SOC 101: Introduction to Sociology

Professor Heba Gowayed

Winter 2025

Asynhcronous

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Office hours: By appointment

Asynchronous

Course Description

Sociology is the study of patterns of social relationships. Introductions to sociology can look all sorts of ways for that reason. In this course, I have chosen the work of sociologists who are themselves contemporary and whose work contemporary sociologists debate and engage. We are going to begin with establishing what it means to "think sociologically" before we build up our social world. Then we're going to deal with myriad sociological topics including how individuals interact with one another and make meaning of their social world, how our relationships and resources are patterned by inequalities, and particularly inequalities of gender, race, and class. Finally, we will move to consider theories how we fit into the broader, globalizing world.

Learning Objectives

- Gain knowledge of applying sociological concepts to everyday issues.
- Build critical capacity to think beyond the obvious and the anecdotal to ask why the world looks the way it does.
- Work on critical reading and writing skills.

Commitments & Expectations

My availability & office hours: If you need to contact me, please send an email. I will do my best to respond promptly (within 1 day with the exception of weekends or during breaks). Please note that if you are an undergraduate student in my class, it is appropriate to address me using my academic title which is Professor/Prof Gowayed or Dr. Gowayed.

Grades & Grading: I care much more about you learning something in class than being a stickler for grades, so I try to be as generous as possible with grading. I do not change grades that you have earned. That said, if you think a mistake has been made regarding grading (ie an assignment was marked missing that isn't or a point was deducted that shouldn't have been) please reach out, I am glad to correct my mistakes.

University Resources & Policies

The Writing Center: The Writing Center is a service that provides free tutoring to students. The Writing Center has a staff of trained tutors who will work with you to help you become a more effective writer, from planning and organizing a paper, to writing and then proofreading it. The Writing Center is a valuable resource, and I encourage you to use it. http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/rwc

Hunter College Policy on Academic Integrity: Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g. plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures. By registering for this course, you are promising to abide by all the requirements stated in this policy. Students in breach of this policy are liable to severe penalty, including disciplinary action. See the Hunter College Undergraduate Bulletin for further explanation. http://catalog.hunter.cuny.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=1448

ADA Policy: In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (emotional, medical, physical, and/or learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY, located in Room E1214B, to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call: (212) 772-4857 or (212) 650-3230. http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/advising/resources/accessability

Hunter College Policy on Sexual Misconduct: In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College reaffirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationships. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College.

a. Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646)

610-7272 or their local police precinct, or contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212) 772-4444.

b. All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose (jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-650-3262) or Colleen Barry (colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123
c. CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct Link: http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/la/Policy-on-Sexual-Misconduct-12-1-14-with-links.pdf

Hunter Grading Scale
Final grades reflect Hunter College Grading Scale.

Letter Grade	Scale
A+	97.5-100
A	92.5-97.4
A-	90.0-92.4
B+	87.5-89.9
B	82.5-87.4
B-	80.0-82.4
C+	77.5-79.9
C	70.0-77.4
D	60.0-69.9
F	0.0-59.9

Course Requirements

Your final grade will be determined from these requirements as follows:

- 60% Application Assignments (4 memos, 15 points each)
- 14% Discussions –These are on Brightspace. You select 7 of your choosing.
- 26% Final assignment.

Application Assignments. The main requirement for the course is application assignments. There are four total prompts for these assignments, meant to push students to apply the concepts we learn in class. **Due dates are listed clearly both on this syllabus and on Brightspace.**

Assignments should be around 400-500 words, engage the materials from that module bring in your own perspective and analysis and be posted on Brightspace on the appropriate tab. I will grade them throughout the semester. Each assignment MUST answer the prompt and engage MOST of the readings of the assigned modules.

Word to the wise: Do not upset me by using ChatGPT.

They will be graded as follows:
1- 5 points: there were words but not good ones (ie no serious engagement with the prompt or readings).
5-10 points: you fully engaged the prompt but did not connect it to the readings or vice versa.
10-15 points: you fully engaged the prompt and connected it to the readings. Strong memo!

