

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

“Outsmart the System, Heal the Planet”

Spring 2019 | 01:920:101:13
 Department of Sociology
 Rutgers University - New Brunswick

Instructor: Haruki Eda, MSc, MA | Contact: haruki.eda@rutgers.edu

Class: Mondays and Thursdays, 10:20am-11:40am
 at Lucy Stone Hall Auditorium (Livingston)

Office hours: Mondays, 12:00pm-1:00pm (or by appointment)
 at Asian American Cultural Center (Livingston: 49 Joyce Kilmer Ave)

Course description

Sociology is the science of society. It aims to make sense of social life--how society works, how it doesn't, where it comes from, where it's going, and how to change it. It's essentially a study of human struggles, which encompasses a wide range of complex, interrelated issues from the psychic to the planetary. Sociologists examine the relationships between individual and collective experiences, private and public interactions, and personal and social problems. Virtually anything and everything is of interest to sociologists: human cultures, language and mind, family and community, education, law and governance, technology and environment, race and ethnicity, social class, gender and sexuality, political economy, and even the ways in which science itself is conducted by human beings.

With the key phrase “*Outsmart the System, Heal the Planet*,” we will identify historical patterns of human struggles, investigate contemporary workings of the social system, and explore how we may heal ourselves through knowledge-building. We will read a variety of writings and watch various insightful films, on which we will have focused class discussions. The course consists of 9 “units,” or general topics, and each unit will take place over 3 class periods. Day 1 will introduce basic materials through lecture, for which you will prepare by completing the assigned readings. Day 2 will center on film screening. Day 3 will be used for fishbowl discussion, in which 5 or 6 students engage in a group discussion while the rest of class will actively listen. You will reflect on the issues discussed in each unit through written assignments.

Learning goals

This course meets the School of Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum Learning Goals: 21st Century Challenges [21C] and Social Analysis [SCL].

- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experiences of and perspectives on the world.
- Analyze a contemporary global issue from a multidisciplinary perspective.
- Analyze issues of social justice across local and global contexts.
- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.
- Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations.

Learning outcomes

By successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- Understand the purpose of using a sociological perspective to analyze society.
- Understand the importance of scientific, systematic, and empirical ways of producing knowledge about society.
- Recognize the dynamic patterns, flows, contexts, and relationships that exist between individual experiences and what goes on in broader society.
- Recognize how power shapes social structures and institutions, and how it impacts your own life experiences.
- Question and understand how human interactions produce social injustices and inequalities, and how social institutions maintain them.
- Question and understand how the effects of social differences like class, gender, race, sexuality, and nation intersect with one another to perpetrate structural oppression.
- Question and imagine how you may better engage with the social world as an active agent of social transformation, a responsible leader of the global community, and a compassionate healer of the planet.

Assessment and grading

You will be assessed and graded on your performance on the following assignments:

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Unit reflections – 8 points each × 9 units | 72 points |
| 2. Final reflection | 15 points |
| 3. Fishbowl discussion | 15 points |
| | Total: 102 points |

Grades will be assigned according to the total points earned:

| | | | |
|----|-------------------|----|-------------------|
| A | 90 points or more | C+ | 75-79 points |
| B+ | 85-89 points | C | 70-74 points |
| B | 80-84 points | D | 60-69 points |
| | | F | 59 points or less |

*Final grades are not negotiable. Please do your work while you can.

Required readings

All required readings are available on Sakai under “Resources.” You don't need to purchase any books.

Course assignments

1. Unit reflections – due at the end of each unit

Learning objectives:

A successful unit reflection includes honest and critical engagement with the reading(s), lecture, film, and class discussions in each unit. It should demonstrate the following cognitive actions:

1. **Make sense** of the learning materials as a whole unit
2. **Interpret** the contexts behind the social conflicts, dynamics, and relations
3. **Evaluate** the competing perspectives that are present
4. **Relate** to your own experiences and emotions

Method:

You will submit your reflections on Sakai under “Assignments.” Your reflections should be at least 500 words and not more than 800 words each and demonstrate your understanding of and engagement with all four components of the unit: readings, lecture, film, and class discussions. Each reflection is due within 24 hours after the end of the unit. If you miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining notes from your classmates; I will not go over class materials individually.

