

# Syllabus: Basic Ideas of Sociology

## SYG 3002 RVC – SPRING 2022

Professor: Dr. Abby Gondek

CONTACT: Use Canvas e-mail only

**Class meeting time:** none, there will be [x] optional (extra credit) virtual office hours via zoom on Tuesdays

**Class location:** ONLINE

**Office hours:** by appointment (Tuesdays)

Global and Socio-cultural Studies office: SIPA 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

Phone number for SIPA main office: 305.348.2247

### Course Purpose and Objectives

The description of this course (according to the course catalog): The course introduces the student to the ideas of community, authority, status, alienation, and the sacred, as used in sociological literature.

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:

This course challenges the traditional sociological canon by emphasizing theorists and theories which may not always be taught in sociological theories courses. In **Part II**, you will investigate the colonial and imperial foundations of sociology and interrogate the ways that categories such as race, gender, sexuality and class have historically been foundational to the development of sociological concepts. In **Part III**, you will consider the histories of racism and sexism within the discipline of sociology and how these systems of power and oppression impacted the development of the sociology of race and gender and theories such as intersectionality. In **Part IV**, you will explore concepts that have traditionally been considered “core” to sociological theory (community, the sacred, authority, status, alienation), but we will approach them using the ways of thinking about race, class, gender, sexuality and colonialism that we have developed earlier in the course.

This course addresses the *FIU Global Learning Curriculum and Objectives* including **Global Perspectives, Global Awareness and Global Engagement**; these will be discussed throughout the syllabus.

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

Use creative modalities, especially digital technologies, to critically analyze dense texts, media and primary sources, reflect on your intellectual and personal consciousness, conduct ethnographic research, raise awareness and implement outreach about marginalized social theorists and theories with historical, global and local impact. You will be able to fluently express in multiple modalities their own interpretations of sociological theories and theorists.

## Approach to Teaching

### *Online participation, digital technologies and creative expression*

This course requires a high level of online engagement and experimentation/skill/willingness to explore with digital technologies. All assignments will be submitted through Canvas, including exams. For each assignment, you will always have multiple choices, so that you can have the opportunity to excel and use your strengths to build upon areas where you may experience challenges.

## Readings

All readings will be available via Canvas or through the internet. **You do not need to purchase any texts.** Readings are listed in the **Weekly Schedule** and will be accessible from Canvas either through pdf documents to download or through links to specific websites. You are required to complete readings *by TUESDAY* for the week they are listed in the Weekly Schedule. You are permitted and encouraged to work together to complete readings and to collaborate to critically analyze texts using a format that I will provide- Argument, Organization, Evidence (AOE).

## Course Policies

### *Late work policy*

Late work is accepted but with a late **penalty of 10% per day**. After 10 days have passed the assignment will not be accepted.

If there is a serious issue that comes up such as a death in the family or a serious illness in which you are hospitalized, you will be required to show proof or documentation of this circumstance. You must get a dated doctor's note indicating how long you should be excused from schoolwork. **Please do not falsify documents.** If you do not provide evidence, proof, or documentation, an extension will not be provided. If extension is granted, I will discuss with you the due date. It is up to my discretion to grant the extension. I will take into consideration your previous performance in the course, and previous completion of assignments, when deciding whether to give you an extension.

Typically, only one extension will be granted per student, per semester and only for serious issues as described above.

### *Academic Conduct and Plagiarism*

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and to honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning.

Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the [Student Handbook](#).

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else's ideas and work and using it as your own. Be very careful when researching on the Internet. Always consider the source of the material, and make sure to explicitly cite the website from which you gathered the information using the correct formatting. Plagiarism not only relates to cheating off the Internet, but also to how you use information from books, articles, etc. If you do not correctly cite information from print sources, you are plagiarizing. If you have questions about what might be considered plagiarism, please ask. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- Papers acquired online or from other sources (and that you claim you wrote yourself);
- Copying of original material without attribution (incorrect citation);
- Use of other students' work;
- Copying and pasting, verbatim, information from Internet sources, without quotation marks and correct citation.

Additionally, **do not**:

- Submit the same assignment or a version of a previous assignment that you completed in another course for this course.
- Use another student's work, change out some of the words for synonyms, and submit it as your own.
- Use quotations longer than 3-4 lines. If 30% or more of your submission is made up of quotes, this is not your original work.

**Turn-it-in** will be used to verify the originality of your assignments. Similarity % should be lower than 25%. Additionally, I will analyze each submission for similarity to other students' work, even if your similarity percentage is below 25%.

### *Course Ground Rules*

You will have the chance to add to these during the first virtual class meeting when we discuss ground rules.

