

SYG 2000 – Principles of Sociology

Spring 2025 University of Florida 3Credits

MWF Period 4 (10:40-11:30 PM EST)

Class Location: Turlington 2303

Instructor: Wenyi Shen(she/her)

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Office hours: Wednesday 1.55 pm-4.00 pm (and by appointment)

Course Description and Learning Objectives:

Social and behavioral science courses, like SYG 2000, provide students with a broad introduction to the core ideas, methods, and concepts that shape these fields of study. Through these courses, students explore the functions of social institutions, the dynamics of social structures, and the processes that govern human behavior. A key focus is placed on developing problem-solving skills, both through qualitative and quantitative approaches. Students will analyze how individuals and groups make decisions, evaluate behaviors and outcomes, and consider the ethical implications of those decisions within broader societal contexts.

Sociology is the systematic exploration of human social life. It seeks to understand how social groups, institutions, values, and identities emerge, change, and shape our world through interaction. By studying Sociology, we uncover the influence of "social structures" like race, gender, class, and other hierarchies on our everyday experiences, as well as how these forces contribute to stability, conflict, and transformation within societies.

Why study Sociology? Sociology provides a unique lens through which we can understand our daily lives and the broader world. It offers the tools—known as the "sociological imagination"—to think critically about the connections between personal experiences and larger social forces. Sociology encourages us to question assumptions and uncover the hidden influences of social patterns on our lives. In today's interconnected world, it helps us recognize the global links that tie our lives to those of others, fostering a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and preparing us to be thoughtful and engaged members of the global community.

Learning Objectives:

- Content is knowledge of the concepts, principles, terminology and methodologies used within the discipline. Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, methodologies and theories used within the discipline. Exams, in-class assignments, and homework assignments fall under this category.
- Communication is the development and expression of ideas in written and oral forms. Students communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in written or oral forms appropriate to the discipline. In-class assignments and homework assignments fall under this category.
- Critical thinking is characterized by the comprehensive analysis of issues, ideas, and evidence before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems. Exams, in-class assignments, and homework assignments fall under this category.

Course Reading:

Required textbook: Giddens, Duneier, Appelbaum, and Carr (2021). *Introduction to Sociology* (Seagull 12th edition). W.W. Norton & Co., ISBN: 978-0-393-53802-1.

Additional readings and media content will be made available over Canvas.

Course Structure & Assignments:

Students in this class will be assessed across these three thematic areas based on their performance on the assessments outlined below. Assignments are due by 11:59pm on the date listed unless otherwise specified.

Assignment	Point	Percent	Due date
In-Class Assignments	5x10	10%	Assigned unannounced throughout the semester
Reflection paper	3x50	30%	Sunday, Feb 9 at 11:59 pm Sunday, Feb 23 at 11:59 pm Sunday, Mar 16 at 11:59 pm
Field Observation Assignment	100	20%	Sunday, Mar 1 at 11:59pm
Exams	100x2	40%	Monday, Mar 31 Mon, Apr 28

Attendance and in-class assignments: (10%)

Throughout the semester, there will be 11 short, unannounced in-class assignments designed to encourage class attendance, stay engaged with the readings, and provide opportunities to reflect on course content. The average of your top 10 scores will count toward your final grade, allowing you to skip one assignment without penalty. These assignments may include individual written reflections, small-group projects, or pop quizzes.

Criteria & Points	Description
Exemplary (5 points)	The student assignment demonstrates excellent comprehension of class material, and the writing is clear and convincing with specific details and examples.
Satisfactory (3 points)	The student assignment demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of the class material, and the writing is clear but lacks specificity and detail.
Absent (0 points)	The student did not complete the assignment.

If you are absent from class due to a **university authorized** (legitimate reasons include illness, family emergencies, or university-sponsored activities) and miss an in-class assignment on that day, you need to provide written documentation explaining your legitimate absence. The easiest way for you to do this is to reach out to the university Care Team (umatter@ufl.edu or by phone at 352-294-2273) and explain your situation. They will gather appropriate documentation and let me know which, if any, days you need to be excused.

