

SOCIOLOGY 140: POLITICS AND SOCIAL CHANGE—FALL 2015

SECTION SYLLABUS*

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Section bCourses site: SOC140 S101&102 Fa15

Discussion Sections

101: Tuesdays 10:10 - 11:00 AM, 54 Barrows Hall

102: Tuesdays 11:10 AM - 12:00 PM, 238 Kroeber Hall

Office hours signup (Thursdays): www.wejoinin.com/sheets/tbbut

Overview. Welcome to SOC 140: Politics and Social Change! I will be your GSI, which means I answer questions, teach stuff, and basically do whatever I can to facilitate your learning in this class. I'm a researcher in training, which means I don't know everything, but at least I know something (about sociology). I hope I can be useful!

We will use the readings as a starting point for a discussion that is collaborative, active, and fun! I trust you to come to class having read the assigned readings and taken time to reflect on them and gain clear understanding. This will pay off in class, providing essential background so that we can focus on higher-level learning tasks. Our focus in discussion is on *critical reflection*, *integration*, and *application* of textual materials, because this deepens your learning, makes it more relevant to your lives, and ultimately lets you take away more from this course. Thus, rather than read together or do lots of lecture, I've designed sections to encourage you to arm yourselves with knowledge and deploy it in creative ways. Your section experience is in your hands. Let's have fun and learn lots!

Goals. Section aims to help you develop deeper skills in:

- ❖ critical reading and writing
- ❖ seeing with clarity and curiosity the social worlds in which you are embedded
- ❖ understanding and intervening in complex arguments
- ❖ making focused contributions in a collaborative environment

Priorities. To accomplish our goals, section takes the following practical priorities:

- ❖ clarifying complex ideas from reading and lecture
- ❖ offering guidance with the process of thinking and especially *writing* sociologically
- ❖ fostering dialogue between students
- ❖ providing diverse opportunities for engagement

Timing. To let you digest and catch up—and for review—our Tuesday sections will cover the lecture and reading material from the *previous week*. Thus, our first section (Sept. 1) will not go over any content; our second section (Sept. 8) will cover the readings listed for “Week 1” and additional content from the previous week's lectures; and so on.

Office hours. Please come see me! Office hours are an opportunity to build dialogue around sociology and to get support for your education, including reading & writing. Times are Thursdays 10 AM-12 PM on the sunny benches outside Dwinelle Hall (but if there's rain/mist, you can find me in 483 Barrows; either way, please **sign up online** using the website above), and by appointment (please email me at least 24 hours in advance). Groups welcome.

Section structure. Here's a breakdown of your average section: first, logistics, like attendance, due dates, and when you get grades back; then we usually do a written or verbal warm-up. Next, you will break into groups for some activity (drawing, skit prep, etc.) or discussion (during which I typically ask one member to be note-taker), after which you share your group's conclusions/work and we discuss as a class. We will also do mini-lectures and Q&A as needed ☺

Section grading. Section counts for 20% of your total course grade and has three graded parts (see below for details):

(1) *active participation* (40% of your section grade); (2) *reading responses* (weekly except two; 30% of your section grade); and (3) *case/theory memos* (six total; 30% of your section grade).

Participation. Good participation involves *attendance* (checked when class starts—late arrival will affect your grade!) as well as *verbal* contributions to discussion. I will grade your participation each section as **0 (absent/ sleeping/ texting)**, **1 (noticeably silent/ mumbling/ incoherent)**, or **2 (active listening, clear speaking)**. I encourage you to bring physical, annotated readings to class for reference. Finally, if you're shy to talk, ask me about other ways to participate.

Reading responses (RRs). This section has two writing requirements to prepare you for the papers. First, each week—with **two unexcused exceptions**, which won't affect your grade—by Sunday 10 PM you will post to bCourses a brief (100 words or less) RR. I will use these to guide our discussions in section. They have three 1-2 sentence parts:

- 1) A *lesson*: something from the readings that you found interesting or useful;
- 2) A *question*: something from the readings you didn't understand or would like to discuss further; and
- 3) An *application*: something in the news, recent history, or your own life that relates to something in the readings.

