

Sociology 2000 Principles of Sociology
WMU Department of Sociology, Lee Honors College
Spring 2023

Instructor: Professor Kate Tierney (pronouns: She/her/hers)

Course Description

This course is an introduction to sociology as a discipline. We will explore sociological concepts, methods, and perspectives intended to develop your “sociological imagination.” By learning how to critically examine the world through a sociological lens, you will be able to apply the concepts and theories from this class to your own experiences and to other areas that interest you. Thus, in addition to learning the foundations of sociology and gaining exposure to sociological research, you will gain critical thinking skills that you can use throughout your college education and beyond.

Course Goals & Learning Objectives

Sociological Thinking & Application

1. You will be able to explain how you are influenced by and influence society
2. You will be able to use the sociological imagination to describe and understand social issues such as stratification, racism, sexism, and deviance.
3. You will be able to apply sociological concepts and theories to your life, media, and real-world situations

Content

4. You will be able to define sociology and explain its purpose
5. You will be able to define and explain the relevance of sociological concepts including the sociological imagination, social stratification, culture, social institutions, agency, structure, social control, socialization, and social mobility
6. You will be able to identify the types of topics sociologists study
7. You will be able to explain how research is conducted by sociologists

Specific Skills

8. You will be able to produce clear and well-organized short essays
9. You will be able to critically evaluate social claims made in everyday life
10. You will be prepared to take advanced sociology classes and classes in other social science disciplines
11. You will be able to communicate your ideas and perspective to your peers and work collaboratively to apply course materials.

Course Prerequisites: *None. This course is an introductory course for all undergraduates.*

Essential Studies Level, Category and Student Learning Objectives:

Soc 2000 is a 3 credit Essential Studies Foundations Level 1 course in the Inquiry and Engagement Category. The Essential Studies Student Learning Outcomes for this course are to:

1. Increase foundational knowledge of the Social Sciences, Humanities, or the Arts.
2. Develop creative and critical thinking.

The learning objectives described in this syllabus will be evaluated through a variety of assessments, described in the Course Requirement and Evaluation section of this syllabus.

Required Course Texts: Conerly, Tonja R., Holmes, Kathleen, Tamang, Asha Lal, et al. (2021) Introduction to Sociology 3e. OpenStax. Book URL:

<https://openstax.org/details/books/introduction-sociology-3e>

Note: *The full text of our text book is available for free at the link above. You may also order a paper copy if you wish. Please be sure to access the 3e edition rather than the 2e edition. All other materials will be linked in e-Learning.*

Code of Honor: The University Code of Honor will be in effect through all exams and written assignments. Please read carefully the provisions of Code of Honor, make certain you understand and adhere to them, and ask me to clarify any questions you have regarding the Code. You may also find <https://wmich.edu/conduct> to be a helpful resource.

Class Policies & Procedures

Instructional Procedure

In this course, lectures will be kept to a minimum! Research has shown that classic script-based lectures are not a great way to encourage learning. While, at times, short lectures may be used to make specific points or to highlight important information, they will not be the primary vehicle for learning in this class. Instead, we will spend much of our time in class discussing material in groups and engaging in class activities related to the course material.

WMU COVID-19 Policies

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, there may be times when masking or other safety requirements may be introduced. All students are expected to respectfully and completely comply with any and all safety requirements per the WMU Safe return plan and official WMU communications. Noncompliance with safety requirements will be reported to the relevant offices.

Attendance

We will spend a considerable amount of time in class discussing material in groups and building upon the readings with activities and mini-lectures. As a result, daily attendance and completing work before class is vital for your success.

If you are unable to regularly attend class at the scheduled time of this class (see the beginning of the syllabus) for any reason, **seek an alternative course**. Please do not schedule any appointments, trips, meetings, or other activities during our class time. If you have an emergency or will be absent from class for any reason, please let me or our TA(s) know as soon as you are able. Making up missed in-class work is solely at the discretion of the instructor. In order to protect your own wellbeing and the health of your classmates, **DO NOT** attend class if you are sick.

Office Hours & Contact Info

I will hold office hours twice a week as listed above. I recognize these times may not work for everyone, so you can always email me to arrange another time to meet. I invite you to meet with me regarding class materials and assignments, but you also are welcome to ask more general questions about sociology, your college experience, or your future plans. For the time being, all office hours will be held virtually.