Reflection Paper : (40%)

Over the course of the semester, you will be required to complete four reflection papers: one autobiographical reflection, two movie reflections, and one game reflection. The movie clips will be shown in class, lasting approximately 20–30 minutes, followed by a 20-minute class discussion. For the game reflection, you must ensure that you have played the game prior to class. During class, we will explore the sociological theories and issues highlighted in the movies and games and engage in deeper discussions with your classmates.

After each class discussion, you will write a reflection paper based on the prompts provided on Canvas. These papers should integrate your personal insights with the sociological concepts emphasized during the class discussion. Each paper should be 450–700 words and must be submitted via Canvas by the end of the weekend following the in-class game or movie discussion. Detailed prompts, along with the grading criteria, will be available on Canvas. Be sure to review these instructions carefully to ensure your submissions meet the expectations. This assignment is designed to help you connect sociological theories to real-world applications and deepen your understanding of course material.

Field Observation Assignment:(20%)

The purpose of this assignment is to help you apply sociological concepts to real-world situations and gain hands-on experience with sociological research methods through systematic observation. This is a group assignment, with each team consisting of three students. A sign-up sheet will be provided in class to facilitate team formation. Detailed instructions will be discussed during class, but here's an overview of the process and requirements to help you get started.

1. Form a Team: Identify two classmates to form your research team. A sign-up sheet will be distributed in class to assist with this process. If the total number of students doesn't divide evenly, some teams may consist of two members. This will not impact your grade.

2. Choose an Observation Setting: As a team, select a public and lawful social setting or activity for your observation (e.g., interactions at a public park, library, mall, grocery store, farmers market, airport, religious service, or social event). This list is not exhaustive; you are welcome to propose other settings. However, you must confirm the suitability of your chosen setting with me or one of the TAs before proceeding.

3. Submit a Proposal: Once your team has been formed and a setting selected, submit a one-page proposal outlining your observation plan. This proposal should include: The names of all team members. Your chosen observation setting and the rationale behind the choice (why is this setting interesting or relevant?). A clearly defined research question (what are you aiming to discover?). A detailed plan for conducting the observation, including the date, method, and logistical arrangements.

4: Conduct the Observation: Each team member must spend at least one hour systematically observing activities in the chosen setting at the same time. During the observation: Do not initiate conversations or actively participate in the activity you are observing. Aim to be a non-participant observer and minimize interference with the environment. Spread out in different spots to observe independently.

5: Take Detailed Field Notes: While observing, take thorough field notes (either written or verbal). Try to remain unobtrusive and avoid making those you observe uncomfortable. Use the provided observation worksheet in the syllabus as a guide, but you may use separate sheets to ensure there is enough space for detailed notes. Create a field map of the setting to visually support your observations: The goal is to capture as much detail as possible to facilitate your team discussion later.

6: Prepare a Team Field Report: After completing the observation, your team will convene to compare and discuss your individual notes. Together, you will create one integrated field report summarizing your findings and insights from the observation.

Grading: Total 100 points: Your final report will be graded based on the following rubric: • Specific details (name, date, the time of observation, main research question, etc.) (10 points) • Detailed description of the setting with evidence from the field (30 points) • Sociological interpretation (with concepts), analysis, and reflection (40 points) • Observation notes and map (10 points) • Format (4-5 pages [not counting the title or any reference page], single-spaced, 1-inch margins on all four sides, 12-size font, page-numbered, stapled) and overall quality (10 points). See the assignment submission guidelines for more details.

Exams:

Exams twice during the semester, you will need to complete two in-class exam covering material addressed in course lecture except video game content. Each exam is cumulative: Exam 1 covers weeks 1-9; Exam 2 covers weeks 1-14. The exam 1 is open note; you are encouraged to rely on uploaded course slides, your own notes, and the textbook while completing the exams. Exam 2 is a close-book Exam. Questions will primarily be terminology, multiple choice, and discussion questions.

