

# SOC 248: Self & Society

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

Writing Mentor:  
Katy Tucker [tuckerka]  
Office hours:

## Required Text:

O'Brien (Ed.), 2011. *The Production of Reality* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage/Pine Forge Press. ISBN: 978-1-4129-7944-3

[People] live in a world of meaning.  
—George H. Mead

Fall 2015  
Grinnell College  
4 credits

SCI 1822  
Tues & Thurs  
2:30-3:50 pm

## So what's this class about?

Welcome.

This course engages the study of human social interaction, in particular the meaning-making processes inherent in socialization and social interaction. We will study how people interact in small groups, change their beliefs, interpret behavior, develop a sense of identity, and construct their social worlds. We will pay attention to the social psychology of collective behavior and of everyday life. Two organizing questions of the course are:

- How do we develop shared perception?
- How does society get inside our heads?

## Readings

The core of our regular discussions will be our readings, all of which are “primary texts” - excerpts important to the field of sociological social psychology, in an edited reader. Please come to each session having read the assigned material in advance, and ready to discuss—with your notes and questions in hand.

## Learning Objectives

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Learn how we become social creatures
- Master social psychological vocabulary and concepts
- Be able to apply those concepts in analyzing their own daily life and contexts
- Understand to what degree we construct our own realities, and thus
- Be able to begin producing a social world they desire

The social psychology of this century reveals a major lesson: often it is not so much the kind of person a man is as the kind of situation in which he finds himself that determines how he will act.  
— Stanley Milgram

## Writing Mentor

We are lucky to have a Writing Mentor for the course, who is here to help you with your essays. Please put her to work as you brainstorm, draft, and revise your essays. You are REQUIRED to meet with her about EACH writing assignment—so get to know her right away! You may choose at what stage to seek help with each essay.

# Assignments & Grading

## Writing

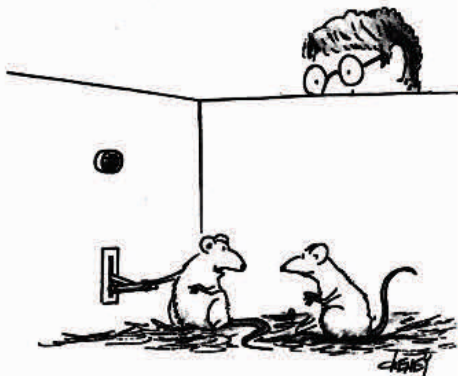
You will write two short (1200-1500 word) papers in this class:

1. An essay using social psychological principles and concepts to describe how you might have become something other than what you are today
2. An analysis of a field exercise (which may include a breaching demonstration) you conduct during the semester.

You will also write three short analytical reading memos (500-800 words) in which you respond to questions in our text. You may write these on any of the topics that have an asterisk in the reading schedule (e.g. *reality as a collective hunch\**), which refer to a set of questions in the text; your paper will be due at the quiz FOLLOWING the date the reading is assigned. You may only turn in ONE memo per quiz, so don't procrastinate.

You are REQUIRED to work with the writing mentor on EACH of these five drafts at some stage.

I highly recommend you take advantage of my office hours; I am always happy to read drafts in advance.



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It's a rather interesting phenomenon. Every time I press this lever, that post-graduate student breathes a sigh of relief.

If people define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.  
—W. I. Thomas

Attendance is required. Learning is about the interaction of minds and ideas in the classroom. 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

## Quizzes

We will have six short, in-class quizzes that consist of multiple choice, matching, and short answer questions. These quizzes will NOT take the full class period; be prepared to conduct other learning on those days as well. I will drop the lowest quiz grade. There will be no make-ups.

There is substantial evidence that the process of preparing for tests, and then having to recall on the test, is beneficial for long-term retention. These quizzes are intended to cement your learning of the concepts and terminology of our course, so that you can use them in higher-order thinking for your papers. They also give me a good sense of how effectively I am teaching the class.

Want to know more? Recommended reading: Brown, Roediger & McDaniel. 2014. *Make It Stick*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press . Ch8 (with study suggestions!) is on pweb.

