

SOCI 101
Introduction to Sociology
Mason Korea
Spring 2022

Professor Name: Dr. Deborah Kwak
Office Location: G548 @ Mason Korea
Class Time: Mondays & Wednesdays, 10.30am - 11.45am
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Office Hours: Mondays, 12pm - 1.30pm; Please email me to schedule a meeting

Course Focus

Sociology is the science of understanding human behavior, social relationships, and the society that we live in. In this course, we will examine the major concepts, theories and tools of inquiry critical to understanding the social world. We will also devote ourselves to developing a sociological mode of thinking while investigating how our social world and society work.

Briefly: What is the point of taking this class?

You might say, 'To fulfill the Mason Core'. Well, sociology is more than that! Basically, this class will give us the opportunity to critically think and question what, at first glance, is assumed and obvious. We will study the influences that shape who we are, how we think, and why we behave the way we do.

Getting Specific: Course Questions & Objectives

Questions 1 - 3 serve as a starting point for engaged conversation, dialogue and reflection throughout the semester. #4 is essential for this course.

1. What does it mean to think sociologically? What does it mean to exercise sociological imagination?
2. What are the central concepts, theories and debates that structure the discipline of sociology?

3. What interesting insights can we gain about human behavior by examining how society shapes us? What interesting insights can we gain about society by examining how our actions and behaviors shape society?
4. Communicate and collaborate productively with peers. Communication & Collaboration are integral to academic learning and working in the real world. We will develop and practice these skills very often in this class through group work and dialogue.

What does this course have to do with The Mason Core?

This course contributes towards The Mason Core's mission to cultivate **The Mason Graduate: an Engaged Citizen and Well-Rounded Scholar who is Prepared to Act**. The Mason Core is Mason's general education program that builds the foundation for The Mason Graduate. SOCI 101 (3 credits) fulfills requirements for Social/Behavioral Sciences in the *Exploration* category of The Mason Core.

The following three learning outcomes are required goals as part of The Mason Core:

1. Explain how individuals, groups or institutions are influenced by contextual factors;
2. Demonstrate awareness of changes in social and cultural constructs;
3. Use appropriate methods and resources to apply social and behavioral science concepts, terminology, principles and theories in the analysis of significant human issues, past or present.

Required Texts

I will share all readings with you via Mason Blackboard.

What can we expect from each other?

What you can expect from me, the instructor:

Every time I enter discussion, I will come prepared, which means that I will have read the assigned materials for the day and thought carefully about what we are trying to accomplish that day. I will be fully present during class and will treat each of you with respect and integrity. I am also available outside of our class meetings and more than willing to discuss your concerns and any aspects of this course.

What I can expect from each student:

Because you have chosen to enroll in this course, you agree to have the same expectations as the instructor. In other words, you agree to come to each class having read all assigned materials and thoughtfully prepared for class. You also agree to be fully present during class and to treat fellow students and the instructor with respect and integrity. Finally, as students in this course, you agree to thoughtfully engage in discussions and conversations in every class and make every effort to empathize with and respect the perspectives of others.



What we can expect to happen in class:

Every time we meet, this class is an opportunity for us to become a learning community. This means that each student is required to be an active participant in this class—asking questions, contributing to discussion by sharing their perspectives, and critically thinking about the issues we address in this class. Half-baked ideas and thoughts are welcome; often times, just trying to say what you're thinking allows you to further develop your ideas and arguments.

What we can expect in regards to electronic devices:

As part of cultivating a space for discussion, please turn off all electronic devices during class. Laptop use will *not* be permitted unless with special permission from the instructor. This rule is a non-negotiable; research shows that students rarely restrict the use of their laptops to note taking. Research also shows that use of laptops in class for anything other than note taking distracts the student as well as those around them. Using unauthorized electronics in the classroom will negatively affect the student's participation grade and attendance.

Overview of Course Grade

Your learning will be evaluated in the following ways:

15% Class Participation (Active Listening, Large Group Discussions, Activities in Class)

15% Class Participation (Small Group Discussions)

