

**Sociology 1a. Order and Change in Society:  
An Introduction to Sociology  
Brandeis University  
Fall 2019**

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Class Meetings: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 1:00- 1:50 pm

Location: Olin-Sang Auditorium

### **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 races, classes, genders, and sexualities structure our experiences.

This course focuses primarily on the United States though readings from other national contexts are occasionally included. Course materials 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.” We will do as much sociology as possible through the semester combining readings, videos, podcasts, class discussions, a broad range of exercises, and class presentations to develop our sociological imaginations. As we journey through this course, we 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.” This course meets the Oral Communication Foundational Literacy Requirement in the Sociology major.

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

- Describe how sociologists conceive of questions and problems using your “sociological imagination.” Use that imagination to develop a sociologically informed self-awareness and to describe situations in the world in sociological terms.

- Define social structure and analyze how structural forces shape people's daily experiences and opportunities in patterned ways. Define agency and understand when, why, and how people have agency or choice in daily life.
- Analyze several meanings of culture and describe how culture influences the ways people live and are socialized. Articulate how your life has been shaped by the cultures in which you were raised and how your experiences compare to someone who was raised in different cultural contexts.
- Present and analyze data about inequalities based on gender, race, class and sexuality in the contemporary United States and describe how inequalities are evident in particular case studies. Relate data about inequality to questions of identity in a range of case studies.
- Learn to more carefully listen, understand, and engage with people who are different from you along any number of axes. Develop more personal comfort agreeing to disagree with others and holding that disagreement in a professional rather than personal framework.

We hope you develop a lifelong curiosity not about sociology but about what sociological approaches to the world help you see, how your experiences in the world – including your successes and failures – have been shaped by your social context, and what role you do and will continue to place in the social contexts of others.

### Course Readings

- Desmond, Matthew. 2016. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. New York: Crown Publishers
- 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.

\*\* If you are having difficulty purchasing course materials, please contact me or make an appointment with your [Student Financial Services](#) or [Academic Services](#) advisor to discuss possible funding options and/or textbook alternatives.

### Course Requirements

#### 1. Attendance

Attendance at all class meetings is required. Please be on time out of respect for us and your fellow classmates. Your class attendance counts as 10% of your final grade. If you miss zero or one class, you earn full credit (10 points). If you miss 2 classes, you earn 8 points. If you miss 3 classes, you earn 7 points. If you miss 4 classes, you earn 6 points. If you miss 5 classes, you earn 5 points. If you miss 4 classes you earn 4 points, etc. The only absences that will not influence your grade are those for religious holidays that you email us about at least one week in advance. If you will miss class for sports accommodations please give Jenny a copy of your letter and email her with the dates you will miss class. 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 we take very seriously. You can check your attendance on Latte. You will receive half credit for attendance when you are late to class.

## **2. Preparation for class.**

Rather than spending a lot of time in lecture, we will spend our time together in class having discussions, doing exercises, and otherwise working to learn from and with one another. You must come to class having completed the pre-work for each class session. Before most class meetings there will be questions to answer on Latte to help you (and us!) know if you understood the assigned materials, to make sure you are ready for the class exercise, and/or to help us figure out how to best use our time in class. *All pre-work is due by 6am on the day the class will meet.* Taken together, the class pre-exercises completed in Latte will account for 10% of your final grade. You get credit for meaningfully completing the assignments (not getting them all right). The final grade will be the cumulated average of all exercises.

## **3. Class Participation**

Class participation is central to this 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. Everyone will be assigned to a small group so you will get to know 10 to 12 people in the class well. We may switch small groups half-way through the semester. If you are uncomfortable speaking when the full class is together, try talking in your small group and / or email me with questions or comments that show you finding creative ways in which to participate. You are allowed to have computers in class only if you are using them to take notes, look at readings, or complete an in-class exercise. We will reduce your participation grade when we see you reading Facebook, surfing the web, etc. If you are expecting an important phone call or text, please let us know before class. Otherwise please turn off your phones. Class participation will count as 10% of your final grade. Feel free to check with us about your participation grade at any point in the semester.

