Introduction to Sociology (AS.130.101)

Lectures: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:00-10:50 am, Remsen 101

Sections:
01: Fridays, 9:00-9:50 am, Gilman 400
02: Fridays, 9:00-9:50 am, Gilman 75
03: Fridays, 10:00-10:50 am, Gilman 119
04: Fridays, 10:00-10:50 am, Hodson 315
05: Fridays, 10:00-10:50 am, Hodson 303
06: Fridays, 10:00-10:50 am, Gilman 75
07: Fridays, 11:00-11:50 am, Hodson 313
08: Fridays, 11:00-11:50 am, Shriver 104
09: Fridays, 11:00-11:50 am, Hodson 303
10: Fridays, 12:00-12:50 pm, Gilman 413
11: Fridays, 10:00-10:50 am, Maryland 114

Professor Andrew J. Perrin · aperrin@jhu.edu
Please direct course-related questions to lead TA Alexi Williams, awill308@jhu.edu.

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Office Hours: Mondays, 11:00-12:30; Tuesdays, 2:00-3:30; or by appointment

TAs:
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Sections 08 and 11: Ahmed Mori (amori4@jhu.edu)
Section 10: Alexi Williams (awill308@jhu.edu)
Course Overview

This course is designed to give you a dynamic introduction to the field of sociology, with special attention paid to issues, ideas, and facets of American culture and society. It focuses in part on sociological research and writing done at Johns Hopkins to highlight the new knowledge produced by JHU sociologists. If you and we do our jobs correctly, you'll walk away with an appreciation of the ideas and methods of sociological inquiry, an understanding of how sociological knowledge is developed, and a sense of where the field is today.

This course has four broad goals:

1. **To introduce sociology and its ideas.** You should have a sense of the kinds of issues with which sociology grapples, the tools it brings, and the ideas upon which it is built.

2. **To survey several fields of contemporary sociology.** Where is sociology going today? What do sociologists do?

3. **To encourage critical approaches to social claims.** Claims about the nature of society are made daily in the press, popular and business books, and elsewhere. After this class, you should be able to evaluate these claims critically and think about how they might be tested sociologically.

4. **To write and communicate well.** Social science is, fundamentally, a communicative art. Writing well is integral to good sociology. Your writing will be evaluated for clarity of thought, language, structure, and grammar. Your presentation will also be evaluated for its ability to convince readers and accurately represent claims.

Readings and Resources

**Required Book**


**Supplementary Readings**

All additional readings are available either on the web or on the course website. The course website is available through [http://canvas.jhu.edu](http://canvas.jhu.edu).

**Other Resources**

We will use Poll Everywhere for learning measurement, feedback, and questions during lecture. You can use Poll Everywhere from a computer, phone, or tablet, as you wish. The address for our class is [https://PollEv.com/jhusoc](https://PollEv.com/jhusoc).

Have a dictionary close at hand to look up words you don’t know. You can find an adequate one at [http://www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com) if you prefer using an online version.
The Writing Center (https://krieger.jhu.edu/writingcenter/) can help you with writing clearly and correctly.

There is an astonishing amount of information available on the World Wide Web. A significant proportion of that information—though by no means all—is true and relevant. By all means, use the Web to supplement your reading and knowledge, but use it critically and make sure you know the source of the information.

**Formal Requirements**

**You must complete all the course readings.** You are responsible for understanding the readings—make use of your fellow students, your dictionary, the Internet, your TA, and your professor to make sure you understand the readings. Course discussion time is to be used for substantive discussion and further exploration of the implications of course readings, not for grasping the basic contents.

**You must attend, and participate in, all class discussions and small group exercises.** You are also responsible for the information contained in course lectures. While lecture notes will be posted to Canvas, there is no substitute for attending the lectures.

**Assignments**

All assignments should be submitted via Canvas.

**Exams.** There will be two examinations: a midterm and a final. You must take the examinations at the date, time, and place assigned. The midterm examination is Wednesday, March 15, in class. The final examination will be on May 10, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon.

**Sociological Investigation Paper.** The assignment will be distributed in sections on Friday, March 31. Due Sunday, April 23, at midnight. There is no firm length requirement, but about 1,000-1,500 words is a good guideline.

**Grading**

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociological Investigation Paper</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Research Presentations (2 x 10)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Discussion Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
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Adequate completion of the requirements of an assignment will earn you a B-. Work whose quality clearly exceeds these requirements will earn a B, B+, A-, or A. Work whose quality is in
one or more ways less than adequate will earn you a grade of C+ or below. This policy is consistent with Johns Hopkins / KSAS grading policy: https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/arts-sciences/full-time-residential-programs/undergraduate-policies/academic-policies/grading/.

Course Policies

COVID-19. You must follow all Johns Hopkins guidelines and requirements regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes consistent use of an appropriate mask, routine testing, and isolating upon a positive test. Check https://covidinfo.jhu.edu/ for up-to-date policy requirements and information.

You are an adult. As a student in this class, you are provided with a set of resources for learning the class's contents, and you are expected to fulfill a series of requirements designed to evaluate the depth and breadth of your knowledge of those contents. Your grade, therefore, is a reflection of your success in utilizing the resources you have at your disposal. There will be no extra credit or make-up assignments. You are responsible for the information in the readings and given during lectures. If you do not understand something I say in a lecture, ask me during the lecture, during a later class, or privately via e-mail or office hours.

Participation in discussions and class activities is mandatory. Some discussions will be full-class; others will be in small groups. Your participation will be useless—and graded as such—if you have not done the reading.

