with the experiences of others in the room. For example, just as there will likely be someone in class who would prefer abortion not be legal, there will also likely be someone who has had an abortion. It's important to remember this diversity in our discussion so that we maximize, to the extent possible, the vibrancy and respectfulness of our intellectual inquiries.

The imaginations which people have of one another are the solid facts of society.

– Charles Horton Cooley

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty at Grinnell College includes (but is not limited to) such behavior as **quoting** or **paraphrasing** without complete citation, collaborating with others on assignments or exams without the explicit permission of the instructor, submitting work for more than one course without the

instructors' permission, and presenting another's work as your own. Penalties range from a failing grade for the assignment to permanent expulsion from the College, depending on the severity of the offense. I am **obligated** to report all suspected violations to the Academic Honesty Subcommittee of the Com-

mittee on Academic Standing. In other words, as soon as I suspect it, it is entirely out of my hands. Don't put me, or yourself, in this position. See the [full policy](#) for details. Please ask me if you have any questions.

Reasonable Accommodations

Late Work. For regular writing assignments, *I suggest that you begin your papers early enough to accommodate any last-minute emergencies.* As the saying goes, a failure to plan ahead on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part. I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE WORK.

Classroom Accessibility. Please come see me no later than the third class if you have special learning needs. I will work with you to make the classroom and the material accessible. The Academic Resource Centers (<http://www.grinnell.edu/academic/arc>) are fabulous resources for all students.

Unusual circumstances. You might face unusual circumstances that affect your attendance or your work this semester; these might include religious or athletic commitments, health or personal problems, or other things. Please contact me within the first three weeks of the semester if you would like to discuss a specific instance that applies to you. In the case of major emergencies, please talk to me as soon as you're able.

Use of Your Work

Sometimes it helps me to use student work (WITHOUT NAMES) as part of my teaching portfolio, where I demonstrate my teaching methods and success. I also like to use student work as examples in class, for the benefit of other students. If you prefer not to have your work used, please let me know.

Sociology is a new science concerning itself not with esoteric matters outside the comprehension of the layman, as the older sciences do, but with the ordinary affairs of ordinary people. This seems to engender in those who write about it a feeling that the lack of any abstruseness in their subject matter demands a compensatory abstruseness in their language.

– Sir Ernest Arthur Gowers 'Sociologese', in H F Fowler, *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (2nd rev ed).

Contacting me.

The best way to contact me is via **email**: devineau@grinnell.edu. Please read the syllabus thoroughly before emailing me with questions about the course. Don't email me an hour before class starts to ask me questions about the reading or exams; not only will I not have time to respond to you before class, but I will also know you put off the assignment until the last minute. You can expect me to respond to email every afternoon while I'm in my office. (i.e., I might not check email between 5 pm and the start of class the next morning ... plan ahead!)

When you email, please include enough details about the assignment or question that I know what you're asking. I don't like to respond to email when I don't know who it's from. I welcome anonymous emails with suggestions, critiques, or comments about the course.

Email. Please send me an email, before the 2nd day of class, & tell me something you'd like me to know about you (fun, serious, whatever!).

Office hours. I have office hours every week, as listed on the first page of this syllabus. Feel free to just drop by or to make an appointment ahead of time; if two or more people show up at the same time, those with appointments will be given priority. If my scheduled office hours conflict with your schedule, email me or see me in class to set up an alternate time. **You may drop in if my door is open.**

Resources

If you are having trouble in class, here are some steps you can take:

- Come to my office hours and talk about it!
- Seek out an ARC that will help with reading, writing, or time management
- Sign up for a Library Lab (one-on-one help)

The **Add/Drop Period** for Fall 2015 Courses ends Friday, September 18. Last day to withdraw from a course is Friday, November 6.

Connectivity problems will not be accepted as an excuse for not having any electronically-available reading done. I highly recommend that you save to disk and/or print out the online readings well ahead of time.

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus, as I see fit or necessary for the course.

Assignments	Points	Due Date
• Group membership paper	50	Sept 7
• Article review	100	Sept 23: Strategic read TBA: peer review
• Research-paper-minus-paper	250	Oct 28: research q Nov 4: list of sources Nov 23: annotated bib
• Midterm & final exams	200 * 2	Take-home
• Book guide	50	See sign-up sheet
• Strategic Reading Notes	50	See reading schedule
• Attendance & participation	100	Continuous
Total	1000	

THE CONTINUOUSLY-UPDATED READING SCHEDULE

IS AVAILABLE AT

<https://tinyurl.com/111readingsFall2015>

The deepest problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence in the face of overwhelming social forces, of historical heritage, of external culture, and of the technique of life.
– Georg Simmel

Grading Distribution

• 94 and up	A
• 90-93	A-
• 87-89	B+
• 84-86	B
• 80-83	B-
• 77-79	C+
• 70-76	C
• 60-69	D
• 59 and below	F

PRELIMINARY READING SCHEDULE SOC 111-04 FALL 2015 - see current at <http://tinyurl.com/111readingsFall2015>

