

# SOC 100: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

Fall 2023

Class: Mon & Wed 4:00-5:30pm

Room: Modern Languages Building (MLB), Auditorium 3

Instructor: Professor Robert Jansen ([rsjansen@umich.edu](mailto:rsjansen@umich.edu))

Office: LSA 4222

Open Office Hours: Tue & Wed 10:00-10:45am, via Zoom (see Canvas)

Private Meetings (for matters requiring confidentiality): Email for appointment

*\* I will communicate with the class via Canvas announcements, so be sure that you are set up to receive notifications and that you check the site regularly.*

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology is the systematic study of the relationship between individuals and the social worlds that they produce, inhabit, and sometimes change. This course is designed to introduce you to sociology both as a field of scholarship and as a mode of inquiry. That is, it is meant not only to acquaint you with academic knowledge about the social world, but, more critically, to teach you to think like a sociologist. The analytical focus will range from face-to-face interaction to large-scale social institutions and processes; and the topics will speak to key sociological themes like social identities and inequalities, the mechanisms of social reproduction, and the dynamics of social change.

Whether you're aware of it or not, everyone will be coming into this class with their own "folk theories" about how social life operates. This is perfectly normal. Indeed, the fact that human beings navigate their social worlds based on what are often implicit and *ad hoc* theories of the social is *itself* a well-documented sociological finding. This course will provide you with the tools to be more aware of your own social assumptions and to interrogate these critically on the basis of sound evidence. But doing this will require that you adopt a reflexive stance, keep an open mind, think critically about the information and positions that you encounter, and, when appropriate, revise your understandings of the social world. Only *you* can decide to take ownership of this critical aspect of the learning process. Your GSIs and I can't do it for you, although we can provide guidance and support.

Thus—whether this is the only sociology course that you will ever take, or the first of many—my goals for you are the same: that by the end of the term, you will have made a valiant attempt at preliminary engagement with the cutting edge of sociological research across a wide range of topics; and, more importantly, that you will have developed and honed some basic tools for seeing the social world around you in a new way.

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<sup>1</sup> *Acknowledgements:* Similar course offerings by Rogers Brubaker, Pablo Gastón, Chad Alan Goldberg, Sandy Levitsky, Bill Roy, and Gay Seidman have influenced the content of this syllabus.

## ENROLLMENT/ WAITLIST

This course is already as large as we can responsibly manage, so no overrides will be granted to waitlisted students who are not placed through natural attrition (i.e., through other students dropping). If you are on the waitlist, you should attend lecture and section so that you will not be behind if you secure a slot; but be aware that not all waitlisted students will find a place. If you are enrolled but thinking about dropping, please make your decision as quickly as possible, out of consideration for your peers on the waitlist.

If you join the class or switch into a section late, it is your responsibility to meet with your GSI to see what you must do to make up any missed material, assignments, or section points. Depending on your circumstances, it may not be possible to make up everything you've missed.

## LECTURES AND SECTIONS

This course has two major components: my lectures and the section meetings led by your Graduate Student Instructor (GSI). Out of consideration for other students, as well as for your instructor, please make sure you that you arrive to both lecture and section *on time* and do not leave early.

My lectures will not simply go over the readings. Rather, they are an integral part of the course. They will cover material that is not in the readings; and they will also sometimes include film clips that may be difficult to obtain outside of class. Everything that happens during lecture time may be included on the exams. Lecture slides will be posted shortly before class, so that you may take notes on them if you like; but be aware that I use these slides in a fairly clean/minimalist way to structure my presentation of information and to help you to keep one eye on the big picture—so you will still need to take extensive lecture notes on your own. I will never hold you past 5:20; but be advised that lectures will begin *promptly* at 4:00 and you are expected to be in your seat prepared to start by that time.

Sections meet once a week and are an equally important part of the course. They focus on sharpening and deepening your understanding of the readings, clarifying issues raised in lecture, and developing reading strategies and writing skills. The GSIs are *not*, however, expected to prepare lectures or to summarize the readings for you. Your GSI will be taking attendance at section meetings; and 25% of your final grade will depend on your attendance, active participation in section discussions, and a *memo requirement* that your GSI will explain.

## READINGS

The readings for this course are all listed in the Course Schedule (below). You are expected to complete all of the readings under a given date *before* that day's lecture. From years of experience, I can tell you that there is no such thing as "just falling a little behind." If you start to fall behind on the readings, you will find that you get *much less* out of the lectures and section discussions—and that the negative consequences will compound quickly. For your own sake, keep up with the readings! (And if you *do* start to fall behind, reach out to your GSI sooner, rather than later, so that they can help you devise a plan to get back on track.)