You can reach me by email. *Please include the course name or number in your email.* You should also seek to use professional language and etiquette when sending emails, including appropriately addressing me as Dr. Tierney or Professor Tierney or Prof. Tierney. Email works well for simple questions I can answer quickly, and you are also welcome to talk with me immediately before and after class. For longer conversations or more involved questions, I ask that you schedule a time to meet with me. I will let you know if a question received via email requires a meeting.

One further note about email: I may not receive or have time to respond to emails sent outside of usual business hours (9AM -5 PM, M-F). Keep this in mind when sending/expecting emails from me. I will do my best to be attentive and fast on email!

Your TA(s) will also hold office hours virtually during the times listed above. You are welcome to email both or either of us with questions or concerns.

Technology

During class time, strive to use your phone/laptop for only class purposes. If you do not have a reliable computer and/or access to internet, please seek support from the WMU Loaner Laptop (<https://wmich.edu/library/laptops>) program, get in touch with me, or contact your academic advisor/dean of students.

Communications about Class

I will use the e-Learning portal to communicate with the class about the course. In particular, keep an eye on the News section of e-Learning.

Class Conduct

1. Start and end class on time.
2. We will engage respectfully with one another even if, and especially when, we disagree.
3. Raise your hand or wait to be called on in order to participate; this will help me make sure no one is dominating the conversation.
4. Try not to generalize about groups (even groups with which you identify), and do not ask another person to speak as a representative of a group.
5. Keep an open mind—enter the classroom dialogue with the expectation of learning something new. Look forward to learning about, and being challenged by, ideas, questions, and points of view that are different than your own.
6. I invite you to talk with me about any patterns in discussion that may be impeding full engagement by you or others. If this is not possible, you are encouraged to contact the sociology chair or another mentor.
7. Follow public health guidance from WMU as described here: <https://wmich.edu/safereturn>

Other class conduct rules may be added as needed and agreed upon by the class

Course Requirements & Evaluation

Weekly Work (Total: 40%)

- Reading Notes (15%) – Due on Tuesday and Thursday by 8:05 AM via e-Learning. The purpose of these notes is to check completion of reading and to support your ability to recall what you have read for class. In addition, these notes will assist me in identifying any confusing or unclear parts of the readings.
- Weekly Review Quizzes (10%) – Due every Tuesday by 8:05 AM. The purpose of these weekly quizzes is to help you assess your knowledge and understanding of readings and lecture materials in the previous week. In addition, these quizzes will help me to identify any areas of confusion about materials in a timely fashion. These will be posted on the e-Learning site. Your lowest score will be dropped.
- Group Activity Activities (15%) – These are activities we complete in class. They will be focused on working collaboratively to critically and creatively apply your sociological knowledge. Your grade will be based on completion and participation in group and class activities assigned during class. Please note that you may not earn completion credit for group work even if present if there are concerns from your group members, Prof. Tierney, or either of our TAs about your participation and contribution to the group. Your lowest 2 weekly group work grades will be dropped without penalty. Generally, missed in-class work cannot be made up or excused beyond your lowest 2 weeks of scores.

Reflections & Evaluations (Total: 10%)

- *About me & self and course evaluations (5%):* These periodic course and self-assessments will give you a chance to identify and share your goals and progress in the course with me as well as to provide feedback on the course and instructor.
- *Two Written Reflections (5%):* These early semester and end of semester reflections will give you an opportunity to record your beginning of class and end of class ideas and viewpoints in order to engage in self-evaluation of your own learning and takeaways from the course.

Three Short Writing Assignments (40% total, equally weighted): We will not have exams during the semester. Instead, there will be three short papers assigned throughout the semester. The purpose of these short papers is to help you reflect and synthesize your understanding of key topics throughout the course. Rubrics for grading and the full assignment details are on e-Learning. I am willing to provide detailed line edits on your paper to enhance your learning and writing skills if you request them. I strongly encourage you to use the services of the Writing Center for support and assistance in your writing.

Final Exam (10%): The final exam for this course will be cumulative and held at the date and time assigned by the University.

