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Office Hours: Tues. 3:00-5:00 pm,
Wed. 4:00-5:30 pm or by appointment

SOCY 91 – W '15
THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION
6 Kemeny at the 10A Period
(x-hour Wednesdays 3:00-3:50 PM)

Herein lies the fundamental theme of sociology: that everyday social life -- our thoughts, actions, feelings, decisions, interactions, and so on -- is the product of a complex interplay between societal forces and personal characteristics.

In order to explain why people are the way they are, we must understand the social, historical, cultural, and organizational environments they inhabit. Neither individuals nor society can be understood without understanding both.

David Newman, *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life*, 1995

All around us, persons are attempting to make sense of their world. Family and friends experience and witness the challenges and rewards of daily life – jobs, childrearing, leisure and finding the cheapest gas, and typically offer explanations and solutions rooted in individual attitudes and actions. Just as various politicians, pundits, public intellectuals and even humorists dominate civic discourse about what's wrong and praiseworthy in U. S. society, and they debate which values, ideologies or policies best address whatever's amiss.

Sociologist C. Wright Mills described "the sociological imagination," as that quality of mind with the ability to grasp the interplay of biography and history, of self and social structure, of private troubles and public issues. Such an imagination would allow us to discern the relative significance of the individual behavior and structural dynamics, to appreciate the interdependence of micro- and macro-level processes.

This capstone seminar is designed to invite us to explore various contemporary expressions of the sociological imagination. The assigned books represent an array of substantive, theoretical and methodological approaches. Thematically, we shift from examining the everyday routines of men made a living on city streets to considering the dynamics of the global economic chains that supply local flower shops or the configure the space of sexual commerce, from exploring the social significance of singlehood to investigating the social impacts of contemporary policing practices. Lastly, the seminar will emphasize the discipline of sociology beyond the walls of academe. How might the discipline of sociology better engage the various publics outside the academy in the sociological dialogue? In what ways might sociology continue to inform your professional and personal life as you prepare to leave Dartmouth? *Satisfies the culminating experience requirement for the Sociology major.*

Books Available for Purchase at Dartmouth Bookstore and Wheelock Books:

Bernstein, Elizabeth. 2007. *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity and the Commerce of Sex*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Duneier, Mitchell. 1999. *Sidewalk*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Klinenberg, Eric. 2012. *Going Alone: The Extraordinary Rise and Surprising Appeal of Living Alone*. New York: Penguin Press

Rios, Victor M. 2011. *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*. New York: NYU Press

Ziegler, Catherine. 2007. *Favored Flowers: Culture and Economy in a Global System*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press

Optional

Mills, C. Wright. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*. London: Oxford University Press

Additional required and supplemental courses readings, materials and resource links are on Canvas.

NOTE: This course is being hosted on Canvas for the first time. I appreciate your assistance in bringing any problems to my attention (please send me an email), and your patience as I resolve any concerns.

SEMINAR REQUIREMENTS

The specific requirements for evaluation and the basis for your final course grade will be:

10% **Daily Participation: Response Memos and Critical Questions**

As the culminating experience requirement for the Sociology major, this will be an intensive working seminar, which means that everyone is expected to attend regularly and come prepared to engage, actively and critically, in a discussion of the assigned readings. Critical engagement necessitates bringing to bear all of the theoretical, methodological, and analytical prowess in sociology that you have acquired. From time-to-time, I may offer mini-lectures to set the background or to explicate some idea but our primary format will be discussion.

*** Attendance** A sign-in sheet will be circulated at each class session.

*** Response Memo** Memos are intended to assist you in being a proactive, seminar participant. The memos should be more than just summaries of the assigned readings, rather you should offer critiques (which entail noting a work's contributions as well as its shortfalls), juxtapose the reading against broader sociological concepts and theories that you have encountered in this or other courses, pose questions that have the potential to *generate discussion*, or present relevant (or complementary) examples from other research and current events that will enable you to participate proactively and constructively in our discussions. In addition, to making sure that you have something to contribute to class, the response memo also allow me to determine what you're getting out of the readings, *prior to class discussion*.

As Professor Lively has aptly observed:

This is not simply busy work; it is one of the goals of this class for you to be critical consumers of what you read and to be able to pose sociologically relevant questions. In sum, these assignments should illustrate your understanding of the assigned reading for the day – in its entirety. It will be very clear if you've only read the first two pages! In other words, do not center your thoughts on a single footnote! Make it about the big picture.