All of the readings are fair game for exams. While lectures and sections will discuss key points from the readings, they will also be focused on contextualizing the readings and applying their arguments and perspectives to other cases. Neither I nor your GSIs will be presenting exhaustive summaries of the texts themselves. If you have trouble with parts of the readings that are not addressed in lecture or section, it is your responsibility to ask questions—and you will only be prepared to do this if you have done the readings beforehand.

There are no required textbooks or readers for this course. All readings may be downloaded from the course website via Canvas, where they are listed under each lecture's "Module." I strongly recommend that you budget some of the money you'll be saving on books for *printing*. It's my experience that you'll engage the material on a deeper level if you have a paper copy in hand. That said: I understand that you may be more comfortable working from a screen than I am, and/or that the cost of printing may be an issue for you. If you choose not to print the readings, check in with yourself from time to time to make sure that (1) you're reading as thoroughly on the screen as you would be on paper; (2) you have as good a system in place for taking notes as you would have if you had printed out the readings; and (3) you are able to access the readings as easily in class as you would otherwise. *Whether electronically or on paper, it is imperative that you bring a copy of the weekly readings to both lecture and section.* If you opt electronic, please remember that *I do not tolerate non-academic uses of electronic devices* (see below).

## SHORT PAPERS

You will be required to write two short papers for this class (750-1,000 words each). The first will require you to conduct either field observations or a life history interview and to analyze the results from a sociological perspective, based on readings from one of the first two substantive class sessions. This paper will be due at **5:00pm on Friday, October 6**, and is worth 15% of your final grade. The second paper involves leveraging sociological theories, concepts, or findings to write an editorial essay (i.e., like a newspaper op-ed) on a contemporary event or issue of your choice. This paper will be due at **5pm on Friday, November 17**, and is worth 20% of your final grade. Detailed instructions for each assignment will be posted on Canvas and discussed in lecture. Late papers will be marked down by 1/2 of a letter grade for each day late.

## EXAMINATIONS

There will be two examinations, corresponding with the first and second halves of the course. Each will be administered asynchronously via Canvas and will be worth 20% of your final grade. Each will be written to be reasonably do-able in an hour-and-a-half, but I'll give you a full three hours, just in case. The first exam will be available for you to take anytime between **8:00am and 11:59pm on October 23**; the second will be available from **8:00am on December 6 through 11:59pm on December 8**. (Note that lectures have been canceled on Oct 23 and Dec 6 so that you may utilize this block of pre-scheduled time for the exams, if you like.)

The exams will cover the readings *and* lectures; this may include parts of the readings not covered in lecture and parts of the lectures not represented in the readings. Any videos or clips shown in class are also fair game; and while some of these are available online, a few may not be. A study guide will be distributed about one week before each exam; and there will be a review day in lecture before each, as well. (Please note that the second exam is *not* cumulative but will focus only on material covered after the first exam.)

**GRADING SUMMARY**

In sum, your grade will be calculated as follows:

Paper 1	15%
Exam 1	20%
Paper 2	20%
Exam 2	20%
Section	25%

Overall Grade Scale (min % for each letter grade):

A+	97%
A	93%
A-	90%
B+	87%
B	83%
B-	80%
C+	77%
C	73%
C-	70%
D+	67%
D	63%
D-	60%
E	0%

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

\* Note: you should make every effort to do the readings for a given date *before* that day's lecture, and in the order in which they are listed. (There's often a reason for the order!)

**UNIT 1. WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY?**

**August 28: Introduction**  
(no readings assigned)

**August 30: The Sociology of Everyday Life**  
***Seeing the strange in the familiar, and the familiar in the strange***

Miner, Horace. 1956. "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema." *American Anthropologist* 58(3):503-507.

Berger, Peter L. 1963. "Sociology as a Form of Consciousness." Pp. 25-33 in *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective*. New York: Anchor Books.

Goffman, Erving. 2012 [1955]. "On Face Work." Pp. 185-192 in *Readings for Sociology, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.*, edited by Garth Massey. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

**September 4: \*\*\* NO LECTURE \*\*\* (Labor Day)**  
(no readings assigned)

**September 6: The Sociological Imagination**  
***Grasping the connections between (personal) biography and (social-structural) history***

Mills, C. Wright. 2011 [1959]. "The Promise" (excerpt from *The Sociological Imagination*). Pp. 1-6 in *The Practical Skeptic: Readings in Sociology, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.*, edited by Lisa J. McIntyre. New York: McGraw Hill.

