

# STS 221 - INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

## SYLLABUS

### COURSE SECTIONS

#### STS 221 - INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

Section CRN	Days	Times	Location	Delivery Mode	Credits
004 15409	WF	8:30 AM - 9:50 AM	CKB 223	Face-to-Face	3

#### STS 221 - INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY – HONORS

Section CRN	Days	Times	Location	Delivery Mode	Credits
H02 15411	WF	10:00 AM - 11:20 AM	CKB 315	Face-to-Face	3

### FACULTY CONTACT INFORMATION

**GARETH A. F. EDEL, PhD. University Lecturer, Dept. Of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Modes of Communication-** Primary mode is **Course canvas Messaging**, Additional mode is email: [edel@njit.edu](mailto:edel@njit.edu)

as well as the Course **Discord** Channel, an invitation will be sent to all registered students on the first day of semester, course invite link will be updated on the Canvas every few weeks for late adopters, while it is recommended to participate it is officially optional.

Office hours, or appointments take place at my office – Cullimore hall Rm 317 (Knock so I can hear you arriving).

**Dr. Edel will aim to reply to emails or canvas messages within 48 hours, usually quicker via Canvas than via email which may take longer.** If you have an emergency, a real emergency, not a late homework or question about class that can wait, please feel able to Text or call Personal Phone: (646) 479-3236

### Course Description

Official Catalogue Description- “This course is designed to introduce students to research methods used in the human and social sciences. The course will advance a framework, a process, and compositional approaches to help students become proficient in research design, practice, and writing. The course will examine three sociological methods: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. The course will also examine selected ethical and political issues associated with the role of research methods in the production of knowledge and expertise.”

Professor’s addition: Sociology is the study of our society, that means it is about how we and others live together and affect each other, this includes all the systems that we may participate in, the meaning and forms of our actions and thoughts. The study of sociology and the social sciences are not meant to be an entirely abstract discipline, you’re goal is to literally understand the world in which you participate a bit better for having worked at understanding. Sociology teaches vital skills, including recognizing patterns and systems that are not individually based, and thus are *repeatedly* causes for people’s individual experiences and the activities around us and for which we are responsible or judged. When we understand the system and society in which we must live we are better able to understand how to live our lives to achieve our chosen ends, and to understand larger scale phenomenon such as social problems (poverty, crime, disease) or Social policy (why laws? Why norms or rules? Why do we talk or act the way we do?).

The goal is to be less confused in a confusing world through the application of scientific method to reduce the confusion.

### COURSE READINGS:

**ALL READINGS WILL BE PROVIDED AS DIGITAL FILES ON CANVAS-** Most of the weekly readings are from one Textbook:

- Corrigan-Brown (2020) *Imagining Sociology – An Introduction With Readings 2nd* Oxford Univ Press. Oxford UK.

## **Course Objectives**

"In this course, students will demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of:

- The sociological perspective
- How the basic concepts and theoretical orientations of sociology apply to daily life
- One's social contexts and the larger society in which they are embedded
- Social inequalities and their impact on citizens today"

## **KEY THEMES & IDEAS:**

- The Sociological Imagination and The Study of Sociology (Discipline and Academic Field)
- Inequality, Identity, and Social Identification
- Institutions and Social structure

## **OFFICE HOURS:**

Regarding Office Hours- I strongly recommend speaking to me in office hours about any trouble as soon as possible; you can ask for assistance or clarification of course material or course concepts and workload. Students are often given too little advising and explanation or orientation in starting their college experience, and faculty are willing to help. Please ask if you have any questions or issues. If I or another faculty member you speak to does not know the answers, we will usually be able to direct you to someone who can help. I want to assist you in doing well and getting the most out of your education and your time on campus.

Dr. Edel will generally be available in Drop-In Hours both in his office for in person and digitally via a Zoom meeting. as well as in person **at Cullimore 317**, during drop in office hours you do not need an appointment to see the professor either in person or online. The Zoom will be paused/muted when students do come to 'in person' meetings if privacy is needed. **FOR IN PERSON MEETINGS I REQUEST THAT YOU BE MASKED IN THE OFFICE**, I do have masks you can put on. Dr. Edel is available to speak about any course, student, material related issues without an appointment at the following

**DROP-IN (In Person and Zoom is open)**

**MONDAY- 2:45- 4:00 PM**

**FRIDAY 1pm- 4:00 PM**

## **OTHER TIMES BY APPOINTMENT (Both In-Person or Online)**

- Preferred In-Person Appointments are after the scheduled drop in hours Monday 4-5pm, Friday 4-5pm

Or Wednesday 2:30-5:00 PM when available.