You must submit a total of four (4) critical response memos, one (1) memo for each the assigned books: Duneier, Bernstein, Klinenberg, Rios and Zeigler (excluding the book for which you're facilitating discussion). The memo should be no more than 2 double-spaced, pages in length.

Your response memo should address the assigned readings on that date and be submitted via Canvas no later than 9:00 am that. Please note that submissions on the second or third class session of a given book should not duplicate observations, questions, or materials previously presented or discussed. Please note that it is within the facilitators' prerogative to require seminar members to share their comments or ask their questions as part of their facilitation.

10% **Seminar Discussion Facilitators**

In addition to general participation, small groups of students will assume responsibility for initiating and leading the seminar discussion (for approximately 30 - 45 minutes) for one session. At professional sociology meetings, the term, "discussant" is used to refer to the person(s) who review, critique, and compliment the presenters' papers. Their role is to identify main themes, to share observations or pose questions that stimulate further discussion among those in attendance. Similarly, your objective is to facilitate a dynamic exchange, not to make a formal presentation.

Seminar \ facilitators will need to meet with and/or email me prior to the class that they are scheduled to facilitate, so that we may discuss the issue upon which or angle from which they plan to focus the discussion. Facilitators must have, prior to that meeting, have carefully read the assigned materials and identified their unifying themes, methodological strengths and weaknesses, key findings or theoretical and policy implications. They are also encouraged to bring in outside resources (news articles, photographs, public opinion surveys, complementary studies, video clips, etc.) that might advance a deeper understanding of the analyses.

Hint: Please be aware that it may takes some time before people respond to a question, so be certain to allow sufficient time for seminar members to form their responses. Don't just speed ahead to the next question, if answers or discussion are slow in developing. It's also important to allow a productive conversation continue, even if you don't finish all your questions.

Grades for discussion facilitation and presentations will be assigned based on assessments provided by myself, as well as your peers.

5% **Historicizing the Life of a Famous Person**

Each students will also required to prepare a brief biographical sketch of someone whose life they believe reflect either a grasp of the sociological imagination or whose life can be better understood via the sociological imagination. These sketches *must* include some discussion of the broader social and historical context in which that person (or persons) was situated and the degree to which her or his “personal troubles” were or, perhaps could be, linked to “public issues.” Past presentations have featured such diverse subjects as hockey player Wayne Gretsky, music mogul Jay-Z, and author J. K. Rowlings.

This task is scheduled during the early part of the term to assist you in formulating of your final project. Details for completing this assignment are posted on Canvas under “Assignments.”

10% **Symposium on Guns and Violence in the U. S.**

Due: Thurs. Jan. 29th

Details for completing this assignment are posted on Canvas under “Assignments.”

30% **Exercises in the Sociological Imagination (2)**

Completion of two (2) response papers (4-6 pages, double-spaced and typed) that present critical essays addressing a given question or report the findings/conclusions of exercises in the use of the sociological imagination. There will be at least one option for each book, and will cover a range of sociological skills, methodologies, and substantive topics.

<i>Note #1</i>	<i>Negotiating Public Spaces</i>	Due: Mon. Jan. 26
<i>Note #2</i>	<i>Re-imagining the Everyday</i>	Due: Mon. Feb. 9
<i>Note #3</i>	<i>TBA</i>	Due: Mon. Feb. 16
<i>Note #4</i>	<i>Trading in Bodies</i>	Due: Mon. Feb. 23
<i>Note #5</i>	<i>Living Solo</i>	Due: Mon. Mar 2

See the "Assignments" folder on Canvas for details regarding the various options and due dates.

30% **Final Project: Sociologically Informed Autobiography**

This self-reflective exploration should situate your development as a sociologist in a broader socio-historical context. In other words, an analysis that attempts, as C. Wright Mills argues, "to grasp the interplay of biography and history." As you are about to leave Dartmouth and embark on the next phase of your lives, it may be useful for you to contemplate your own biography within the framework of the sociological imagination.

In order to do this you must 1) sketch out your own biographical history, considering how “culture,” “place,” “time” and “history” affected your life chances; 2) locate your position in various social structures – socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, or gender; 3) identify the characteristics of your proximal conditions and circumstances that facilitated and constrained any personal choices; and 4) relate any personal trouble to social issues. You will be expected to consult the sociological literature on educational attainment, class mobility, the reproduction of status, and the relationship between structure and agency, etc. –or any other concepts and theoretical perspectives that are relevant to the focus of your paper.

