

**Soc 154: Principles of Sociology**  
**Fall 2014**  
**Wake Forest University**  
**Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-10:45 Kirby 101**

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**Office:** Kirby 04E [Ground floor]

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:30-4:00

[Please sign-up on Sakai in advance—and to check for potential schedule changes.]

*“What societies, really, ideally, want is a citizenry which will simply obey the rules of society. If a society succeeds in this, that society is about to perish. The obligation of anyone who thinks of him [or her] self as responsible is to examine society and try to change it and to fight it—at no matter what risk. This is the only hope society has.”*

*-- James Baldwin*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is an introductory sociology course designed to examine and challenge our taken-for-granted ideas about the society we live in. Looking at the world through a sociological lens, (which you will learn to adopt in the early weeks of the course) we will **consider our relationships with one another, social structures and institutions, and the persistent inequalities that permeate the social order to gain a better understanding of our own lives and the social contexts we live them in.** This will not always be easy, as it can be quite challenging to look at your own situation and taken-for-granted viewpoint from another perspective. We have usually, in fact, been steeped in cultural ideologies that encourage us *not* to do so. This course will ask you to critically examine many things that you may previously never have given a second thought. With a bit of patience, willingness to think outside the box, close reading, and perseverance; hopefully you will find the journey to be well worth it in the end. We will also consider **how concerted collective action has led (and can lead) to social change**, and our own ability to influence the world around us and work towards greater equality.

Note: This course is also participating in the **“Magnolias Project”** a cross-disciplinary Wake Forest effort to incorporate critical thinking about sustainability into the curriculum. Thus, in this particular Principles of Sociology course, we will **pay special attention to the consequences of social activities for both human and planetary well-being**, and conclude by considering social changes that could increase sustainability both locally and globally.

Ultimately, this course aims to offer you tools to help you **develop critical thinking skills, evaluate social data**, become more **aware of the interconnections and interdependences** between all people, and, hopefully, to lead more **responsible and fulfilling lives** as a result.

## COURSE MATERIALS

1) Schwalbe, Michael. 2005. *The Sociologically Examined Life: Pieces of the Conversation*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed.

2) Course Packet available for purchase at the bookstore.

Note: There is no traditional textbook for this course. I have found that it is much more interesting for all of us to read “real” sociology that we can discuss in class and mine for examples of more basic concepts. I have worked hard to select readings that are particularly well-written, engaging, “classic”, and/or particularly interesting or novel new directions in the field, so that you will be well versed in a range of sociological ideas and get a true taste of the discipline that hooked me. Instead, I will provide you with text-book type material in class (in a sense, “I” will be your textbook—so taking notes during class and getting notes from your classmates if you miss class is essential!)

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### **Attendance (10 points):**

Coming to class regularly is a basic and fundamental expectation of this course. If you must miss class for any reason, you should contact me prior to the class you will miss, if at all possible. You have two “free” absences that you should use in case of sickness, family emergency, scheduling conflict, religious observances, athletic excusals, etc. **Use these wisely!** There will be **NO “excused” absences beyond these**. **Further absences will reduce your attendance grade by 2 points per absence. After seven absences (or missing 25% of our class time) you will fail the course, regardless of the reason for your absence.** If a medical or family situation arises that requires you to miss more course time than this, it would be appropriate to consider a medical withdrawal for the semester. Please **discuss with me immediately any personal challenges that are keeping you from class** so we can be proactive and make a plan together for moving forward.

### **Participation (5 points):**

It is also critical that you come to class **prepared to participate fully in class discussions and activities**. To do so effectively, you should:

- Write in the margins of your assigned texts or take notes and bring them to class for discussion. You may want to locate one or two sentences that constitute the crux of the piece, outline the author’s argument, or note a passage that was particularly interesting to you.
- Be prepared to offer your thoughts and/or questions about those texts in class.
- Bring any data, information, or objects to class as listed on the syllabus in a given week.

- Respond to questions I pose to the class, and ask questions that our course readings, lectures, or activities raise for you.