Romero, Mary. 2010 [1992]. "An Intersection of Biography and History: My Intellectual Journey." Pp. 19-33 in *Mapping the Social Landscape: Readings in Sociology, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.*, edited by Susan J. Ferguson. New York: McGraw Hill.

**September 11: The Science of Sociology**  
***Evaluating evidence and assessing arguments about the social world***

Best, Joel. 2001. "The Importance of Social Statistics." Pp. 9-29 in *Damned Lies and Statistics: Untangling Numbers from the Media, Politicians, and Activists*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Schuman, Howard. 2002. "Sense and Nonsense about Surveys." *Contexts* 1(2):40-47.

Adler, Patricia A., and Peter Adler. 2003. "The Promise and Pitfalls of Going Into the Field." *Contexts* 2(2):41-47.

**UNIT 2. THE STRUCTURATION OF SOCIETY**

**September 13: Identity and Inequality: An Introduction**  
***Unpacking the relationship between "who is what?" and "who gets what?"***

Massey, Douglas S. 2007. Pp. 1-7 and 242-245 in *Categorically Unequal: The American Stratification System*. New York: Russell Sage.

Fischer, Claude S., Michael Hout, Martín Sánchez Jankowski, Samuel R. Lucas, Ann Swidler, and Kim Voss. 2008 [1996]. "Inequality by Design." Pp. 49-52 in *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., edited by David B. Grusky. Philadelphia: Westview Press.

### **September 18: Citizenship & National Identity (part 1)**

#### ***The social construction of national identity through immigration and citizenship policy***

Sachar, Ayelet. 2009. "The Puzzle of Birthright Citizenship." Pp. 1-18 in *The Birthright Lottery: Citizenship and Global Inequality*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.  
 Massey, Douglas S. 2015. "How a 1965 Immigration Reform Created Illegal Immigration." *The Washington Post* (September 25).

### **September 20: Citizenship & National Identity (part 2)**

#### ***How conceptions of national identity and belonging shape inequalities***

Abrego, Leisy J. 2019. "Relational Legal Consciousness of U.S. Citizenship: Privilege, Responsibility, Guilt, and Love in Latino Mixed-Status Families." *Law & Society Review* 53(3):641-666.

### **September 25: Social Class (part 1)**

#### ***The structure of American class relations (and the myth of a "classless" society)***

Wright, Erik Olin and Joel Rogers. 2015. *American Society: How it Really Works* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). W.W. New York: Norton & Co. Pp. 10-25 and 257-266.  
 Loewen, James. 2011 [1995]. "The Land of Opportunity." Pp. 317-326 in *The Practical Skeptic: Readings in Sociology* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.), edited by Lisa J. McIntyre. New York: McGraw Hill.

### **September 27: Social Class (part 2)**

#### ***How class relations produce and reproduce inequalities***

Domhoff, G. William. 2008 [2002]. "Who Rules America? Power and Politics." Pp. 290-295 in *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., edited by David B. Grusky. Philadelphia: Westview Press.  
 Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2010 [1999]. "Nickel-and-Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America." Pp. 282-295 in *Mapping the Social Landscape: Readings in Sociology* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.), edited by Susan J. Ferguson. New York: McGraw Hill.

### **October 2: Race & Ethnicity (part 1)**

#### ***The social construction of racial and ethnic identities***

Haney López, Ian F. 1995 [1994]. "The Social Construction of Race." Pp. 163-172 in *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*, edited by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

### **October 4: Race & Ethnicity (part 2)**

#### ***The production and reproduction of racial and ethnic inequalities***

Desmond, Matthew and Mustafa Emirbayer. 2010. Pp. 150-170 in *Racial Domination, Racial Progress: The Sociology of Race in America*. New York: McGraw Hill.

**\*\*\* October 6: PAPER 1 DUE (by 5pm, via Canvas) \*\*\***

**October 9: Gender (part 1)*****The social construction of gender identities***

West, Candace, and Don H. Zimmerman. 2000 [1987]. "Doing Gender." Pp. 131-148 in *The Gendered Society Reader*, edited by Michael Kimmel. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Specia, Megan, and Emile Ducke. 2022. "War Brings Ukraine's Women New Roles and Dangers." *New York Times* (August 27).

