

**Sociology 110: Introduction to Sociology**  
**Fall 2023**  
**Lutkin Hall**  
**M / W 12:30pm-1:50pm**

**Instructor:** David Schieber (he/him)

**Email:** [david.schieber@northwestern.edu](mailto:david.schieber@northwestern.edu)

**Office Hours:** I will be in my office (1810 Chicago Ave. Rm. 321, top of the turret) on Tuesdays from 10:00am-12:00pm to meet. Feel free to reach out to set up meetings outside this time as well, and I am also happy to meet virtually over Zoom.

**Virtual Meeting Room:** <https://northwestern.zoom.us/my/dwschieber>

**Teaching Assistants:**

Miguel Chavez ([MiguelChavez2021@u.northwestern.edu](mailto:MiguelChavez2021@u.northwestern.edu))

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Office Hours:

**Course Description:**

Sociology is a field of study that examines how people and groups interact, navigate, and make decisions within the structure and constraints of their social world. Often these social processes go unobserved or unacknowledged, and sociologists treat it as their job to shed analytical light on how people experience and participate in society. Through sociological analysis, we can

answer questions like: How did Evanston become largely segregated by race? Why is it illegal for people to sell their kidneys? How do people decide when to get married? Why would someone pay for Instagram followers?

Sociology is a huge field of study, and includes a wide variety of topics and methods. Each lecture will focus on a specific area of sociological study (Culture, Gender, Race, Money, Stigma, etc.) with the goal of offering you a general overview of the types of questions sociologists ask and how they answer them. By the end of the quarter, you will be able to think sociologically about your own world, and hopefully develop a budding interest in one or more of the areas we discuss in class.

Many of the readings for this class are academic articles. These readings are difficult. I know they are difficult. One of the skills we will actively focus on and develop throughout the quarter is how to approach and understand readings that are intimidating and difficult. Having the practical ability to quickly process dense academic articles (without spending hours trying to understand every sentence) will help you in many courses across a variety of majors at Northwestern. If nothing else, I will make sure you leave this course with helpful strategies to approach dense, technical readings. The syllabus is designed to facilitate this.

### **Course Objectives:**

1. Students will learn about what types of research sociologists conduct, focussing on the relationship between societal forces (e.g. norms, laws, organizational structures, etc.) and the behaviors of humans as individuals and groups. Each lecture highlights research on how the decisions people make are both embedded in the social structures / contexts the person exists in, as well as the social psychological underpinning of how people act within these social contexts. Using short answer questions to evaluate their comprehension of the core ideas discussed in lecture, students will be expected to synthesize these concepts with their own outside examples or personal experiences.
2. Students will gain a broad understanding of the qualitative and quantitative methods social scientists use to observe, describe, and understand individual human and group behavior. Students will be expected to discuss and critique the methodological choices researchers make when conducting their research in their writing assignments, and lectures throughout the quarter will cover the benefits and drawbacks of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods social science research.
3. Students will develop their skills in reading and critiquing the theories and methods discussed in academic sociology research and will learn to build upon the arguments these research articles make through their own writing. By reading primarily academic articles (and not a textbook) and completing assigned reading

response papers, students will demonstrate their comprehension of research at the source, and then build their skills in critiquing research at source through written responses to the research.

### **Course Materials:**

There are no required textbooks for this course. Readings for this class will be available on Canvas through the course reserves or as PDF links.

### **Class Procedures:**

I will lecture in person in our assigned classroom. I expect students to attend lecture, but I will use the Panopto systems in the lecture hall to record the lectures and post them to the course canvas page for students who are unable to attend that day. I conduct class polls during lecture, and each time you answer one of these polls in-person, you will receive one point added to your final grade.

### **Grading:**

*Reading Response Papers: 20% (4% x 5)*

Throughout this course, you are required to complete five 2-3 page reading response papers. These response papers should be divided into two parts: 1.) A brief summary of the main takeaways from that days readings showing me that you attempted the readings, and 2.) A brief response to the reading. See Canvas for a more detailed explanation of what the summary and response should look like.

You may choose which 5 days readings' you respond to, and your paper must be submitted to Canvas before the start of class that day. Each paper is worth 4% of the total writing assignment category. The paper will be graded on a Check Plus / Check / Check Minus system (Check Plus = 4%; Check = 2%; Check Minus = 0%).

All writing assignments should be double-spaced, with 12-point font, and 1-inch margins. See the "Reading Response Rubric" posted on Canvas for more details.

*Short Answer Questions: 80% (5% x 16):*

After every lecture, I will post 1 short answer question to canvas. **By Sunday, December 3rd at 11:59pm** you must have answered and submitted 16 answers to these questions. If you would like to save these until the last week and complete them like a typical exam you are welcome to do so. If you want to complete the questions as quickly as possible in the first few weeks of class, you are welcome to do that as well.

