

Image: Nam Jun Paik "Electronic Superhighway"

SOCA 101 INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

Sessions 7D2 and 7D4
SYLLABUS

Meeting Days, Times, Location: ONLINE
Semester: SPRING, Year: 2020

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Course Description

This course introduces students to the field of sociology, it is designed to be an overview of major sociological theories, concepts, and experiences that shape the human experience. Students are also introduced to the concept of socio-technology, the extent to which technologies are impacting and reshaping society. Socio-technological concepts we will study include personal and group privacy, online harassment, digital divide, online propaganda and misinformation, self-perception and algorithmic bias. Questions asked are: what is society and how can we understand it? What is the role of individuals in society and how are they affected by society? how do technologies (re)shape and impact cultures and social interactions? In answering these questions, we will move away from the “common sense” understanding of the social world and develop a “sociological imagination”, which is the capacity to think about how things we experience as personal problems are really social issues. We will pay attention to social phenomena across space and time by examining substantive areas of sociology such as theories, methods, culture, socialization, inequality, deviance, social institutions and social change through socio-technological lens.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this class, you will be able to:

- Explain key sociological theories, terms and concepts
- Discuss the social implications of technology, how the internet and the Web impact individuals, communities, and society.
- Apply sociological theories to understand local and global social and sociotechnical problems relating to cultures, inequalities, socialization and interactions, gender, race and ethnicity, and deviance.
- Develop a “sociological imagination” to critically analyze social and sociotechnical problems from the course materials.

Required Resources



Required Text: *The Real World: An Introduction to Sociology*, (6th edition). Kerry Ferris & Jill Stein. 2018. Publisher: W. W. Norton

Additional required reading: will be available on eCampus for the assigned week/assignment.

Technology:

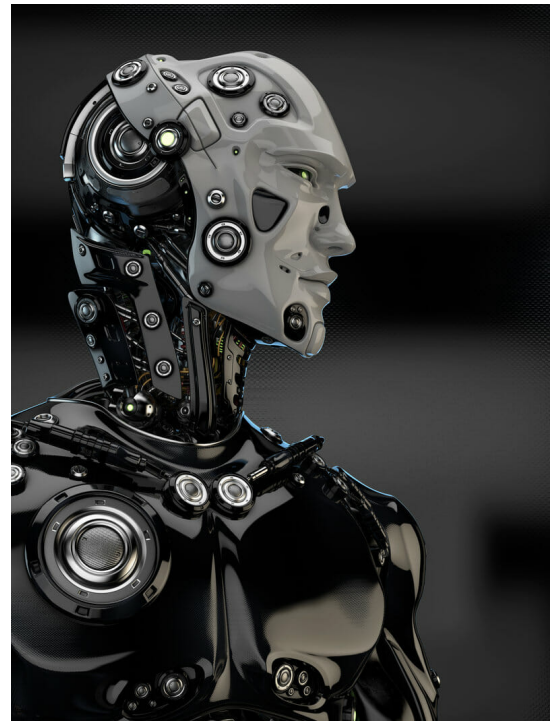
Please ensure that you have reliable technology (a laptop or desktop computer with a reliable internet connection, word processing and PDF reader software, a browser) prior to the first day of class. While you can access some of the class content via your cellphone, I do not recommend using cellphones as the means for taking this class. If you are having trouble getting access, make sure your laptop or other device is set up to work with eCampus. If you still have technical issues, please contact ITS for assistance and email me about the issue and that you are working to resolve it urgently. On the course page, the left-hand menu, there is an *Ecampus Help* link. Clicking this will take you to a variety of help resources for navigating eCampus. You should contact the WVU ITS Service Desk to receive remote assistance with ITS-supported systems and applications at 304-293- 4444 or ITSHelp@mail.wvu.edu

This is an **online** course, please familiarize yourself with the platform. The course will be taught through WVU's eCampus system of Blackboard. It is your responsibility to check eCampus and your WVU issued email for announcements daily.

How to Contact Me

Email is the best way for you to contact me. Please use vfg0002@mix.wvu.edu and I will try to respond within 24 hours and 48 hours on weekends. Do not forget to state the course name, section and purpose of your message in the subject line of the email.