15% Journals

10% Mason Culture Analysis Observations

15% Mason Culture Analysis Group Work and Presentation

15% Mid-Term Exam

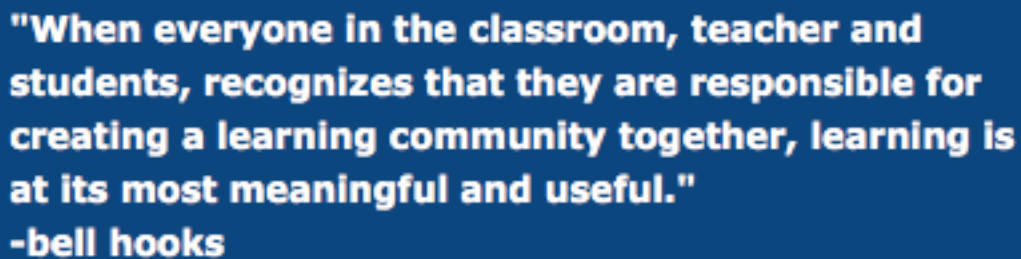
15% Cumulative Final Exam

1. Class Participation

This course depends upon your participation. More than two absences of our class meetings during the semester will *lower* the student's final grade by two thirds of a letter grade (e.g. a B+ will become a B-), and more than four absences will result in a failing grade. If a student joins the meeting after attendance is taken or leaves the meeting early, the student may be counted absent (unless student contacts the professor prior to class to make arrangements).

You will be granted an excused absence from class only in specific, unavoidable situations such as death in the family or health emergency.

In order to get a full participation grade, actively listen, ask questions, share your perspectives, and engage in critical thinking about the material during *Large Group Discussions* and *Small Group Discussions*. Equally important, participate enthusiastically in class activities and writing assignments.



**"When everyone in the classroom, teacher and students, recognizes that they are responsible for creating a learning community together, learning is at its most meaningful and useful."
-bell hooks**

Note: If a student engages in actions which distract others and detract from the classroom's overall experience as a learning community, then his/her/their participation grade will be significantly reduced.

2. Small Group Discussions

We are a learning community and the success of this class depends on our active engagement with the class materials and with one another. Through the process of dialogue and discussion, we will gain a deeper and richer understanding of the issues discussed in this course. Difference in opinions, feelings and values are welcome and respected in this classroom.

I will remind you via email the reading schedule for the upcoming week every Friday. You should come prepared to discuss what you have read for every class. A specific type of discussion that we will have in every class is: *Small Group Discussions* (please see "Reading Roles & Journal Guidelines" which I will make available on our first day of class).

I will ask everyone to evaluate their fellow group members during the semester regarding their participation and contributions to group discussions and project.

However, if you have a problem with a group member who is not keeping up with the reading or not participating please notify me early in the semester so that I may discuss the issue with that individual.

3. Journals

Good writers are most often interested readers. For this class, please write a reflective journal responding to the day's readings prior to class. See the "Reading Roles & Journal Guidelines" handout for the requirements for journals. Students should post their journal entry on Blackboard by 9am the day of class. Please have your journals with you for breakout rooms.

4. Mason Culture Analysis & Presentation

Students will form groups for this project. Your group of 2 to 3 will focus on one phenomenon of college culture and provide a cogent analysis that weighs both its adverse and more positive effects on the university community. This assignment is part of your effort to understand your social world more fully by mapping the phenomenon's trends, influences, and effects within the Mason microcosm. You will go on at least four field trips to observe the phenomenon you have chosen. I will provide you with more instructions as the semester progresses.

5. Mid-Term and Final Exam

The final exam in this course is cumulative.

Grading Scale

As instructor, I reserve the right to round up or down any course grade calculations at the end of the semester.

A	94-100	B-	80-83	D+	67-69
A-	90-93	C+	77-79	D	64-66
B+	87-89	C	74-76	D-	60-63
B	84-86	C-	70-73	F	0-59

Students should keep in mind that "A" level work should be outstanding and consistently exceed minimum requirements.

Answers to Other Important Questions

Traditional (face-to-face) or Online Instruction

Based on the COVID-19 situation in Korea, we will start the semester completely in-person. Please note that the format of this class may change at mid-point of the semester if the health situation in Korea worsens. I ask that you be flexible with the format of instruction, and I will do my best to support you along the way.

Turning in Late Work

All course work should be submitted by the assignment deadlines. There is no exception for journals and group presentation. Regarding individual papers, if you know that you will be unable to complete an assignment by the due date, you should make this clear to me by e-mail at least 24 hours before the deadline. A short extension without penalty is possible only if you notify me 24 hours in advance.

If not, papers submitted *after* the deadline will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade for each day late: a B+ becomes a B, a B becomes a B-, and so on. This rule does not apply to weekly journals because late submission for journals is not available.

