

Introduction to Sociology: Social Problems and Social Movements

SSS100.1947 (28478) Spring I 2020: Online Edition – updated 5/20/20

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description:

Welcome to Sociology, the study of society! We will utilize a sociological perspective to understand hierarchies of class, race, gender, and sexuality and explore contemporary social problems including inequality, precarious work, migration, relations of power and social control. Sociologist C. Wright Mills posited that sociological imagination rests on the understanding that “neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both.” We will consider the relationship between “personal troubles” and “public issues” as we delve into the social, political, economic and historical contexts that shape outcomes. Together we will apply sociological imagination to augment our understanding of historical and contemporary issues and events. Ongoing examination of how people have utilized power from below to build social movements and bring about social change will be integrated into our studies throughout the semester.

Principles for Our Revised Class *adapted from Brandon Bayne’s Religion in America syllabus*

1. **Nobody signed up for this** - Not for COVID19, not for social distancing, not for the transition to online teaching and online learning
2. **We cannot just do the same thing online** - Some assignments are no longer possible. Some expectations are no longer reasonable.
3. **We will foster intellectual nourishment, social connection, and personal accommodation**
 - Accessible asynchronous content for diverse access and contexts.
 - Synchronous discussion for those that can participate to learn together and combat isolation.
4. **We will remain flexible and adjust to the situation**
 - Nobody knows where this is going and what we’ll need to adapt.
 - Everybody needs support and understanding in this unprecedented moment.
 - **We must remain committed to safety and well-being.**
5. **LaGuardia Community College services for students from emergency aid to academic support** - <https://www.laguardia.edu/coronavirus/campus-services/>
6. **LaGuardia Community College assistance you with the transition to distance learning** - <https://www.laguardia.edu/coronavirus/student-resources/>
7. **Your well-being is the most important thing for you to focus on right now.** If at any time you need to take care of yourself and those around you conflicts with class requirements, choose self and community care. *No one will receive a grade lower than a B+ for this course if you have submitted the work.*

Course Readings:

- Many of the assigned texts are found in the following textbook: *Social Theory: The Multicultural, Global, and Classic Readings*. 6th Edition by Charles Lemert; ISBN: 978-0813350028. You are encouraged to acquire the book. The 5th and 4th editions are also okay.
- **All required course readings are available in the “Readings” section on the course website** at <http://cunyhumanitiesalliance.org/introsocspring20/readings/> or through links in the syllabus.

Course Website: Our course website is <http://cunyhumanitiesalliance.org/introsocspring20/>. All information about the course including the syllabus, readings, assignments and other materials will be housed on this website. Weekly Reading Responses will be posted on the site. Respond to your email invitation and register for the site immediately following the first class and before March 5 class.

Other Platforms for Distance Learning:

- **Zoom or Blackboard for weekly synchronous sessions** – Each Tuesday during the previously scheduled class time of 1:00 – 3:15pm, I will hold Zoom calls to discuss the course content for the week, check in and answer questions, and review next steps for the class. I will divide the class into groups for these sessions, each of which will last no more than an hour. The platform for the sessions may shift to Blackboard. If so, the new platform will be explained.
- **Google Docs** – You will be asked to conduct some group mini-activities using Google Docs or another useful platform for group work.

Course Requirements

Participation is essential to your learning experience and the success of the class. Read the assigned texts, watch the videos, review the websites, take notes, make comments and ask questions. Participation means contributing constructively based on your reading of the texts and your personal knowledge of the topic being discussed. You don't have to always know the answers. A question can be as valuable as a statement and help clarify the material for others as well.

Show Up, Speak Up, Ask Questions and Share Your Ideas!

The following assignments are required:

1. After the first class, **send me an e-mail message** from your preferred email address. The subject line should read "Sociology 100.1947 and the body of the message should contain your name and e-mail address. I'll add all addresses from which I receive e-mail to my address book. *If you do not respond you will not get on the class e-mail list.* Since I will send periodic updates by email it is important to get on the list. Use this email address to register for the course website.
2. **Weekly reading responses (WRR)** consisting of one of the following: 1) A quote you select from the reading that you believe best captures its message. 2) A current news article you find that is related to the content of the assigned reading. 3) A multimedia source such as a video, website or other source related to the content of the assigned reading. In addition, write a few sentences explaining why you chose your quote, news article or multimedia sources *Your responses are to be posted as replies to my prompt on our course website by 9:00pm each Monday before our Tuesday virtual class sessions. If you are having difficulty posting on the*

course website, you should send me your response by email. You may miss up to three responses and still get full credit. ***Weekly responses will be graded for completion and are worth 20% of your grade.***