## **4. Course Assignments.**

You will complete three graded assignments during the semester in addition to a final exam. They are designed to help you get feedback as you go and, if you are not happy with what you are learning and the grades you are receiving, to have time to work with us to improve. Details about each of these are included on the Latte site as well.

- a. *Assignment 1. Thinking Like A Sociologist.* This assignment asks you to use the tools and concepts we have been learning to develop a sociological question about your high school and a research methodology that would enable you to answer it. You are NOT to answer your question - just explain what data you would gather to do so. Please write a 3-4 page (double spaced) paper. Check the Latte site for additional details include readings you must engage with to complete this assignment. (Assigned September 12, Due October 3, 15% of your final grade)
- b. *Assignment 2. Analyzing Gender in Kids Books.* Building from a data collection activity that we will do as a class, this assignment asks you to investigate the ways gender is represented in a set of award winning kids' books. This assignment updates a published article written about this topic based on an older set of kids' books. Please write a 4-6 page (double-spaced) paper in which you make an argument about how class findings compare to the published article. Check the

Latte site for additional details. (Assigned October 23, Due November 4, 15% of your final grade)

- c. *Assignment 3. Responding to Race in Current Events.* This assignment asks you to look closely at what Ann Morning argues Americans' think about race in her book, *The Nature of Race*. Please write a 3-4 page (doubled spaced) paper in which you compare and contrast one aspect of Mornings' central arguments with at least two recent newspaper articles that address questions of race OR with what you learn about race from talking informally with at least two friends or family members. Check the Latte site for additional details (Assigned November 13, Due December 5, 15% of your final grade)
- d. *Final Exam.* Details about the final exam will be distributed on the last day of class. It will be a take home exam due on December 16, (15% of your final grade)

### **5. Student Led Discussion**

Each student will also give one oral presentation about their first or second paper and will also sign up for one Student Led Discussion for the class with their small group. Small groups will sign up for dates for discussion topics and we will spend time in class talking about the content of the information you share, the delivery of that information (i.e how you share it), and how to actively listen and engage as an audience member. You will receive feedback on your first presentation that will help you develop your oral communication skills and improve on your second oral presentation. Topics for the later include class, race, sexuality and gender. Information about each of these presentations will be posted on Latte. (Each presentation will be worth 5% of your final grade = 10% for both presentations).

All course assignments are due by Latte at the beginning of class on each of these due dates. You will one letter grade for each 24 hours after the due date the assignment is turned in. Please properly cite and reference any articles you refer to when completing these assignments as described on the Latte site.

### **Final Grades**

Final grades will be based on your class attendance (10%), preparation for class (10%), class participation (10%), assignment 1 (15%), assignment 2 (15%), assignment 3 (15%), student led discussion (10%) and final exam (15%). Final grades will be calculated using the following point distribution:

98-100 A+  
94-97 A  
90-93 A-  
87-89 B+  
84-86 B  
80-83 B-  
77-79 C+  
74-76 C  
70-73 C-  
67-69 D+  
64-66 D  
60-63 D-

## **The Small Print (which is important!)**

### **1. Preparing to Learning Together**

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. We 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.”

### **2. University Policy on Academic Accommodations**

Brandeis seeks to welcome and include all students. If you are a student who needs accommodations as outlined in an accommodations letter, please talk with me and present your letter of accommodation as soon as you can. I want to support you. In order to provide test accommodations, I need the letter more than 48 hours in advance. I want to provide your accommodations, but cannot do so retroactively. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Support (SAS) at 781.736.3470 or [access@brandeis.edu](mailto:access@brandeis.edu).

### **3. University Policy on Academic Integrity**

You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult [Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities](#) for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at [LTS - Library guides](#).