**October 11: Gender (part 2)*****The production and reproduction of gender inequalities***

Martin, Karin A. 1998. "Becoming a Gendered Body: Practices of Preschools." *American Sociological Review* 63(4):494-511.

England, Paula. 2008. "Devaluation and the Pay of Comparable Male and Female Occupations." Pp. 834-837 in *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., edited by David B. Grusky. Philadelphia: Westview Press.

**October 16: \*\*\* NO LECTURE \*\*\* (Fall Break)**

(no readings assigned)

**October 18: Review Session**

(no readings assigned)

**October 23: \*\*\* EXAM 1 \*\*\***

Administered asynchronously via Canvas

Time limit: 3 hrs (although likely will take you less than 90 mins)

Opens: 8:00am

Closes: 11:59pm

(note: no meeting during lecture time today)

**UNIT 3. MECHANISMS OF SOCIAL REPRODUCTION****October 25: Social Institutions: An Introduction*****How the organization of social life reproduces social structures over time***

(no readings assigned)

**October 30: Family*****The institution of the family and its role in social reproduction***

Coontz, Stephanie. 2010 [1992]. "The Way We Wish We Were: Defining the Family Crisis" (excerpt). Pp. 143-148 in *Conflicting Interests: Readings in Social Problems and Inequality*, edited by Robert Heiner. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lareau, Annette. 2010 [2002]. "Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families." Pp. 611-626 in *Mapping the Social Landscape: Readings in Sociology*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Susan J. Ferguson. New York: McGraw Hill

Gerson, Kathleen. 2015. "Falling Back on Plan B: The Children of the Gender Revolution Face Uncharted Territory." Pp. 154-166 in *Readings for Sociology* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.), edited by Garth Massey. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

**November 1: Education*****The institution of education and its role in social reproduction***

- Kozol, Jonathan. 2011. "The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America." Pp. 297-302 in *Crisis in American Institutions* (14<sup>th</sup> ed.), edited by Jerome H. Skolnick and Elliott Currie. Boston: Pearson.
- Hamilton, Laura, and Elizabeth A. Armstrong. 2012. "The (Mis)education of Monica and Karen." *Contexts* 11(4):23-27.
- Granfield, Robert. 2010 [1991]. "Making It by Faking It: Working-Class Students in an Elite Academic Environment." Pp. 123-135 in *Mapping the Social Landscape: Readings in Sociology*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Susan J. Ferguson. New York: McGraw Hill.

**November 6: Economy*****The institution of the (capitalist) economy and its role in social reproduction***

- Wright, Erik Olin and Joel Rogers. 2015. "The Capitalist Market: How it Actually Works." Pp. 49-70 in *American Society: How it Really Works* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). W.W. New York: Norton & Co.
- Cech, Erin. 2021. *The Trouble with Passion: How Searching for Fulfillment at Work Fosters Inequality*. Oakland: University of California Press. Pp. 1-4, 127-135, and 147-155.

**November 8: Law*****The institution of the legal system and its role in social reproduction***

- Frohmann, Lisa. 2014. "Convictability and Discordant Locales: Reproducing Race, Class, and Gender Ideologies in Prosecutorial Decisionmaking." Pp. 35-41 in *The Law and Society Reader II*, edited by Erik Larson and Patrick Schmidt. New York: New York University Press.
- Western, Bruce, and Becky Pettit. 2010. "Incarceration and Social Inequality." *Daedalus*. 139(3):8-18.

**November 13: Culture*****The institution of the art world and its role in social reproduction***

- Halle, David. 1992. "The Audience for Abstract Art: Class, Culture, and Power." Pp. 131-147 in *Cultivating Differences: Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequality*, edited by Michèle Lamont and Marcel Fournier. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Zolberg, Vera. 1992. "Barrier or Leveler? The Case of the Art Museum." Pp. 187-205 in *Cultivating Differences: Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequality*, edited by Michèle Lamont and Marcel Fournier. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

**November 15: Writing Workshop (\*\*\*)OPTIONAL(\*\*\*)**

(no readings assigned)

- \* To participate, bring a rough draft of your second paper to class (printed or electronic)  
If you have a rough draft of your second paper by the time of this lecture, come to a workshop led by Prof. Jansen on how to revise it to make it stronger—learning revision skills that should be useful in future classes (and careers!) as well.  
If you do not yet have a draft of your second paper, use this time to write!

