SSC 101-003: CULTURE, SOCIETY, AND SOCIAL CHANGE
THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
Medgar Evers College
COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor:	Bengi Sullu	**Term:**	Spring 2024
Office:	B-1032E (Bedford Building)	**Class Meeting Days:**	Wednesday 18:00-20:40
E-Mail:	bengi.sullu77@mec.cuny.edu OR bsullu@gradcenter.cuny.edu	**Class Location**	Synchronous - Online meetings on Zoom
Office Hours:	Wednesday 15:00-16:00 pm **Zoom link for office hours:** https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89852314339?pwd=cmJlQ3hnNTJYNVJaTURiOGo5cm1yZz09 Meeting ID: 898 5231 4339 Passcode: socsci		

I. Welcome

Welcome to the Introduction to Culture, Society and Social Change. My hope is that you will be a lifelong learner, and that this course is the first steps in a new, critical evaluation of society that you will use throughout your lives. The point of this course is not to merely interpret society, it is to change it. My hope is that you will develop your sociological imagination to become change agents in society.

II. University Course Catalog Description

This interdisciplinary course is designed to give a broad overview of the subject matter covered by the Social Sciences and to introduce students to basic concepts, approaches, and principles governing the Social Sciences. The underlying theme of the course is culture, society and social change. Attention is given to the historical development, continuity and changes in social institutions, culture and society. Among the topics discussed in this course will be the contributions of women to the development of the social sciences and gender issues as they pertain to social inequality in the United States.

III. This course fulfills the following General Education Requirements: ¨ Yes ¨ No

¨ Foundation Cluster ¨ Required Core
¨ General Knowledge Cluster ¨ **Flexible Core**

College Option:
Socio-Cultural, and Diversity Cluster ¨

Integrated Knowledge Cluster: ¨ **Social Sciences**
¨ Humanities & the Arts
¨ Natural Sciences & Mathematics

IV. Course Overview

This course will serve as an introduction to the Social Sciences, which is a set of interrelated disciplines that use a combination of research methods to understand the society and social change as well as the underlying processes of human interaction and behavior. The sociologist C. Wright Mills wrote that the aim of social science was to bring about "the vivid awareness of the relationship between experience and the wider society", which he called "the sociological imagination". In this course while we will be tracing the connections between the wider society and the individual experiences by drawing on social science disciplines of sociology, anthropology, geography, economics, political science, history, and psychology. Occasionally, we will also draw on some other disciplines like philosophy and literature because social sciences cannot exist without its relationship to human experience and expression.

Concepts and the developments such as the Copernican Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the nation-state, capitalism, race, gender, evolution, white supremacy, political revolutions, globalization, immigration, inequality, environmental destruction, and colonialism will be some of the topics and issues we examine. We will practice critical thinking, discussion and writing skills throughout our course.

V. Course Objectives / Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

The course objectives and SLOs for SSC 101 are essential elements that drive the instructional materials that students are required to learn. Therefore, students are required to:

- Describe the disciplines within the social sciences
- Identify various types of social research methods and their purpose
- Develop an introductory understanding of interdisciplinary study of social problems
- Attain an awareness of how individual problems relate to social problems
- Develop critical thinking skills required to apply interdisciplinary study of social problems to current social issues

- Develop an introductory understanding of mechanisms through which power relationships begin and evolve under different political and economic systems

These course objectives and student learning outcomes are consistent with the Program Objectives of the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Specifically, upon completion of the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies, scholar learners that are degree candidates are required to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge:

- Identify and apply critical thinking methodology based on the American Association of Universities and College Critical Thinking Value Rubric (see: https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/VALUE/CriticalThinking.pdf)
- Apply all the essential steps of research design and methodology in 300 level courses and the capstone experiences;
- Understand and utilize quantitative methods in the design and presentation of their capstone course final projects and presentations;
- Understand and apply the methodology specific to social research—i.e., collect, analyze, interpret, and present empirical data that support the main arguments presented in their final capstone project;
- Utilize and apply information literacy in research and class discussions;
- Identify the cultural significances of race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, etc., on the life-chances of individuals living in our global societies, in general, and, in particularly, the United States.

VI. Course Prerequisites

Pre/Co-requisite: ENGL 112

VII. Course Credits

Three (3)

VIII. Required Texts and Materials

Social Science: An Introduction to the Study of Society by Elgin F. Hunt and David C. Colander
ISBN-13: 9780429671258

IX. Supplementary Texts and Materials

There will be additional readings placed on Blackboard.

