SOC 1A: Order and Change in Society
Online Course
Summer 2020

**Instructor:** Samantha Leonard  
**Office Hours:** via Zoom on Tuesdays 10AM-11AM (sign-up on Google doc); or by appointment  
**Email:** sleonard@brandeis.edu

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**
This course is an introduction to the basic concepts, topics, and methods of sociology. You will be challenged to question your everyday world, connect individual biography to social history, and critically thinking through the social phenomena around you. We will ask questions about how and why society is organized the way that it is, and answer them through the analysis of how lives are shaped by (often invisible) social forces and processes. We will develop our sociological imaginations to understand how sociologist design research questions and choose the appropriate methods for their investigations. In this introduction to sociology, we will explore it as a social science with its own key methodological and conceptual toolkits.

This introduction to sociology primarily focuses on the U.S., although some readings will focus on other national contexts, and you are encouraged to extend your sociological imagination beyond the U.S. We will closely read books and articles by sociologists, watch and listen to topical videos, films, and podcasts, explore data visualizations, and read popular media articles and think-pieces. The course materials are curated and organized to introduce you to key concepts and perspectives, while also giving you an opportunity to “do sociology” by extending your analytical gaze on the different materials and assignments.

This course is organized around three themes: Self & Society, Inequality, Power, & Violence, and Order, Institutions, & Change. Each theme builds towards more complex discussions of society and social organization. Key topics include social structure, agency, institutions, inequality, and intersectionality. We will discuss these topics through the concepts of culture, gender, sexuality, race, class, and social movements.

As this is an online course, we will discuss the readings and interact with each other virtually. Active participation is key and respectful, thoughtful interaction is necessary for this course to be successful for all of us. Participation will be graded, just as in an online course, and we will develop together a guide for respectful, productive online interaction. Online courses require students to be self-motivated and organized to be successful. These are great skills to develop, but if you have any difficulties, please reach out directly to me as soon as possible so that we can discuss solutions.

I have provided vided lectures to clarify and develop upon the sociological readings and concepts required each week. Along with the required readings, videos, and other activities, each week also includes optional supplemental materials if you’d like to explore the topic further. I will also respond to your forum posts, mediate forum conversations when necessarily, and make myself available by email to clarify your questions.
Each week you will also be required to complete two-three short writing assignments in addition to completing the course readings and materials. These posts include weekly discussion forum posts and responses to your peers, weekly entries in your private Wiki (a diary-like feature on LATTE), and engagements in the “Where in the World is Sociology Forum” (three times per semester). These assignments will remain constant each week, even as discussion questions and course materials vary, to establish a routine for our collective engagement in the course.

In addition to these weekly assignments, you will complete three other writing assignments. The first two, the “Using Your Sociological Imagination” memo and “Public Sociology: Writing an Op-Ed”, are opportunities to apply the concepts and perspectives that you’ve learned to real-world applications and practice “doing” sociology. The final assignment is a “Sociological Autobiography” in which you will demonstrate your sociological understanding by drawing connections between your personal experiences, larger social structures, and sociohistorical context. This an opportunity to apply your sociological imagination, employ and connect course readings, topics, and concepts, and practice your academic writing. More information on all assignments is below and detailed descriptions and rubrics are also provided on LATTE.

“That life is complicated may seem a banal expression of the obvious, but it is nonetheless a profound theoretical statement – perhaps the most important theoretical statement of our time.”

(Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*)

**LEARNING GOALS:**

1. Define the “sociological imagination” and explain how sociologists use it to design and perform research.

2. Develop your sociological imagination to demonstrate a sociologically informed self-awareness and to describe situations in the world in sociological terms.

3. Discuss core sociological concepts and research methods in forum posts and other assignments. Apply these sociological concepts to everyday life.

4. Define social structure and analyze how structural forces shape individuals’ daily experiences and opportunities in patterned ways.

5. Analyze and interpret data regarding social inequalities based on gender, race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality in the contemporary U.S.