Academic Integrity

All of the work that you submit for this course must be your own. The university has a strict policy concerning academic integrity. The George Mason University Honor Code reads as follows: “To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this Honor Code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.” More information about the Honor Code, including definitions of cheating, lying, and plagiarism, can be found on the Committee of Academic Integrity’s website at <https://masonkorea.gmu.edu/resources-and-services/cai/overview>.

Academic integrity is an essential part of personal integrity, and I expect you to demonstrate honorable behavior in all of your classes including mine. You should pledge to observe Mason’s Honor Code in all written and oral work including journals, papers, presentations and exams. Student who committed plagiarism in an assignment will at a minimum receive a failing grade for the assignment. As the instructor for this course, I will also report the student and instance of plagiarism to the Dean.

Ethical Discourse and Inclusivity

George Mason University is committed to social justice. I share that commitment and strive to maintain a positive learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. In this class we will not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, economic class, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

Disability Accommodations

If you are a student with a physical, learning, and/or psychological disability, I will gladly work with you to arrange academic accommodations for this class.

Please note that reducing assignments or reducing the class participation requirement are not permitted as accommodations for a disability at the college level.

Meeting with the Professor about Your Grades

I won't discuss grades over email. This is to protect your privacy, so please do not make such requests. Instead, set up a meeting with me.

Essay Formatting

I expect you to show that you take pride in every piece of written work that you submit. Always re-read your journals and essays (even if they are in draft form) for grammatical errors and spelling mistakes. You should also read your essay aloud to yourself or to a friend. In addition, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Essays must be in 12-point Times New Roman or similar font with 1.0 in/2.54 cm spacing around the margins.
- Essays must have page numbers and a header that includes your name, the assignment name, and date.
- All of the formal assignments must be submitted via paper copy.

Rules for Citation

You can use this useful online resource for rules on citation. The *American Sociological Association Style Guide*:

for in-text citation: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/asa_style/in_text_citation_references.html

for references: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/asa_style/references_page_formatting.html

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Tentative Schedule of Topics

As the instructor for this course, I often make changes and adjustments to the course schedule. I post weekly readings on Blackboard and make weekly announcements via email. Please bring the required texts to our weekly classes.

Week 1 Introduction

2/21 Introduction & Syllabus

2/23 *Sociological Perspective (Lecture)*

Week 2: Establishing a Sociological Framework

2/28 Syllabus & Journal Guidelines Quiz; The Sociological Imagination, Mills

3/2 The Sociological Imagination, Mills (cont.)

Week 3: Establishing a Sociological Framework

3/7 The Mundanity of Excellence, Chambliss

3/9 *Presidential Election Day, No Class*

Week 4: How can we conduct sociological research?

3/14 Concepts, Indicators, and Reality, Babbie

3/16 Mason Culture Analysis project; research question for project in groups

Week 5: Culture

3/21 On Being Sane in Insane Places, Rosenhan

3/23 Practice Observation & Write Fieldnotes

Week 6: Culture

3/28 The Code of the Streets, Anderson

3/30 Lecture on Culture

Fieldnote 1 due on Thursday 3/31

Week 7: Socialization

4/4 Reading on Socialization [TBD]

4/6 Lecture; Share norm violation extra credit opportunity

Week 8: Exam Week; Socialization (cont.)

4/11 Mid-Term Exam

4/13 The Mask You Live In (2015)

Fieldnote 2 due on Thursday 4/14

Week 9: Socialization; Social Class

4/18 Gender Socialization Exercise
4/20 The Uses of Poverty: The Poor Pay All, Gans

Week 10: Social Class

4/25 People Like Us: Social Class in America
4/27 Lecture; Inequality Exercise
Fieldnote 3 due on Thursday 4/28

Week 11: Social Class

5/2 Finish rest of lecture & class exercise; work on research question in groups
5/4 Group work on Mason Culture Analysis Project; come up w/ ten interview questions, also tentative argument
Interview Questions due on Wednesday 5/4 @ 11.59pm

Week 12: Race and Discrimination

5/9 The Power of an Illusion, Episode 1, Lecture
5/11 The Mark of a Criminal Record, Pager
Fieldnotes 4 due on Thursday 5/12

Week 13: Everyday discrimination

5/16 Bring two new stories regarding race and/or discrimination; Discussion
5/18 Meetings w/ groups on their projects
Interview responses due on Friday 5/20

Week 14: Privilege

5/23 Hello, Privilege (Netflix) or White Privilege Documentary
5/25 Lecture on privilege

Week 15: Presentations due

5/30 Last Class; Presentations due by 11.59pm
6/1 *Regional Election Day, No Class*

Final Exams, Wednesday 6/8 - Wednesday 6/15