Assignment submission guidelines:

1. A hard copy of the Observation Report will be due in class on the due date mentioned in the syllabus.
2. The assignment will be 4-5 pages, single-spaced (4 pages minimum, but not more than 5).
3. The report must be typed, single-spaced, using 12-point Times New Roman font, with one-inch margins, and must include page numbers and proper use of citations and references.
4. Please remove the “extra space” between paragraphs.
5. Make sure you proofread your paper multiple times.
6. Don’t forget to number your pages (except the cover page).
7. Please staple your pages together when hard copies of papers are due in class (no paper clips or loose pages)!

Course Policies:

Communication: You may contact me with questions about the course, the site, or assignments and assessments at your leisure. When emailing me, I ask that you mention in the email title or body that you are in SYG 2000. I will endeavor to reply as quickly as possible, usually within 48 hours. Please be aware that I do not typically check my email regularly on weekends.

Please use your UFL email account; I cannot guarantee messages sent through the Canvas messaging system will receive timely responses.

Course Evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback professionally and respectfully is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Course Grading Policy: This course's grading scale for final scores, based on the assignment descriptions provided earlier in this syllabus, is as follows:

A	94-100%	C	73-76.9%
A-	90-93.9%	C-	70-72.9%
B+	87-89.9%	D+	67-69.9%
B	83-86.9%	D	63-66.9%
B-	80-82.9%	D-	60-62.9%
C+	77-79.9%	E	<60%

A minimum grade of C is required for General Education credit. Further information on university grades and grading policies at the University of Florida can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Extra Credit: In general, I do not provide extra credit opportunities during the semester. As such, students should plan to perform well on the regular course assignments and assessments.

Late Assignments: Written assignments and homework worksheets may be submitted up to 72 hours (3 days) late, at a 15% score penalty. Online quizzes and exams cannot be submitted late. Extensions beyond this policy will only be provided in extreme extenuating circumstances, usually requiring documentation and/or discussion with the instructor. Such

instances will be handled on a case-by-case basis (that is, just asking for an extension is not a guarantee!).

Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal antidiscrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Students with disabilities who experience barriers to learning should request academic accommodations through the Disability Resource Center. Visit <https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/> to begin this process. Part of the process will involve the generation of an accommodation letter; please share this letter with the instructor as early as possible in the semester. You are invited, but not required, to discuss your needs with the instructor, as well.

Course Schedule:

Week	Topic	Readings(Complete prior to class)	Course Work
Week 1			
Mon, Jan 13	Course Introduction	No Readings	
Wed, Jan 15	Sociological Imagination	1. Ch. 1 (pp. 1-11) 2. Mills (Canvas)	
Fri, Jan 18	Sociological Theories	Ch. 1 (pp. 12-19)	
Week 2			
Mon, Jan 20	No class-Holiday		
Wed, Jan 22	Sociological Theories	Ch. 1 (pp. 19-27)	
Fri, Jan 24	Applying the three sociological approaches		

Week 3			
Mon, Jan 27	Sociological Methods	Ch.2 (pp31-40)	
Wed, Jan 29	No class		
Fri, Jan 31	Sociological Methods	Ch.2 (pp41-54)	
Week 4			
Mon, Feb 3	Socialization and the Life Course	Ch.4(pp97-114)	
Wed, Feb 5	Socialization and the Life Course	Ch.4(pp.114-124)	
Fri, Feb 7	Film 1: 《The Neighbors' Window》		Reflection paper(due on Feb 9,Sunday)
Week 5			
Mon, Feb 10	Social Interaction and Everyday Life	Ch. 5 (pp.134-146)	
Wed, Feb 12	Social Interaction and Everyday Life	Ch. 5 (pp. 144-161)	
Fri, Feb 14	Conformity, Deviance and Crime	Ch. 7 (pp. 198-211)	
Week 6			
Mon, Feb 17	Conformity, Deviance and Crime	Ch. 7 (pp. 212-225)	Reflection paper due on Feb 23 (Sunday)
Wed, Feb 19	Conformity, Deviance and Crime	Ch. 7 (pp. 226-233)	