6. Articulate how your own experiences in the world have been shaped by social context.

7. Practice the skills of careful & open discourse, civic respect, and reading sociologically.

**COURSE POLICIES:**

**a. Participation & General Etiquette:**

Active participation is vital to the success of this course for all of us as participants. I define active participation as consistent participation, completing all of the assigned readings, thoughtfully responding to your classmates’ comments, and full participation in discussion.
forums. Active participation shows respect for your classmates, your self, and your professor. It also shows respect for the scholars and authors that we will be engaging with throughout the semester. Don’t let them down!

b. Netiquette:
As a group, we will create a Google doc with guidelines we agree upon for discussion and interaction online. We will be discussing issues and topics that challenge and affect all of us in different ways. We will want to be mindful of what we say and how we interact as we practice our skills of civil discourse and respectful dialogue.

We will discuss topics in this course that may be difficult in different ways for each of us. They will be challenging, intellectually and personally, and students are expected to treat this as an opportunity to develop their skills in mature dialogue and building solidarity across differences. Please be aware of how and when you share personal information. Together, we will make this a supportive and inclusive environment. We all come to classrooms (online or face-to-face) with a range of experiences and we all will practice being thoughtful as we speak and listen. If you have any concerns about being able to participate actively in this course, because of trauma, personal experience, or something else, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can create a solution together.

c. Email Communication:
This is a summer course and many (most!) of us will be balancing many commitments, including work, travel, family, and hopefully even some rest/vacation. That being said, I still expect you to respond to my emails when necessary, complete all readings and assignments, and reach out with any questions or problems. You should have the same expectations that I will respond to your emails and provide feedback in a timely manner on assignments. We will all be held to the standard of responding to one another within 48 hours or less. That means that while you may not get a response immediately (and I many not expect one from you), you can count on a response within 48 hours (barring extenuating circumstances) and I expect the same.

In addition, I will borrow from the brilliant Shonda Rimes and her rule about communication after work hours (https://www.fastcompany.com/3065423/shonda-rhimes). Unless your subject line reads “EMERGENCY” in your email, I will not reply to emails after 7PM.

d. Citations & Formatting of Assignments:
All written assignments should be double-spaced, in a 12-point clear font (such as Times New Roman), with 1” margins. I prefer that you use the ASA citation format, but you are welcome to use any style with which you are most familiar. Most importantly, citations should be consistent throughout your papers. All written work should also include a references page in the same citation style as your in-text citations.

e. Extensions:
The expectation is that you will meet all deadlines successfully for assignments. If you are unable to do so because of a serious illness/emergency/work-related issue, you must contact the instructor ASAP to discuss possible solutions. I do not typically give extensions for major
assignments. Without a previously agreed-upon extension, late assignments will be docked a half-letter grade for every day they are late.

f. Academic Integrity:
Academic integrity is central to the intellectual mission of Brandeis University, your development as an intellectual citizen of the university and the world, and the study of sociology. You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. When you use the words or ideas of others (including academic writers, journalists, anything found on the Internet, classmates, family, etc.), you must acknowledge your source by using proper citation practices (see Citations & Formatting of Assignments above). If you have any questions, please reach out to the instructor. Citation and research assistance can also be found at LTS-Library Guides.

Please consult the Brandeis University guide to Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. This is available in Section 4: “Maintenance of Academic Integrity” of the Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities booklet. If you have any questions about what it means to be academically honest, please consult with your instructor. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university.

g. Accommodations:
Brandeis seeks to welcome and include all students. If you are a student who needs accommodations as outlined in an accommodations letter, please talk with me and present your letter of accommodation as soon as you can. I want to support you. In order to provide accommodations, I need the letter more than 48 hours in advance. I want to provide your accommodations, but cannot do that retroactively. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Support (SAS) at 781.736.3470 or access@brandeis.edu.

REQUIRED BOOKS, ETC.:
All readings, other course materials, and lectures are available on LATTE. Running time for videos and lectures will be posted on LATTE. Readings and videos are subject to change with advance notice from the instructor.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & REQUIREMENTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Weekly Discussion Forum Participation</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Weekly Reflection Wiki Journal</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Weekly “Where in the World is Sociology” Forum Posts</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. “Using Your Sociological Imagination” memo</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. “Public Sociology: Writing an Op-Ed”</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>f. “Sociological Autobiography” Final Paper</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points Possible</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

a. Weekly Discussion Forum Participation (40 points)
Participation is essential for your individual success and for the course as a whole. One of the objectives of this course is for you to practice the skills of civil discourse, respectful dialogue,
and reading/writing sociologically. You will be required to post in the weekly discussion forums three times per week. The first post is an original post in which you respond to that week’s readings and discussion prompt. The second and third posts are responses to other students’ original posts.

