

**SO 100 Thinking Sociologically/SO 240 Law and Society**  
Blocks 1-2, 2018

Professor: Gail Murphy-Geiss  
Palmer 131C, 719-389-6868  
[gmurphygeiss@coloradocollege.edu](mailto:gmurphygeiss@coloradocollege.edu)

FYE Mentor: Miguel Mendez (719-351-2053)  
Sociology Department Paraprof: Mark Scaggs, Palmer 129 (719-389-7221)

Course Descriptions:

SO 100 - Thinking Sociologically

An introduction to sociological perspectives through investigation of the social sources of the self; the unequal distribution of power, privilege, and prestige; the social construction of institutions and their impact on human activities; and processes of social change.

SO 240 – Law and Society

An examination of law as a ubiquitous and ongoing process in society; consideration of broad interdisciplinary perspectives and models in law and society studies with special attention to social contexts, specific readings and case studies related to major law and society themes, and contemporary debates related to legal issues. Visits to El Paso County courts will include data collection on behalf of local court watch organizations.

Block two of this course fulfills the Critical Perspectives: Social Inequality requirement.

Required Texts:

All texts should be available in the bookstore. Be sure, if buying used books, that you have the correct edition. Changes are made often, and can be significant. The following books are required reading for everyone:

Block 1:

Desmond, Matthew. 2016. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*.

Ferguson, Susan J. 2018. *Mapping the Social Landscape: Readings in Sociology*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed.

McIntyre, Lisa. 2014. *The Practical Skeptic: Core Concepts in Sociology*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.

Block 2:

Berrey, Ellen, Robert Nelson and Laura Beth Nielson. 2017. *Rights on Trial: How Workplace Discrimination Law Perpetuates Inequality*.

Granna, Sheryl, Jane Ollenburger and Mark Nicholas. 2002. *The Social Context of Law*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

Kirkland, Anna. 2016. *Vaccine Court: The Law and Politics of Injury*.

Stuart, Forrest. 2016. *Down, Out and Under Arrest: Policing and Everyday Life on Skid Row*.

The following individual chapters are also required reading during Block 2. We may add or subtract from this list as the course develops, but all will be accessible on Canvas.

Loseke, Donileen R. 2005. "Through a Sociological Lens."

Loseke, Donileen R. and Demie Kurz. 2005. "Men's Violence Toward Women is the Serious Social Problem."

Strauss, Murray A. 2005. "Women's Violence Toward Men is a Serious Social Problem."

### Course Requirements:

1. Read! Participation in class is essential, so both attendance and preparation will be crucial.
2. You will be required to comment via e-essay on a number of the assigned readings. I will provide questions or directions for each entry, to which you will respond. Comments should be well thought out and carefully written. Quotes should be kept to a minimum, and citations to specific statements in the texts we are reading can be made with simple parenthetical references. If you cite an outside source, you will need to provide the full reference at the end as well as the in-text citation. Try to write about 400 words, and post them the morning before they are due by 7am. Note that the point values for the various essays over the two blocks vary.
3. In addition to e-essays, you will hand in four formal written assignments (details are attached or will be distributed later):
 

Block 1:	Subculture Paper
	"Doing Sociology" Paper
Block 2:	Sociological Analysis of Current Legal Issue Paper
4. After a brief orientation/training (re: courtroom procedures and protocol, and data collection), you will be assigned to observe three El Paso County courts, including restraining orders (once), and misdemeanors/felonies (twice). We will collect data for *Justice Watch* (a local organization that monitors the courts) regarding courtroom culture and judicial demeanor. We will then discuss our observations in class. Hours will be logged and data sheets will be collected and entered into the *Justice Watch* database.
5. Each student will present his/her literature review in Block 2 to the class. Topics will be selected based on what's "hot" and of interest in the news.
6. There will be two exams in the first block, and one in the second block. The first exam (a midterm) may be taken in a setting of your choosing, and handed in electronically by a specified time, which we will set together. The two final exams will be oral, taken in groups of four. Note when the exams are scheduled on the syllabus; no exceptions will be made for travel, so plan accordingly. In case of illness, or any excused absence from the final oral exam, you will be required to write answers to ALL questions asked on the day of the exam.
7. We will read three monographs in Block 2. On each of the three days planned for discussion of those books, students will submit written questions for discussion. The best questions will highlight sociologically relevant themes from either block.