Image: Vladislav Ociacia "Robots"



Class Format & Participation

This is an online independent study course; students are required to complete the course and assume responsibility for all course guidelines. Online classes are more demanding, they require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills. Make sure to familiarize yourself with the platform, all due dates and course requirements. **All due dates times are Eastern Standard Time (EST) zone.** The course is designed in eCampus with "Weekly Instructions". Each weekly instruction or module contains the appropriate assignments, lecture slides, audio or video and other material needed for each week.

This is not a lecture class; it is an active learning class designed to be engaging and relevant. Research has found active learning to be highly effective, a lot of learning will

come from your own independent work to complete required readings, review required media (videos or podcasts) and complete assignments.

Students Responsibilities for Online Learning

- Log in to the course at least three times per week
- Responsible for reading and reviewing the syllabus throughout the course as it may change
- Responsible for checking announcements regularly and ensure they receive emails from eCampus when announcements are posted. You may need to check your spam
- Responsible for completing all assignments and material on time and throughout the course. This includes material from lectures (PowerPoints), reading assignment (textbook), audiovisual content, videos, and handouts. Late submissions will NOT be accepted
- Expected to maintain academic integrity and adhere to the Student Code of Conduct

Instructor's responsibilities include

- Log in to the course at least four times per week
- Respond to emails within a day
- Grade assignments within four days of the deadline
- Not accept late submissions
- Post reminders, announcements on the eCampus course home page



Image: Norman Rockwell, "The Problem We All Live With"

Learning Assessment Description

1. Introduction assignment (15 points)

All students are required to respond to the first discussion board prompt introducing themselves.

2. Syllabus Quiz (20 points)

Read the syllabus and take the quiz within the first week.

3. Discussion Board Assignments

Discussion board posts (6 @ 10 pts each - 60 points)

Some weeks you will be required to participate in discussions. A question or prompt will be posted, and you are required to respond and contribute. The questions may relate to the readings, materials from the class or current events. Do not copy posts, any plagiarized posts will receive a zero grade.

You are required to post one original response. The original post is due **Thursday 11:59pm EST**, and it is worth 10 points and must be between 150 to 200 words. Your initial post must include at least 1 concept from the textbook and make reference to the page or section number. Please write the response in Word and then cut and paste onto the discussion board, make sure to include the word count.

**You will not receive credit for late or unsatisfactory completion of the assignment*

Discussion board responses (12 @ 5 pts each - 60 points)

You are required to respond to at least two of your peers (more is better). Please respond to someone different each time, not the same people/friends. The reply posts to your peers are due **Sunday by 11:59pm EST** and are worth 5 points each, and each must be at least 5 sentences long. Comments such as "I agree" or "great post" do not count, the replies must be substantive and reflect your knowledge of the course material and critical evaluation.

As this is an online course, this assignment is an opportunity to share your opinions, experiences, and understanding of the course material as well as academically engage with your classmates. The discussion board will be as interesting and engaging as we make it. Only respectful and appropriate dialogue should be used when contributing to discussion boards. Disrespect will not be tolerated in this class.

**You will not receive credit for late or unsatisfactory completion of the assignment*

4. Digital Living Tweets (13 @ 5pts each – 65pts)

To engage in public-facing sociology, each class, you will be required to use your sociological imagination by turning in a 280 characters tweet (“sociotweets”) or meme about the readings or lecture. You will be asked to write in your own words what you understood from the concepts learned from class and/or questions you still have, find and post articles or videos that relate to the class readings. You are encouraged to set up a professional Twitter account that you will use for the class posting. The posts will be turned in via Twitter using the class hashtag #Soca1017D2 or #Soca1017D4 by Friday, 11:59pm EST.

**You will not receive credit for late or unsatisfactory completion of the assignment*

5. Engagement Activities (6 @ 20 pts each – 120pts)

Some weeks you will be required to complete individual engagement assignments. The activities may range from watching a film, video or listen to a podcast and writing a 1-2 pages reflection paper based on the topic, media and how it relates to the class readings. Other engagement activities include creative assignments such as memes, infographics, informational website and blogs, concept maps. These activities are meant to serve as gradual work towards your final projects (see below). Scores are based on student’s participation and thoughtful response; a rubric will be provided. The assignment is due Sunday 11:59pm EST.