X. Basis for Final Grade

Your total final grade will be based on a combination of writing assignments, midterm exam, in-class writing exercises, a final research paper and participation in discussions and regular check-in meetings that will stand for participation grade.

(7) Assignment submissions to Blackboard (5% each):	35%
(1) Final statement of interest paper	25%
(1) Midterm exam:	20%
(5) Writing activities (2% each):	10%
Participation	10%
Total	100

Medgar Evers College Grading Policy:

GRADES	POINTS	CATEGORY	GP A
A+	*97-100*	*Exceptional*	*4.0*
A	*93-96.9*	*Excellent*	*4.0*
A-	*90-92.9*	*Outstanding*	*3.7*
B+	*87.1-89.9*	*Very Good*	*3.3*
B	*83-87*	*Good*	*3.0*
B-	*80-82.9*	*Good*	*2.7*
C+	*77-77.9*	*Satisfactory*	*2.3*
C	*70-76.9*	*Satisfactory*	*2.0*
D+	*67.1-69.9*	*Passing*	*1.3*
D	*63-67*	*Passing*	*1.0*
F	*0-59.9*	*Failure*	*0.0*

XI. Grade Dissemination

Grades will be posted on Blackboard as you complete the related assignment. Based on the Blackboard assignment submissions, midterm exam, in-class exercises, you will have midterm standing that will let you know of how you are doing in the class, which will be communicated to you also through Blackboard. Grade of the final research paper as well as the final grades from all assignments will also be made available via Blackboard. Additionally, students will be able to discuss their grades with the professor during office hours, or at a mutually convenient time.

XII. Course Policies: Grades

Syllabus Grade Change Policy: Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. Please check Blackboard for these changes.

Feedback/commentary policy: I will provide detailed feedback on the research final paper latest by the week after receipt. For all other in-class writing assignments, you will also receive feedback and midterm standing report after the midterm.

Late Work policy: There will not be a make-up midterm exam or compensation for missed in-class writing exercises. Only in the case of a documented medical emergency, you will be able to take a make-up exam. Late submission of assignment submissions and in-class check-in submissions will be accepted (but you will lose 1% for assignment submissions and 0.5% for in-class check-in submissions for each late submission).

Extra credit policy: There will be an opportunity to gain an extra credit of 2% from a movie or book review related to a social science issue we covered in class.

Participation Policy: You will be expected to come prepared to the class. This means doing the reading and writing assignments before class, being willing to contribute to class discussions and in-class assignments, beyond attending the class.

Grades of 'Incomplete' (INC): Grades of incomplete might be given only based on the incidents that prevent you from completing the final paper at the end of the academic term. This might be evidenced by the medical report. Please note that ultimately this chance is given to students whose assignments and in-class exercises are close to completed and missing the final paper produces a significant deviation from their general class performance.

XIII. Course Policies: Technology and Media

- We will be using Blackboard for nearly everything this semester.
- You are expected to use your campus e-mail and to check Blackboard regularly.

XIV. Course Policies: Student Expectations

Disability Access:

In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Medgar Evers 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 OSDA.
According to the ADA, as amended in 2009, a disability is any mental or physical impairment that significantly limits a major life activity or bodily function. These activities may include learning, speaking, walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, working or the ability to care for oneself. A person must have a disability, a record of a disability or be regarded as having a disability that is not considered transitory or minor.
If you have a disability and will require accommodations, you must register with the Office of Services for the differently abled.

Attendance Policy: It is the student's responsibility to be informed of the requirements of each course, to take examinations at the time prescribed by each instructor, and to turn in all assignments when they are due.

Academic Conduct Policy:

MEDGAR EVERS COLLEGE regards acts of dishonesty (e.g. plagiarism, cooperation on examinations falsification of documentation, records, and data of any kind) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty promoted and adhered to by this institution. The College is committed to strictly enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity. No cheating of any kind will be tolerated will result in a failing grade for an assignment, quiz, or the whole course, and may result in disciplinary action from the dean.

Writing Center

The Medgar Evers College Writing Center provides a broad range of tutoring services and computer assisted instruction to students to improve student writing. In addition to exceptional student tutors, this semester there are WAC Fellows (Writing Across the Curriculum) from the CUNY Graduate School. WAC Fellows are PhD students who also provide tutoring services and provide professional development workshops for faculty and student tutors. Our tutors serve as writing coaches and are

trained to help students improve their writing skills across all disciplines. The goal of the Writing Center is to mold students into writers who are able to articulate original ideas both inside and outside of the classroom. If your professor recommends Writing Tutoring/Coaching or if you think you need to improve your writing skills, please schedule an appointment with one of our Tutors at 718-804-6953 or click on the link below. We are open 6 days a week, located on the first floor of the library (in the back corner) in Room Rm. B-1045A. http://mecwritingcenter.weebly.com/

Explanation on the Basis for the Final Grade

Assignment submissions to Blackboard: These are short responses based on the topics, readings, materials covered within the relevant day/week. The aim is to see how you interpret and/or apply the social sciences topics discussed or read during classes. They are required to be submitted on Blackboard but also you need to come to the class having read at least some of your classmates' responses as we will also discuss them during our class time.

