

**Sociology 1a. Order and Change in Society:  
An Introduction to Sociology  
Brandeis University  
Spring 2013**

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Class Meetings: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 9:00-9:50am, Location Mandel Center for the Humanities G03

**Course Description:**

This course introduces you to the basic concepts and methods of sociology. We explore sociology as a “social science” by focusing on the key methodological and conceptual tools sociologists use and by looking closely at recent books and articles written by sociologists. We address questions about how and why society is organized as it is, how our lives are shaped by broader social forces (that we often do not see), and how aspects of our lives and biographies, like our race, class, gender, and sexuality structure our experiences.

Societies are always changing and we ask questions throughout this course about how social change happens. This course focuses primarily on the United States, though readings from other countries and cultures are occasionally included. Course lectures, readings, and exercises are designed to show you how sociologists approach the world and to give you the opportunity to develop what C. Wright Mills calls the “sociological imagination.” As we journey through this course, I encourage you to take C. Wright Mill’s important insight to heart; “Most people are unable to see or control the forces that shape their lives, but the great end of the sociological imagination is to raise awareness of those constraints and then to transcend them.”

By the end of the semester you will be able to:

- Describe how sociologists conceive of questions and problems using your “sociological imagination”
- Define social structure and analyze how structural forces shape people’s daily experiences and opportunities in patterned ways.
- Analyze several meanings of culture and describe how culture influences the ways people live and are socialized
- Present and analyze data about inequalities based on gender, race, class and sexuality in the contemporary United States and describe how they are evident in particular case studies.

- Better understand how your own experiences in the world – including your successes and failures – have been shaped by your social context.

### Course Readings:

The following required books are available in the university bookstore. They are also on reserve at the library. All other required course readings are available through Latte.

- Brown-Saracino, Japonica. 2009. *A Neighborhood That Never Changes: Gentrification, Social Preservation, and the Search for Authenticity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 2003. *The Second Shift*. New York: Avon Books.
- Morning, Ann. 2011. *The Nature of Race: How Scientists Think and Teach about Human Difference*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Pascoe, C.J. 2007. *Dude You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Willis, Evan. 1996. *The Sociological Quest*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

### Course Requirements:

1. **Attendance** at all class meetings is required. Please be on time out of respect for me and your fellow classmates. Your class attendance counts as 5 points towards your final grade. If you miss zero or one class, you will receive 5 points. If you miss 2 classes, you will receive 4 points. If you miss 3 classes, you will receive 3 points. If you miss 4 classes, you will receive 2 points. If you miss 5 classes, you will receive 1 point. If you miss more than 5 classes, you will receive 0 points. The only absences that will not influence your grade are those for religious holidays that you email me about at least one week in advance. For the health of all, absences may also be excused if you think you have the flu. If you are not feeling well, please take your temperature, follow campus flu guidelines, and email me to let me know you are ill. *Please make sure to sign the attendance sheet that will be passed around in class*. Signing in for someone else is a violation of University policies on academic integrity that I take very seriously.
2. **Reading** is required. All course readings must be done for Monday of each week unless otherwise noted in the syllabus. To help you keep up with the reading, I will ask you to write 8 one page single-spaced “response papers” throughout the semester. I will give you the question for each response paper in the class meeting before it is due. These response papers are due on the dates noted in the syllabus and should demonstrate that you have completed the reading and are thinking about the issues we talked about in class and the topics the authors discussed. Rachel, Sierra and I will read and comment on your response papers and you will receive 3 points for each one you complete thoroughly (24 points total for the

semester). Response papers cannot be made up if you are not in class when the question is announced or when the paper is due unless your absence is excused.

- 3. Class Participation** is central to this class, and I ask that you participate fully in class, section, and the small group discussions we will sometimes have as a part of class. You will get out of this class what you put in, and the course will be more enjoyable for all of us if you are actively engaged. If you are uncomfortable speaking in lecture, I strongly encourage you to participate in discussion section and to email me, Rachel and Sierra with questions or comments that show you finding creative ways in which to participate. You are allowed to have computers and cell phones in class only if you are using them to take notes or look at readings. **Please sit in the front two rows of the classroom if you will be using a computer during class.** I will reduce your participation grade when I see you reading Facebook, surfing the web, sending text messages, etc. Class participation will count as 8 points toward your final grade. Feel free to check with me about your participation grade at any point in the semester.