These will be the same type of questions I typically ask on my exams, but de-bundled from the traditional exam format. Each answer should be 200-250 words, but more importantly, should answer each part of the question. Please see the rubric on canvas for more information.

Once per quarter, if you or a group of students attend office hours (either mine or a TAs) to discuss a short answer question, it will count as full credit for one of your 16 short answer questions.

#### *Letter Grading Scale*

93%+	A	90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+	83-86%	B
80-82%	B-	77-79%	C+
73-76%	C	70-72%	C-
67-69%	D+	60-66%	D
0-59%	F		

#### **Emails**

Email is the best way to get a hold of me, and I try to respond to emails as quickly as possible. If you have questions about course materials or readings, don't hesitate to email. **Please include SOC 110 in the subject line of any email sent to me.**

#### **Students With Disabilities**

Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with AccessibleNU ([accessiblenu@northwestern.edu](mailto:accessiblenu@northwestern.edu); 847-467-5530) and provide professors with an accommodation notification from AccessibleNU, preferably within the first two weeks of class. All information will remain confidential.

#### **Additional Notes**

It is the responsibility of every student enrolled at Northwestern University to support the principles of academic integrity and refrain from all forms of academic dishonesty: <https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/>. Always do your own work, and reference any words that did not originally come from you. I will report any suspected academic dishonesty cases to the dean.

#### **Calendar of Lectures and Readings**

*(Subject to Change)*

#### **Week 1: Let's Talk About This Course**

*Wednesday, September 20th*

- Introductions and Overview, no readings

## **Week 2: Let's Talk About Reading, Data, and Methods**

Monday, September 25th

- Hannah Wohl and Gary Alan Fine. 2017. "The Active Skim: Efficient Reading as a Moral Challenge in Postgraduate Education." *Teaching Sociology*: 45(3): 209-219.
- Jessica Calarco. 2018. "Beyond the Abstract: Reading for Meaning in Academia." [Personal Blog](#).

Wednesday, September 27th

- Robinson Meyer and Alexis Madrigal. 2021. "Why the Pandemic Experts Failed: We're Still Thinking About Pandemic Data in the Wrong Ways." [The Atlantic](#).
- Colby King. 2011. "Behind the Data." *Contexts*: 10(1): 16-17.
- Dana R. Fisher, Kimberly Kay Hoang, Colin Jerolmack, Alexandra Murphy and Rhacel Salazar Parreñas. "How to Do Ethnography Right." *Contexts*: 15(2): 10-19.
- Peter K. Enns and Jake Rothschild. 2022. "Do You Know Where Your Survey Data Come From? Outsourcing Data Collection Poses Huge Risks for Public Opinion." [Medium](#).

## **Week 3: Let's Talk About Structure, Culture, and Class**

Monday, October 2nd

- Ann Swidler. 1986. "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." *American Sociological Review* 51(2): 273-286.
- Allison Benedict. 2021. "My Covid Parenting Has Reached Peak Inconsistency: Honestly, I have No Idea What I'm OK Letting My Kids Do Anymore." [Slate](#).
- Jennifer S. Hirsch and Shamus Khan. 2020. "Chapter 3: The Toxic Campus Brew." Excerpt from *Sexual Citizens: A Landmark Study of Sex, Power, and Assault on Campus*.
- Anthony Jack and Zennon Black. 2022. "Belonging and Boundaries at an Elite University." *Social Problems* 00:1-18.

Wednesday, October 4th

- Paul DiMaggio. 1982. "Cultural Capital and School Success: The Impact of Status Culture Participation on the Grades of U.S. High School Students." *American Sociological Review* 47(2): 189-201.

- P.F. Harvey. 2022. "Make Sure You Look Someone in the Eye": Socialization and Classed Comportment in Two Elementary Schools. *American Journal of Sociology*, 127(5), pp.1417-1459.
- Anthony Jack and Zennon Black. 2022. "Belonging and Boundaries at an Elite University." *Social Problems* 00:1-18.
- Ally Mauch. 2019. "The North Shore's Hidden Gem Restaurant Might Just be a Bowling Alley." [The Daily Northwestern](#).

#### **Week 4: Let's Talk About Socialization, Interaction, and Groups**

*Monday, October 9th*

- Howard S. Becker. 1953. "Becoming a Marihuana User." *The American Journal of Sociology* 59(3): 235-242.
- Allen C. Smith and Sherryl Kleinman. 1989. "Managing Emotions in Medical School: Students' Contacts with the Living and the Dead." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 52(1): 56-69.
- Patrick Reilly. 2018. "No Laughter among Thieves: Authenticity and the Enforcement of Community Norms in Stand-Up Comedy." *American Sociological Review* 83(5): 933-958.
- Yusheng Peng. 2010. "When Formal Laws and Informal Norms Collide: Lineage Networks versus Birth Control Policy in China." *American Journal of Sociology* 116(3): 770-805.