Case/theory memos. As the name implies, these approximately 500-word memos can have one of two focuses. First, this can be a *case study*, in which you apply some concepts from the lecture/readings to an empirical case (e.g., an online community, nation, city, or other social group). Alternatively, this can be a *theoretical synthesis*, in which you describe how different authors' perspectives might be similar/different, how different concepts can weave together or conflict, etc. Whichever option you choose, please explain your concepts; for synthesis, describe how the originating authors use them; and for case study, also describe your case. These are due twice for each third of the semester: before midterm I (Oct. 1), between midterms I and II (Oct. 29), and between midterm II and the last day of section (Dec. 1)—for **six total**. I encourage you to write these after sections, when the material is probably most clear yet still fresh. I will grade these on a ✓- / ✓ / ✓+ basis. Please submit these in section as hard copy.

Absences. You may have **two unexcused absences** from section for illness, family responsibilities, or outside commitments. Beyond that, I ask for a doctor's note or other official documentation to excuse you. If you miss section, it is your job to learn what was covered—your classmates are a great resource for this!

Help with writing. Strong, clear writing develops with practice, and revising paper drafts is a great opportunity! I am happy to help revise your papers in office hours (but not over email). I also encourage peer feedback on your research paper drafts (see forms on bCourses) and use of the excellent writing tutors at the Student Learning Center (SLC). See here for more info: <<http://slc.berkeley.edu/writing>>.

Discussion. I encourage you to actively listen to your peers, comment thoughtfully, and ask questions both to the GSI and to the class as a whole. I especially encourage "joining" with others' comments by stating your own, similar perspective—and before you launch into a disagreement with someone else, ask if the class is ready to hear it! In addition, in our discussions we will try to balance focus on the material at hand with drawing broader connections between themes, events, etc., without either becoming rigid or prone to tangents. Please do the class the service of announcing when you are confused, for you will probably be voicing what many classmates are also experiencing.

Important dates: Midterm I: Thurs., Oct. 1; Midterm II: Thurs., Oct. 29; **NO SECTIONS OR OH:** Tues. & Thurs., Nov. 24 & 26 (Thanksgiving); last section: Tues., Dec. 1; Research Paper due: Friday, Dec. 18; Final Exam: Friday, Dec. 18.

Before & after section. Our 50 mins will pass quicker than you expect. I strongly recommend warming up first: take at least 10 mins right before section to review lecture and reading notes. To help your memory, it's also a good idea to "cool down" by spending around 10 minutes right after section to update and clarify your notes.

Late assignments. As indicated in lecture, late papers will incur a reduced grade of one level per day (e.g., from A to A-, or B- to C+). Lateness will not affect your grade **only** if you provide official documentation and notify me ASAP.

Use of electronic devices during section. Section is our "low-tech hour" for the day. We have a lot to think about, so we need all the help we can get to be alert and focused. For that reason, during section, **use of your laptops, phones, etc. is not allowed.** For writing exercises & notes, please bring paper and a pen(cil). Also, **please silence your phone.**

Email policies. I usually answer emails within 24 hours. Please keep emails short and restricted to administrative matters (e.g., absences). Rather than send me long or broad questions, come to office hours or bring them to section. Also, please make sure your bCourses email is correct.

Feedback. I really value your feedback on course structure, on what works and what doesn't. I will provide you ways to give me feedback in class, including midterm evaluations. Additionally, feel free to email me or speak to me after class or in office hours. The sooner you say something, the more likely I can change it.

Special needs. Please consult with me if you need anything special to make participation in the class easier for you—whether due to learning disabilities, participation in athletics, parenthood, etc. I can't promise to accommodate you, but I'll do what I can. For DSP, please provide a letter of accommodation ASAP to secure extra time on take-home exams.

On mental health. College can be really stressful. For support, please contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) at the Tang Center (2222 Bancroft Way, 510-642-9494), and the Career Center (<https://career.berkeley.edu>). If you need someone to talk to immediately, call the 24/7 Suicide Prevention and Crisis Hotline (415-499-1100).

This is my job. Sorry, but we're not Facebook friends, beer friends, etc. while you're in this course. Our respective roles require our relationship to be strictly professional—you are a student, I am staff. Let's be courteous, thanks!