Fri, Feb 21	Christakis, Nicholas. 2010. "The Hidden Influence of Social Networks." TED2010		
Week 7			DUE: Field Observation
Mon, Feb 24	Stratification, Class, and Inequality	Ch. 8 (pp. 240-254)	Proposal
Wed, Feb 26	Stratification, Class, and inequality	Ch. 8 (pp. 255-265)	(Sun, Mar 1)
Fri, Feb 28	Stratification, Class, and inequality	Ch. 8 (pp. 265-281)	
Week 8			
Mon, Mar 3	Global Inequality	Ch. 9 (pp. 286-305)	
Wed, Feb 5	Global Inequality	Ch. 9 (pp. 305-319)	
Fri, Mar 7	Film 2: Nero's Guests	No Readings	
Week 9			
Mon, Mar 10	Gender Inequality	Ch. 10 (pp. 224-344)	Due: Reflection
Wed, Mar 12	Gender Inequality	Martin, Karin A. 1998. "Becoming a Gendered Body: Practices of Preschools." American Sociological Review 63(4): 494-511.	Paper (Sun, Mar 16)

Fri, Mar 14	Gender Inequality	Ch. 10 (pp. 345-371)	
	Spring break		
Week 10			
Mon, Mar 24	Race, Ethnicity, and Racism	Ch. 11 (pp. 376-392)	
Wed, Mar 26	Race, Ethnicity, and Racism	Ch. 11 (pp. 392-401)	
Fri, Mar 28	Race, Ethnicity, and Racism	Ch. 11 (pp. 402-413)	
Week 11			
Mon, Mar 31	Open-exam		
Wed, Apr 2	Families and Intimate Relationships	Ch. 15 (pp. 562-575)	
Fri, Apr 4	Families and Intimate Relationships	Ch. 15 (pp. 575-609)	
Week 12			
Mon, Apr 7	Education—Basic concepts and theories of education	Ch. 16 (pp. 614-622) Ch. 16 (pp. 623-628)	
Wed, Apr 9	Education—Research on education	Ch. 16 (pp. 629-647)	
Fri, Apr 11			

	Education—Influences on student outcomes		
Week 13			
Mon, Apr 14	The Sociology of the Body: Health, Illness, and Sexuality	Ch. 18 (pp. 706-727)	
Wed, Apr 16	The Sociology of the Body: Health, Illness, and Sexuality	Ch. 18 (pp. 728-757)	
Fri, Apr 18	The Sociology of the Body: Health, Illness, and Sexuality	Ch. 18 (pp. 728-757)	
Week 14			
Mon, Apr 21	Population, Urbanization, and Environment	Ch. 19 (pp. 762-778)	
Wed, Apr 23	Population, Urbanization, and Environment	Ch. 19 (pp. 778-790)	
Mon, April 28 (10:40-11:30)	Exam in class		

Academic Compliance Statement:

In SYG 2000, there may be content on historical background and sociological concepts about sociological topics. Multiple sources, types of evidence, and interpretations are included, and differing interpretations of historical events are discussed with an emphasis on diverse theoretical perspectives rather than privileging one over the other. The class emphasizes maintaining accuracy and objectivity and skills to evaluate evidence and claims. Discussions of history are case- or data-driven rather than rooted in ideology or advocacy, and students can draw their own conclusions. SYG 2000 may touch on topics germane to identity, but as subjects of study and not advocacy; in that spirit, this course examines diverse perspectives rather than privileging one over the other. Discussions of identity are case- or data-driven rather than rooted in ideology or advocacy. Grading of assignments and/or exams focuses on understanding of content rather than adopting a specific opinion. SYG 2000 may discuss systemic theories as they relate to sociological perspectives on the Principles of Sociology, but it considers them in the context of other theoretical approaches and includes critique of diverse theoretical perspectives. The course may explore various theoretical concepts, including of systemic racism, sexism, oppression, or privilege, without endorsing any specific viewpoint. It also does not treat inequalities or injustice as inherent, but instead discusses theoretical perspectives that explain whether and how social structures may create and reproduce inequalities. Such processes are viewed as contingent and negotiated and often contested rather than natural or determined. The course cites relevant facts based on research demonstrating how institutions are social contexts that shape inequalities within the United States and globally. Grading of assignments and/or exams focuses on understanding of content rather than adopting a specific opinion.