*Wednesday, October 11th*

- Michael G. Flaherty and Cosima Rughinis. 2021. "Online Memes and Covid-19." *Contexts* 20(3): 40-45.
- Forrest Stuart. 2020. "Chapter 3: Keepin' It Real" from *Ballad of the Bullet: Gangs, Drill Music, and the Power of Online Infamy*.
- Gary Alan Fine and Michaela De Soucey. 2005. "Joking Cultures: Humor Themes as Social Regulation in Group Life." *Humor* 18(1): 1-22.
- Jeff Bezos. 2019. "No Thank You, Mr. Pecker." [Medium](#).

#### **Week 5: Let's Talk About Stigma, Labels, and Suicide**

*Monday, October 16th*

- Matthew Clair, Caitlin Daniel, Michele Lamont. 2016. "Destigmatization and Health: Cultural Constructions and the Long-Term Reduction of Stigma." *Social Science and Medicine* 165: 223-231.
- Laura Eichelberger. 2007. "SARS and New York's Chinatown: The Politics of Risk and Blame During an Epidemic of Fear" *Social Science and Medicine* 65(6): 1284-1295.
- Abigail Saguy. 2020. "Chapter Two" from *Come Out, Come Out, Whoever You Are*. Oxford University Press.
- Roy Richard Grinker. 2020. "Autism, 'Stigma,' Disability: A Shifting Historical Terrain." *Current Anthropology* 61(21): S55-S67.

Wednesday, October 18th

- Anna S. Mueller and Seth Abrutyn. 2016. "Adolescents Under Pressure: A New Durkheimian Framework for Understanding Adolescent Suicide in a Cohesive Community." *American Sociological Review* 81(5): 877-899.
- Seth Abrutyn and Anna Mueller. 2014. "Are Suicidal Behaviors Contagious in Adolescence? Using Longitudinal Data to Examine Suicide Suggestion." *American Sociological Review* 79(2): 211-227.
- Marco Ramos. 2022. "Mental Illness is Not in Your Head." *The Boston Review*.
- Selena Simmons-Duffin. 2023. "'Live Free and Die?' The Sad State of U.S. Life Expectancy." [NPR Health Shots](#).

## **Week 6: Let's Talk About Race and Ethnicity**

Monday, October 23rd

- Ann Morning. 2005. "Race." *Contexts* 4(4): 44-46
- Pamela Perry. 2001. "White Means Never Having to Say You're Ethnic: White Youth and the Construction of 'Cultureless' Identities." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 30(1): 56-91.
- G Cristina Mora, Reuben Perez, Nicholas Vargas. 2021. "Who Identifies as 'Latinx'? The Generational Politics of Ethnoracial Labels." *Social Forces*.
- Linda Villarosa. 2022. "The Long Shadow of Eugenics in America." *The New York Times*.

Wednesday, October 25th

- Devah Pager. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology* 108(5): 937-975.
- David R. Williams, Jourdyn A. Lawrence, and Brigette A. Davis. 2019. "Racism and Health: Evidence and Needed Research." *Annual Review of Public Health* 40:105-125.
- Jingqui Ren and Joe Feagin. 2020. "Face Mask Symbolism in Anti-Asian Hate Crimes." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 44(5): 746-758.

### **Week 7: Let's Talk About Sex, Gender, and Sexuality**

*Monday, October 30th*

- Amy M. Denissen and Abigail C. Saguy. 2013. "Gendered Homophobia and the Contradictions of Workplace Discrimination for Women in the Building Trades." *Gender and Society* 28(3): 381-403.
- Caitlyn Collins, Liana Christin Landivar, Leah Ruppanna, and William J. Scarborough. 2021. "COVID-19 and the Gender Gap in Work Hours." *Gender, Work, and Organizations* 28(S1): 101-112.
- Tristan Bridges. 2014. "A Very 'Gay' Straight? Hybrid Masculinities, Sexual Aesthetics, and the Changing Relationship Between Masculinity and Homophobia." *Gender and Society* 28(1): 58-82.
- Libby Berry. 2016. "Subtle Sexism: Female Professors Grapple with Bias in CTECs." [North by Northwestern.](#)

*Wednesday, November 1st*

- Emma Mishel et al. 2020. "Cohort Increases in Sex With Same Sex Partners: Do Trends Vary by Gender, Race, and Class?" *Gender and Society* 34(2): 178-209.
- Mignon Moore. 2006. "Lipstick or Timberlands? Meanings of Gender Presentation in Black Lesbian Communities." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 32(1): 113-139.
- Elizabeth Armstrong, Paula England, and Alison C.K. Fogarty. 2012. "Accounting for Women's Orgasm and Sexual Enjoyment in College Hookups and Relationships." *American Sociological Review* 77(3):435-462.
- Michael Halpin. 2022. "Weaponized Subordination: How Incels Discredit Themselves to Degrade Women." *Gender and Society* 36(6): 813-837.