Failure to be prepared for or actively participate in class will significantly impact your final grade. Your participation grade will be assigned based on my observations of your preparation and your contributions to class and group activities. Participation will be graded as follows:

5 points: Frequent Engaged, Thoughtful Participation

4.5 points: Regular Engaged, Thoughtful Participation

3.5 points: Reasonable, Satisfactory Participation

2.5 points: Irregular Preparation and Participation

2-0 points: Poor Preparation and Participation

### **Reading Quizzes (15 points):**

To further encourage you to come to class each week having completed the readings, I will roll a dice at the beginning of class each Tuesday to determine if we will have a quiz. If I roll an **even number**, we **will have a quiz** that week. If I roll an odd number, we will not.

If I roll an even number, I **roll the dice again to determine which reading** you will be quizzed on. I will then roll the dice one more time to determine which of the following questions you will answer:

1. What is the author's central argument?
2. Briefly describe the methods the author(s) used to gather their data.
3. Tell me something that was surprising to you that you learned in this reading [or if not to you, might be surprising to someone else].
4. Connect a point from this article to your personal life.
5. Describe an important difference between this and one of this week's other readings.
6. Describe an important similarity between this and one of this week's other readings.

Don't worry: If one of these questions is not appropriate for a particular reading, I will roll the dice again. For instance, if the reading is theoretical, and did not involve data collection, you will obviously not have to answer question #2 for that reading.

If needed, I will calibrate the dice-rolling to ensure that not all quizzes occur during the first 6 weeks, or give a quiz if we've gone too many weeks without. We will have SIX quizzes total, worth 3 points each, and you only need to take 5 of them. However, quizzes cannot be made up if you are absent, or did not do the reading.

Quizzes will be scored as follows:

- 3 Points: Correct and complete answer makes it clear you completed and understood the reading.
- 2.5 Points: Reasonably accurate answer that illustrates decent familiarity with the reading.
- 2 Points: Answer may be vague or incomplete, but conveys some knowledge of the reading (but could easily be gained from simply skimming or glancing over the reading).
- 1 Point: For being honest and admitting that you did not read that particular reading assignment!
- 0 Points: Answer could be given based on a guess derived from the title of the article alone (or you were not present to take the quiz).

Quiz scores will be entered into and available on Sakai within a week after you take them.

**Personal Reflection Papers (6 points):** To help me get to know you, and to help me assess your ability to apply course material to your own life, you will write 2 short, low-stakes, personal reflection papers.

The **first one** is just to share with me who you are, where you're from, etc., so I have a sense of who is in the room. That will be **worth 2 points**, just for doing it (completely and on time). It should be **NO MORE than 1 page single-spaced**.

The second will be completed at the end of the semester, and ask you to **reflect on how what we've learned in class could be applied to your own life**. That paper will also be limited to **one page single-spaced**, but will be **worth 4 points**. Everyone will receive at least 2 points for doing and completing the assignment on time. The remaining 2 points can be earned for **making meaningful connections to course material that show me connections you've made to your own life**.

**Inequality Project (15 points):**

Choose ONE of the following options:

- 1) Gender and Television: Take careful notes during our week on gender and sexuality on the sitcom episodes we view in class. Take enough notes that you can use particular scenes, comments, or incidents, as "data" in your paper. You will then use comparisons between the episodes to explain:
  - a. What gender ideologies are reinforced by these shows?