- Zoom Appointments are more flexible, and students may schedule an online Meeting between 9am and 7pm Tuesday and thursday if I available.

## **For both Drop-IN and Appointment: OFFICE HOURS ZOOM:**

Professor Edel- OFFICE HOURS ZOOM INVITE (recurring meeting)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85793660316?pwd=MGdabjBDSDJ3Njdsak9GQVdhNWxhQT09>

Meeting ID: 857 9366 0316 Passcode: 876742 One tap mobile +16469313860,,85793660316#,,,,\*876742# US

Dial by your location +1 646 931 3860 US Meeting ID: 857 9366 0316 Passcode: 876742

## **COURSE 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 (which includes plagiarism) 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 the instructor's 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](mailto:dos@njit.edu)."

## **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." Students in need of accommodations or with disabilities - I don't strictly require students to conform to official policy, any student who requests extra time on exams, or a reasonable accommodation of their needs to perform or be comfortable in class, I will attempt to assist or meet your needs. To be accommodated seek to express your needs to the professor as early in the process as possible and be open about any limits or preferences that may need to be considered in your performance in class. Officially and Additionally- Any student requiring accommodations due to one or more disabilities should also make sure to contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (Kupfrian Hall 201, Email at DSS@NJIT) both for themselves and to support the maintenance of good policies for other students who need support. Students who are ESL or Learning Disabled should inform the professor and will be allowed to negotiate appropriate modification to course expectations.

## **Instructional methods**

This course is taught as a seminar, students will be expected to do close reading and writing outside of class, and then come to class for a brief lecture and quizzes, following those the course will be discussion based. Some classes will include small group discussions and student presentation to the whole class.

## **Communication with Instructor:**

It is your responsibility to communicate with the instructor about absences, lateness and assignment expectations, you should ask for assistance and support when needed. Contact the professor about any issues in office hours, at class times, or send any questions about the course or material to the professor's CANVAS email. You may also email directly at gmail/njit.edu, but for quick replies communication should be via Canvas. Canvas emails will usually be replied to within 48 hours by the professor.

## **Course Environment**

"This course should be a safe space: in the classroom, in one-on-one discussions with the instructor, and in online spaces for this course. This means no hate speech (slurs or derogatory or demeaning comments) and no bullying. You are expected to treat your classmates respectfully and with kindness, generosity, and empathy. "

## **Assignment Submission**

"All assignments are to be submitted through Canvas unless other arrangements are made with the instructor. Files must be of type .doc, .docx, .pdf, or .txt unless otherwise instructed. Google Docs are NOT acceptable. Should you encounter technical problems, contact the NJIT helpdesk at 973-596-2900 (or simply extension 2900 from campus locations). In the event that it is impossible to submit through Canvas, you must provide a paper version of the assignment that includes an explanation of why online submission was not possible. Emailed work is not an acceptable substitute."

## **Late Submissions**

All assignments are due at 11:59 PM on the assigned date unless otherwise indicated. This rule is not flexible. I encourage you to complete and submit the assignment earlier in the day to avoid encountering any problems with this deadline. Late assignments will be docked 15% per class meeting. If the assignment is more than three class meetings late, it will not be accepted. No work whatsoever will be accepted after May 4th

Limited lateness of work may be permitted in cases of illness or emergency, If you need a deadline extended or to be excused from an assignment you should ask ahead of the deadline, and request an extension, or provide explanation of emergency or exigent circumstances. If you are out of school sick you don't need to prove it, you just need to be in touch, any illness that is so severe permission cannot be requested should be documented with the Dean's office for official excused absence due to illness. Any missing work is penalized by the nature of not earning a grade, no further penalty is applied.

NOTE- NO ONE MAY select to take exams after the exam date listed, and you may only be allowed to take a make-up exam if the Dean's office has accepted a documented explanation for absence, and provided that excused status to the Professor. The "Make-Up" Date for the Midterm is negotiable depending on issues, Final Exam Make-up will take place during the exam week slot assigned by the Registrar for the class.