Midterm exam: There will be a midterm exam consisting of multiple choice and open-ended short answer questions that will be based on the concepts we cover during the lectures, main ideas we discuss based on the readings, and your knowledge and experiences related to the discussions and assignments that you completed throughout the term. Even when you are asked about *your* opinion or to formulate your own argument, having done the readings, assignments and participated in the class discussions will help formulate your answers based on the material.

Final research paper: You will write a 4-page double-spaced paper explaining your interest, development of research question, how you would go about researching it and who you expect the policy outcomes of this research to be.

The questions to respond to and points you can get for each section will be:

- What is the social sciences topic you are interested in? How did you get interested in this topic? What field of social sciences do you think this topic belongs to? **(3%)**

- What personal experiences and observations are at the root of your curiosity and interest? What is your specific research question? **(5%)**

- When you typed the variables of your research question into Google Scholar and Medgar Evers Library's OneSearch some articles will come up. Review first pages quickly, look at abstracts, and pick two articles that you think is related to your research question. Report the title, authors, year, and journal of these articles and explain the main argument, methods used and conclusion for each article. Explain why these two articles are relevant for your research question**. (5%)**

- If you had more time to do an empirical research study to investigate your research question, which research method would you use? Why? **(4%)**

- Imagine that you conducted and concluded this research project. Who would benefit the most from the outcomes of this research? How would the outcomes be translated into policy/action event, program, or plan? **(3%)**

You will submit your draft paper **two weeks before submitting your final paper** so that you can receive suggestions for revision and editing. You will get 5% for submitting your draft.

You are imagining here and turning your curiosity/passion into a policy that helps people through *your* research project. Be creative!

In-class writing exercises: We will have in-class writing exercises that will be based on quotes, statements, images that we encounter during our readings and/or lectures. We will be doing discussions in pairs or individual reflection that will lead to short writing exercises in which you elaborate on these quotes or statements. These exercises will be based on your opinions and perspectives, but you will need to draw on: reference(s) to important authors, time periods, theories/concepts, and argument in relation to the significance of the quote/statement/image as you write an interpretation.

Participation: You are expected to regularly attend to the class (except for documented emergencies) and participate in class discussions. This means doing the assigned readings, having submitted discussion posts and participating in in-class writing and discussion exercises.

Extra credit activity: There will be an opportunity to complete an extra credit activity of a book or movie/documentary review related to a social sciences topic.

XV. Course Calendar

Before our first meeting on **Wednesday, January 31** start reading:

- Mills, C. Wright (1959) The Promise, *The Sociological Imagination* (p. 1-5)

Think about how this reading might be related to our class Social Science: Society, Culture and Social Change. We will talk about it in detail when we meet!

Class	Date	Topic & Discussion Points	Assignment(s) for the next class:
1	**Wed Jan 31**	**Introduction to Social Science** -Welcome! -What are social sciences? -Scientific knowledge & social science -What does social science	**Read:** • Colander and Hunt, Chapter 1: Social Science and Its Methods (pages 1-20; p. 23-Appendix). • Colander and Hunt, Chapter 3: Origins of Western Society (pages 46-64). • Simmel, G. (2002). *The Metropolis and Mental Life.* (pages 11–19) in The Blackwell City Reader. • Marx, K. (2016). *Estranged Labour.* Economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1844. Routledge. • Excerpt from W.E.B. Du Bois' 'The Propaganda of History' (1935): Facing History & Ourselves.

		bring to our understanding of the world? -Different social science disciplines	**Assignment # 1 on Blackboard:** • Find and submit a news article that deals with an issue that is relevant to you and that is about social science. Explain with two sentences why it relates to social science. **OR** Share a song and its lyrics that you think reflects or deals with an issue that is relevant to you and that is about social science topics/disciplines. Outline where in the song specifically you feel that emphasized and explain why with a sentence.
2	**Wed Feb 7**	**Origins of Western Civilization and Society** -The Age of Exploration -The Renaissance -The Scientific Revolution -The Enlightenment -Industrial Revolution -The condition of the modern individual in the city	**Read:** • Romero, M. (2016). Intersection of Biography and History: My Intellectual Journey. In *Maid in the USA* (pp. 31-46). Routledge. **Watch:** • The Danger of a Single Story by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4LLMHmXMLg **Assignment # 2 on Blackboard:** • How does the concept of **ethnocentrism** relate to the video by Adichie? You can draw on a personal memory or experience to explain.