6. Final Project, Proposal, Presentation (200 pts)

In the final project, you will choose a topic related to technology and social issues such as race, gender, class, sexuality inequalities, deviance, presentation of the self, technology in the work force and provide an analysis of a question of your choice using themes and topics from class and outside readings. Your topic of choice should be something that will be useful to you in your current or future work. The final project may take one of the following forms: a podcast/audio documentary, a short film or script, a collection of poetry, an informational website or blog, a zine, a digital collections exhibition of your own original work, a 10-page (excluding title page and references) analytic paper analyzing one of your fictional societies i.e. the Sociology of Black Mirror or the Sociology of Harry Potter.

A 1-2-page proposal of your final project is due February 23, 2020 by 11:59pm EST. The proposal should include a short summary of the proposed project, an outline of the content you plan to include, a timeline for completing the project. If you have an idea of what your final project will be before the deadline, you are encouraged to submit early. You will receive feedback on your proposal as needed to ensure we have a mutual understanding of what a successful completion of your final project will look like.

*You may do the final project as a team of up to 4 members. However, you will be expected to produce an extensive project than you would as an individual. Not all projects can be done as a group. More details of the project will be provided at a later date.

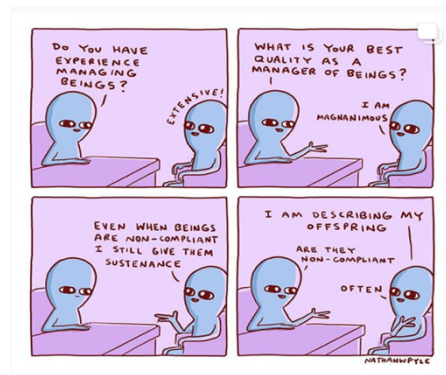
7. Bonus material/Extra credits (10 points)

You will have an opportunity to earn extra credits up to 10 points by submitting ONE assignment which could be a reflection paper, blog post, infographics etc. due the last week of class.

Example week:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Student						
Read Watch Listen			Due: Discussion board (initial post)	Due: Tweets		Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion board (2 responses to peers) OR Engagement activity
Instructor						
Check and respond to emails, discussion boards		Grade assignments		Check Twitter for submitted tweets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Release of: Weekly materials PowerPoint Slides Discussion Board or Engagement activity 	

Image: Nathan Pyle, "Strange Planet"



Course Grades Summary

The final course grade will be calculated using the following categories:

Assessment	Total Points	Percentage of Final Grade
Introduction assignment	15	2.8%
Syllabus quiz	20	3.7%
Discussion Board Posts		
6 Original post @10pts each	60	22.2%
6 Response post 1 @ 5pts each	30	
6 Response post 2 @ 5pts each	30	
13 Digital Living Tweets @5 each	65	12%
6 Engagement activities @20 pts each	120	22.2%
Final project		
Proposal	50	37%
Presentation	50	
Project	100	
Total points	540	100%

Students will be assigned the following final letter grades, based on calculations from the course assessment section. Grades are assigned on the 10% cut-offs, being close to the cutoff is not the same thing as making the cut thus 89.99 is not equal to 90.00.

Letter Grade	Percentage	Performance
A	93-100%	Excellent Work
A-	90-92%	Nearly Excellent Work
B+	87-89%	Very Good Work
B	83-86%	Good Work
B-	80-82%	Mostly Good Work
C+	77-79%	Above Average Work
C	73-76%	Average Work
C-	70-72%	Mostly Average Work
D+	67-69%	Below Average Work
D	60-66%	Poor Work
F	0-59%	Failing Work

Course Policies

- **Late-work policy:** I will not accept late assignments for the discussion boards or tweets. For the engagement assignments submitted after the due date, I will deduct 5 points for each late working day.
- **Re-grade policy:** If you want to review any of your grades, or have questions about how it was scored, email me to schedule a time for us to meet in my office or chat online.
- **Grades policy:** check eCampus course website frequently, all grades will be posted on eCampus. It is your responsibility to check and inform me if there is anything missing or incorrect before the end of the semester. If I have made a mistake, I will immediately correct it. There is no grading on the curve, you get the grade you earn. Grades are not negotiable, they are given, you have to do the work and earn the grade. If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me at the beginning of the semester so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goals.
- **Attendance & participation policy:** you are still required to be present in an online class, it is your responsibility to 'show up' in class frequently and do all the assignments and readings.