Each week, I will provide discussion prompts and questions. The first of the required posts is an original response to these discussion prompts and questions. **Your first original post is due by Thursday, 9AM each week.** Generally, these posts should be 300-500 words. You will receive full credit for these posts if they are clearly written, directly refer to at least one of that week’s course readings, and demonstrate your thoughtful engagement with that week’s topics. You may also include questions about things that you don’t understand about the week’s materials. Each original post is worth 2 points.

The other two required posts are responses to two other students’ original posts. **These two response posts are due by Sunday, 12AM, each week.** While these can be shorter in length, they should be thoughtful and substantial engagements with your peers. Each reply post will be worth 1 point.

The purpose of this assignment is to provide an opportunity for you to engage with the course materials and concepts, interact directly with your fellow students, ask questions, and develop your sociological imagination (Learning Goals 1-7).

b. **Weekly Reflection Wiki Journal (9 points)**
Each week you will write in the semi-private Wiki journals that I have created for each student on LATTE. These journals will be semi-private; that is, I will read them every week, but they will not be visible to other students. The intention is for you to reflect and respond to the course in a more informal manner than in other assignments. The purpose of this assignment is to prepare you for the sociological autobiography final paper. I will provide discussion questions/prompt each week to help guide the journals to that purpose. Each journal entry is worth 1 point and there an entry is required for Weeks 1-9. **Journal entries are due by Sunday, 12AM, each week.** This assignment is really for you to keep track of your own progress and questions throughout the course, so the key here is to demonstrate your thoughtful engagement with the course, rather than necessarily being correct (Learning Goals 2, 4, & 6).

c. **“Where in the World is Sociology?” Forum Posts (6 points)**
Several of this course’s key learning goals center around the application of sociological concepts, perspectives, and methods to everyday experiences and issues. You will be required to post three times per semester to the “Where in the World is Sociology?” Forum. While you may post more than three times, you will only receive credit for three posts. Each post is worth 2 point.

Each post should be at least 150 words. **These posts are due by Sunday, 12 AM, on the weeks you choose to submit.** In these posts, students should link to a piece of media (article, blog post, podcast, video, etc.), a current event (political, cultural, whatever theme they find interesting), or cultural object (piece of clothing, kitchen tool, street sign, movie poster, etc.). They should summarize the event/topic/object in 1-2 sentences and explain how their sociological imagination helps them understand it in 2-3 sentences.
These should be relatively short posts that allow you the opportunity to apply the concepts and perspectives you’re learning from sociology to real-life situations, problems, and topics that you find to be of personal interest (Learning Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5).

d. “Using Your Sociological Imagination” Memo (15 points)
For this assignment, you will first identify a social problem related to your experiences in and understandings of your hometown. Using the sociological concepts and research methods that we have learned, you will design a small research project to address a sociological question related to your identified social problem. In a 2-3 page, double-spaced memo, you will write up a project summary, description of the social problem, outline of your research methods, and describe what data you think needs to be collected to answer your question. In your project summary and description of the social problem, you should clearly state the research question in 1-2 sentences. The research question should be **bolded**. The sociological concepts used in the memo should be *italicized*. In the outline of your research methods, please explain why you think those methods would be most appropriate for answering your research question. A more detailed description and rubric will also be provided in advance of the due date. The “Using Your Sociological Imagination” Memo is due by Sunday, June 28, 12AM to the dropbox on LATTE.