Discussions. There are discussion prompts throughout the course. For full credit I need to be able to tell that you read the material and are engaging in good faith the discussion question. You can either start your own thread or engage with someone else's/ respond to someone else's comment. This is graded on completion unless I can tell your participation is not in good faith. To get full credit complete **seven total discussion questions** of your choosing over the course of the semester (there are approximately 11 opportunities to do these). They are two points each. **These are due where they are indicated on the syllabus and on Brightspace. They are due the night that the reading is assigned by midnight. I did it this way to keep you current on reading throughout the semester.**

Final Assignment. For your final assignment you will watch **one of two** documentaries and write a longer response to it (500-700 words) referencing material from **four different modules** of the course in your response. The deadline for this is the final day of the course **January 23**. The documentaries assigned reflect on the question of protest and revolution: how do we change the durable structures of oppression that surround us? You can choose between "How to Survive A Plague" OR "Pray the Devil Back to Hell" both available free of charge via the CUNY library**.**

They will be graded as follows:

1-10: References the documentaries or readings but extremely superficially. Does not bring in student analytical voice.
11-20: References one clearly but one superficially. Does not bring in student analytical voice.
20-26: References both documentary and readings clearly and fully. Brings in student voice and ideas. Great final project!

Required Texts
There are no required texts for this course, all material you need will be on Brightspace.

Jan 2: The Sociological Imagination
- Read "The Promise"
- Listen to bell hooks
- Discussion question available on Brightspace

Jan 6: Why is Sociology a Science?
- Read "Sociological Research"
- Watch The Tuskegee Experiment: Crash Course Black American History
- Discussion question available on Brightspace

Application Assignment 1 (due Jan 6 by midnight): Reflecting on what we learned in the past two modules, identify a topic that interests you. Why is it sociological? What is a way you can study it? What are some ethical pitfalls you may consider? **Your answer should reference at least three course materials from the "sociological imagination" and "Why is Sociology a Science" modules.**

Jan 7: Culture
- Read chapter from "Talk of Love"
- Watch "The Culture Trap: Book Trailer"
- Discussion question available on Brightspace

Jan 8: Money
- Read "The Social Meaning of Money"
- Read "When We Were Socially Distant, Money Brought us Closer"
- Discussion question available on Brightspace

Jan 9: Labor
- Read "Hustle and Gig"

- Read "How Service with a Smile Takes a Toll on Women"
- Discussion question available on Brightspace

Application Assignment (Due Jan 9 by midnight) Think of a recent economic transaction that you've had – this can be at work or home, with a partner or a friend. How do you make sense of it given the readings of this week? **Your answer should reference at least three course materials from the "culture," "money," and "labor" modules.**

Jan 13: Gender

- Read "Doing Gender"
- Watch The Problem with Sex Testing in Sports.
- Discussion question available on Brightspace

Jan 14: Race

- Read "The Social Construction of Race"
- Read "'White' Without The Privilege: An Arab American's Quest To Be Counted"
- Discussion question available on Brightspace

Jan 15: Class

- Read "The State of the Middle Class"
- Check out this resource on "Payflation"
- Listen to "Black Americans and the Racist Architecture of Home Ownership"
- Discussion question available on Brightspace

Optional listening:

- "WTF does Race Have to do with Taxes?"

Jan 16: Intersectionality

- Read "What is Intersectionality?"
- Listen to "The Urgency of Intersectionality"
- Discussion question available on Brightspace

Application Assignment (Due Jan 16 by Midnight): Read this article entitled "Half of Black gay men will be diagnosed with HIV, despite highly effective preventive treatments – why?" OR listen to this podcast "The Original 'Welfare Queen'". Write a reaction to them referencing the readings of this week. **Your answer should reference at least three course materials from the "gender," "race," "class" and "intersectionality" modules.**

Jan 20: Colonialism

- Read What Is Colonialism? A History of Violence, Control and Exploitation
- Read Walter Rodney's "How Europe Under-Developed Africa"
- Discussion question available on Brightspace

Jan 21: Borders

- Read Catherine Besteman's "Militarized Global Apartheid"
- Read short article by Petra Molnar's "The Grim High-Tech Dystopia on the US-Mexico Border"
- Discussion question available on Brightspace

Application Assignment Due Jan 21 by Midnight: Find an article on a piece of border technology that's being used anywhere around the world. Link the article and tell us about the tech. What it's meant to do/ who is it designed to target? **Your answer should reference at least three course materials from the "colonialism" and "borders" modules.**

Jan 22: Imagining a Different Kind of World (N/A)

- Watch either "How to Survive a Plague" or "Pray the Devil Back to Hell"

Jan 23: Submit Documentary Reaction Final