Professor Kathryn Lively has described this essay as an opportunity to reflect upon why you're interested in sociology, what it means for you to be a sociologist, and how you plan to use sociology as you transition into the next phase of your life. While this may seem like a daunting task, it is merely one that requires imagination and the ability to bring your sociological eye to bear on your own life.

You will have opportunities to complete preliminary tasks (non-graded) that are designed to assist you in proposing, developing and revising your autobiography. You may also find it useful to maintain an informal, intellectual journal should record your observations, questions, new items, notes, artifacts, etc. related to the sociological analysis of your own life.

COURSE POLICIES

Honor Principle Academic work is simultaneously a collaborative and an independent enterprise. Consulting others and using their ideas, findings, and interpretations are integral parts of intellectual inquiry. The laborious, critical and creative work of developing one's own understandings is equally important. In this course, you will have opportunities to engage in both endeavors. Therefore it is essential that you maintain the integrity of each. Class members are encouraged to discuss readings, lectures and other course matters with one another. However required written assignments and presentations must reflect your own independent effort and ideas, unless otherwise indicated. By putting your name on an assignment that you submit, you are indicating to me that the work is your own original work.

You should familiarize yourself with Dartmouth College's *Academic Honor Principle* regarding honesty in completing all course examinations, research papers, and exercises (see online "Academic Honor" under the Registrar Regulations, plus the Standards of Conduct regulations on computing resources and library privileges). This Principle commits each of us to individual responsibility and fairness in all course work; and prohibits cheating on exams, fabricating research, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, purchasing papers, submitting fraudulent documents, engaging in computing abuses and forging signatures.

Acknowledgements & Citations Learning when and how to acknowledge appropriately the ideas, words and work of others is a critical skill for academic as well as other professional fields. Pay close attention to your citations of the intellectual and creative ideas, writings, images and products of others (including other class members, readings, films, government reports, art work, lectures, websites, etc.). Always consult *Sources: Their Use and Acknowledgment*, use links to various citation references posted on Canvas' "External Links." You might consider purchasing a comprehensive reference book on acknowledging sources. Several useful style guides include *The Chicago Manual of Style*, *APA Style Guide*, and Diana Hacker's *Research and Documentation Online*. You should also feel free to consult me before submitting work that you think might be improperly cited.

Missed Sessions As responsible adults, class members should notify the instructor in writing of any anticipated absences. In the event that you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for getting the seminar discussion notes for that class from another student. I will not make my lecture/discussion notes available. I trust that members of the class will be cooperative in sharing their notes, realizing that you also may be in a similar position one day. Repeated absences will adversely affect your grade.

Religious Observance Class members may wish to take part in one or more of the religious observances that occur during this academic term. However, some activities may conflict with your participation in this course. Before the end of the second week of the term, please send me an email detailing the occasion, date and the specific course responsibility that may be affected. I will use this information to determine any appropriate accommodations.

Submission & Return of Assignments The submission of response memos, assignments and papers is expected on the indicated due date and time. Requests for extensions beyond the submission date should be made *at least 24 hours prior* to the due date. Please note that grades on non-approved late submissions may be penalized. Graded work will be returned in the sealed envelopes. Course assignments, examinations and papers *may not be submitted by email, postal mail or fax* (unless otherwise instructed and with prior approval).

Note for Student Accessibility and Special Concerns Students with learning or other disabilities as well as chronic health conditions that may disrupt your studies are encouraged to meet with the professor during the first two weeks of the term to discuss any academic accommodations that may be of assistance to you. *All discussions will remain confidential, although the Student Accessibility Coordinator, Dick's House staff or other college officials may be consulted.*

Electronic Devices Cell and smart phones, iPods, MP3s, Bluetooth, tablets, etc. must be turned-off and put away during our seminar sessions. Laptop computers and notepads should only be used for note taking or researching information pertinent to that class discussion. In a small class, web browsing, texting, handling email, updating Facebook or working on non-course related matters are especially distracting for others and not conducive to your own learning. The repeated disregard of this policy will lead to a reduction in your course participation grade.