3	**Wed Feb 14** **Last Day to File for June 2024 Graduation** **Last day to drop for 25% tuition refund. Last day to Change Major/Minor for Spring 2024**	**Methods of Social Science** -What are the methods used in social science research? -Asking research questions related to the modern society & its problems -Ethnocentrism -Cultural relativism	**Read:** • Colander and Hunt, Chapter 7: Psychology, Society and Culture (pages 122-130). • Glasper, A. (2020). Sensory deprivation in children living in suboptimal care environments. *British Journal of Nursing (Mark Allen Publishing)*, *29*(6), 376–377. • Culture Helps Shape When Babies Learn to Walk (2019)- Dr. Lana Karasik's Research (CSI): https://www.sciencenews.org/article/culture-helps-shape-when-babies-learn-walk
4	**Wed Feb 21**	**Socialization of the Individual** -Nature vs. nurture in development -Individual's identity and socialization -Domains of development -Sensory deprivation	**Assignment # 3 on Blackboard:** • Explain the concept of cultural relativism in relation to child development. **Read:** • Colander and Hunt, Chapter 9: The Family (pages 164-185). • Coontz, S. (2004). The world historical transformation of marriage. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, (974-979). • Zontini, E., & Reynolds, T. (2018). Mapping the role of 'transnational family habitus' in the lives of young people and children. *Global networks*, *18*(3), 418-436.

5	**Wed Feb 28**	**The Family** -Shifting meaning and function of marriage & family organization -Different family structures in the context of globalization -Family habitus	**Assignment # 4 on Blackboard:** How do you observe the transformations that marriage (Coontz) and family (Zontini and Reynolds) structures and relationships have gone through in the last decades? Discuss your observations and experiences. **Read:** • Lorber (2001) The Social Construction of Gender (p. 120-124). • Adams, M. E., & Campbell, J. (2012). Being undocumented & intimate partner violence (IPV): Multiple vulnerabilities through the lens of feminist intersectionality. **Watch:** • Kimberle Crenshaw – The Introduction of Intersectionality (2023): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wL6ugSK0cWA • Stereotyping Black women in media: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2teqoyPe3TU
6	**Wed March 6**	**Gender & Society** -sex vs. gender and biology / socially constructed identity -feminist theory -feminization of poverty -unpaid vs. paid labor; women's entry into workforce	**Read:** • Chapter 12-Social and Economic Stratification (pages 226-240). • Colander and Hunt, Chapter 13- Stratification, Minorities, and Discrimination (pages 243-272). • Ehrenreich, B., & Hochschild, A. R. (Eds.). (2003). Chapter 3: *Global woman: Nannies, maids, and sex workers in the new economy*. Macmillan, 21-33. • Lacy, K. R. (2004). Black spaces, black places: Strategic assimilation and identity construction in middle-class suburbia. *Ethnic and racial studies*, *27*(6), 908-930. **Watch:** What is the experience of the African diaspora in Germany? (DW).

7	**Wed March 13**	**Race, Immigration & Social and Economic Stratification** -Discrimination and segregation in the US -Intersecting modes of domination -Structural explanations of poverty -Race, class, gender, ethnic background, residency status in the stratification of labor -Transnational immigration ***Review for the midterm exam****	**Review for the midterm exam** **No new material assigned for next week**
8	**Wed March 20**	**Midterm exam [75 minutes during the class period** ****WORKSHOP ON FINDING RESOURCES FROM THE LIBRARY WEBSITE****	**Read:** • Colander and Hunt, Chapter 11-Education (pages 207-224). • Jonathan Kozol (2005), "**Still Separate, Still Unequal**: America's Educational Apartheid" (578-594). • Durán-Narucki, V. (2008). School building condition, school attendance, and academic achievement in New York City public schools: A mediation model. *Journal of environmental psychology*, *28*(3), 278-286. • What was affirmative action designed to do- what has it achieved? (Guardian, 2023). **Watch:** • Unequal Childhoods, Annette Lareau.