- b. What evidence can we find in these episodes of how gender ideologies have changed over time?
  - c. What evidence can we find in these episodes of how gender ideologies have not changed much over time?
- 2) One Day at Wake: Keep a notebook with you throughout an entire day on campus, from the time you wake up until you go to bed, everywhere you go. Write down any instance of inequality you observe around you, in terms of race, class, gender, sexual, or other group differences. Try to note both obvious and subtle examples of inequality. An obvious example would be hearing someone tell someone else they “throw like a girl.” Or using the disclaimer “no homo.” A more subtle example would be noticing who serves your lunch or picks up your trash, and noting their working conditions. You should make connections to relevant course readings throughout your paper, and will also turn in your notes. Do not invent examples that do not happen to you. Doing so would be considered falsification of data. This is both highly unethical, and a violation of the Honor Code.
- 3) A Day in the Life of your Wallet: Spend one day tracking just your purchases. Ideally, this will be a day when you make several purchases (you run errands of some kind, go clothes shopping, etc.—but please don’t take this as encouragement to engage in a spending spree—just take notes on purchases you WOULD have made anyway). Also log any dining purchases, that day, etc. Note how much you spend, where each product was purchased, and where each product was made/produced (within reason—i.e; if you buy 75 odds and ends at Target, pick a representative sample—alternatively, don’t do the assignment with too few items—make sure you have enough for an interesting analysis. Do this on a day when you are making normal consumer purchasing habits for you—i.e. if you don’t usually buy all organic-cotton locally produced clothing, don’t artificially do so today. In your paper, discuss:
- a. What identity considerations informed these buying decisions (what does the place you shopped at convey about you, what statement does the item you purchased help you make to others, etc.)?
  - b. What ecological impact are these purchases likely to have had? (Consider shipping, how much workers who made them were paid, the worker who sold it to you, profits, carbon emissions, etc.)
  - c. How easy or difficult would it have been for you to obtain all of these purchases from local producers, produced in “greener” ways, etc.? [If any of them already fit these criteria, go back to “a” and consider what that allows you to communicate to others about yourself!]

**Life Happens Project (10 Points):**

For a good chunk of the semester you will become a “family” with several of your classmates, and will be responsible for negotiating life within this family. Throughout the semester you will receive “Life Happens” cards, letting you know what challenges are facing your family that week and you will need to find ways to meet those challenges or life events with the resources you have available to you. At the end of the semester, you will give a group presentation on how well your family fared, and the impact of your family’s social situation upon its life chances. Your presentation should include connections to course material. Detailed instructions will be provided in class.

**Exams (20 points each):** There will be a midterm and final exam to ensure completion and comprehension of all course readings and lectures.

FINAL GRADING SCALE:

A 94-100	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66
A- 90-93	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62
B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F 0-59

REMEMBER: “C” IS SATISFACTORY!

Remember that an “A” grade is not given for good work that meets all requirements. An “A” grade represents exceptional and outstanding work that EXCEEDS expectations. A grade of “C” represents satisfactory work that meets minimum requirements. Keep this in mind as you interpret your scores.

LATE WORK:

Work that is submitted after the deadline will be reduced by the equivalent of one letter grade if it is submitted within the first week after the due date, and 2 letter grades if it is submitted more than one week, but less than 2 weeks late. Assignments received more than 2 weeks late will not be graded and will not receive course credit.

DISABILITIES AND ACCOMMODATIONS:

If you are a student with a documented disability and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this course, please contact the Learning Assistance Center (758-5929) and discuss this with me as soon as possible.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY AND STUDENT INTEGRITY:

Academic honesty and student integrity are of fundamental importance and **each student's work MUST be entirely their own**. In particular, students must be aware that **material (including ideas, phrases, sentences, etc.) taken from the internet and other sources MUST be placed in quotation marks and appropriately cited if used in any written work turned in for this, or any other class**. Also, students **will not be allowed to collaborate on work except by the specific permission of the instructor**. Failure to cite sources properly may result in a judicial referral being made to the appropriate university officials. The outcome of this action may involve academic and disciplinary sanctions, which could include (but are not limited to) such penalties as receiving no credit for the assignment in question, **failing or receiving no credit for the related course**, or suspension or **dismissal from the University**. A student that is in doubt about standards of academic honesty (regarding plagiarism, multiple submissions of written work, unacknowledged or unauthorized collaborative effort, false citation or false data) should consult the course instructor immediately.