Assessment:

You will receive up to 8 points based on how well you achieved the learning objectives stated above. Thoughtful reflections do not merely regurgitate the learned materials or make shallow moralizing arguments (e.g. “We should all respect each other,” “People need to be aware of this issue,” etc.). Instead, you should analyze and synthesize specific elements of the components (e.g. quotes from the reading, concepts from the lecture, scenes from the film, and perspectives shared in class discussion) in order to offer an original and insightful discussion. There will be 9 of these reflections, through which you can earn up to 72 points. You will not receive extensive individual feedback, but I will share outstanding work anonymously and provide general feedback orally in class. Please refer to the grading criteria handout for further information.

2. Final reflection – due at the end of the semester

Learning objectives:

Your task is to reflect on your overall learning experience throughout the semester and demonstrate how deeply and sincerely you have engaged with the course.

1. **Articulate** a coherent narrative of your intellectual growth including challenges, efforts, accomplishments, and future actions.
2. **Advocate** for your enhanced competencies by providing compelling evidences of your learning.

Method:

You will submit your final reflection on Sakai under “Assignments.” Your final reflection should be at least 1,000 words and demonstrate your critical response to the essay prompt. I will disseminate the

prompt during the semester. No outside sources are required, but you may include brief scholarly sources if you wish to. Bibliography does not count toward the required word count.

Assessment:

You will receive up to 15 points based on how well you achieve the learning objectives stated above. The general grading criteria is the same as unit reflections; your essay should establish clarity of your ideas/arguments and coherence of your overall narrative to receive full points. References to specific learning materials are expected. Please refer to the grading criteria handout for further information.

3. **Fishbowl discussion** – once throughout the semester

Learning objectives:

Successful participation in a fishbowl discussion entails the following:

1. **Develop** at least three thoughtful discussion questions
2. **Listen** actively and respectfully to the other panelists
3. **Engage** in the discussion by responding to other panelists and sharing your ideas

Method:

You will sign up to participate in one of the 9 topics covered in this course on a first-come, first-served basis. You will submit your discussion questions by writing on the shared Google Document posted in the folder under “Resources” on Sakai for each unit (You will need to sign in to Google with your Rutgers NetID account). On the day of fishbowl discussion (third day of each unit), you must present your discussion questions in class and engage in a group discussion. The class time will be split into three panels consisting of 4-5 participants.

Assessment:

You will be assessed on the thoughtfulness of your prepared discussion questions and your active participation in the discussion. Good discussions questions are well-defined and specific, and connect the learning materials to real-world issues and/or personal life experiences. Your questions should be able to solicit meaningful responses from others by inspiring them to think from diverse perspectives. Don't be afraid to pose controversial questions. Active participation does not mean speaking up more than others; rather, it involves listening and responding to each other respectfully and honestly. You may lose points if you dominate the conversation. You will receive up to 15 points on your in-class performance. If you will miss the session you signed up for, you must notify me before class. Only under unforeseeable or extenuating circumstances, I will allow you to sign up again for another session.

Notes on attendance and absence

Although I will not take individual attendance every day, you are expected and required to attend all classes. Your unit reflections should demonstrate that you attended and paid attention to each class. If you miss a class, you are responsible for catching up with the materials by talking to your classmates. You do not need to notify me of your absence. If you have specific questions, I'm happy to discuss them during my office hours.

Shared expectations

<Education is emotional>

We should acknowledge that education is not only a cognitive process but also an emotional one. Learning about the reality of the world might be uncomfortable or disturbing to some people, while it might be uplifting to others. Keep in mind that we are learning about social issues that literally kill people. Your discomfort may come from your privileges and probably does not save any lives, but it's an important part of collective healing. It's okay to feel uncomfortable with the reality, and we all do. Do not let your fragility hinder your learning. Education is not given, you have to earn it. You're a student, not a customer—take pride in your work.

<Respect when it really matters>

It's easy to respect someone you admire and agree with. But respect really matters when you encounter doubts and disagreements. Don't give in to the temptation to dismiss them as wrong, offensive, or ridiculous. Instead, challenge their assumptions and your own by asking questions. "Can you clarify what you mean by that?" or "Do you have specific examples in mind?" may be a good start. After engaging in such a way, if you find the other perspective to be a flawed argument, explain it how. Conversely, if you've been called out for your assumption, try to listen without arguing back defensively. It's okay to say, "I didn't think of it that way, thanks for pointing it out. I'll continue to think through this." In any case, assume good intention in others' ideas and questions, and be mindful about the impact of your behaviors on others regardless of your intention.