- Follow through on what you say you will do with group members and with your instructor. Do not lie, omit, or mislead your instructor or your team members. Do not falsify documents.
- Please be aware of the language you use in the online classroom environment including in your assignments and in conversations with team/group members. Racist, sexist, homophobic and other offensive comments do not contribute to creating a safe space. Should any questionable remarks be made, we will address these as a class. Also, if any student has made a remark that you think falls into this category, but the remark was not made in a public forum but instead in a small group setting, please let me know privately so that we can appropriately address the issue. Thus, you should be aware that you will consistently be asked to question your own assumptions, privileges, prejudices and areas that lack understanding or where there is misunderstanding.
- In some sources, you may find reference to racial slurs, or derogatory language towards racial, gender or sexual minorities. In no circumstance should you state these racial slurs aloud or re-type them unless you are using quotation marks and are quoting directly from the text (for example the n-word or derogatory terms toward LGBTQ+ people). If you are speaking from your own voice and point of view and wish to refer to how these words are used, you should use asterisks or dashes.

### *Disability Statement:*

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) collaborates with university faculty to provide inclusive learning environments. If you have a disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, additional information may be found in the *DRC's website: [drc.fiu.edu](http://drc.fiu.edu)*. Also, please draw this to my attention at the very beginning of the semester and be sure to inform me of your specific accommodations.

In addition, I am a former Special Education (and Social Studies) public school teacher and earned a master's degree in Teaching Urban Adolescents with Disabilities. Because of this training and experience, it is highly important to me to ensure that every student (even those who do not have disabilities or do not identify as having disabilities) can access and understand the materials in the course, complete assignments that utilize multiple modalities and emphasize student choice and strengths. If you have ideas for how course materials and assignments can be more accessible for you and/or other students, please let me know right away.

### **Grading**

Detailed **assignment instructions and grading criteria** can be found within each assignment's respective submission location in the "Assignments" and "Modules" sections in canvas.

This course relies primarily upon self-evaluation and peer evaluation for grading and feedback, with a focus on grading rubrics. This is part of my educational philosophy discussed in the introductory video and the introductory ppt. Students are teachers too; your life experiences and previous knowledge are valued. By centering grading and feedback around self-evaluation and peer evaluation, you have more power over your learning and become more conscious of your learning process, your strengths and areas where you would like to develop. You will create your assignments using the grading rubric, revise them based on this rubric and submit your self-evaluation with your assignments. You will also be responsible for submitting peer reviews of the work of 2 other students, and will receive reviews of your work from 2 other students. You will need to use the grading rubrics and provide detailed comments on each criterion of the rubric in your self-evaluations and peer evaluations.

When you submit your self-evaluation, you will specify if there are specific questions you still have about the assignment, content, or structure, and if there are specific aspects of your assignment that you would like to receive feedback about.

Your grade on each assignment will be determined through your self-evaluation, peer reviews you complete and receive, as well as my own evaluation using the rubric.

- 25% of your grade on each assignment will be based on my assessment using the rubric.
- 25% of your grade will be based on your self-evaluation using the grading rubric and how thoroughly you completed the self-assessment.
- 25% of your grade will be based on the peer evaluations you **receive**. *If peers do not complete the peer review, my grade will be used for this part of your grade.*
- 25% of your grade will be based on your level of detail in the peer reviews you complete for 2 other students.

When you are evaluating yourself, you are not requesting a specific grade, but rather you are assessing how well you met each criterion in the rubric and justifying each of these decisions with a narrative explanation. You should never demand a specific grade on an assignment or the final grade. You must always explain how you met each of the objectives described in the instructions for the assignment. As part of my educational philosophy, I want students to have high expectations of themselves, submit your best possible work, and be innovative and creative, so that when you answer the self-evaluation questions and grade yourself using the rubric, you can be proud of what you have accomplished.

If you are concerned about your grade, please discuss this with me as soon as possible, so that we can work together to make sure you receive a grade that you deserve and are satisfied with. Be pro-active and check your grades regularly; I update my gradebook weekly. If you notice something that looks incorrect, bring it to my attention right away. **Never** wait until the end of the semester to discuss your grade. Especially do not wait until after the final exam period has ended and instructors are submitting grades.

Additionally, I will be dropping the lowest grade in each of these weighted categories. This means that you can choose to either: (1) complete all assignments in each category and then

have the lowest score dropped or (2) do not complete one of the required assignments in each category and that 0 score will be dropped.

The exceptions to this rule are: (1) outreach, (2) course evaluation, (3) syllabus quiz and (4) **final exam**. These grades will **not** be dropped, so make sure to complete those because if you receive a 0 on those, you will keep that 0.

### *Weighted Grading Categories*

Quizzes (4), Exams (3), Course Evaluation (1) 30%  
Critical reading analysis & Primary source analysis 30%  
Interview, Participant observation, Outreach 40%

\*All of these assignments are explained in great detail below in the section called “Description of course assignments”

### **Description of course assignments/projects**

#### *Critical Reading Analysis*

Critical reading analysis responses will be due **in weeks 1, 2, or 4** depending on which group you sign up for (**you must sign up for your group in week 1**). The goal is for you to practice grappling with dense texts related to the sociological theories and theorists we will be discussing. This assignment meets the **“Global awareness”** objective: Through critical reading analysis, students will be able to examine the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural sociological theories.