Much of what we will discuss in this class has personal implications. It is important to remember that as a group we are racially, ethnically, religiously, politically, culturally, and economically diverse and have a range of genders and sexualities. We include students in every class year who are all in the process of learning, developing, and becoming. As a class we want to respect and honor these processes. We can do this by listening carefully to each other, making an effort to include everyone, letting each other try out ideas we are not certain about, disagreeing respectfully, and striving to discuss all that we do in this class in as mature a manner as possible. Some of what we read and discuss will likely make you uncomfortable. I ask you to be patient, to reserve judgment, and to remember the commitment Brandeis makes in its mission statement to be “a center of open inquiry and teaching.”

- 4. Written Assignments.** You will do two short (4-6 doubled spaced page) written assignments during the semester. These assignments are designed to show that you understand what you have been reading and we have been discussing in class and that you can apply what you are learning to a new sociological question or puzzle. These assignments will be distributed on *January 30 (due February 14)* and *March 6 (due April 4)*. The first assignment is worth 15 points and the second is worth 22 points. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on each of these due dates. You will lose 2 points for each 24 hours after the due date the assignment is turned in (i.e. if you would have received 14 points but your paper is turned in within the first 24 hours after it is due, you will receive 12 points, etc.). Please properly cite and reference any articles you refer to when completing these assignments. We will talk in detail about this when the first assignment is distributed. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.
- 5. Lecture Summary or Article/Book Review Analysis.** Two options:

- a. The Sociology Department is hosting lectures by two visiting sociologists in a colloquia series this semester. Each lecture takes place on a Thursday afternoon as noted in the syllabus below and summarized here:  
<http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/sociology/colloquia/index.html>  
 You may attend one of these lectures and write a two-page single spaced response paper. One page should summarize the speaker's argument. In the second page, please respond to the speaker's argument bringing the ideas into discussion with those we have been discussing in class. You must cite at least two course readings in your response paper.
  
- b. If these lectures do not fit into your schedule or your interests, you have the option of instead reading one book or article written by a sociologist not on the syllabus for this class (or another class you are taking this semester!) and writing a two page single spaced review and response to it. Work through the Sociology links in Brandeis Scholar or the LTS Sociology Guide on the class Latte page to find relevant articles / books. One page of the response should summarize the author's argument. In the second page, please respond to the author's argument bringing the ideas into discussion with those we have been discussing in class. You must cite at least two course readings in your response. Please check your article / book with me or your TA before beginning.

This assignment is worth 6 points and is due at the beginning of class on *April 29*. You will lose 2 points for each 24 hours after the due date the assignment is turned in.

6. **Exam.** You will have a take-home final exam. The exam will be designed to assess what you have learned in lectures and course readings and to see how well you can apply what you have learned to new questions and problems. You may use your lecture notes and course materials when completing the exam, which will require that you show evidence of having completed course readings. The final exam will be distributed on *April 29 (due on May 7)*. Your completed exam can be no more than ten double spaced pages. The final exam is worth 20 points
  
7. **Final Grades** will be based on your class attendance (5 points), class participation (8 points), response papers (24 points), assignment 1 (15 points), assignment 2 (22 points), lecture summary or article / book review assignment (6 points), and final exam (20 points).

Final grades will be calculated using the following point distribution:

98-100 A+	77-79 C+
94-97 A	74-76 C
90-93 A-	70-73 C-
87-89 B+	67-69 D+
84-86 B	64-66 D

80-83 B-

60-63 D-  
<60 F

**\*\*With the exception of response papers, which cannot be made up, all written work must be completed to receive a passing grade in this class\*\***

- 8. University Policy on Academic Accommodations:** If you are a student who has academic accommodations because of a documented disability, please contact me and give me a copy of your letter of accommodation in the first two weeks of the semester. If you have questions about documenting a disability, please contact Beth Rodgers-Kay in the Undergraduate Academic Affairs Office (x63470, brodgers@brandeis.edu). Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.
- 9. University Policy on Academic Integrity:** You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University's policies on academic integrity (see <http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai> ). We will refer any suspected instances of alleged dishonesty to the Office of Student Development and Conduct.

## Course Outline

### I. The Basics: Conceptual and Methodological Tools

January 14, 16, 17. What is Sociology?

