

Introduction to Sociology (SYG 2000)

Katie Rainwater

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Virtual Office Hours (<https://fiu.zoom.us/j/5456764451> (Links to an external site.)):

Wednesdays 12 - 1pm

In-person Office Hours (SIPA 316B): Tuesdays 2-3pm; Thursdays 1 - 2PM; or by appointment

Course Description and Purpose

This course serves as an introduction to the discipline of sociology. You will be introduced to sociology in three respects. First, and most importantly, you'll learn what it means to think sociologically or deploy the sociological imagination. Sociologists search for patterns in human behavior and seek to understand the cultures, history, policies, social forces, and institutions that give rise to these patterns. Second, you'll be introduced to the methodologies and theories that sociologists use to make sense of the social world. Third, you'll be introduced to areas of sociological inquiry including race, and class; sociology of sex and gender; collective behavior and social movements; family; global and transnational sociology; inequality, poverty and mobility; labor and labor movements; and political sociology.

Sociologists study all facets of the social world. We can't possibly cover everything in a single semester! This course will focus on inequality in education. We will consider how inequality is produced and reproduced in educational institutions along axes of class, race, immigration status, gender, and sexual orientation. We'll also consider social movements that are attempting to address these inequalities through collective action. While educational inequality will be our focus, this is not a sociology of education course. Instead, we'll use educational inequality as a theme with which to learn how to think sociologically and to explore different areas of sociological inquiry. Sociology offers new ways to think about the familiar or the taken-for-granted. Together, we'll reconsider our experience in educational institutions (both at FIU and those which we attended prior to FIU) through the sociological imagination and through reflection on sociological scholarship.

Course Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Employ the sociological imagination to analyze society
2. Explain, critique, and interpret complex written arguments about inequality
3. Identify key substantive areas of sociological inquiry
4. Analyze social movements in K-12 and higher education

University Course Curriculum

This course satisfies the following University Core Curriculum requirement for Social Science Group Two (university-required):

Students will demonstrate the ability to examine behavioral, social, and cultural issues from a variety of points of view. Students will demonstrate an understanding of basic social and behavioral science concepts and principles used in the analysis of behavioral, social, and cultural issues, past and present, local and global.

It is supported by the following learning outcomes for the course:

1. Employ the sociological imagination to analyze society
2. Explain, critique, and interpret complex written arguments about inequality
3. Identify key substantive areas of sociological inquiry
4. Analyze social movements in K-12 and higher education

Course Communication and Office Hours

- Email: krainwat@fiu.edu
- Virtual Office Hours (<https://fiu.zoom.us/j/5456764451> (Links to an external site.)): Wednesdays 12 - 1pm or by appointment
In-person Office Hours (SIPA 316B): Tuesdays 2-3pm; Thursdays 1 - 2PM; or by appointment

Please get in touch via email if you have a logistical issue that you need to communicate. For discussion of course materials or assignments please come to my office hours.

Office hours are not only for students who are struggling with the material. (However, if you are having difficulties, please reach out sooner rather than later). I'm also here to help you engage more deeply with the readings, to recommend further readings, or to talk about applications of course material beyond school. So please stop by!

Readings and Digital Resources

There is no required textbook for this course. All readings are available to download on Canvas.

Assignments

Participation (20%)

The success of this class depends on the participation of ALL students. We each bring a unique perspective to this course and mutual learning occurs when we share our perspectives. Pedagogy research moreover indicates that class participation helps students in retaining knowledge and maintaining focus.

You are expected to attend class, to prepare for class by completing the readings, and to engage in class discussion about the readings. I will assess your participation grade based on the criteria we collectively determine. (More about this on the first day of class). *To make an A or B for your participation grade, it is **not** enough simply to come to class. You must actively participate in discussion about the readings.*

While I encourage all students to challenge themselves to take part in class discussion (and I have planned activities to facilitate participation), I recognize that students have varying levels of comfort speaking about new ideas or content in front of others. For this reason, you can also earn participation credit by contributing posts to an online discussion forum according to the directions specified on Canvas. To earn participation credit for a class, you must *attend* class and submit your discussion post within 24 hours of the class. Writing online discussion posts is **NOT** a substitute for class attendance. Rather, it is an option for students who have attended class but did not participate in class discussion. The Discussions tab on canvas provides further instruction for how to complete an online discussion post.

I will grade your participation twice during the semester: once at the semester's mid-point and once at the end of the semester. Your final participation grade will be an average of the two grades. I will also give you an (ungraded) assessment of your participation around the end of Week 3 or Week 4 so there is still time to make improvements before a grade is issued.