Assignments are due on the dates listed. In exceptional cases, I may grant an extension; you must discuss this with me in advance. Make sure you give yourself sufficient time to finish assignments by their due dates. You will lose roughly one letter grade per day between the due date and the date the paper is received. You may make the calculation yourself as to whether your work will improve sufficiently in the extra time to make up for the grade reduction.

Lecture topics and readings may change in response to changing current events or new research. Any changes will be announced via email and Canvas at least one week in advance. Lectures will not be recorded or provided via remote modalities such as Zoom.

Your participation in this course is covered by the Homewood Undergraduate Academics Policy (https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/policies-guidelines/undergrad-ethics/). I take academic dishonesty—including, but not limited to, plagiarism—very seriously. There will be no excuses or second chances; if you have plagiarized the ideas or words of someone else without giving credit, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. If you have questions as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, check https://guides.library.jhu.edu/avoidingplagiarism/home or consult a TA or me.
Course Schedule

Monday, January 23 – Lecture
Welcome to Sociology; Introduction to “Introduction to Sociology”

Wednesday, January 25 – Lecture/Tutorial
Reading, Writing, and Presenting Sociologically
Reading: This syllabus

Friday, January 27 – Section Meetings

Monday, January 30 – Reports back from Friday's sections
Asking Good Sociological Questions

Wednesday, February 1 – Lecture: Thinking Causally
Readings:
Conley, Chapter 2 of You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton).

Friday, February 3 – Section meetings – Research Discussion
Readings:
https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2378023120982435
https://sociologicalscience.com/articles-v6-5-118/

Monday, February 6 – Section Presentations – Sections 1, 3, 4, 5, 10

Wednesday, February 8 – Lecture: Group, Culture, Society

Friday, February 10 – Sections – Reproduction of Inequality

Monday, February 13 – Lecture
Durable and Reproducing Inequalities – Class in America

Wednesday, February 15 – Lecture
Sociology of Race and Ethnicity

**Friday, February 17** – Sections – Research Discussion

**Readings:**

https://doi.org/10.1086/703538


https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0003122418759544

https://www.jstor.org/stable/24878707

**Monday, February 20** – Section Presentations – Sections 2, 3, 4, 8, 9

**Wednesday, February 22** – Lecture

Sociology as Science: Asking Good Questions

**Friday, February 24** – Sections – Research Discussion

**Readings:**

https://doi.org/10.1086/674005

https://sociologicalscience.com/articles-v7-22-528/

https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224221135810


**Monday, February 27** – Section Presentations – Sections 1, 6, 7, 9, 11

**Wednesday, March 1** – Lecture

Sociology of Gender and Sexuality
**Friday, March 3** – Sections – Research Discussion

**Readings:**

[https://doi.org/10.1177/0735275120973248](https://doi.org/10.1177/0735275120973248)

[https://doi.org/10.1086/719714](https://doi.org/10.1086/719714)

[https://doi.org/10.1086/699652](https://doi.org/10.1086/699652)

[https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122419837567](https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122419837567)

**Monday, March 6** – Section Presentations – Sections 2, 3, 5, 7, 10

**Wednesday, March 8** – Lecture: The Sociology of Health and Illness

**Friday, March 10** – Sections – Research Discussion

**Readings:**

Sections 1, 2, 3: Greve, Rao, Vicinanza, Zhou. Online Conspiracy Groups: Micro-Bloggers, Bots, and Coronavirus Conspiracy Talk on Twitter. *AJS 87:6 (Dec22).*  
[https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224221125937](https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224221125937)


[https://doi.org/10.1215/00703370-9099310](https://doi.org/10.1215/00703370-9099310)

[https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022146520924810](https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022146520924810)

**Monday, March 13** – Section Presentations – Sections 1, 4, 6, 8, 11

**Wednesday, March 15** – Midterm examination

**Friday, March 17** – No class
March 18-26 – Spring Break

Monday, March 27 – Lecture
Culture and Health

Wednesday, March 29 – Lecture
Sociology of Politics and Democracy
Reading:

https://doi.org/10.1525%2Fctx.2008.7.4.22

Friday, March 31 – Sections – Research Discussion
Readings:

Sections 1, 2, 6: Luca Carbone & Jonathan Mijs (2022) “Sounds like meritocracy to my ears: exploring the link between inequality in popular music and personal culture.” Information, Communication & Society.
https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2021.2020870

http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10875549.2015.1112870


Monday, April 3 – Section Presentations – Sections 2, 6, 7, 5, 9

Wednesday, April 5 – Lecture
The Sociology of Economic Activity

Friday, April 7 – Sections – Research Discussion
Reading:

Sections 1, 2, 3: Best, Introduction and Chapter 1
Sections 4, 6, 10: Best, Introduction and Chapter 2
Sections 5, 8, 9: Best, Introduction and Chapter 3
Sections 7, 11: Best, Introduction and Chapter 4

Monday, April 10 – Section Presentations – Sections 8, 10, 11

Wednesday, April 12 – Lecture
Higher Education in the United States

**Friday, April 14** – Sections – Research Discussion
   **Reading:**
   Best, Chapters 5, 6, and Conclusion

**Monday, April 17** – Lecture
   Work, precarity, and emotion labor in the US

**Wednesday, April 19** – Zoom Q&A with author Rachel Kahn Best

**Friday, April 21** – Section Discussions

**Monday, April 24** – Lecture

**Wednesday, April 26** – Final Exam review

**Friday, April 28, 10:00 am – 10:50 am** – Lecture (all sections together in Remsen 101)
   Thinking, Asking, Doing, and Using Sociology

**Wednesday, May 10, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm** – Final Exam – Remsen 101