Monday:

- Introductions

Wednesday:

- Mills, C. Wright. 1959. "The Promise" p. 1-7 in Susan Ferguson. Ed. *Mapping the Social Landscape*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Willis, Evan. 1996. *The Sociological Quest: An Introduction to the Study of Social Life*. (c. 1 "Introduction: Understanding the Social World," c. 2 "The Nature of Sociological Explanation")

Thursday:

Please read one of the following:

- Brown-Saracino, Japonica. 2009. *A Neighborhood That Never Changes: Gentrification, Social Preservation, and the Search for Authenticity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Introduction)
- OR
- Pascoe, C.J. 2007. *Dude You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley: University of California Press (c. 1 Making Masculinity: Adolescence, Identity, and High School)

\*As you read, please pay attention to what research questions Brown-Saracino and Pascoe are going to try to answer in their books. See what each says about why that it is an important question. Come to class prepared to discuss.

January 23, 24. Some Perspective on the Discipline and Basic Concepts

Monday:

- No class, MLK Day

Wednesday:

- Willis, Evan. 1996. *The Sociological Quest: An Introduction to the Study of Social Life*. (c. 3 "Sociology's Place in the Academy," c. 7 "Theory and Method" p. 107-116)

Thursday:

Please read one of the following:

- Brown-Saracino, Japonica. 2009. *A Neighborhood That Never Changes: Gentrification, Social Preservation, and the Search for Authenticity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 1 and Appendix 1 and 2)

OR

- Pascoe, C.J. 2007. *Dude You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley: University of California Press (“Appendix: What If a Guy Hits on You? Intersections of Gender, Sexuality, and Age in Fieldwork with Adolescents”).

\*As you read, think about what the founders of the discipline of sociology that we talked about on Wednesday would think of the ways these authors are gathering data to answer their research questions and the kinds of research designs they are using. Come to class prepared to discuss.

### January 28, 30, 31. Research Designs and Methods

Monday:

- Haney, Lynne. 2013. “Studying the Social World” in *The Sociology Project: Introducing the Sociological Imagination*. Jeff Manza Ed. Boston: Pearson.

Wednesday:

- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (c. 1 and c. 2 – a bit more is up on the Latte site if you want to keep reading)
- *Assignment 1 will be distributed in class.*

Thursday:

- No reading, we will do a participant observation exercise in class to help you think about your first assignment.

## **II. Social Structure(s)**

### February 2, 6, 7. The Creation of Societies and Nation-States

Monday:

- Willis, Evan. 1996. *The Sociological Quest: An Introduction to the Study of Social Life*. (c. 5 “Structure and Critique”)

Wednesday:

- Manza, Jeff and Harel Shapira. 2013. “Social Structure” in *The Sociology Project: Introducing the Sociological Imagination*. Jeff Manza Ed. Boston: Pearson.
- Solnit, Rebecca. 2007. “Detroit Arcadia: Exploring the Post-American Landscape” *Harpers Magazine*.
- See some photos here: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/03/23/detroit-decline\\_n\\_813696.html#218521](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/03/23/detroit-decline_n_813696.html#218521)

Thursday:

- We will meet in section for the first time. Your first response paper is due – listen for the question in class.

## Feb 11, 13, 14. Social Institutions and the Construction of the Self

Monday:

- Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday. (Introduction, c. 1 “Performances” p. 17-30)

Wednesday:

- Jerolmack, Colin. 2009. “Primary Groups and Cosmopolitan Ties: The Rooftop Pigeon Flyers of New York City.” *Ethnography*. 10:435-457.

Thursday:

- Section Meeting, *Assignment 1 due*

February 18-22 no class

## **III. Culture(s) and the Learning Process**

February 25, 27, 28. Culture

Monday:

- Willis, Evan. 1996. *The Sociological Quest: An Introduction to the Study of Social Life*. (c. 4 “Accounting for History and Culture,” c. 6 “The Social World and the Biological World”)
- Griswold, Wendy. 1994. *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press. (c. 1 “Culture and the Cultural Diamond”)

Wednesday:

- McNall, Scott and Sally Allen McNall. 1992. *Sociology*. Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. (p. 78-100)

Thursday:

- Section meeting. A response paper will be due, listen for the question in class. It will be based on the article: Orend, Angela and Patricia Gagne. 2009. “Corporate Logo Tattoos and the Commodification of the Body.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. 38:493-517.