Email Policy Course assignments, examinations and research papers *may not be submitted* by email, snail mail or fax. Please note that I typically read and answer email periodically during the work week (i. e. Mon. – Fri.), but not on a fixed schedule. As a rule, I am not accessible via email during the weekends.

Classroom Etiquette We will cover some complex and controversial subjects. Understandably, disagreement and debate are welcome and integral parts of the learning process. Please extend respect to all members of the class in terms of your verbal and

nonverbal communications, listen attentively to their questions and comments as you would the lectures, and offer your informed observations and criticisms in a constructive manner.

SCHEDULE OF REQUIRED READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

The seminar schedule, readings and assignments are subject to change

PART I THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION: FROM CONCEPT TO PRACTICE

The fascination of sociology lies in the fact that its perspective makes us see in a new light the very world in which we have lived all of our lives. . . . It can be said that the first wisdom of sociology is this – things are not what they seem. People who like to avoid shocking discoveries . . . should stay away from sociology.

Peter Berger, Invitation to Sociology, 1963

Tues. Jan. 6 **Course Overview**
Introductions and course organization

Thurs. Jan. 8 **A Passion for Sociology**
Mills, C. Wright. 2000. *The Sociological Imagination*, New York: Oxford University Press, Chaps. 1 and 9 "The Promise" and "On Reason and Freedom" (available on Canvas).
Skim: Chaps. 2 and 3

Due: *Historicizing the Life of a Famous Person*

See "Assignments" folder on Canvas for detailed instructions. Be prepared to discuss your preliminary analysis in class today.

Submit your sketch via Canvas your written sketch no later than 6:00 pm on Saturday, January 10th

PART II CONTESTATIONS OVER PUBLIC SPACES

One of the excitements of sociological work in general is to watch general patterns – dim and shapeless at first – emerge from a wash of seemingly unconnected details; and that . . . a new species of trouble . . . a profound difference between those disasters that can be understood as the work of nature and those that need to be understood as the work of humankind

Kai Erikson, A New Species of Trouble, 1994

Tues. Jan. 13 **Working Men & Living for the City**
Duneier, Mitchell. 1999. *Sidewalk*. Introduction, Part I and A Note on Methods: Appendix

Due: 1st Daily Response Memo on Duneier

Thurs. Jan. 15 **Sustaining & Managing a Street Habitat**
Duneier, *Sidewalk*. Parts II and III

Due: 2nd Daily Response Memo on Duneier

Fri. January 16

Lessons Learned in Ferguson & Their Implications for the Country

Reverend Starsky Wilson

Pastor of St. John's United Church of Christ in Saint Louis

4:00 -5:30 pm ~ Location: TBA

Tues. Jan. 20 **Controlling the Street, Controlling the Vendors**
Duneier, *Sidewalk*. Parts IV and V

Skim: Symposium on *Sidewalk*, plus E. Anderson's *Code of the Street* and K. Newman's, *No Shame in My Game*. *American Journal of Sociology*, v107 n5 May 2002 (on Canvas). Pay particular attention to The exchange between Loic Wacquant (p. 1468-1532) and Mitchell Duneier (p. 1551-1576).

Due: 3rd Daily Response Memo on Duneier

Thurs. Jan. 22 **Policing, Race and Hypercriminalization**
Rios, Victor. 2011. *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*. New York: New York University Press. Preface, Acknowledgements, and Part I, Chapters 1 - 4 and Appendix

Due: 1st Daily Response Memo on Rios

Fri. January 23

Dear White People

Film follows four black students at an Ivy League college where riots break out after an ill-conceived "African American" themed party.

7:00 pm ~ Spaulding \$

Mon. Jan 26

Due: *Optional Note #1 ~ Negotiating Public Spaces*

See "Assignments" folder on Canvas for detailed instructions. Submit via Canvas no later than 6:00 p.m.

Tues. Jan. 27

Managing A Criminalized Identity

Rios, *Punished*, Part II, Chapters 5-7 and Conclusion

Due: 2nd Daily Response Memo on Rios

Tues. January 27

A Better Life

A gardener in East LA struggles to give his son the opportunities he never had, while keeping him away from gangs and immigration agents. Film explores the Latino community served by Father Greg Boyle and Homeboy Industries.

12:00 - 2:00 pm ~ 324 Blunt Alumni Center

Brown Bag Lunch

Thurs. Jan. 29

Symposium on Guns, Violence in the U. S.

See "Assignments" folder on Canvas for detailed instructions.