9	**Wed March 27**	**Education & Social Inequality** -Education as an institution of social control -Curriculum and human development -Unequal access to quality education -Parenting and concerted cultivation ******Going over the midterm questions*****	**Read:** • Blokland, T. (2008). "You got to remember you live in public housing": place-making in an American housing project. *Housing, Theory and Society*, *25*(1), 31-46. • Fullilove, M. T. (2013). The frayed knot. *Place attachment: Advances in theory, methods and applications*, *141*. **Watch:** The Death of an Architectural Myth, Pruitt-Igoe (PBS News Hour).
10	**Wed April 3**	**Housing & Built Environment** -Housing and inequality -Place attachment & Construction of the self through places -Place-based perspective to crime -Socio-economic and political contexts of urban transformation	**Assignment # 5 on Blackboard:** Remember the neighborhood/area you spent your childhood in. How do you think the place you grew up affected you as a person? Research the place you grew up online and locate it through google maps. Additionally, if you have a chance to connect to people who are still living there (family, friends, elder neighbors etc…), talk to them about how the place is like, how it's doing, whether/how it changed. How do the images compare to what you remember about it? How do the narratives compare to what you remember about it? **Read:** • Chapter 5: Geography, Demography, Ecology and Society (p. 88-103). • Deep Inside Mountains, Work is Getting Much More Dangerous (New York Times, August 2023).

		-Psychological consequences of neighborhood change in urban America	• Smith, N. (2006) There's No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster: https://items.ssrc.org/understanding-katrina/theres-no-such-thing-as-a-natural-disaster/ • White, M.M. (2011). Sisters of the Soil: Urban Gardening as Resistance in Detroit. *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts 5*(1), 13-28. **Watch:** • The cobalt challenge - The dark side of the energy transition https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Q2IW7UEcII&t=166s
11	**Wed April 10**	**Human-Nature Relationship, Climate Change & Environmental Justice** -What psychological processes are prominent in the discussions of **human-nature relationship**? -How do different systems influence human perceptions of nature? -Understanding and contextualizing **climate change** and	**Assignment # 6 on Blackboard:** Identify an environmental issue in your community/neighborhood or from the media documents that is related to questions around environmental/social justice. Briefly explain why this is an environmental justice issue. What would be the change(s) required to address this environmental justice issue? Think about the individual, social/relational, institutional, and structural factors as you respond. **Read:** • Chapter 17- The Organization of Economic Activities (pages 340-353). • Colander and Hunt, Chapter 6: Technology and Society, 104-120. • Gapasin, F., & Bonacich, E. (2016). The strategic challenge of organizing manufacturing workers in global/flexible capitalism. In *Unions in a globalized environment* (pp. 163-188). Routledge. • Morozov, E. (2023) Opinion: The True Threat of Artificial Intelligence, New York Times.

		environmental degradation -Establishing the connections between climate change and the question of **environmental (in)justice**	
12	**Wed April 17**	**Work, Technology and Society** -wage labor, precarity, types of economies -standardization and Fordism; flexibility and post-Fordism -unions & the labor movement	**Read:** • Chapter 21 – The Political Economies of Developing Countries, p. 418-439. • Neoliberalism – the ideology at the root of all our problems (Guardian, 2016). • The Global South Must Be at the Center of the Making of a Just Global Economic Order, An Interview with Daniela Gabor and Ndongo Samba Sylla (Jacobin, 2023): https://jacobin.com/2023/02/neoliberalism-global-south-finance-climate-washington-consensus
April 22 – 30 / No Class / Spring Recess			
13	**Wed May 1**	**Political Economy and Global Stratification** -world-systems theory -political economy, ideology & governance	**Assignment # 7 on Blackboard:** What are the main functions of the dominant religion(s) where you are from/living in? What roles do the dominant religions play in everyday life? **Read:** • Weber, M. (2018) The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, excerpt in Ferguson's *Mapping the Social Landscape* (pages 520-526). • Bhimji, F. (2009). Identities and agency in religious spheres: a study of British Muslim women's

			experience. *Gender, Place and Culture*, *16*(4), 365-380. **Listen to:** 'Women across Iran are refusing to wear headscarves, in open defiance of the regime' (NPR, Tanis, March 13, 2023)
14	**Wed May 8**	**Religion** -institution of religion & social and economic organization and change -religion's interaction with the state -religion And everyday social practices **One-on-one meetings with the instructor to work on the final papers**	
15	**Wed May 15**	**Last Day of Classes**	**Last chance to meet with the instructor to work on the final papers** **Final exams at Medgar Evers** **End of Spring Term**
*****Final Statement Paper DUE MAY 22nd!!!*****			