3. **Weekly Group Digital Activities** – To maintain regular group work following our transition to distance learning, there will be weekly small group digital exercises related to the course topic. These exercises will be announced each week and can range from creating social media posts, to finding articles or videos, to online museum tours, etc. ***Weekly group activities will be due on Fridays at 9pm.*** You may miss up to two weekly group activities and still get full credit. ***Weekly Group digital activities will be graded for completion and are worth 15% of your grade.***
4. **Mid-semester Essay** of 450 words due on April 29 is based upon a reflection upon personal experience or an oral interview you conduct of somebody you know with experience related to a one of the course topics. ***Short essay #2 will be assigned a grade for quality and is worth 25% of your grade.***
5. **Final Assignment:** The final assignment will consist of one or two options related to the course topics: 1) **An Op-Ed or opinion piece of approximately 500 words** that discusses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to one of the social problems covered in the course and proposes at least two measures you believe that policymakers should consider to advance greater equity and justice following the pandemic *OR* 2) **Create an E-Zine of 4-6 pages** designed to raise awareness among community members or workers about one of the social problems covered in the course and to provide ideas about how they can work together to address those issues during COVID-19. **Send an email by Tuesday, May 26 indicating which type of final assignment you will do and which course topic you will cover. *The final assignment is due on June 5 and is worth 30% of your grade.***

Opportunities for Extra Credit:

- **Utilize the LaGuardia Writing Center** - The Writing Center is now open for business online. For each time you work with the Writing Center on something for this class, I will ***give you three points towards your final grade.*** To receive credit, have the writing center submit a report to me on your behalf. See below in this syllabus for more information.
- **Write a Review about an Online Museum Exhibition or Film about a Sociological topic we study in class** (*3 points for each review. You can do up to 3 reviews*) - This extra credit assignment involves a close look at an online exhibit or watching the entire film. Take two photos or screenshots of the exhibit or film. Write a 2-3 paragraph “review” of the exhibit or film about what you learned and how it relates to the class topic. State the social problems or issues covered and what the movement did to address those issues. Rate the film on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest rating, and in one to two sentences state why you chose that rating. Send your extra credit report including your review, rating and photos/screenshots to me by email. Be sure to include your name and the title of the exhibit or film.

Choose from these online exhibits and films:

- **Activist New York**, Museum of the City of New York (exhibit) - <https://activistnewyork.mcnyc.org/exhibitions>
 - **At the River I Stand** (film) - <https://www.cctv.org/watch-tv/programs/martin-luther-king-memphis-river-i-stand>
 - **Barnard Digital Feminist Archives** (exhibit) - <https://bcrw.barnard.edu/digital-feminist-archives/>
 - **Black Power Mixtape** (film) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgkJcdmheCg>
 - **Harvest of Empire** (film) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFgW1C5AeLk>
 - **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee digital gateway** (exhibit) - <https://snccdigital.org/>
 - **Union Maids** (film) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74gvcvXlgnM>
- From time to time I will also provide information by email about upcoming events that you can attend and write about for extra credit.

Course grades will be based on:

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|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1) Participation | = 10% |
| 2) Weekly Reading Responses due Mondays by 9pm | = 20% |
| 3) Weekly Group Digital Activities due Fridays by 9pm | = 15% |
| 4) Mid-semester Essay due April 29 | = 25% |
| 4) Final Assignment due June 5 | = 30% |

Grading System:

A: 93-100%	A-: 90-92%	B+: 86-89%	B: 83-85%	B-: 80-82%	C+: 76-79%	C: 73-75%
C-: 70-72%	D+: 66-69%	D: 63-65%	D-: 60-62%	F: -59%	WU: Unofficial withdraw (≈F)	W: Withdraw

CLASS CALENDAR			
<i>The course calendar is subject to change. Changes will be posted online and announced by email.</i>			
Date	Topics	Readings/Lecture	Assignments
Week of March 3	Course Overview What is Sociology?	C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination	Send preferred email/register for course website (due 3/5, noon)