Fri. Jan. 30

Due: *Report on Guns, Violence in the U. S.*

Submit via Canvas no later than 6:00 p. m.

**PART III
STRUCTURE**

GLOBAL DYNAMICS: SOCIAL PRACTICES & CULTURAL MEANINGS IN,

The world we live in today is characterized by a new role for the imagination in social life. To grasp this new role . . . (the image, the imagined, the imaginary – these are all terms that direct us to something critical and new in global cultural processes: the imagination as a social practice. . . . the imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (in the sense of both labor and culturally organized practices), and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility.

Arjun Appadurai, Modernity at Large, 1996

Tues. Feb. 3

"When You Care Enough to Send the Very Best": Social Meanings & Evocative Objects

Ziegler, Catherine. 2007. *Favored Flowers: Culture and Economy in a Global System*, Introduction and Chaps. 1 - 4

Due: 1st Daily Response Memo on Ziegler

Thurs. Feb. 5

Globalization in Everyday Life: A Fragrant Commodity in the Global Chain

Ziegler, *Favored Flowers*, Chaps. 5 - 8 plus Conclusion

Due: 2nd Daily Response Memo on Ziegler

Mon. Feb. 9 **Due: Option Note #2 ~ Re-imagining the Everyday**
See "Assignments" folder on Canvas for detailed instructions. Submit via Canvas no later than 6:00 p. m.

Tues. Feb 10 **Topic to be Determined**
Readings - TBA

Tues. February 10
Annual Stonewall Lecture
Denise McWilliams, Executive Director of the New England Innocence Project
4:15 -5:30 pm ~ Location TBA

Thurs. Feb. 12 **Topic to be Determined**
Readings - TBA

Required Attendance:

Thurs. February 12
"Getting Serious about Inequality"
Kevin Leicht, Professor of Sociology, University of Iowa
4:30 pm ~ Location TBA

Mon. Feb. 16 **Due: Optional Note #3 ~ TBA**

Tues. Feb. 17 **Erotic Commodities: Sex as Labor**
Bernstein, Elizabeth. *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity and the Commerce of Sex*. Chaps. 1- 4
plus Appendix: Methodology
Due: 1st Daily Response Memo on Bernstein

Thurs. Feb. 19 **Erotic Commodities: Sexuality, State and the Market**
Bernstein, *Temporarily Yours*, Chaps. 5 - 7
Due: 2nd Daily Response Memo on Bernstein

Mon. Feb. 23 **Due: Optional Note #4 ~ Trading in Bodies**
See "Assignments" folder on Canvas for detailed instructions. Submit via Canvas no later than 6:00 p. m.

PART IV REVEALING THE MYSTERIOUS POWER OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE

All sociology, whether written or spoken, necessarily addresses a public. The meaningful questions at issue concern, which publics sociologists should and should not serve, by what means, and to what ends . . .

Judith Stacey, 'If I Were the Goddess of Sociological Things'

Tues. Feb. 24 **Singles: An Emergent Demographic Trend**
Klinenberg, Eric. 2012. *Going Alone: The Extraordinary Rise and Surprising Appeal of Living Alone*.
Intro, Chapters 1- 3, and Appendix

Due: 1st Daily Response Memo on Klinenberg

Thurs. Feb. 26 **The Singleton Society: Reshaping the Way We Live**
Klinenberg, *Going Alone*, Chapters 4 - 7 and Conclusion

Due: 2nd Daily Response Memo on Klinenberg

Mon. Mar. 2 **Due: *Optional Note #5 ~ Demographic Shifts & Reshaping Living***
 See "Assignments" folder on Canvas for detailed instructions. Submit via Canvas no later than 6:00 p. m.

Tues. Mar. 3 **Final Project Updates: *Sociologically Informed Autobiography***
 You are expected to present your main ideas to the class. The point is not to fully disclose, and only provide information as you feel comfortable sharing. The objective is to get feedback from your seminar partners that might help you in contextualizing your experiences. Keep this part of the assignment in mind when selecting your topic

Thurs. Mar. 5 **Final Project Updates: *Sociologically Informed Autobiography***

Tue. Mar. 10 **Last Day of Class**

MON. MARCH 16 **Due: *Sociologically Informed Autobiography***

Deliver a hard copy to either my office (107 Silsby) or my mailbox in the Sociology Department Office (111 Silsby) no later than 6:00 pm.