

New Jersey Institute of Technology
Introduction to Sociology
STS 221-001
Fall 2023

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Reibstein
Office: Cullimore 315
Contact: sjr25@njit.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:00 – 3:30 PM

Course Meeting Time and Location:
Tuesdays and Fridays 8:30 - 9:50 AM
Central King Building 120

Course Website: <https://njit.instructure.com/courses/29895>

Course Description

This course introduces sociology by surveying major theories, topics, scholars, and approaches, while encouraging students to apply a sociological way of thinking to the world around them. The first half of the class presents foundational tools for analyzing social life: the sociological imagination and research methods, culture, socialization, interaction, and groups. The second half explores key social institutions and processes: criminality, stratification, race, gender, the environment, and social movements. Across sections, there is a focus on the processes that create and sustain inequalities and the ways they can be challenged.

Course Objectives:

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Explain the main sociological perspectives
- Describe how sociologists conduct research
- Identify relationships between the individual and society
- Demonstrate knowledge of key social institutions and processes
- Think through current events from a sociological point of view

Prerequisites: None

Texts

Sociology: Understanding and Changing the Social World. 2016. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing. ISBN 978-1-946135-24-7.

- Available online via Pressbooks: <https://open.lib.umn.edu/sociology/>

Additional shorter readings will be assigned and made available on Canvas.

Course Requirements and Grading

The course includes a few in- and out- of class components to facilitate student learning. All assignments and any changes to the schedule will be posted on Canvas. Following is a breakdown of how you will be assessed.

- 1. Class Attendance (10%):** Students are expected to attend each class session and a record will be kept via a sign-in sheet. Late arrival – more than thirty minutes – without prior notification will be treated as an absence. Each student will be granted two “free absences” during the semester; every subsequent unexcused absence will result in a two-point reduction in the attendance portion of your final grade.
- 2. Class Participation (15%):** Students are encouraged to engage actively in in-class discussions. On Friday sessions, we will typically work in small groups on activities that may involve research, data analysis, and presenting to the class. If you make a serious effort at thoughtfully completing the activities, you will receive a perfect grade in this area!
- 3. Weekly Take-Home Quizzes (15%):** A short multiple-choice quiz will be posted on Canvas each week, which must be completed prior to class time on Friday. The quiz will assess your comprehension of that week’s lecture and assigned reading.
- 4. Group Project (10%):** The course has one graded group project. In groups of 3-4 students, you will learn about and present on a sociological research study. We will use the magazine, *Contexts*, which reports on cutting-edge social research. Each group will be assigned a *Contexts* article (honoring your preferences to the extent possible) and will be tasked with preparing a 10-minute presentation – with slides – explaining the study’s research question, research method, theory, and key findings. We will form groups and assign topics in week two and do presentations in week three.
- 5. Midterm Exam (25%):** The midterm exam will be a combination of multiple-choice and short essays questions covering material from the first seven weeks of the course. You will be asked to recall key terms and to apply concepts analytically and comparatively. The exam will take place in class on October 24.
- 6. Final Exam (25%):** The final exam will have the same format as the midterm and will only cover material presented after the midterm. The exam will take place at the university-assigned time and place, between December 17 and December 23.

Final Grading Rubric

90–100 = A

87–89 = B+

80–86 = B

77–79 = C+

70–76 = C

60–69 = D

< 60 = F

Schedule

	Topic	Reading
Sept. 5 / Sept. 8	Introduction: The Sociological Perspective	Chapter 1
Sept. 12 / Sept. 15	Sociological Research Methods	Chapter 2
Sept. 19 / Sept. 22	<i>Group Projects</i>	
Sept. 26 / Sept. 29	Culture	Chapter 3
Oct. 3 / Oct. 6	Socialization	Chapter 4
Oct. 10 / Oct. 13	Social Structure and Social Interaction	Chapter 5
Oct. 17 / Oct. 20	Groups and Organizations	Chapter 6
Oct. 24 / Oct. 27	<i>Midterm</i>	
Oct. 31 / Nov. 3	Deviance, Crime, and Social Control	Chapter 7
Nov. 7 / Nov. 10	Social Stratification	Chapter 8
Nov. 7 / Nov. 10	Global Stratification	Chapter 9
Nov. 14 / Nov. 17	Race and Ethnicity	Chapter 10
Nov. 21 / Nov. 22	Gender and Gender Inequality	Chapter 11
Nov. 28 / Dec. 1	Social Change and the Environment	Chapter 20
Dec. 5 / Dec. 8	Collective Behavior and Social Movements	Chapter 21
Dec. 12	<i>Wrap Up</i>	

Policies

University Policy on Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your

educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at: <http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>.

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu.

Technology

You are required to bring a laptop or tablet with you to Friday class sessions. There is no makeup credit if you do not bring such a device and are unable as a result to complete course activities that day.

Accessibility

This class is intended to be fully available to students regardless of health or disability status (whether mental or physical). If you need reasonable accommodations to complete the course because of a disability, you can reach out to the course instructor or to the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (<https://www.njit.edu/accessibility>).

Incompletes

A grade of incomplete is only assigned in the face of extremely extenuating circumstances that are pre-confirmed by the Dean of Students. Students facing such a situation are also encouraged to bring the matter to my attention at the earliest possible opportunity.