Date	Day	Book Reading	Supplemental Reading	Due	Week
8/28/2015	F	Read this syllabus! & "1-hour read" blogs			0
8/31/2015	M		O'Brien, Jodi. 2009 "Sociology as an Epistemology of Contradiction." <i>Sociological Perspectives</i> 52(1):5-22. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/sop.2009.52.1.5	Strategic Reading Note (1 of 10)	1
9/2/2015	W		Miner, Horace. 1956. "Body Ritual among the Nacirema." <i>American Anthropologist</i> 58:503-507. [via Burling online]		
9/4/2015	F		Becker, Howard S. "Becoming a Marihuana User." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 59(3):235-242. [via Burling online]		
			Gracey, Harry L. 1977. "Learning the Student Role: Kindergarten as Academic Boot Camp." Pp. 215-226 in <i>Readings in Introductory Sociology</i> , edited by Dennis Wong and Harry Gracey. Macmillan Publishing. [on pweb]		
9/7/2015	M	Edin&Kefalas:1: Strategic read		Group membership paper, Strategic Reading Note (2 of 10)	2
9/9/2015	W	Edin&Kefalas:2			
9/11/2015	F	Edin&Kefalas:3			

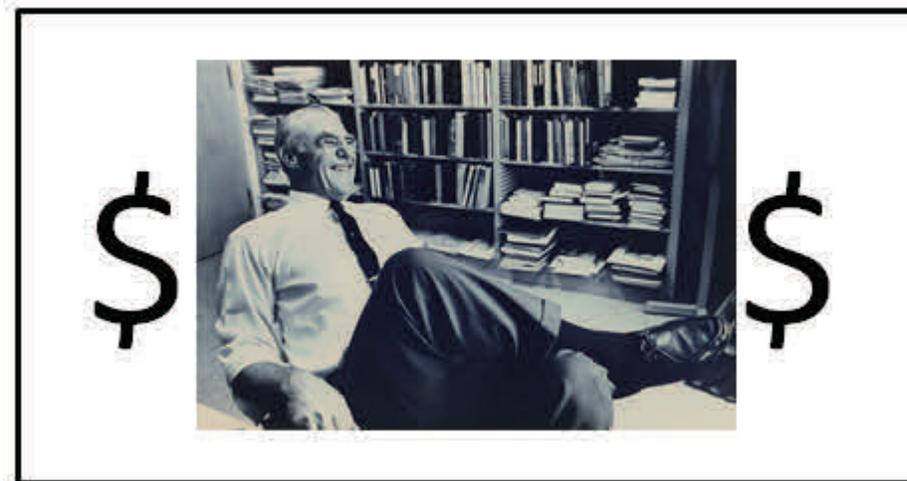
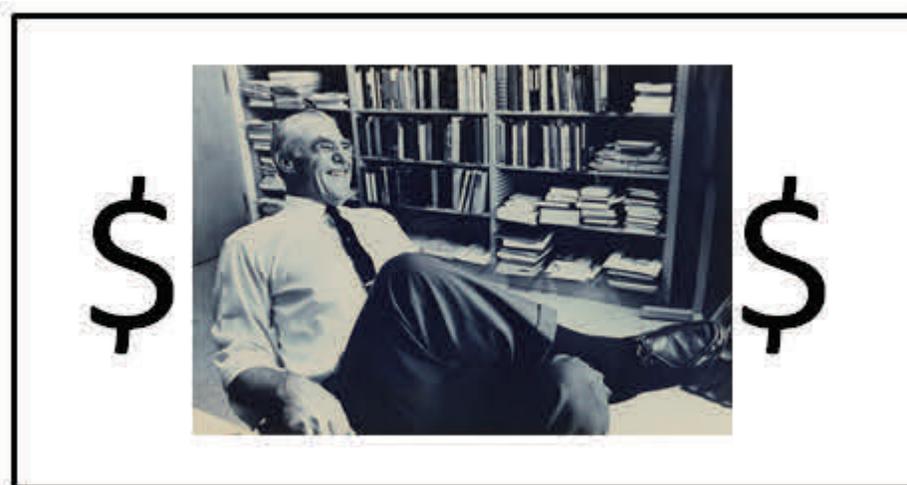
Blumer Bucks

I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE WORK.

But sometimes things come up that prevent you from working how you'd intended to work, or writing when you intended to write. Prioritizing and making hard decisions about your time is a learned skill, one you can practice in this class. Namely, you have access to TWO "Blumer Bucks" to use – or not – as you like. Each gives you one 24 hour extension on a deadline, or if saved, ½ extra credit point on your final course grade (I'll keep track; no need to turn them in at the end of the semester). You can use them both together, separately, or not at all.

Choose wisely; spending a Blumer Buck is the ONLY way to make up a quiz or submit a paper late in this class.

To redeem, cut out, write your name, and attach to your late paper or present to receive your late quiz.



Who's Herbert Blumer? An American sociologist (1900-1987) who developed the *Symbolic Interactionism* theoretical perspective, in a 1969 book of that name. He challenged reigning ideologies of *behaviorism* and of *positivistic* methodologies. Blumer played pro football for the Chicago Cardinals while completing his doctorate, and then originated the sociology department at Berkeley.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert_Blumer