Summary of Grade Components:

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Percent of Grade</i>
Weekly Work	40%
Reflections & Evaluations	10%
Application Writing Assignments	40%
Final Exam	10%
TOTAL	100%

Grading Scale:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Letter Grade</i>
94-100	A
88-93	AB
84-87	B
77-83	CB
74-76	C
67-73	DC
64-66	D
0-63	E
*Grades ending in 0.5 or higher will be rounded up.	

Grading Criteria:

Grading rubrics will be provided for written assignments and will be posted on our e-Learning site.

Helpful WMU Resources

Accessibility Resources and Services: Both in compliance with and in the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), I would like to work with you if you have a disability that will impact the work in this course. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss reasonable academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible as accommodations are not retroactive; they begin after notification. Accommodations are facilitated by the Office of Disability Services for Students, so please reach out to their office at 269-387-2116 or at wmich.edu/disabilityservices for support.

WMU Writing Center: The Western Michigan University Writing Center is a free consultation service for all WMU students, where experienced writing consultants help writers of all levels and all abilities. Our consultants help writers to determine strategies for effective communication and to make academically responsible choices at any stage in the writing process and on assignments in any field of study. Both appointments and drop-in sessions are available. The Writing Center is located in 1343 Ellsworth Hall. To learn more information, including hours of operation, and to make an appointment, visit our website at wmich.edu/writingcenter.

Tips and Tools from the Academic Resource Center: The Academic Resource Center Learning Center has compiled a number of resources addressing study strategies, reading techniques, and ways to manage time. More information can be found here: <https://wmich.edu/tutoring/resources>.

COVID-19 Related Resources: A number of resources related to COVID-19 can be found here: <https://wmich.edu/safereturn>. And here: <https://wmich.edu/covid-19/faq>.

Final Notes

All of us have lives, responsibilities, and experiences outside of the classroom. Sometimes these things will impact us inside the classroom. 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, or is struggling with other unmet needs, is urged to contact the Dean of Students and/or WMU's Invisible Need Project (<https://wmich.edu/invisibleneed>) for support.

You may also find more information about mental health supports from the Sindecuse Health Center here: <https://wmich.edu/healthcenter/counseling>. The Sindecuse Health Center has compiled a number of other resources you might find helpful here: <https://wmich.edu/healthcenter/counseling/resources>. If you or someone you know is in crisis, you can find resources related to mental health here: <https://wmich.edu/healthcenter/immediate>.

If you are struggling with these or other issues that you feel might impact your course performance, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so, and I will try to connect you with resources to help.

Note: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including due dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible via e-Learning.

Schedule & Readings

All Readings are in the required textbook *or* can be found under “Outside Readings and Media Links” in the content page of our e-Learning site.

Module 1: Introduction to the Course

1. 1/10: Overview of Course
 - a. Read:
 - i. Syllabus
 - ii. Online Learning Guidelines on e-Learning
 - b. Watch:
 - i. Dweck, Carol. 2014. Developing a Growth Mindset with Carol Dweck. (Linked on Content page of e-Learning under “Outside Readings and Media Links” folder)
2. 1/12: Establishing Classroom and Small Group Norms
 - a. Read:
 - i. Cornell University Center for Teaching Innovation. n.d.-a. “Building Community and Belonging | Center for Teaching Innovation.” Retrieved May 26, 2022 (<https://teaching.cornell.edu/teaching-resources/assessment-evaluation/inclusion-accessibility-accommodation/building-inclusive-3>).
 - ii. Cornell University Center for Teaching Innovation. n.d.-b. “Getting Started with Establishing Ground Rules | Center for Teaching Innovation.” Retrieved May 26, 2022 (<https://teaching.cornell.edu/resource/getting-started-establishing-ground-rules>).
 - iii. Brame, CJ, and R. Biel. 2015. “Group Work: Using Cooperative Learning Groups Effectively.” *Vanderbilt University*. Retrieved December 17, 2021 (<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/setting-up-and-facilitating-group-work-using-cooperative-learning-groups-effectively/>).
 1. ONLY sections labeled:
 - a. What’s the theoretical underpinning?
 - b. Is there evidence that it works?