Assignments	Points	Due Date
• In-class quizzes (drop lowest of 6)	200	Periodic
• Alternate Realities & "Becoming" essay (1200-1500 words)	225	FRIDAY Oct 16, 4pm to Carn 115
• Presentation of self OR Breaching analysis essay (1200-1500 words)	250	FRIDAY Dec 4, 4pm to Carn 115
• Analytical reading memos (500-800 words *3)	225	On quiz days
• Attendance & participation	100	Continuous
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>	

## Attendance & Participation

holidays; you might just want to go sledding or sleep in. You don't even have to tell me which. I suggest choosing carefully. You don't, of course, have to use all of them.

**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.

After all, what is reality anyway? Nothin' but a collective hunch.  
—Trudy the Bag Lady

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

As a person's level of wealth increases, their feelings of compassion and empathy go down, and their feelings of entitlement, of deservingness, and their ideology of self-interest increases.  
—Paul Piff,  
social psychologist at  
UC-Berkeley

## 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.**

The imaginations which people have of one another are the solid facts of society.  
– Charles Horton Cooley

## 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

## 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](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]



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<b>Self &amp; Society Reading Schedule</b>		Start page	total pages	APPROX. DATES	Day	Week
<b>First day: a. read the syllabus</b>				27-Aug	R	0
b. Caplow, Theodore. "Rule Enforcement Without Visible Means: Christmas Gift Giving in Middletown." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 89(6):1306-1323.			14			
<b>Part I: Introduction</b>						
Essay: what is real?		2	8	1-Sep	T	1
<b>reality as a collective hunch*</b>		10	1			
1. Zerubavel		11	17			
2. Wagner		28	6			
<b>researching social life*</b>		34	1	3-Sep	R	
3. Babbie		35	4			
4. Charon		39	10			
<b>Part II: Humans as symbol-using creatures</b>						
Essay: Shared meaning is the basis of humanness		49	1			
50		19				
<b>symbol use, language, and development*</b>						
69		2		8-Sep	T	2
5. Cassirer		71	1			
6. Sacks		72	2			
7. Davis		74	7			
<b>categorization, language, and culture*</b>						
81		1		10-Sep	R	
8. Langer		82	5			
9. Lakoff & Johnson		87	11			
10. Moore		98	9			
QUIZ 1				15-Sep	T	3
<b>Part III: Producing social selves</b>						
107		1		17-Sep	R	
Essay: Who Am I?		108	12			
<b>the self as a process of interaction*</b>		120	1			
11. Mead		121	5			
12. Cooley		126	3			
<b>significant others and self development*</b>						
129		1		22-Sep	T	4
13. Scheff		130	13			
14. Farr		143	8			
Chambliss, Daniel F. 1989. "The Mundanity of Excellence: An Ethnographic Report on Stratification and Olympic Swimmers." <i>Sociological Theory</i> 7(1):70-86.			16	24-Sep	R	
<b>self and social context*</b>						
151		2		29-Sep	T	5
15. Zhao		153	8			
16. Rosenfeld		161	12			
QUIZ 2				1-Oct	R	
<b>Part IV: Producing social identities and social scripts</b>						
173		1		6-Oct	T	6
Essay: learning the script		174	13			
<b>socialization and reference groups*</b>		187	2			
17. Berger & Luckmann		189	3			
18. Shibutani		192	6			
19. Perry		198	21	8-Oct	R	
<b>naming experience*</b>						
219		2		13-Oct	T	7
20. Becker		221	8			
21. Simon, Eder & Evans		229	20			