Academic & University Policies

Please take the time to read the following WVU Academic policies, click on the links:

- [Academic Integrity](#)
- [Academic Standards Policy, including Academic Dishonesty](#)
- [Adverse Weather Statement](#)
- [Appropriate Use of Technology Statement](#)
- [Attendance Policy](#)
- [Campus Safety Statement](#)
- [Inclusivity Statement](#)
- [Grading & Incomplete Grade Policy](#)
- [Sale of Course Material Statement](#)
- [Sexual Misconduct Statement](#)
- Student Wellness: [Carruth Center](#)

Our Class Contract:

As members of a learning community, we need to have a mutual understanding of what is expected from each of us, and what we have the right to expect from others.

I, as the instructor, agree to...

- Create and maintain a classroom environment that fosters student engagement and active learning

- Establish clear standards, assess your learning in a fair and honest way, and give you helpful feedback
- Respond to your questions in a timely manner

You, as the student, agree to...

- Take personal responsibility for your learning
- Actively engage with the material and class meetings
- Actively monitor email and eCampus announcements
- Ask questions

We, as members of this learning community, agree to...

- Abide by the course and campus policies
- Be respectful and encouraging as we actively cultivate an inclusive online classroom climate
- Give each other our individual attention and respect
- Be professionals



Image: Hebru Brantley
"Martha's Boys"

Classroom Culture:

Because the topics covered in this class are complex, it is important that we create and maintain a learning environment that is safe for ALL students and free from judgement. Be ready to openly share your own opinions and experiences and to be understanding and accepting of others' perspectives. We are here to learn from one another, and our differences create opportunities for discussion and deeper understanding of ourselves and our social world. If you disagree with content or comments in this course, I encourage you to express your thoughts, but you must do so respectfully, and you must use evidence to support your statements. Personal attacks, offensive language, or threats will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Tentative Schedule

Each week there is an assignment or discussion board and tweets due. You are also required to read the textbook chapters, slides, any other material (articles, podcasts, videos or films) I will post for the week. Class schedule is subject to change, you will be notified in advance if there is any change.

Week and Dates	Chapter/Topic	Assignment
Week 1 January 13 - 19	Introduction	Read: syllabus Watch videos, open a Twitter account Due: Syllabus quiz, introductions, getting to know you survey
Week 2 January 20 - 26	Sociology and the Real World	Read: Chapter 1 Due: Discussion 1 Tweet #1
Week 3 January 27 – Feb 2	Studying Social Life & Online (Mis)information	Read: Chapter 2 Due: Engagement activity 1 Tweet #2
Week 4 February 3 – 9	Culture & Cyborgs	Read: Chapter 3 Due: Discussion 2 Tweet #3
Week 5 February 10 – 16	Socialization, Interaction and Selfies	Read: Chapter 4 Due: Engagement activity 2 Tweet #4
Week 6 February 17 – 23	Separate and Together: Life in Groups & Online Connections	Read: Chapter 5 Due: Project proposal Tweet #5
Week 7 February 24 – March 1	Deviance & Online Hate Crime	Read: Chapter 6 Due: Engagement activity 3

		Tweet #6
Week 8 March 2 – 8	Social Class: Structure of Inequality & Automating Inequalities	Read: Chapter 7 Due: Discussion 3 Tweet #7
Week 9 March 9 – 15	Race and Ethnicity & Algorithm of Oppressions	Read: Chapter 8 Due: Engagement activity 4/Project update Tweet #8
Week 10 March 16 - 22	Spring Break	March 14 -22
Week 11 March 23 – 29	Gender and Sexuality	Read: Chapter 9 Due: Discussion 4 Tweet #9
Week 12 March 30 – April 5	Social Institutions	Read: Chapter 10 Due: Discussion 5 Tweet #10
Week 13 April 6 – 12	Economy & Automated Future	Read: Chapter 11 Due: Engagement activity 5/Project update Tweet #11
Week 14 April 13 – 19	Leisure and Media & Social Media	Read: Chapter 13 Due: Engagement activity 6 Tweet #12
Week 15 April 20 – 26	Social Change	Read: Chapter 16 Due: Discussion 6 Tweet #13
Week 16 April 27 – May 1 (5 days)	Presentation and finalizing projects	*May 1 last day of classes
May 4 – 8	Finals week	Final project due May 4