### Grading:

There will be two separate grades for this course, one for each block. Final grades will be based upon the above requirements, weighted approximately as follows:

<u>Block 1:</u>	E-Essays 1-5	20% (4 for 3 points; 1 for 8 points)
	Subculture Paper	15%
	"Doing Sociology" Paper	25%
	Mid-term Exam	15%
	Final Exam	25%

<u>Block 2:</u>	E-Essays 1-6	21% (5 for 3 points; 1 for 6 points)
	Quizzes	15% (5 points each)
	Monograph Discussion Questions	9% (3 points each)
	Presentation of Current Legal Issue	10%
	Current Legal Issue Paper	20%
	Final Exam	25%

All assignments will be handed in electronically through the Canvas site, unless otherwise specified. If you have trouble posting there, you may bring it to me on paper. But please revert to paper **ONLY** if the Canvas site is problematic. That's the best way to assure that things don't get lost. I will also grade on Canvas to the extent possible/desirable, so posting papers there will make grading easier for me which means a quicker turn around for you.

Once a whole set of papers has been graded, later papers will earn points only equivalent to the lowest grade earned on that assignment. This is to keep me on top of the grading, as well as you on top of the assignments. In addition, all assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. Because the clock keeps ticking, and assignments keep coming, I recommend that you try to hand everything in on the date noted in the syllabus. Don't ask for permission to hand work in late. Just remember that if all papers have not been handed in, even if after the "due date," the paper may be treated as "on time." If late, the grading scheme explained above will be applied.

#### Attendance:

Because much of the learning that occurs in this course happens in the midst of class discussion, attendance is crucial. I do not give credit for attendance and participation, but I detract it for absences, both physical and mental. That is, you must be here and you must participate.

That said, life happens (health problems, family emergencies, etc.), and when it does, some students choose to miss class. You don't have to ask for permission – I won't give it; that is your choice. Do let me know though. An excused absence is much less problematic when I am figuring grades than simply "blowing off" class. Even so, keep all absences to a minimum; zero is best! If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to find out from another student what was missed. You **WILL** be tested on material covered in both readings and class sessions, so if you've missed any information, it may come back to haunt you – in fact, it is likely.

Please come to class on time, and try to remain until official break times. Points will be subtracted from your grade for late arrivals and other disruptions to the class, including talking to your neighbor outside of the class discussion, cell phone ringing, texting, using your computer for e-mail or other distracting internet surfing, and falling asleep (I will wake you up and ask you to leave – it's embarrassing for both of us. Be sure to study hard and play hard, but also to sleep hard.) It is ultimately my responsibility, but we all contribute to creating a distraction free and engaging classroom environment.

#### Honor Code:

Cheating on tests and plagiarism on papers will not be tolerated - period. For each assignment, we will agree upon time limits, resources allowed (books, notes, internet, etc.), levels of individual v. team work, and so on. If afterward, my final instructions are not clear, please ask for clarification. I take violations of the Honor Code very seriously, and will not hesitate to

report any suspected infringements to the Honor Council. You must also include a statement of Honor Code compliance at the end of ALL written work, as follows: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment,” and your electronic or written signature.

Accessibility Resources:

If you have a disability (permanent or temporary) and require accommodations, please speak with me, either in person or via email, as soon as possible. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with Accessibility Resources (Armstrong 211, 227-8294), the office responsible for coordinating accommodations and services for students with disabilities.

Course Outline:

Monday, August 27: Introduction to the Course

Tuesday, August 28: The Sociological Perspective

McIntyre, ch. 1-4

Ferguson, readings 1-6

Wednesday, August 29: Methods

McIntyre, ch. 5-6

Ferguson, readings 7-9

\*Library Orientation: 1:30 – 3pm, meet in Tutt Library

Thursday, August 30: Culture

McIntyre, ch. 7

Ferguson, readings 10-12

Friday, August 31: Structure

McIntyre, ch. 8

Ferguson, readings 17-19

\*Writing Center Orientation: 11:30

DUE: E-Essay #1 (due by 7am) and Doing Sociology Topic (in or before class)

Monday, Sept. 3: Institutions

McIntyre, ch. 9

Ferguson, readings 47-49

DUE: Subculture paper

Tuesday, Sept. 4: Socialization

McIntyre, ch. 10

Ferguson, readings 13-16

Wednesday, Sept. 5: Deviance and Social Control

McIntyre, ch. 11

Ferguson, readings 20-22

DUE: E-Essay #2

Thursday, Sept. 6: Stratification and Work  
 McIntyre, ch. 12  
 Ferguson, readings 35-37, 41-43

Friday, Sept. 7: Mid-term Exam

Monday, Sept. 10: Class and Media  
 McIntyre, ch. 13  
 Ferguson, readings 23-26, 38-40  
DUE: Draft of Lit Review