Module 2: Seeing the World & Yourself Sociologically

3. 1/17: Sociological Imagination
 - a. Read:
 - i. Text Chapter 1 – Introduction & Sections: 1.1 and 1.4
 - b. Watch:
 - i. Sociology Live! 2015. *Sociological Imagination*. (Linked on Content page of e-Learning under “Outside Readings and Media Links” folder)

4. 1/19: Culture
 - a. Read:
 - a. Text Chapter 3 – Introduction & Sections: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3
5. 1/24: Socialization
 - a. Read:
 - i. Text Chapter 5 – Introduction & Sections: 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4
6. 1/26: Agency/Structure
 - a. Read:
 - i. Hoffower, Hillary, and Allana Akhtar. 2019. “Mind-Blowing Facts That Show How Dire the US Student Loan Crisis Is - Business Insider.”
 - ii. Knueven, Liz. 2020. “A Millennial Who Paid off \$48,000 of Student Loans Shares 3 Steps for People Who Feel like They’re Drowning in Debt.” Business Insider
 - iii. *Note: focus on how these two articles frame the problem of student loan debt, rather than the statistics about the debt itself. If you want to learn more about student debt, you should seek a more reliable sources, for example:*
 1. Yilla, Adam Looney, David Wessel, and Kadija. 2020. “Who Owes All That Student Debt? And Who’d Benefit If It Were Forgiven?” *Brookings*. Retrieved January 4, 2021 (<https://www.brookings.edu/policy2020/votervital/who-owes-all-that-student-debt-and-whod-benefit-if-it-were-forgiven/>).
 2. Mitchell, Josh. 2020. “WSJ News Exclusive | Student Loan Losses Seen Costing U.S. More Than \$400 Billion.” Wall Street Journal, November 21. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/student-loan-losses-seen-costing-u-s-more-than-400-billion-11605963600>
7. 1/31 : Social Control
 - a. Read:
 - i. Text Chapter 7 – Introduction & Sections 7.1 and 7.3
8. 2/2 Social Construction
 - a. Read:
 - i. Text Chapter 4 – Section 4.3

Module 3: Skills for this Class

9. 2/7: Skills for this Class
 - a. Read
 - i. Review the Writing Center website here: <https://wmich.edu/writingcenter>

1. Be sure to look at the “About Us” and “For Students” Sections
- b. Watch
 - ii. Ali Abdaal. 2018. *How to Study for Exams - Evidence-Based Revision Tips*.
 - iii. Watch the **4 videos** on plagiarism here:
 - a. Eckel, Edward. n.d. “WMU Research Guides: Avoiding Plagiarism: Undergraduate Level Tutorials.” (<https://libguides.wmich.edu/plagiarism/tutorials>).

Module 4: Social Inequality

10.2/9: Social Stratification & Social Mobility

- a. Read:
 - i. Text Chapter 9 – Introduction & Sections: 9.1 and 9.2
 - ii. Read & take the Quiz: PBS. 2017. “What’s Your American Dream Score?” Chasing the Dream.

11.2/14: Social Class & Socioeconomic Status

- a. Read:
 - i. Tirado, Linda. 2014. “Poor People Don’t Plan Long-Term. We’ll Just Get Our Hearts Broken.” The Guardian.

12.2/16: Race & Ethnicity

- a. Read:
 - i. Text Chapter 11 – Introduction & Sections: 11.1, 11.2, 11.4, and 11.5
 - ii. Various Authors. 2017. “First Encounters With Racism.” The New York Times, August 2.

- b. Watch:
 - i. Jones, Camara. 2014. *Allegories on Race and Racism* TEDxEmpory.

13.2/21: Gender

- a. Read:
 - i. Text Chapter 12: Sections 12.1 and 12.2

- b. Watch:
 - i. Stone Williams, Paula. 2017. I’ve Lived as a Man & a Woman -- Here’s What I Learned. Colorado.

14.2/23: Sexuality

- a. Read:
 - i. Flaherty, Colleen. 2021. “What’s Really Going on with Respect to Bias and Teaching Evals?” *Inside Higher Ed*, February.
 - ii. Chapter 12 - Section 12.3

- b. Watch:
 - i. CBC Docs. 2019. Queer at Prom: True Stories from 7 Different Decades | Take Me To Prom.

15.2/28: Intersectionality

- a. Watch
 - i. NMAAHC. 2017. *#APeoplesJourney: African American Women and the Struggle for Equality*.

Module 5: Research Methods & Theories

16.3/2: Research Methods: The Basics of Doing Sociological Research

- a. Read:
 - i. Text Chapter 2 – Introduction & Sections 2.1 and 2.2
- b. Watch:
 - i. Delton Daigle. 2014. Research Ethics Involving Human Subjects.