QUIZ 3			15-Oct	R	
Alternative Realities and Becoming Essay - 4 pm at CARN115			16-Oct	F	
Fall Break October 17-25					
<b>Part V: Producing social order through interaction</b>	249	1	27-Oct	T	8
Essay: Meaning is negotiated through interaction	250	10			
<b>projecting the definition of the situation*</b>	260	2			
22. Goffman	262	10			
23. Emerson	272	14			
<b>identity work, stigma, and self presentation in interaction*</b>	286	2	29-Oct	R	
24. Waskul & Vannini	288	7			
25. Lankenau	295	11			
26. Marvasti	306	12			
QUIZ 4			3-Nov	T	9
<b>Part VI: The social production of reality</b>	337	1	5-Nov	R	
Essay: Building and breaching reality	338	21			
<b>a theory of reality*</b>	359	2	10-Nov	T	10
29. Berger & Luckmann	361	2			
30. Mehan & Wood	363	16			
31. Garfinkel	379	12			
<b>self-fulfilling prophecies*</b>	391	1	12-Nov	R	
32. Watzlawick	392	12			
33. Snyder	404	5			
<b>the social production of the cultural status quo*</b>	409	1	17-Nov	T	11
34. Altheide	410	9			
35. Ewick & Sibley	419	10			
<b>the social production of difference and inequalities*</b>	429	1	19-Nov	R	
36. Harris	430	14			
37. Ridgeway	444	9			
TBA			24-Nov	T	
Thanksgiving!					
QUIZ 5			1-Dec	T	13
<b>Part VII: Social complexity, ambiguity, and contradiction</b>	453	1	3-Dec	R	
Essay: Boundaries and Contradictions	454	18			
Presentation of Self OR Breaching Demonstration Analysis - 4pm at CARN115			4-Dec	F	
<b>contradictions and conflict in self production*</b>	472	2	8-Dec	T	14
38. DuBois	474	5			
39. O'Brien	479	15			
40. Hopper	494	10			
<b>complexities and change in cultural production*</b>	504	1	10-Dec	R	
41. Hondagneu-Sotelo	505	8			
42. hooks	513	4			
Epilogue	517	8			
QUIZ 6 (Exam period TBA Dec 14-18) Have a great winter break!					

We may also use some films in class, including but not limited to Zimbardo's *The Stanford Prison Experiment* and Milgram's *Obedience*.

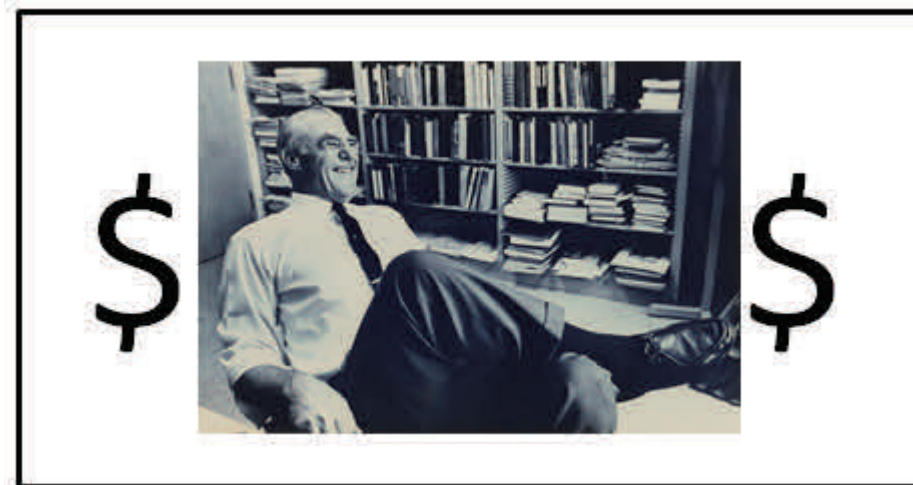
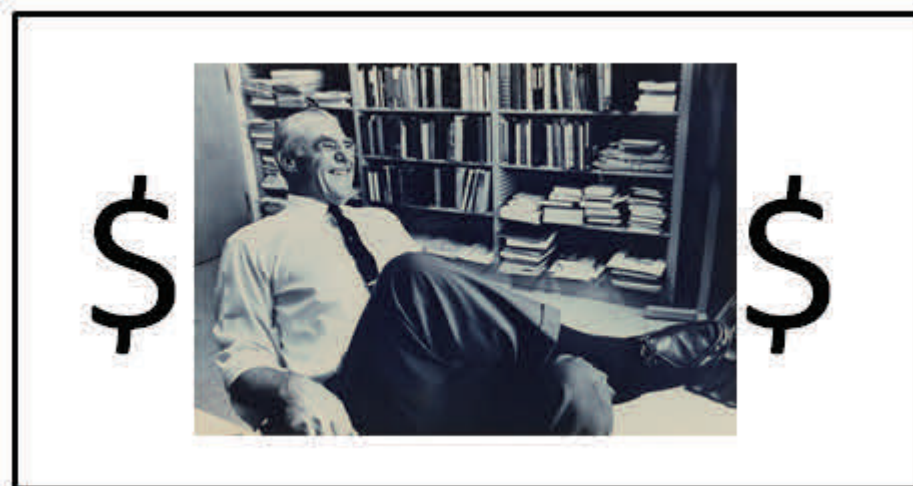
# Blumer Bucks

## 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 paper or quiz, 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert_Blumer)