<Strive to ask better questions>

In this course, it's more important to develop *questioning skills* than *answering skills*. While there are no "stupid" questions (we're all here to learn), there are better questions. They bring more to the table with new perspectives, different imaginations, abstract interpretations, or practical implications. For instance: "Is XYZ still true for different contexts like ABC?" "Where did this idea originate from?" "Who benefits from spreading this viewpoint?" Don't focus on memorizing or giving a perfect answer; instead, try to pose difficult and challenging questions to both yourself and others. Meanwhile, you may find yourself wanting to say something in class but not sure how to articulate it. We're not articulate all the time, and that's okay. Starting with questions will help you and your classmates think through some difficult ideas together. Help each other out.

<Instructor intentions and commitment>

As a professional educator, I strive to facilitate a world-class learning experience for all of us. I am deeply committed to providing clear explanation, quality guidance, and timely feedback in a manner that is as approachable and supportive as possible. I take my honesty, integrity, and patience seriously as my professional and personal qualities, and I mean what I say. I understand that the existing structure of formal education that emphasizes memorization and test-taking can incapacitate you and perpetuate inequalities, and I will do my best to counteract such a pattern through my curriculum. I also understand that some groups of people are particularly under-resourced to navigate the university, such as working students, first-generation college students, students of color, international students, and student athletes, and I will always remain open to listening to you if you're going through a difficult time.

Course policy

As a rule, I don't believe in punishment, but I believe in fairness.

- I will accept and grade late submissions until one week after the deadline. Unless you communicate with me in advance, please do not submit anything to me after that.
- If you want to appeal your assignment or course grades, please write a formal letter, at least 500 words, explaining why you deserve more points.
- If you'd like my attention, please pay attention to me.

Academic integrity

Please cite your sources properly! Rutgers University has a policy on academic integrity that addresses plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and so on. The formal legal procedure outlined in this policy will be followed in the case of a violation, along with a failing grade. Please refer to this link: academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the use of another person's words, ideas, or results without giving that person appropriate credit. Some common examples of plagiarism are:

- Copying word for word (i.e. quoting directly) from an oral, printed, or electronic source without proper attribution.
- Paraphrasing without proper attribution, i.e., presenting in one's own words another person's written words or ideas as if they were one's own.
- Submitting a purchased or downloaded term paper or other materials to satisfy a course requirement.
- Incorporating into one's work graphs, drawings, photographs, diagrams, tables, spreadsheets, computer programs, or other non-textual material from other sources without proper attribution.

All information and ideas that you derive from other sources, whether written, spoken, or electronic, must be attributed to their original source. Such sources include not just written or electronic materials, but people with whom you may discuss your ideas, such as your roommate, friends, or family members. They deserve credit for their contributions too!

To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation, and both direct quotation and paraphrasing must be cited properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline. For an example of a referencing style, please refer to the American Sociological Association's quick style guide:

http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick_Tips_for_ASA_Style.pdf.

Academic and wellness support

Dean of Students

If you need attention to an issue that is beyond the scope of my position as an instructor, please reach out to the Dean of Students.

<http://deanofstudents.rutgers.edu/>

Student Legal Services

They provide free legal consultation, attorney referral, and other services. All Rutgers University students are eligible for RUSLS. No fees are charged for the lawyer's services, although clients are responsible for any and all court fees, judgments, etc.

<http://rusls.rutgers.edu/>

Counseling, ADAP and Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

Provides mental health services including individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, and referrals.

rhscaps.rutgers.edu

Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance (VPVA)

Provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling, and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking.

vpva.rutgers.edu

Disability accommodations

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:

ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form.






My policy on writing letters of recommendation





I generally discourage students from asking me for a letter of recommendation if they're applying for a graduate program. This is because I do not have any status or prestige in the academia as a lecturer/PhD student. If you're considering going to graduate school, make sure to take classes with tenured professors in your chosen or relevant field and do well. My letter will not count and may even hurt your application. If you need a letter from me, please contact me more than one month before the due date. I will determine case by case; I will decline your request unless you get an A in my class. If I agree to do it, I ask that you write a recommendation for me on LinkedIn in return.

