

**SOC 500: FIRST YEAR GRADUATE PROSEMINAR IN SOCIOLOGY**  
FALL 2020

Class: Th 10:00-11:50am

Room: REMOTE

Instructor: Rob Jansen

Email: [rsjansen@umich.edu](mailto:rsjansen@umich.edu)

Office: 4222 LSA

Office Hours: By appointment (sign up here: <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/wwggl>).<sup>1</sup>

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The goals of this seminar are:

1. To integrate you into the University of Michigan's Department of Sociology
2. To provide practical information about sociology and academic life
3. To provide a space for support and reflection about the milestones and challenges of graduate school

More broadly, this seminar will help you to begin the ongoing tasks of understanding how the discipline works, developing professional habits and practices, and cultivating your identity as a sociologist. Graduate education is a lengthy and transformative process, which means that it's sometimes less helpful than it may seem to introduce professional information in advance of when it's actually necessary (e.g., you don't yet need to know the *fine details* about how to navigate the academic and non-academic job markets); at the same time, however, it *is* often useful to hear things multiple times, in different ways, to help you orient toward future milestones (e.g., it's useful to start thinking now about your *general* career goals and how to prepare yourself for them). Accordingly, we will work through the details of milestones like the preliminary exams, have broader discussions of upcoming experiences like becoming a teaching assistant (Graduate Student Instructor, or GSI, in UM-speak), and get you started thinking about different potential trajectories through the program and into sociological careers. We will also talk about how to develop your own research agenda, albeit in a totally non-committal way at this point. This class is graded on a pass/fail basis (so you can relax!).

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<sup>1</sup> If you're unable to make the scheduled appointment slots, or if you have an urgent matter, please email me and we'll set up an alternative meeting time.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Before each class, examine the syllabus and ask yourself what you might like to know about the topic, and bring your questions to class.
2. Come to class and participate actively. Make it a goal to speak in each meeting.
3. Start your career today: don't just "learn about" the professional world of sociology. Instead, you can start taking up the role of a professional social scientist *now*. To do so, you will need to find a balance that makes sense for you, between making some accommodations to the professional world, while at the same time keeping true to yourself—capitalizing on your own identities, assets, and ideas.

## PROCEDURES

### Email Policy

While I maintain the soc-graddirector@umich.edu address for queries related to my role as Director of Graduate Studies, you can direct your course-related emails to my regular work address: [rsjansen@umich.edu](mailto:rsjansen@umich.edu). I will do my best to respond to your email messages within 24 hours during the work week (although I will take longer over the weekend, during university breaks or holidays, or when I am traveling).

### Canvas

We will make use of the course Canvas page for various aspects of class. Materials will be available via Canvas in the Files section. If you are unfamiliar with Canvas or have questions, please consult the Canvas student user guide at <https://guides.instructure.com/m/4212>, or e-mail the UM ITS Service Center at [4HELP@umich.edu](mailto:4HELP@umich.edu) for help.

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### Sensitive Issues

In this class, you may find yourselves discussing controversial topics that you feel strongly about, and you may encounter classmates who view these issues completely differently. I expect you to interact with each other respectfully (i.e., no interrupting, no personal attacks, no mocking of another's viewpoint). If you feel personally offended by something said in class, and don't feel comfortable discussing it with the person who said it, please talk to me about the issue. It is my goal to provide an engaging, honest, and supportive environment for all students in the class, in a way that respects and reflects the University's principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and the rights of every person in our classrooms. For more information on DEI efforts across campus, see <http://diversity.umich.edu/>.

### Accommodations

If you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at the beginning of the term. If you have not already done so, you should contact the Services for

Students with Disabilities (SSD) office immediately. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation (VISA) form and we can arrange for your accommodation. Any information you provide is confidential and will be treated as such. If you already have a VISA form from SSD, please present this to me (and your other instructors) at the beginning of the term, but no later than two weeks prior to the need for the accommodation, so that there is enough time for the appropriate arrangements to be made.