### **Week 8: Let's Talk About Health and Healthcare**



Monday, November 6th

- Thomas Bodenheimer and Kevin Grumbach. 2009. "Chapter 2: Paying For Healthcare." Excerpt from *Understanding Health Policy: A Clinical Approach*.
- Roi Livne. 2014. "Economies of Dying: The Moralization of Economic Scarcity in U.S. Hospice Care." *American Sociological Review* 79(5): 888-911.
- Deven C. Patel, et. al. 2021. "Cancer Diagnoses and Survival Rise as 65-year-olds Become Medicare-eligible." *Cancer* 127(13): 2302-2310.
- Amy Ivette, et. al. 2021. "Non-compliance with Covid-19 Related Public Health Measures Among Young Adults in Switzerland: Insights from a Longitudinal Cohort Study." *Social Science and Medicine* 268: 113370.

Wednesday, November 8th

- Peter Conrad and Kristen K. Barker. 2010. "The Social Construction of Illness: Key Insights and Policy Implications." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51(S): S67-S79.
- Wilbur J. Scott. 1990. "PTSD in DSM-III: A Case in the Politics of Diagnosis and Disease." *Social Problems* 37(3): 294-310.
- Garcia, Eric. 2021. "Chapter 5: Somebody Get me a Doctor | Healthcare" from *We're Not Broken: Changing the Autism Conversation*. Houghton Mifflin.

### **Week 9: Let's Talk About Inequality and Money**

Monday, November 13th

- Dennis Gilbert. 2015. "Chapter 11: The American Class Structure and Growing Inequality." Excerpt from *The American Class Structure in an Age of Growing Inequality*.
- Matthew Desmond and Nathan Wilmers. 2019. "Do the Poor Pay More for Housing? Exploitation, Profit, and Risk in Rental Markets." *American Journal of Sociology* 124(4): 1090-1124.
- Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas. 2005. "Unmarried With Children." *Contexts* 4(2): 16-24.
- Daniel Schneider. 2011. "Wealth and the Marital Divide." *American Journal of Sociology* 117(2): 627-667.

Wednesday, November 15th

- Viviana Zelizer. 1978. "Human Values and the Market: The Case of Life Insurance and Death in 19th-Century America." *American Journal of Sociology* 84(3): 591-610.
- Gabriel Rossman. 2014. "Obfuscatory Relational Work and Disreputable Exchange." *Sociological Theory* 32(1): 43-63.
- Ashley Mears. 2015. "Working for Free in the VIP: Relational Work and the Production of Consent." *American Sociological Review* 80(6): 1099-1122.
- Sophie Gallagher. 2019. "I Bought Your Drinks, So You Owe Me Sex- Why Do Some Men Believe Dating is a Transaction?" [Huffington Post](#).

**Week 10: Let's Talk About Community, Protest, and Collective Behavior**

Monday, November 20th

- Marcus Anthony Hunter, Mary Pattillo, Zandria F. Robinson, and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor. 2016. "Black Placemaking: Celebration, Play, and Poetry." *Theory, Culture, and Society* 33(7-8): 31-56.
- Maria Abascal. 2020. "Contraction as a Response to Group Threat: Demographic Decline and Whites' Classification of People Who are Ambiguously White." *American Sociological Review* 85(2): 298-322.
- Brian J. McCabe. 2014. "When Property Values Rule." *Contexts* 13(1): 38-43.
- Colin Jerolmack. 2021. "Opinion: They Couldn't Drink Their Water. And Still, They Stayed Quiet." [New York Times](#).

Wednesday, November 22nd

- David A. Snow, E. Burke Rochford, Jr., Steven K. Worden, and Robert D. Benford. 1986. "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation." *American Sociological Review* 51(4): 464-481.
- Danielle Kilgo. 2020. "Riot or Resistance? How Media Frames Unrest in Minneapolis Will Shape Public's View of Protest." [The Conversation](#).
- Aldon Morris. 2021. "From Civil Rights to Black Lives Matter: Protest Expert Aldon Morris Explains how Social Justice Movements Succeed." *Scientific American*.