### **4. Credit Hours**

Success in this 4-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

## Course Outline

### I. How Do Sociologists Think? Some Basic Conceptual and Methodological Tools

#### Week 1. August 28, 29. What is Sociology?

Wednesday:

- Introductions

Thursday:

Before class, please:

- Read: Mills, C. Wright. 1959. "The Promise" *The Sociological Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press (p. 3-24).
- Read /watch: The Boston Globe Spotlight Series, "Boston. Racism. Image. Reality" (Please watch the video and read at least one of the seven sections and the article from this link)
- Also read: Wallack, Todd. "11 Takeaways from this month's Spotlight series on race in Boston." *Boston Globe*. December 29, 2017.
- Do: Complete Survey 1

#### Week 2. September 2, 4, 5. How Do Sociologists Ask Questions?

Monday:

- No class, Labor Day

Wednesday:

Before class, please:

- Read: Willis, Evan. 1996. *The Sociological Quest: An Introduction to the Study of Social Life*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. (c. 3 Sociology's Place in the Academy, p. 31-54).
- Brown-Saracino, Japonica. 2011. "From the Lesbian Ghetto to Ambient Community: The Perceived Costs and Benefits of Integration for Social Ties," *Social Problems*, 58(3): 361 – 388. (We will be doing an x-ray of this article in class in groups)
- Do: Complete the non-graded pre-test for the class (Survey 2)

Thursday:

Before class, please:

- Read: 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").
- Desmond, Matthew. 2016. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. New York: Crown Publishers. ("About this Project")
- Do: Complete Survey 3

### Week 3. September 9, 11, 12. How Do Sociologists Answer Questions?

Monday:

- Read: Willis, Evan. 1996. *The Sociological Quest: An Introduction to the Study of Social Life*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press (c. 7 Theory and Method, p. 107-132).
- Read: Haney, Lynne. 2013. "Studying the Social World" in *The Sociology Project: Introducing the Sociological Imagination*. Jeff Manza Ed. Boston: Pearson.
- Watch:
  - Mini lecture by CJ Pascoe
  - Mini lecture by Matthew Desmond
  - Please pick one more sociologist from [this](#) website and listen to an episode about their work paying attention to how and why they came to ask the questions they did.
- Do: Complete Survey 4

Wednesday:

- Watch:
  - Mini lecture by Jen Clearly on Speech Process
  - Mini lecture by Jen Clearly on Nervousness
  - Mini lecture by Jen Clearly on Hooks, Transitions and Conclusions
- Do: Be prepared to talk about the questions on the oral communications pre-assessment sheet in class.

Thursday:

- Guest Speaker: Maric Kramer, Social Sciences Librarian
- *Assignment 1 Distributed in Class*

## **II. How Do Structure and Agency Influence Where and How People Live?**

### Week 4. September 16, 18, 19. Macro Contexts

Monday:

- Read: Manza, Jeff and Harel Shapira. 2013. "Social Structure" in *The Sociology Project: Introducing the Sociological Imagination*. Jeff Manza Ed. Boston: Pearson.
- Read: Leetaru, Kalev. "Data Mining News to Map Global Inequality" *Forbes*. December 16, 2015.
- Explore the Infographics on GDP per capita. Use data from the year 2014
- Explore the Infographics on WDI
- Do: Complete Survey 5

Wednesday:

- Read: Harkey, Patrick with Max Besbris. 2013. "Cities and Communities" *The Sociology Project: Introducing the Sociological Imagination*. Jeff Manza Ed. Boston: Pearson
- Explore: Please look at the websites for the Mayor of Newton and the Mayor of Waltham.