Week of March 10	Class Structure	Karl Marx, The Manifesto of Class Struggle	WRR
<i>RECESS – March 12 through March 18</i>			
Week of March 23 (plus March 19 Zoom call)	Inequality Today	Bob Herbert: Losing Our Way on Moyers & Company, 10-7-2014, https://billmoyers.com/content/bob-herbert-losing-way/ The Heist: Who Stole the American Dream - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgEjTBGeafs	WRR and Small Group mini- exercise
Week of March 30	Class and Work	Karl Marx, Estranged Labor Harold Meyerson, The Future of Work: Stemming the Rise of Bad Jobs in American Prospect, in Pacific Standard, August 4, 2015 - https://psmag.com/economics/the-future-of-work-stemming-the-rise-of-bad-jobs	WRR and Small Group mini- exercise
Week of April 6	Workers’ Movements	Economic Policy Institute, “How Today’s Unions Help Working People: Giving people the power to improve their jobs and unrig the economy,” Aug. 24, 2017 (Sections 1,2, 7, 8, 9, 10) - https://www.epi.org/publication/how-todays-unions-help-working-people-giving-workers-the-power-to-improve-their-jobs-and-unrig-the-economy/ Stephanie Luce, \$15 per hour or Bust: An Appraisal of the Living Wages Movement, New Labor Forum, 24(2), 2015, 72-79	WRR and Small Group mini- exercise
<i>Spring Recess – April 8-16</i>			
Week of April 20	Race	W.E.B Dubois, Black Reconstruction and the Racial Wage Movement for Black Lives platform/demands (from Wikipedia) - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Movement_for_Black_Lives#Demands	WRR and Small Group mini- exercise

	Intersectionality	Intersectionality, from Ted Talks (video) - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akOe5-UsQ2o Combahee River Collective Statement, 1979 https://combaheerivercollective.weebly.com/the-combahee-river-collective-statement.html	exercise
Week of May 18		Guest Speaker on Social Movements	Small Group mini-exercise
Week of May 25		No Class Tuesday, 5/26 (classes follow Monday schedule) Zoom office hour/class Thursday, May 28 instead	Choose type of final assignment and Topic by May 26
Week of June 1	Black Freedom Movement	Martin Luther King Jr., Letter from a Birmingham Jail Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, "Black Panther Party: What We Want" - http://www.pbs.org/hueypnewton/actions/actions_platform.html	WRR <i>Final Assignment (due Fri, 6/5)</i>
	Grades posted Mon, June 15		

Policies:

Academic Integrity: Do Not Plagiarize! I will know that you have done it. This course is taught in compliance with LaGuardia’s Academic Integrity Policy found at https://library.laguardia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/academicintegritypolicy_LibraryVersion.pdf. Plagiarism is turning in work that is not your own, whether in part or full. Students that submit plagiarized work or commit other acts of academic dishonesty will receive a failing grade and may face more serious penalties.

Late Assignments: Unexcused late assignments will result in lowering of your grade for that assignment. It is your responsibility to request an extension before the deadline date. Extensions will only be granted for valid reasons and with prior approval. Assignments more than a week late will not be accepted.

Resources:

LaGuardia Writing Center: The LaGuardia Writing Center is now open for business online and offers free professional tutoring on **any aspect of any phase of any kind of writing**. You can make appointments and get face-to-face online Writing Center tutoring using the Zoom program. The appointment process is pretty much the same, with a couple of small additions: As usual, make your appointment by going into My LaGuardia, clicking on the red **Make Appointment** button and filling in your responses. Before your actual appointment, register for Zoom at Zoom.us. It's absolutely free and very quick. At the time of your appointment, be sure to check in by sending an email to WCLab@lagcc.cuny.edu so that we know that you're here. Minutes later a tutor will contact you for your session. You can request a particular tutor in your check-in email. If you don't get that tutor, either the tutor was not on duty or already had a student. Be sure you know your teacher's first and last name so that your tutor can send a session report to the right person. More information about the writing center can be found at <http://www.laguardia.edu/Writing-Center/Home>.

Accessibility Services: In coordination with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD), reasonable accommodations will be provided for qualified students with disabilities. Please meet with the instructor the first week of class to make arrangements. Jhony Nelson, Director of the Office for Students with Disabilities can be contacted at jhonym@lagcc.cuny.edu

Immigrant Rights: LaGuardia provides information and services to students or a student's family member that have concerns about their immigration status or safety. More information about legal and financial resources, as well as regarding safety and harassment can be found at <http://www.laguardia.edu/immigrationhelp/>.

Wellness Center: The Wellness Center offers free and confidential counseling in a safe environment where individual and cultural differences are valued and respected. Wellness Center services include: short-term individual counseling, crisis intervention, workshops, outreach and referrals to college community resources. <http://www.laguardia.edu/WellnessCenter/>

Single Stop: Single Stop connects students with federal and state financial resources, and local community services to overcome financial barriers, stay in school and graduate. Single Stop provides financial assistance with daily living expenses, e.g. pay for doctor's visits, medications, food, rent, utilities, child care, transportation and more. Services are free for LaGuardia students and their immediate family members. <http://www.laguardia.edu/singlestop/>