You will be asked to break one of the assigned texts for that week down in order to assess its **main argument, organizational structure and types of evidence it uses** (AOE). *You will be provided with examples and will be able to watch tutorials for how to do this.*

*Week 1: Groups 1-2* (available until Week 2 without a late penalty)

*Week 2: Groups 3-4*

*Week 4: Groups 5-6*

This assignment should be at least 500 words.

#### *Primary source analysis*

This meets the **“global perspectives”** objective: Through the Primary Source Analysis, students will be able to conduct a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and

Point Range	Letter Grade
94-100	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
70-76	C
60-69	D
0-59	F

intercultural problems. Students will analyze the intersectional positionality of the author of the primary source, how the author was influenced by their ideological, political and socioeconomic contexts/networks, and what kind of audience and impact/relevance this primary source may have had historically and now. You will evaluate the local, national and global/transnational relevance of this sociologist's theorizing.

This will be due during **Weeks 3, 5, or 7**. You will be provided with a chart to help you begin your analysis. *You will be able to see examples of how to develop these.* The primary source you are assigned and the week it is due is based on your group # (sign up in the "collaborations" document).

What are primary sources?

<https://sccollege.edu/Library/Pages/primarysources.aspx>

Week 3: Groups 1-2

Week 5: Groups 3-4

Week 7: Groups 5-6

This assignment should be at least 500 words.

*Interview, participant observation and outreach*

You will complete 1 interview (15 minutes), and 30 minutes of participant observation ("fieldwork notes"). *We will practice both of these research methods before these assignments are due.* You will be provided with specific guidelines for both types of ethnographic research. These interviews and participant observation will be based upon the themes in the week they are assigned.

This assignment meets the "**global engagement**" objective by conducting outreach and raising awareness about the sociological issues discussed in the weeks in which you complete your interview and participant observation. Students will be able to demonstrate a willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving.

The interview should include at least 5 questions and must last a **total of 15 minutes**. If you choose you can interview multiple people as long as your total amount of time is 15 minutes. You must submit the audio or video files, a corrected transcript of the interview, your 5 open-ended interview questions, and coding of the interview for at least 4-5 themes. **You must also analyze the interview using 3 course readings.**

You will take fieldwork notes using a specific kind of format (jottings, description, analysis, reflection= JDAR) and code those notes for 4-5 themes. Each of these sections should be at least 1 page (double spaced) for a total of 4 double spaced pages. **The analysis section should incorporate at least 3 course readings.**

Once you complete your interview and/or participant observation fieldnote, you will share them with your selected community and collect their feedback. You have to provide evidence that you have received feedback from at least **5 people** outside of our class. You will also need to reflect on that outreach and feedback with reference to at least 3 course readings.

- Interview is due Week 9, 10, 11
- Participant observation is due Week 12, 13, 14.
- Outreach is due Week 14, 15, 16

The following chart details the due dates for each group for each of these three assignments.

Group number	Interview	Participant Observation	Outreach
1-2	Week 9	Week 12	Week 14
3-4	Week 10	Week 13	Week 15
5-6	Week 11	Week 14	Week 16

\*Please note that you are permitted to conduct this ethnographic research online because it is an online course.

### *Exams & quizzes*

There will be three exams. All exams will be taken online and will therefore be open book, open note and collaborative. You are allowed to work with other students. These tests are designed to be learning tools and you can use them to help you better understand readings, class discussions, lectures, activities, films, etc. Exams must be taken **before Tuesday of the week they are assigned** and will be open for approximately 1 week prior to the due date, and students will have 3 attempts. These will only contain true/false, multiple choice, multiple answer, matching, and multiple dropdown types of questions and no essay questions.

There will be quizzes that will test students' knowledge of the readings for weeks in-between the Exams. The questions from the quizzes will also be used for the Exams.

Quiz or Exam #	What it covers	When it will be due
Quiz 1	Syllabus	Week 1
Quiz 2	Weeks 1-2	Week 2
Exam 1	Weeks 1-4	Week 4
Quiz 3	Weeks 5-6	Week 6
Exam 2	Weeks 1-9	Week 9
Quiz 4	Weeks 10-12	Week 12
Exam 3	Weeks 1-14	Week 15



*Course evaluation*

**During week 15** of the semester, students will submit proof that they have completed the course evaluation called SPOTS (Student Perceptions of Teaching Survey) via [my.fiu.edu](https://my.fiu.edu). These evaluations are part of your Exam grade. I use these evaluations in order to change the course for future semesters, so provide constructive feedback that is honest and professional.