**\*\*\* November 17: PAPER 2 DUE (by 5pm, via Canvas) \*\*\***



**UNIT 4: DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL CHANGE****November 20: Gradual Social Change*****Tectonic shifts and slow-moving trends in American social life***

Harper, Charles L., and Kevin T. Leicht. 2019. "American Social Trends." Pp. 72-86 in *Exploring Social Change: America and the World*. New York: Routledge.

Alwin, Duane F. 2010 [2002]. "Generations X, Y, and Z: Are They Changing America?" Pp. 301-309 in *Everyday Sociology: Reader*, edited by Karen Sternheimer. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

**November 22: \*\*\* NO LECTURE \*\*\* (Thanksgiving Recess)**

(no readings assigned)

**November 27: Rapid Social Change*****How the government, corporations, social movements, and experts actively produce social change***

Konefal, Jason. 2014. "Forces of Social Change." Pp. 219-20 and 226-45. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**November 29: Taking Responsible Social Action*****The power of sociological thinking to advance social change***

Johnson, Allan G. 2010 [1997]. "What Can We Do? Becoming Part of the Solution." Pp. 649-660 in *Mapping the Social Landscape: Readings in Sociology, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.*, edited by Susan J. Ferguson. New York: McGraw Hill.

Collins, Randall. 2011 [1998]. "The Sociological Eye and Its Blinders." Pp. 397-402 in *The Practical Skeptic: Readings in Sociology, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.*, edited by Lisa J. McIntyre. New York: McGraw Hill.

**December 4: Review Session**

(no readings assigned)

**December 6: \*\*\* EXAM 2 \*\*\***

Administered asynchronously via Canvas

Time limit: 3 hrs (although likely will take you less than 90 mins)

Opens: December 6, 8:00am

Closes: December 8, 11:59pm

(note: no meeting during lecture time today)

## OTHER INFORMATION

**(1) COVID-19 and other illness-related disruptions:** If you're feeling sick in any way, *please do not come to class!* If you miss lecture, there is no need to inform me or your GSI; all lectures will be recorded and posted to Canvas for this purpose, so you should just view the lecture as soon as you're able. If you miss section, please reach out to your GSI and follow their section policies for making sure you stay caught up. If your illness impacts your ability to submit one of your paper assignments on time, extensions will be granted to those who request one *before* the deadline. (A Google Form will be provided for this purpose.) If your illness impacts your ability to take either of the exams during their scheduled time windows, email me and we will make alternative arrangements.

**(2) Mental Health and Well-Being:** If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 734-764-8312 and <https://caps.umich.edu>. You may also consult University Health Service (UHS) at 734-764-8320 and <https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs>, or for alcohol or drug concerns, see <https://www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources>. We are committed to helping you work through this course in a way that helps your learning, while recognizing the difficulty of the circumstances. If you are falling behind and need support with catching up, please reach out to me and/or your GSI as soon as possible, and we will work with you to figure out a catch-up plan.

**(3) Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The University of Michigan recognizes disability as an integral part of diversity and is committed to creating an inclusive and equitable educational environment for students with disabilities. Students who are experiencing a disability-related barrier should contact Services for Students with Disabilities <https://ssd.umich.edu/>; 734-763-3000 or [ssdoffice@umich.edu](mailto:ssdoffice@umich.edu)). For students who are connected with SSD, accommodation requests can be made in Accommodate. If you have any questions or concerns please contact your SSD Coordinator or visit SSD's Current Student webpage. Please let me and your GSI know within the *first two weeks of class* if you would benefit from such an accommodation.

**(4) Electronic Device Use in the Classroom:** While digital technologies certainly have their advantages—including for academic work—there are at least three significant problems with their use in a class of this nature. *First*, a growing mountain of research shows that you learn better when your attention is free of distractions and you are processing information *actively* (as you do when writing notes longhand). This is hard to do, especially these days; but the first step is freeing yourself from the temptation to drift, as well as from the ability of others to electronically interrupt you (like when you get a text or notification). *Second*, you may not realize it, but when you are browsing online, you are likely distracting the people behind and around you, who are *themselves* trying valiantly to stay focused. That is, it's disrespectful to your fellow students. (This isn't coming from me, but from countless of your peers over the years!) *Third*, I can often tell—even from the front of the room—when you are distracted by web surfing, texting, etc., especially if it gets to the point where it is negatively impacting the people around you. This then becomes distracting *to me*, and I become a worse teacher for everyone.