Your goals for this assignment are to demonstrate your comprehension of the concepts and methods we’ve discussed, use your sociological imagination to identify a research question, and develop your skills in research design, thinking analytically, and writing clearly (Learning Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, & 7).

e. “Public Sociology”: Writing an Op-Ed (10 points)
This assignment requires that you apply your sociological imagination to a social issue. Many consider op-eds and letters to the editor as examples of “public sociology”, which is the application of sociological knowledge and perspectives to social issues and questions for non-academic audiences. Using the concepts that you have learned in this course, you will draft a letter to an editor of a newspaper or an op-ed to argue your opinion on a pressing, current social issue. You may draw upon the work you did for the “Using Your Sociological Imagination” Memo to discuss the same social problem or you may choose to discuss a different topic. Your letters should be 1-2 pages and double-spaced. For some suggestions on style and format, you can check out the ASA’s guidelines for op-eds and letters to the editor: https://www.asanet.org/press-center/communication-tools/letters-editor. As with other assignments, a more detailed description and rubric will also be provided in advance of the due date. The “Public Sociology”: Writing an Op-Ed assignment is due by Sunday, July 26, 12AM to the dropbox on LATTE.

Your goals for this assignment are to demonstrate your understanding of sociological concepts, analyze the impact of social structure on everyday experiences, and critically reflect on how social issues and inequalities are shaped by gender, race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality (Learning Goals 2, 3, 4, 5, & 7). Your document should be clearly written and create a compelling argument on your chosen issue by using these concepts and your sociological imagination.
f. “Sociological Autobiography” Final Paper (20 points)
For this final writing assignment, you will write a 5-6 page autobiographical paper that analyzes the distinction between your biography and history using your sociological imagination. This is the summation of the course and your goal is to demonstrate your sociological perspective, understanding of sociological concepts, and critically reflect on yourself and your life story, as well as practice your academic writing skills. I emphasize here that you will use academic writing and that this is not a reflection piece. Not only should you use sociological concepts and theories from the course throughout the paper, but you should also directly cite and use the course readings. A more detailed description and rubric, including expectations on the number of readings cited, will also be provided in advance of the due date. The “Sociological Autobiography” Final Paper is due by Sunday, August 9, 5PM to the dropbox on LATTE.

As you will learn through the development of your sociological imagination, the central work of a sociological understanding is all about drawing connections between your personal experiences, larger social structures, and sociohistorical context (Learning Goals 1-7). How have your gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, class, geographical location, and/or cultural background impacted your life story? In what ways have these factors and their intersections shaped the trajectory of your life by providing advantages or disadvantages and influencing choices?

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 0: Online Class Orientation
As this course is only ten weeks long (shorter than a regular semester), we will all need to dive right in. To make this possible, please complete the following tasks as soon as possible before the first official week begins:

Watch:
Video: Introduction
Video: Introduction to the syllabus, policies, and course schedule

Complete:
Video Introductions
Community Netiquette Guidelines

PART 1: SELF & SOCIETY

Week 1, June 1-7: What is Sociology?
Topics: sociological imagination, sociological perspectives, introduction to the course

Read:


**Watch/Listen:**
Lecture: What is Sociology

Video: “Sociologists on Sociology” Video (ASA)

Video: “A Radical Experiment in Empathy” Video (Sam Richards, Tedx Talks)

**Complete:**
Discussion Forum
Weekly Wiki Journal

**Optional/Supplemental:**

“Putting your sociological imagination to work” by Sally Raskoff, Everyday Sociology Blog


**Week 2, June 8-14: Sociological Methods & Ethics**
**Topics:** research methods, quantitative methods, qualitative methods, evidence, research ethics

**Read:**


Code of Ethics: American Sociological Association

**Watch/Listen:**
Lecture: Methods & Ethics

Video: “Methods in Context” Playlist, Norton Sociology (There are seven short videos – try to watch them all to learn about different perspectives on research questions and methods)
Listen: Give Methods A Chance podcast interview with qualitative sociologist C.J. Pascoe

**Complete:**
Weekly Discussion Forum
Weekly Wiki Journal
“Where in the World is Sociology?” Forum

**Optional/Supplemental:**

Stuff You Missed in History Class Podcast: “The Tuskegee Syphilis Study”

Part 1 of Documentary on *Sidewalk* by Mitchell Duneier (an urban ethnography)

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### Week 3, June 15-21: Culture, Socialization, & Interaction