Exams (Final and Mid-term)(40% - 20% each)

Exams will be composed of essay questions and/or short answer questions. The mid-term will be held in class on October 11th. The final exam will be held during the final exam period for this class.

Written Assignments (40%)

You will be required to submit short written assignments about the course readings. These written assignments (there will be 15-20 for the semester) will be given in class on random days. The purpose of the assignments is to prepare you for class discussion by providing you with an opportunity to reflect on the reading that you have done in advance of class. Potential prompts for the short-written assignments include:

- What is the main idea of the reading?
- What evidence did the author give in support of their argument?
- What is a question that you have about the reading? (Something that you did not understand or something you would like to discuss more).
- Compare and/or contrast the argument in this reading to another reading in the course.

These assignments will be graded on a pass-fail basis. You can make up missed or failed in-class written assignments by completing at-home written assignments as described on

the assignment page. Note, the due date for these at-home written assignments will be before the class start time for the reading in question.

Course Policies

Before starting this course, please review the following pages:

- [Accessibility and Accommodations](#)
- [Academic Misconduct Statement](#)

Religious Holy Days

The University's policy on religious holy days as stated in the University Catalog and Student Handbook will be followed in this class. Any student may request to be excused from class to observe a religious holy day of his or her faith.

Statement on Academic Freedom

Academic freedom and responsibility are essential to the integrity of the University. The principles of academic freedom are integral to the conception of the University as a community of scholars engaged in the pursuit of truth and the communication of knowledge in an atmosphere of tolerance and freedom. The University serves the common good through teaching, research, scholarship/creative activities, and service. The fulfillment of these functions rests upon the preservation of the intellectual freedoms of teaching, expression, research, and debate. The University and UFF affirm that academic freedom is a right protected by this Agreement in addition to a faculty member's constitutionally protected freedom of expression and is fundamental to the faculty member's responsibility to seek and to state truth as he/she sees it.

Academic Honesty Statement

FIU defines academic misconduct in the Student Conduct and Honor Code (Code) as, "any act or omission by a Student, which violates the concept of academic integrity and undermines the academic mission of the University in violation of the Code." Code violations include, but are not limited to: academic dishonesty, bribery, cheating, commercial use, complicity, falsification, and plagiarism. The Code is available here: <https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/student-conduct-and-honor-code/index.php> (Links to an external site.)

A Note on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offense. **Don't do it.** The minimum penalty for plagiarism will be a zero on the assignment. I will pursue the case with the Office of Academic Integrity. The reason I take this so seriously is that plagiarism completely undermines our educational aims. You are expected to think for yourself in this class and passing off someone else's work as your own is the worst way to fail at this.

Not knowing what plagiarism is does not count as an excuse. Even quoting someone's definition of a term can count as plagiarism. Whenever you use someone else's wording, *you must put it in quotation marks and cite the source*. Do not use someone else's words as if they were your own.

If you are unsure, you should familiarize with the definition and the university's policy. Here is a list of things that count as plagiarism (the list is not exhaustive):

1. Using someone else's words without attribution (even for something as small as a definition). You are welcome to use someone else's words. Quoting other people is fine. Just put those words in quotation marks and *cite the source*.
2. Paraphrasing someone else's words. This even applies to assigned readings. Do not simply paraphrase something or replace words with synonyms. That's plagiarism.
3. Using someone else's ideas and arguments. Let's say you consult a secondary source. You do not steal their words or paraphrase them (so you are not breaking the rules mentioned above). But you take the structure of their argument and their ideas and you present them as your own. That's plagiarism.

Avoiding plagiarism is not hard. All you have to do is give credit to the source. Be very careful about consulting outside materials. If you do decide to use an outside source you **must** tell me about it by citing the source.

Names and pronouns

I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly and will support you in doing so as well.

Disability Services

FIU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students who require course accommodations are required to register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) by the beginning of the semester and to follow the DRC's procedures. Contact information:

- MMC, Graham Center 190, (305) 348-3532, email: drcupgl@fiu.edu
- BBC, Wolfe University Center 131, (305) 919-5345, email: drcbbc@fiu.edu

Grading Scheme

Letter	Range%	Letter	Range%	Letter	Range%
A	92.5 or above	B	82.5 - 87.4	C	70 - 77.4
A-	90 - 92.4	B-	80 - 82.5	D	60 - 69.4

Letter	Range%	Letter	Range%	Letter	Range%
B+	87.5 - 89.9	C+	77.5 - 79.5	F	59 or less