It's for these reasons that I maintain a strict policy that electronic devices must be used *for academic purposes only* (and otherwise put securely away). Laptops may be used *only* for note taking and for consulting the readings; and cell phones should be silenced and put completely away so that you're not distracted by incoming texts and notifications. (If you need to keep your phone on for a family emergency or similar reasons, that's of course acceptable, but please be discrete.)

**(5) ChatGPT:** While there are many legitimate and constantly evolving uses for ChatGPT (and other generative AI technologies), none are acceptable for the purposes of this class. In particular, use of such technologies for writing your memos, your papers, or your exam answers is a violation of academic integrity and will be treated accordingly (see below).

**(6) Academic Integrity:** All academic work for this course must meet the University of Michigan's standards of academic integrity. Students are responsible for informing themselves about these standards before performing any academic work (see: <https://www.lib.umich.edu/academic-integrity>). To protect both the student and the instructor, any student turning in a written assignment or exam suspected to be not entirely of his or her own creation will be reported to the Dean's office for further review. You should note that plagiarism involves one of two things: (1) lifting *verbatim* (or close to verbatim) sections of text from another author's work without using quotation marks or providing a citation for the quote; (2) using another person's *ideas* without citing the source (even if you don't use their precise words).

**(7) Grade Contestation Policy:** I put a great deal of time and effort into designing fair and reasonable assessments (exams, assignments, etc.) and into coordinating with your GSIs to ensure that everyone is grading accurately, equitably, and without bias. For this reason, you will find that I am quite resistant to re-grade requests, except in cases of mathematical error. It's my view that it's ultimately your own responsibility, throughout the semester, to work toward achieving the final grade that you would like to achieve, and to reach out for help in a timely way if you worry that you are falling short of that goal. I thus do not round up final grades at the end of the semester, nor do I allow students to improve their grades through additional assignments—so please refrain from asking.

If you are unhappy with your performance on a particular assignment or exam, rather than requesting a re-grade, I encourage you to ask your GSI to help you understand how you might improve your performance in the future (whether in this class or the next). If, however, you feel strongly that you have a valid dispute about a grade, you should submit a statement to your GSI *in writing* within one week of the return of the assignment/exam, explaining in *specific detail* why you believe the grade was inappropriate and noting what alternate grade you suggest. (In considering whether your grade was fair, remember that grades are an evaluation of the quality of work on the page, not of the amount of time or effort that went into producing that work.) Make an appointment with your GSI to discuss the grade in person, and your GSI will then make a decision. If you remain dissatisfied with the grade, ask your GSI to forward your statement and his or her decision to me, and I will re-grade the disputed material myself. *Note that my re-grade can result in either a lower or a higher grade, and this grade will be final.*

## HOW TO EXCEL IN THIS CLASS

***Do the reading. And do the reading before class.*** If you read an article, and *then* hear and participate in the discussion in class, it will cement your knowledge. If you do the reading *after* class, you'll find the lecture and discussion to be considerably less useful for you.

***Take notes in lecture and section!*** Taking systematic notes is a great way to focus your attention in lecture and discussion, to collect your thoughts in a way that makes sense to you, and to organize the material so that you can return to it efficiently in the future. This is a critical skill to learn that will serve you down the road.

***Take notes on the readings!*** In addition to underlining, highlighting, and making marginal notes in the text as you read (which are all great ways to flag issues to return to in the future), you will be well served by taking a few minutes to write out reading notes—in actual sentences—after completing a reading. You can outline the argument in your own words, summarize important points, note issues that remain unclear to you, and write out specific questions to bring up in lecture or section. It's a modest time investment up front that will really pay off.

***Take your writing seriously.*** This skill will serve you well in all of your classes and in whatever profession you choose, so take every opportunity to work on it. Approach all of your course writing—memos, your paper, even your personal reading notes—with equal seriousness.

***Treat each other with respect.*** During some weeks, we will deal with difficult subjects. For some of you, these subjects may be particularly sensitive. There may also be strong disagreements among you. I encourage you to see these moments of disagreement as opportunities to critically unpack the questions and empirical materials at hand. In order for section discussions to be successful, we each need to come with a commitment to listen and engage thoughtfully and with respect. You should not enroll in this course if you don't think you can keep this commitment.

***Face your fears.*** Speak up in section (and don't be afraid to be wrong!). This can be uncomfortable, but active participation is important for your own learning. It will also enhance the learning of those around you. Ultimately, you're responsible to *yourself* to make sure you understand the material and are getting the most out of class—so rise to the challenge!