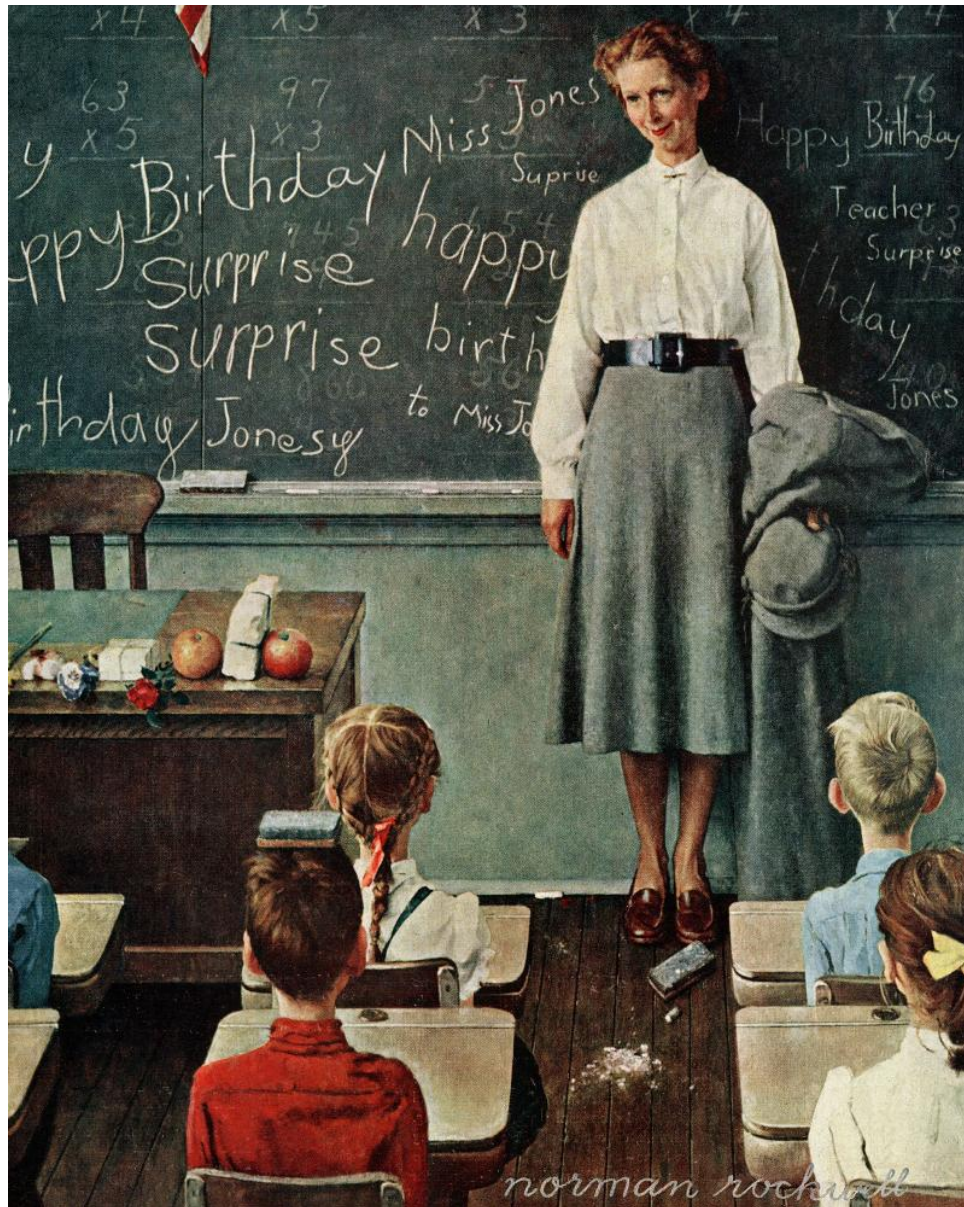


Image: Norman Rockwell. "School Teacher"

Some of the statements, images and assignment on this syllabus were inspired and adapted from other scholars' syllabi including Lindsay Kahle, Eve Ewing.