**Topics:** norms, culture, processes of socialization, symbolic interaction, micro/meso/macro social orders

**Read:**


**Watch/Listen:**
Lecture: Culture

Lecture: Socialization

Video: “Why the game of Life used to have poverty, suicide, and ruin” (Vox)

Listen: Bias and Perception TED Radio Hour, NPR

**Complete:**
Weekly Discussion Forum
Weekly Wiki Journal
“Where in the World is Sociology?” Forum

**Optional/Supplemental:**

Why Rappers Love Grey Poupon (Vox)

**PART II: Inequality, Stratification, Power, & Violence**

**Week 4, June 22-28: Structure, Agency, & Power**

**Topics:** structure, agency, power, inequality and social stratification in the U.S.

**DUE:** “Using Your Sociological Imagination” Memo

**Read:**


**Watch/Listen:**

Lecture: Structure and Agency

Lecture: Inequality

Video: “How America’s public schools keep kids in poverty”, Kandice Summer (TEDx Talk)

**Complete:**

Weekly Discussion Forum
Weekly Wiki Journal
“Where in the World is Sociology?” Forum

**Optional/Supplemental:**


**Week 5, June 29-July 5: Intersectionality**

**Topics:** intersectionality, matrix of domination, race, gender, class, sexuality

**Read:**


**Watch/Listen:**
Lecture: Intersectionality

Video: “The Urgency of Intersectionality”, Kimberlé Crenshaw TED Talk

Video: “What is Intersectionality?”, Lecture by sociologist Tanya Golash-Boza

**Complete:**
Weekly Discussion Forum
Weekly Wiki Journal
“Where in the World is Sociology?” Forum

**Optional/Supplemental:**

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**Week 6, July 6-12: Class & Status in the U.S.**

**Topics:** class, status, stratification, inequality, intersectionality

**Read:**


**Watch/Listen/Do:**
Lecture: Class in America

Explore: Resources from the Op-Ed Project

Explore: “Are you in the American middle class” Income Calculator, Pew Research Center

Watch: “Living in Poverty: Kathryn Edin”, Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality (feel free to explore some of the other videos from the Center’s online course on poverty and inequality)
Complete:
Weekly Discussion Forum
Weekly Wiki Journal
“Where in the World is Sociology?” Forum

Optional/Supplemental:

Week 7, July 13-19: Race & Ethnicity in the U.S.
Topics: race, ethnicity, racial formation, intersectionality

Read:


Watch/Listen/Do:
Lecture: Race-Ethnicity in the U.S.

Explore: Resources from the Op-Ed Project

Explore: “What Census Calls Us”, Pew Research Center


Film: Race: The Power of an Illusion, Episode 1: The Difference Between Us (Kanopy)

Complete:
Weekly Discussion Forum
Weekly Wiki Journal
“Where in the World is Sociology?” Forum

Optional/Supplemental:


**Week 8, July 20-26: Gender & Sexuality**

Topics: gender, sex, sexuality, intersectionality

**DUE:** “Public Sociology”: Writing an Op-Ed

**Read:**


**Watch/Listen:**
Lecture: Gender

Lecture: Sexuality

Watch: Miss Representation, The Representation Project (Kanopy)

OR

Watch: The Mask You Live In, The Representation Project (Kanopy)

**Complete:**
Weekly Discussion Forum
Weekly Wiki Journal
“Where in the World is Sociology?” Forum

**Optional/Supplemental:**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PART III: Order, Conflict, Institutions, &amp; Change</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 9, July 27-August 2: Institutions, Social Change, &amp; Social Movements</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Topics:</strong> institutions, organizations, social movements, social change, labor, reproductive labor</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Read:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Watch/Listen:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture: Institutions &amp; Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture: Social Movement Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film: <em>Maid in America</em> (Kanopy)</td>
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<td><strong>Complete:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Discussion Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Wiki Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Where in the World is Sociology?” Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Optional/Supplemental:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>“The Second Shift: Arlie Hochschild”, Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality</td>
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Week 10, August 3-August 9: Course Wrap-Up & Review

Watch:
Lecture: Course Review

Complete:
Weekly Discussion Forum
“Where in the World is Sociology?” Forum

DUE: “Sociological Autobiography” Final Paper