Remember, all Wake Forest students have agreed to abide by the Honor Code:

The honesty, trustworthiness, and personal integrity of each student are integral to the life and purposes of the Wake Forest community. This statement is embodied in one of our oldest traditions, and that is the honor system (honor code). When a student signs an application for admission to Wake Forest, they agreed to live by the honor system at Wake Forest. In specific terms that means that you and every other student have **agreed not to deceive (lie to) any member of the community**, not to steal from one another, not to cheat on academic work, not to plagiarize academic work, and not to engage in any other forms of academic misconduct. **It means that we can trust each other**, and that we willingly **accept responsibility for our own conduct and activities**. This is a tradition that goes back to the founding of Wake Forest, and with your participation, it continues to be a cornerstone of our community and our interactions with one another.

## A NOTE ON DIVERSITY AND RESPECT:

All students are expected to treat one another courteously, politely and respectfully. While differing perspectives are inevitable and can help us all learn more deeply, all discussions should remain calm, thoughtful, and focused on *issues* not *people*. **Absolutely no bigotry, hate-talk, or otherwise rude or intolerant behavior or comments will be allowed**. If needed, you will be asked to leave the classroom.

### EMAIL AND “NETIQUETTE”:

I will at times need to communicate with you outside of class, and email will be my primary way of doing this. **Checking your Wake Forest email account at least once daily is a requirement of the course.** Email is also the best way to reach me. When we communicate over email, you should communicate professionally. While the proliferation of email, texting, and other forms of electronic missives give the impression of informality, this is often not appropriate in an academic setting. At Wake, you should always practice professional communication: Emails should begin with a salutation and be signed with your name. You should also be mindful of your tone, refrain from using shorthand/acronyms, and at least quickly check emails for typos/errors.

I may sometimes be able to respond to your email immediately, but please do not become upset if you do not hear from me within the hour. I may be away from the computer, completing another task, or we may not keep the same hours! **During the week I will make an effort to respond to all emails within 24 hours.** I will sometimes, but not always be available over the weekend. If you have not heard from me within 24-hours during the week (or by Monday afternoon if you contact me over the weekend), feel free to write again. If it has been only a few hours, or you contacted me on Saturday morning—**please be patient!**

**If you would like to discuss a substantive issue**—i.e.; your grade, questions about an assignment, or for clarity regarding a course reading, you should **sign-up for an office-hour slot—these are matters we should discuss in person!**

### LAPTOPS AND CELL PHONES:

**I do not permit laptops to be used in class**, as the temptation to check your email or social media is simply unavoidable. Dividing your attention between class and outside distractions is both **harmful to your learning in the course, and disrespectful** to your instructor and peers. If you are concerned about this issue, please speak with me. **CELL PHONES must be COMPLETELY turned OFF** as soon as you enter our classroom. Pretend you are on an airplane—before airplane mode came to be! **If you choose to text or otherwise engage with your phone in class, your participation grade will be immediately reduced by one full point. Do not let this happen to you!**

### HAVE FUN!

Okay, I cannot require you to have fun. But I hope this course will be an opportunity for you to enjoy the learning process, get excited about new ways of thinking about the world around you, and challenge you personally and academically. Please let me know what I can do to facilitate that process for you.



TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE:

PART ONE: FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS, PERSPECTIVES, AND METHODS
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Week 1: Course Introductions and the Sociological Imagination (August 26 and 28)

Read:

- Collins: Sociological Eye [Handout]
- Schwalbe: TSEL Chapter 1
- Cole and Brown: The Problem with Fair Trade Coffee [CP #1]

Week 2: Basic Theories (September 2 and 4)

Read:

- Angelo and Jerolmack: Nature's Looking Glass [CP #2]
- Schwalbe: Chapters 2, 3, And 7

Bring:

- One "social fact" with you to class

**Personal Reflection Essay Due**

Week 3: Doing Sociology: Research Methods (September 9 and 11)

Read:

- Schuman: Sense and Non-sense about surveys [CP #3]
- Weiss: In their own Words: Making the Most of Qualitative Interviews [CP #4]
- Pager: Blacks and Ex-cons need not Apply [CP #5]
- Smith-Lovin et. al.: The Ties that Bind are Fraying [CP #6]
- Desmond: Short excerpt from Introduction to On the Fireline [handout]

#### Week 4: Socialization (September 16 and 18)

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Read:

- Schwalbe: TSEL Chapter 5
- Lareau: Concerted Cultivation and the Accomplishment of Natural Growth [Handout]
- MacLeod: Teenagers in Clarendon Heights [CP #7 SCAN]

Bring:

- List of chores you were responsible for at home

#### Week 5: Culture (September 23 and 25)

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Read:

- Griswold: Culture and the Cultural Diamond [CP #8]
- Pugh: Consumption as Care and Belonging [CP #9]
- Kondo and Kahn: The Cultural Democracy Myth [CP #10]

#### Week 6: Identity and Social Interaction (September 30 and October 2)

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Read:

- Goffman: Impression Management [CP #11]
- Snow and Anderson: [CP #12]
- Way and Pascoe: Hearts of Boys [Handout] [Or Pascoe excerpt]
- Schor: The Overspent American: Chapter 1 [CP #13]

Bring:

- A symbol that you use to communicate something about you
- Your computer, to access you own or a [non Wake Forest] sibling or close friends' Facebook [or other online] profile.

#### Week 7: MIDTERM EXAM (October 7 and 9)

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**No new reading: Review Session Tuesday, Exam Thursday**

## PART TWO: SOCIAL INEQUALITY

### Week 8: Economic Inequality (October 14 and 16)

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Read:

- Vidal: Inequality and the growth of bad jobs [CP #14]
- Bessen-Casino: Cool stores, Bad Jobs [CP #15]
- Dodson: Families Facing Untenable Choices [CP #16]
- Ehrenreich: Introduction, Scrubbing in Maine, Afterword [CP #17]

Bring:

- Census data for your home community: Mean and Median income of Zip Code, City, and State [each]

### Week 9: Racial Inequality (October 21 and 23)

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Read:

- Omi and Winant: Racial Formations [CP #18]
- Brodtkin: How Jews Became White Folks [CP #19]
- McArdle: Sociologists on the Colorblind Question [CP #20]
- Western and Petit: Beyond Crime and Punishment: Prisons and Inequality [CP #21]

### Week 10: Gender and Sexual Inequality (October 28 and 30)

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Read:

- Hochschild: Second Shift: Preface, Chapters 1-3, and 1997 afterword [CP #22]
- Martin and Kazyak: Hetero-Romantic Love and Heterosexiness in Disney Films [CP #23]
- Levey Friedman: Tiger Girls on the Soccer Field [CP #24]

Week 11: The Reproduction of Inequality (November 4 and 6) VOTE!

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Read:

- MacLeod: Social Immobility in the Land of Opportunity [CP #25]
- Tyson: Course Selection and Race in the Age of “Laissez-Faire” Tracking [CP #26]
- Khan: Introduction: Democratic Inequality [CP #27]

Bring:

- Graduation Stats from your High School [If Private school, also bring stats from public school you would have otherwise attended.]

**INEQUALITY PROJECT DUE THURSDAY**

Week 12: Inequality and (In)Sustainability (November 11 and 13)

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Read:

- Krieg: Greenwashing [CP #28]
- Schor: From Consumer Boom to Ecological Bust [CP #29]
- Schor: Living Rich on a Troubled Planet [CP #30]

Week 13: Life Happens Presentations (November 18 and 20)

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Week 14: THANKSGIVING BREAK (November 25 and 27)

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**NO CLASS**

Week 15: Course Wrap-up (December 2 and 4)

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- Review Session and Course Wrap-Up

Second Personal Reflection Essay Due

FINAL EXAM:

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**2:00 PM December 10<sup>th</sup>**

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!

**\*\*The above schedule, content, and procedures in this course are subject to change as necessary in the event of unusual or extenuating circumstances.\*\***