- [Newton Mayor Fuller](#)
- [Waltham Mayor McCarthy](#)
- Do: Explore the Demographic Data For Waltham and Newton; Check out the compare feature on this site.
  - [Waltham](#)
  - [Newton](#)
- Do: Think about a situation you might approach the city for help with if you lived in Waltham or Newton (i.e. a pothole in front of your house, a problem with a neighbor, wanting the mayor to visit a community group, a stinky smell or dead animal around your house, a child who wants to go to the pool on a hot day, etc). Find one policy from the city of Newton and one policy from the city of Waltham that shape how your problem might be addressed. [Fill out this table](#) and bring to class.
  - Places to Look for [Policies](#) in [Newton](#)
  - Places to Look for [Policies](#) in [Waltham](#)

Thursday:

- Guest Speakers:
  - Lucas Malo, Director, Department of Community Service, Brandeis University
  - Kaytie Dowcett, Executive Director of Waltham Partnership for Youth (and Brandeis Alum)
  - Kristine Mackin, City Council for our district (and Brandeis Alum)
  - And others TBD

Week 5. September 23, 25, 26. A Case Study

Monday:

- Read: Desmond, Matthew. 2016. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. New York: Crown Publishers. (“Part 1”)
- Listen: David Brancaccio and Katie Long, “Millions of Americans are evicted every year — and not just in big cities.” NPR Illinois, April 9, 2018
- Watch: C-Span, March 4, 2016. Please watch until 23:05. Feel free to continue on and watch the whole Q&A.
- Explore: Matthew Desmond’s CV
- Do: Survey 6

Wednesday:

- Read: Desmond, Matthew. 2016. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. New York: Crown Publishers. (“Part 2”)
- Explore: Eviction Lab
- Do: Survey 7

Thursday:

- Read: Desmond, Matthew. 2016. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. New York: Crown Publishers. (“Part 3”)



- Read the following reviews of this book:
  - Senior, Jennifer. *New York Times*. February 21, 2016
  - Harding, David, *American Journal of Sociology*, July 2017
  - Chaskin, Joshua, *Social Service Review*, September 2016
- Do: Look at [this table](#) and begin to fill out some of the columns. We will work on this table in small groups in class. Think about it as you read.

Week 6. September 30, October 2, 3. A Case Study (continued)

Monday:

- Rosh Hashanah, No class

Wednesday:

- Read resources from the Op-Ed Project
- Read: Desmond, Matthew, “The Eviction Economy.” *New York Times* March 5, 2016.
- Read: Pascoe, CJ. “Homophobia linked to definition of masculinity.” *The Register Guard* May 24, 2017

Thursday:

- *Assignment 1 Due*
- *Oral Presentations in Small Groups*

Week 7. October 7, 9, 10. Micro Contexts

Monday:

- Read: Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday. (Introduction, c. 1 “Performances” p. 17-30)
- Watch: Twist Scene from *Get Out* (2016)
- Do: Complete Survey 8

Wednesday:

- Yom Kippur, no class

Thursday:

- Guest Speakers: Recent Sociology Graduates from Brandeis University

Week 8. October 14, 15, 16, 17. Culture and Learning Processes

Monday

- Indigenous People’s Day, no class

Tuesday (Brandeis Monday):

- Read: Griswold, Wendy. 1994. *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press. (c. 1 “Culture and the Cultural Diamond”)
- Read: Orend, Angela and Patricia Gagne. 2009. “Corporate Logo Tattoos and the Commodification of the Body.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. 38:493-517.

- Do: Do a 10 minute interview with a friend who has a tattoo. Try to learn not just why they have the tattoo but why that particular tattoo and what it means to them.
- Complete Survey 9

Wednesday:

- Watch: the film *Preschool in Three Cultures: Japan, China, and the United States (Revisited)*
- Do: Begin to complete [this table](#). We will continue to work on it in small groups in class.