### Mental Health and Wellbeing

University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available and we urge you to use them. For help, contact me or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (734)764-8312 and [www.caps.umich.edu](http://www.caps.umich.edu) during and after hours, or its counselors physically located in schools on both North and Central Campus. You may also consult with the University Health Service (UHS) at (734)764-8320 and <https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs>; or, for alcohol or drug-related concerns, visit [www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources](http://www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources). For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, see: <http://umich.edu/~mhealth/>.

### Basic Needs Security

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, is urged to contact me if you are comfortable doing so. You may also reach out to the Rackham Graduate School Resolution officer, whether for yourself or on behalf of another graduate student (<https://www.rackham.umich.edu/about/directory/resolution-officer>). Also, if you know of an undergraduate who may be facing similar challenges, please reach out to me or the Undergraduate Dean of Students (<https://deanofstudents.umich.edu/critical-incidents>).

### Academic Misconduct

The University of Michigan community functions best when its members treat one another with honesty, fairness, respect, and trust. The university promotes the assumption of personal responsibility and integrity, and prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty and misconduct. All cases of academic misconduct will be referred to Rackham's Resolution Officer. Being found responsible for academic misconduct will result in serious consequences, potentially including expulsion. For more information, including examples of behaviors that are considered academic misconduct, please see: <https://rackham.umich.edu/academic-policies/section8/>.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1 (September 3): Introduction**

Topics: Introductions; course logistics; how advising works; start-up tips; open Q&A

### **Week 2 (September 10): Open Group Office Hours**

### **Week 3 (September 17): Open Group Office Hours**

### **Week 4 (September 24): Program Requirements & Milestones**

### **Week 5 (October 1): Soc Finance & Departmental Workshops**

Guests: Nan Flood and Zack Cranson (soc finance); Nicole Bedera, Chelle Jones, Jasmine Simington, Katherine Wright (grad student workshop organizers)

Topics: How to use your departmental research funds; introduction to departmental workshops

### **Week 6 (October 8): Defining an Independent Research Project**

Guests: Neil Gong, Yun Zhou; Jacob Caponi, Ethan Johnston (grad student NSF fellowship applicants)

### **Week 7 (October 15): Sociology Library Resources**

Guests: Hailey Mooney (sociology librarian)

Topics: General check-in (10:00-10:20); presentation on library resources and services (10:20-11:50)

### **Week 8 (October 22): Sociological Habitus**

Guests: No guests (Rob content)

Topics: Getting organized, setting up good habits, reading and writing strategies, understanding scholarly communities, etc.

**Week 9 (October 29): Critique, Rejection, Worthlessness, & Imposter Syndrome—  
*Oh My! Staying Healthy and Fulfilled as an Academic*<sup>2</sup>**

Guests: Davis Daumler, Shauna Dyer, Kristin Foringer, Lewis Miles

Topics: Work-life balance, time management, balancing scholarship with activism and maintaining sense of self, physical and mental health for yourself and others.

Reading (optional): “On Mental Health and the Economics Profession” (pdf by Mike Mueller-Smith and Charlie Brown, UM Dept. of Economics)

**Week 10 (November 5): Publishing and Career Planning**

Guests: No guests (Rob content)

Topics: Publishing, career goals and preparation

Reading (optional): Chs. 8 and 10 (“Publishing and Promoting Your Work”; “Navigating the Job Market”) in Calarco, Jessica McCrory. 2020. *A Field Guide to Grad School: Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

**Week 11 (November 12): Faculty Research Roundtable One**

Guests: Deirdre Bloome, Karyn Lacy, Robert Manduca, Paige Sweet

Topics: Research projects, advice for navigating academia, Q&A.

**Week 12 (November 19): Faculty Research Roundtable Two**

Guests: Elizabeth Armstrong, Jonah Stuart Brundage, Margo Mahan, Jeff Morenoff

Topics: Research projects, advice for navigating academia, Q&A.

**Week 13 (November 26): \*\*\*NO CLASS\*\*\***

\*\*\*Thanksgiving holiday\*\*\*

**Week 14 (December 3): Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum**

Guests: No guests

Topics: Book group discussion of Calarco 2020.

Reading: Calarco, Jessica McCrory. 2020. *A Field Guide to Grad School: Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Assignment: See Canvas Announcements for link to the Google Sheet for details.

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<sup>2</sup> Title <sup>TM</sup> Sarah Burgard.