17.3/7: SPRING BREAK

18.3/9: SPRING BREAK

19.3/14 Theories in Sociology

- a. Read:
 - i. Text Chapter 1: 1.2 and 1.3
 - ii. Section Chapter Assigned to your group on E-Learning

Module 6: Social Institutions

20.3/16: Introducing Social Institutions & The Social Institution of Family

- a. Read:
 - i. Text Chapter 14 – Introduction & Sections 14.1 and 14.2
- b. Watch
 - i. Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality. 2016. *Unequal Childhoods: Annette Lareau*.

21.3/21: Education as a Social Institution

- a. Read:
 - i. Text Chapter 16 – Introduction & Sections 16.2 and 16.3
 - ii. Goldstein, Dana. 2019. “‘Threatening the Future’: The High Stakes of Deepening School Segregation.” *The New York Times*, May 10.

22.3/23: Work as a Social Institution

- a. Read:
 - i. Text Chapter 18 – Introduction & Section 18.1 and 18.3
 - ii. Perelman, Deb. 2020. “In the Covid-19 Economy, You Can Have a Kid or a Job. You Can’t Have Both.” *The New York Times*, July 2.

23.3/28: Religion as a Social Institution

- a. Read:
 - i. Text Chapter 15 – Introduction & Sections 15.1 & 15.3
- b. Watch:
 - i. Callahan, Jared, and Russell Sheaffer. 2017. “Opinion | Gay and in Love at an Evangelical College.” *The New York Times*.

Module 7: Social Issues

24. 3/30: Health: COVID-19

a. Read

- i. Text Chapter 19 – Introduction, Section 19.1 and 19.3
- ii. Oppel Jr, Richard A., Robert Gebeloff, K. K. Rebecca Lai, Will Wright, and Mitch Smith. 2020. “The Fullest Look Yet at the Racial Inequity of Coronavirus.” *The New York Times*, July 5

25. 4/4: Domestic and Sexual Violence as a Social Issue

a. Read:

- iii. Zimmerman, Eilene. 2016. “Campuses Struggle With Approaches for Preventing Sexual Assault (Published 2016).” *The New York Times*, June 22.

26. 4/6: In-Class Writing Assignment 3 Working Period

a. Read: Writing Assignment 3

27. 4/11: Population & Environment: Climate Change & Natural Disasters

a. Read:

- a. Schwartz, John. 2019. “What Makes a Catastrophic Flood? And Is Climate Change Causing More of Them?” *The New York Times*, March 22.

28. 4/13: Social Problems and the Media

a. Read:

- i. Rothwell, Jonathan. 2018. “Biased News Media or Biased Readers? An Experiment on Trust.” *The New York Times*, September 26.

Module 8: Social Change and Public Sociology

29. 4/18: Social Change

a. Read:

- i. Text Chapter 21 – Introduction & Sections 21.1 and 21.2

b. Watch

- i. Define American. 2018. #BlackLivesMatter: How a Hashtag Defined a Movement.

30. 4/20: Public Sociology and Course Wrap Up

a. Read

- i. Text Chapter 21 – Section 21.3
- ii. Irwin, Neil. 2017. “What If Sociologists Had as Much Influence as Economists?” *The New York Times*, March 17.

Final Exam: Tuesday, April 25, 2:45 to 4:45 p.m.

Due Date Summary

*Unless otherwise specified, items are due at the beginning of class on the day due.
Subject to Change – e-Learning date is the "official" due date*

Item	Date Due
Initial Self-Assessment & Goals	1/17
Reflection 1	1/19
Writing Assignment 1	2/9
Writing Assignment 2	3/16
Writing Assignment 3	4/11
Mid-Semester Self & Course Evaluation (we will complete in class)	2/23
End of Class Evaluations	4/20
Reflection 2	4/18
Final Exam	Tuesday, April 25, 2:45 to 4:45 p.m.

Recurring work

Reading Notes	Due Every Tuesday and Thursday we have class @ 8:05 AM
Weekly Quizzes – Will Open After Class on Thursdays (Unless otherwise noted, check e-Learning and class slides)	Due Every Tuesday @ 8:05 AM (Unless otherwise noted, check e-Learning and class slides)