Japonica Brown-Saracino will speak in the Sociology Department Colloquia series at 3:30pm today. Her talk is titled, “Pride of Place: Queer Female Identities and Communities in Four Small U.S. Cities.”

March 3, 6, 7. Culture and Socialization

Monday:

- Tobin, Joseph, David Wu, and Dana Davidson. 1989. *Preschool in Three Cultures: Japan, China, and the United States*. New Brunswick: Rutgers

University Press. (skim c. 1 “Introduction” and c. 5 “Looking Across Time and Cultures”)

- We will watch the film *Preschool in Three Cultures: Japan, China, and the United States*

Wednesday:

- We will gather the data required to complete assignment 2. To complete this assignment, you will need to read the article: Weitzman, Lenore et al. 1972. “Sex Role Socialization in Picture Books for Preschool Children.” *American Journal of Sociology*. 77(6): 1125-1150. You may wish to skim it before coming to class
- *Assignment 2 distributed.*

Thursday:

- We will meet in section. A response paper based on the film will be due. Listen in class for the question. Please also be prepared to discuss any questions you have about completing Assignment 2.

#### **IV. Thinking Like A Sociologist about Class, Race, Sexuality and Gender**

March 11, 13, 14. Social Stratification and Inequality in America, Thinking about Class

Monday and Wednesday:

- Torche, Florencia, Richard Arum and Jeff Manza. 2013. “Social Stratification, Inequality and Poverty” in *The Sociology Project: Introducing the Sociological Imagination*. Jeff Manza Ed. Boston: Pearson.

Thursday:

- We will meet in section and complete an exercise that will count as a response paper. In preparation, please print and bring to class with you basic demographic data about your hometown including median income and the percent of people living in poverty there. You can find that information here:  
<http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

Doug Harper will speak in the Sociology Department Colloquia series at 3:30pm today. His talk is titled, “Seeing Society: The Long and Winding Road.”

March 18, 20, 21. A Closer Look at Race in America

Monday and Wednesday:

- Morning, Ann. 2011. *The Nature of Race: How Scientists Think and Teach about Human Difference*. Berkeley: University of California Press (c. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7)

Thursday:

- We will meet in section. A response paper will be due – listen in class for the question.

March 25-April 2 no class

April 3-4. Race, the Power of an Illusion

- We will watch the film, *Race, the Power of an Illusion: The House We Live In*.
- *Thursday, Assignment 2 due*

April 8, 10, 11. Doing Gender and Sexuality in High School

Monday and Wednesday:

- Risman, Barbara. 1998. "Gender as Structure." P. 306-315 in Susan Ferguson Ed. *Mapping the Social Landscape*. New York: McGraw Hill
- Pascoe, C.J. 2007. *Dude You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (chapters 2 through 6)

Thursday:

- Meet in section. Response paper due - listen in class for the question.

April 15, 17, 18. Doing Gender and Work as an Adult with Children

Monday and Wednesday:

- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 1989. *The Second Shift*. (Introduction, c. 1 "A Speed-up in the Family," c. 2 "Marriage in the Stalled Revolution," c. 3 "The Cultural Cover-up," c. 4 "Joey's Problem," c. 5 "The Myth of the Traditional," c. 12 "Sharing Showdown and Natural Drift," c. 13 "Beneath the Cover-up: Strategies and Strains").

Please also read through one of the following:

- Belkin, Lisa "When Mom and Dad Share It All." *The New York Times Magazine*. June 15, 2008  
OR
- Or A Debate on Career and Family: The Myth of Work-Life Balance.  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/debates/women-workplace>

Thursday:

- Meet in section. Response paper due - listen in class for the question.

April 22, 24, 25. One Last Case Study, Bringing it Together

Monday and Wednesday:

- Brown-Saracino, Japonica. 2009. *A Neighborhood That Never Changes: Gentrification, Social Preservation, and the Search for Authenticity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (c. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

Thursday:

- Meet in section. Response paper due - listen in class for the question.

## **V. Wrapping Up**

April 29, May 1. Wrapping Up

Monday:

- *Lecture Summary or Article/Book Review due today*
- Final take home exam distributed

Wednesday:

- Browse through the webpages of the American Sociological Association's web page: <http://www.asanet.org/>

*Final Exam due to my mailbox in Pearlman Hall by 9am on May 7th*