Tuesday, Sept. 11: Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Age  
 McIntyre, ch. 14  
 Ferguson, readings 27-34  
DUE: E-Essay #3

Wednesday, Sept. 12: Education and Family  
 Ferguson, readings 50-55

Thursday, Sept. 13: Religion and Social Change  
 Ferguson, readings 44-46, 56-58  
DUE: E-Essay #4

Friday, Sept. 14: Individual meetings to discuss Lit Reviews

Monday, Sept. 17:  
 Desmond  
DUE: E-Essay #5 (8 points)

Tuesday, Sept. 18: Research Presentations  
DUE: "Doing Sociology" Paper

Wednesday, Sept. 19: Final Oral Exam

BLOCK BREAK

Monday, Sept. 24: Intro to Law and Society

Tuesday, Sept. 25: Contexts and Theory  
 Grana et al, ch. 1-2  
DUE: E-Essay #1

Wednesday, Sept. 26: Cultures and Types  
 Grana et al, ch. 3-4  
DUE: E-Essay #2

Thursday, Sept. 27: Systems and Practitioners  
Grana et al, ch. 5-6  
DUE: E-Essay #3

Friday, Sept. 28: Purposes and Usefulness  
Grana et al, ch. 7-8  
DUE: E-Essay #4

Monday, Oct. 1: Federal and Local Law: Title IX

Tuesday, Oct. 2: Federal and Local Law: Vaccines  
Kirkland  
QUIZ  
DUE: Discussion Question 1

Wednesday, Oct. 3: Federal and Local Law: Constitutional Rights/Freedoms

Thursday, Oct. 4: Individual meetings to discuss papers

Friday, Oct. 5: Federal and Local Law: Policing  
Stuart  
QUIZ  
DUE: Discussion Question 2

Monday, Oct. 8: Intimate Partner Violence and Prep for Court  
Loseke  
Strauss  
Loseke and Kurz  
DUE: E-Essay #5

Tuesday, Oct. 9 and Wednesday, Oct. 10: Data Collection in Court

Thursday, Oct. 11: Child Abuse

Friday, Oct. 12: Federal and Local Law: Discrimination  
Berry, et al  
QUIZ  
DUE: Discussion Question 3

Monday, Oct. 15: Supreme Court  
Specific cases on Canvas  
DUE: E-Essay #6

Tuesday, Oct. 16: Current Legal Issue Presentations  
(lunch together at noon)

Wednesday, Oct. 17: Final Oral Exam  
DUE: Current Legal Issue Paper

Assignments for Block 1:

**Subculture Paper:** Select a subculture to which you belong or with which you are familiar. It can be a religious, racial, or ethnic group, an athletic or social club, or an occupational or work-related subculture. In an essay of 3-4 pages, demonstrate your understanding of ALL of the following concepts by describing the values and beliefs; folkways and mores and their respective sanctions; rituals and customs of the subculture you have chosen. Assume your audience does not know the meanings of these terms, so define them briefly before illustrating them with your subculture. How does one become a member of this subculture (initiation rite)? What are the outward symbols and behaviors that might indicate to others that one is a member? Begin with a general definition of a subculture, and end by noting how any of these concepts differ from the dominant culture. If there is no difference, is this really a subculture, or something else?

Note that I use the term "subculture" quite loosely to include most small groups. The main criterion for evaluation will be your ability to illustrate the key concepts listed above for whatever group you choose.

I will assign peer editing groups, in which you will gather on Friday afternoon (or some other agreed upon time) to discuss each other's papers so as to make improvements to your own paper, as well as hear the descriptions of other subcultures.

**"Doing Sociology" Paper:** In teams of two, develop a brief survey, field study or content analysis on a conceptually sound topic of interest to you. Survey/observe/interview at least 20/6/4 persons respectively, or do a content analysis of a given medium. After conducting a mini-literature review of previous work done on your topic, briefly identify and discuss the main theory that is relevant to your topic as well as the independent variable, the dependent variable, and your hypothesis. Describe your methods as clearly as possible. Collate your data into a table and analyze it in terms of your hypothesis. Was there a pattern to your results? What results surprised you? Interpret the results: What is the significance of your results? Can you make any general statements about the population from which you drew your sample? Were other issues raised that would be important for further study?

Report your results in an (8-ish pages of text and tables) paper. Methods and results will be shared on the due date, so be prepared to discuss your work. The papers will follow this standard sociological format:

- Introduction (no subheading)
- Literature Review
- Methods
- Findings and Conclusions
- Future Research
- Reference List
- Appendix