Thursday:

Catch up day and planning for student led discussions in your small groups

#### Week 9. October 21, 23, 24. Culture and Socialization

Monday:

- Shmini Atzeret, no class

Wednesday:

- Read Assignment 2
- Skim: Weitzman, Lenore et al. 1972. "Sex Role Socialization in Picture Books for Preschool Children." *American Journal of Sociology*. 77(6): 1125-1150.
- Do: bring to class any questions you have about the assignment

Thursday:

- Read the summary data gathered in class
- Read: Gopnik, Adam. 2002. "Bumping Into Mr. Ravioli" *The New Yorker*. September 30.
- Read: Pugh, Allison. 2009. *Longing and Belonging: Parents, Children and Consumer Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (C. 5 and 6)
- Do: Survey 10

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

#### Week 10. October 28, 30, 31. Social Class in America

Monday:

- Read: At least one article from the U.S. Census Website about the History of the Official Poverty Measure
- Explore the Census website
- Do: Complete Survey 11

Wednesday:

- Read: Sherman, Rachel. 2017. *Uneasy Street: the Anxieties of Affluence*. Princeton: Princeton University Press (Introduction, c. 1 and conclusion)
- Watch: Rachel Sherman on the David Parkman Show
- Explore: Rachel Sherman's C.V
- Explore: Mapping Incomes Story Map

- Do: Complete Survey 12
- Do: Are you in the American Middle Class Calculator?

Thursday:

- Student Led

Week 11. November 4, 6, 7. Race in America

Monday:

- Read: Morning, Ann. 2011. *The Nature of Race: How Scientists Think and Teach about Human Difference*. Berkeley: University of California Press (c. 1, 2)
- Watch or Listen to two of these three:
  - PBS piece on racial fluidity, 3/13/2017
  - Talk by Ann Morning at Stanford
  - Equal time for free-thought podcast
- Do: Complete Survey 13

Wednesday:

- Read: Morning, Ann. 2011. *The Nature of Race: How Scientists Think and Teach about Human Difference*. Berkeley: University of California Press (c. 3, 4, 5)
- Explore: Ann Morning's CV
- Do: Complete Survey 14

Thursday:

- *Assignment 2 Due*
- *Oral Presentations in Small Groups*

Week 12. November 11, 13, 14. Race in America (continued)

Monday:

- Read: Morning, Ann. 2011. *The Nature of Race: How Scientists Think and Teach about Human Difference*. Berkeley: University of California Press (c. 6, 7)
- Do: Find, post to Latte, and bring to class a U.S. Census form that asks a question about race or ethnicity from any year.

Wednesday:

- In class we will watch the film *Race, the Power of an Illusion: The House We Live In* and complete and submit the handout posted to latte.
- Distribute *Assignment 3*

Thursday:

- Student Led

Week 13. November 18, 20, 21.

Monday:

- Read: Risman, Barbara. 1998. "Gender as Structure." P. 306-315 in Susan Ferguson Ed. *Mapping the Social Landscape*. New York: McGraw Hill
- Read: Pascoe, C.J. 2007. *Dude You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (c. 1)
- Watch CJ Pascoe Mini-Lecture
- Review materials in the Brandeis Queer Oral History Project Archives.
- Explore: CJ Pascoe's CV
- Do: Survey 15

Wednesday:

- Pascoe, C.J. 2007. *Dude You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (c.2-6)
- Listen: Goldstein, Steve. "Sociology Professor Weighs in on Boy Scout's Decision to Welcome Girls." KJZZ, October 20, 2017
- Do: Survey 16

Thursday:

- Student Led

Week 14. November 25

Monday:

- No Class (Wendy is at a conference)

Wednesday:

- No Class, Thanksgiving Holiday

Thursday:

- No Class, Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15. December 2, 4, 5. Doing Gender, Doing Work

Monday and Wednesday:

- Read: Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 1989. *The Second Shift*. (Introduction, c. 1-5, c. 12-13)
- Skim: Wages for Housework, *New York Times*, October 2014.
- Listen: "With PepsiCo's Indra Nooyi Stepping Down, A Look at the Status of Female CEOs." On Point. August 9, 2018.
- Explore: Arlie Hochschild's CV
- Do: Survey 17 (due 12/2)

Thursday:

- Student Led
- *Assignment 3 due*

## **V. Now What?**

### Week 16. December 9. Looking Back, Looking Forward

Monday:

- Read: the webpages of the American Sociological Association
- Do: Survey 18, the course Post-test

Final Exam Distributed. Due December 16 at noon through Latte.