Instructor biography

I'm a 7th-year PhD student in sociology at Rutgers University. I earned a BA in Sociology at San Francisco State University (2010), a MSc in Gender, Development, and Globalization at the London School of Economics and Political Science (2012), and my MA in Sociology at Rutgers University (2015). My doctoral dissertation examines the relationship between geopolitics of Asia/Pacific and lived experiences of diasporic Koreans engaged in grassroots community organizing. My research interests largely stem from my own life experience growing up in Japan in a bi-national family (Japanese mother and 2nd-generation immigrant Korean father) and as a queer-identified person. I've lived in the U.S. since 2006 on student visas. Teaching Introduction to Sociology is my passion and my honor; I've also taught Asian American studies and Expository Writing.

Course plan and schedule

| Date | Unit and Topic | Learning Materials |
|---|---|--|
| Jan 24 | 0. Introduction | Who are we? What is sociology? Why is it relevant? |
| PART I: HUMAN STRUGGLES <i>Goals: Seeing the big picture, Knowing what has happened, Connecting our struggles</i> | | |
| Jan 28 | 1. The Anthropocene | Reading: Eda, Haruki. 2015. “ Disaster Justice ” |
| Jan 31 |  | Film: The Return of Navajo Boy (2000; 58 mins) |
| Feb 4 | | Discussion – unit reflection due on the next day at 12pm |
| 2. Capitalism and Class | | |
| Feb 7 |  | Reading: Bezruchka, Stephen. 2012. “ American Experiences ” from <i>Tackling Health Inequalities</i> |
| Feb 11 | | Film: Delta Boys (2012; 55 mins) |
| Feb 14 | | Discussion – unit reflection due on the next day at 12pm |
| Feb 18 | 3. Colonialism and Race | Reading: Scarlet and Black : “The Research,” “The Findings,” and “Recommendations” |
| Feb 21 |  | Film: Hate Crimes in the Heartland (2014; 52 mins) |
| Feb 24 | | Discussion – unit reflection due on the next day at 12pm |
| Feb 28 | 4. Gender Oppression | Reading: Abu-Loghod, Lila. 2002. “ Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? ” |
| Mar 4 |  | Film: Tough Guise 2: Violence, Manhood, and American Culture (2013; 80 mins) |
| Mar 7 | | Discussion – unit reflection due on the next day at 12pm |
| PART II: THE SYSTEM <i>Goals: Understanding the system, Decoding the complexity, Knowing our limits</i> | | |
| Mar 11 | 5. Neoliberalism | Readings: Shah, Anup. 2010. “ A Primer on Neoliberalism ” AND Ross, Andrew. 2012. “ Anti-Social Debt ” |
| Mar 14 |  | Film: Life and Debt (2001; 80 mins) |
| Mar 18 & 21 | | Spring Break!! |
| Mar 25 | | Discussion – unit reflection due on the next day at 12pm |

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| Mar 28 | 6. Criminalization and Securitization | Readings: Burdge et al. 2014. “LGBTQ Youth of Color” AND Lageson, Sarah. 2012. “Love, Family, and Incarceration” |
| Apr 1 |  | Film: The House I Live In (2012; 110 mins) |
| Apr 4 | | Discussion – unit reflection due on the next day at 12pm |
| Apr 8 | | 7. Mobilities and Borders |
| Apr 11 |  | Reading: Trask, Haunani-Kay. 1993. “Lovely Hula Hands” |
| Apr 15 | | Film: Which Way Home (2009; 90 mins) |
| | | Discussion – unit reflection due on the next day at 12pm |
| PART III: KNOWLEDGE & HEALING Goals: Daring to Question, Rethinking Knowledge, Healing Together | | |
| Apr 18 | 8. Sociological Theory | Reading: Du Bois, W.E.B. 1899. <i>The Philadelphia Negro</i> , Chapters II and XVIII AND Ginwright, Shawn. 2011. “Hope, Healing, and Care” |
| Apr 22 |  | Film: We Are the Giant (2014; 90 mins) |
| Apr 25 | | Discussion – unit reflection due on the next day at 12pm |
| Apr 29 | | 9. Social Research |
| May 2 |  | Reading: Sandwick et al. 2018. “Promise and Provocation” |
| May 6 | | Film: Tongues Untied (1989; 55 mins) |
| | | Discussion – unit reflection due on the next day at 12pm |
| May 10 | Final reflection due at 12:00pm | |

***Contents of this syllabus are subject to change at my discretion—you will receive prompt notification and adequate explanation in such cases.