## GRADING

Discussion and participation	20%
Reading response/Reflections (~7 needed submitted in the week of reading- 3pts each)	21%
Weekly Reading Quizzes (2pts each, Should complete 8 weeks of quizzes at full credit]	16%
Midterm Examination	14%
Final Examination	20%
Semester Research Project- (propose a question, Outline a method, literature Review)	9%
Extra Credit (Variable, primarily composed of extra quiz and response writing)	- ?%

**Grading scale this course uses is as follows: A= 100%-90% B= 89%-80% C=79% -70% D=69%-55% F=54% - 0%**

Plus/minuses may be given for assignments, Final grades do not use Minuses, will be rounded to letter or Plus per NJIT's policies.

### Grade Component Descriptions:

**EXAMS-** Exams are cumulative up to the point of the exam date including lecture/reading & key elements from class discussion. Thus, midterm covers all lecture and readings up the date of that exam, and the final exam covers all material from the whole course. Exams will be a mixture of multiple choice, as well as long and short answer. It is a mix of informational questions (can you remember details) and Interpretive or conceptual questions (do you understand the material). Students should expect to hand write in class, and should speak to the professor about difficulties writing. Exams are closed book, closed note, and individual.

**QUIZZES-** The weekly quiz is based on the reading, questions are meant to allow students both a focus for attention in the chapter, as well as to document their successful absorption of the readings each week. Students are expected to complete quizzes in most weeks, but they may chose to skip about half of them (if all their completed quizzes are full credit). The quizzes will be primarily multiple choice but may include longer form, narrative answers, aimed at showing understanding as a component. Students should expect to hand write in class, and should speak to the professor about difficulties writing. Quizzes are closed book, closed note, and individual. ***The Quiz will be the first activity at the start of the first class of the week (Wed), and students will have around 15 Min. DO NOT BE LATE, there is no 'making up Quizzes' unless you have Dean's office excusals, the ability to skip some is intended to provide appropriate flexibility if classes are missed.***

**RESPONSES-** Each week students have the opportunity to write about whatever material in the readings they consider interesting or important- the grading mechanic is based on two factors "engagement" with the subject matter, and "Demonstration of Reading," simply that you have completed the reading for the week. The three point rubric, is 1) do you show you read substantially, and 2) did you say something about or show understanding of the material in the reading, linking it to the course or to real world conditions, and 3) Effort and thoughtfulness. There is no Minimum Length, but 250-500 words, or around 2 pages is a useful guide to see if you've done enough thinking. There is no maximum length, but it is strongly advised to substantially complete your thinking on paper, and that regularly takes longer than a page. All Reading Responses will be submitted on CANVAS in the appropriate folders. The Responses may refer to prior weeks concepts, but should include a substantive focus on the weekly assigned chapter.

**PARTICIPATION-** As Dr. Tyrol writes: "Participation is an important part of your course grade, and you will need to be routinely present and engaged in order to earn credit in class. Engaging in class will enhance your knowledge and understanding of and interest in the course content as well as your classmates'. Please always remember that if you have a question, someone else in the class probably does too. Asking questions benefits your classmates and instructor also, not just you. Attendance is not graded in this course." I will add, the basis of a seminar is what is called "dialogic" interaction, that is, you and the professor express understanding together to advance student's grasp of material. Ask questions, offer considered interpretations (not simply opinions we hope), and be a part of it. You will not only gain better understanding, but you will add to the understanding of other students.

**SEMESTER RESEARCH PROJECT** This semester I've added a specific new graded component, over the course of the semester, you're expected to do a little independent research to supplement the textbook, this research/reading will be supported by in class explanation and handouts. You will not have to complete primary research, and students will maintain a single document to respond to -Three stages are involved, though they are ongoing during the semester. (a) Consider what kinds of questions you can answer with sociology - developing a set of research questions over the semester, and looking at how different forms of questions shape answers (b) Consider Methods and Methodology, what will be the ways available, the forms of data to answer those questions, and (c) Consider the theories in our textbook and independent reading, how can the lens of theory shape the answers. Students must demonstrate multiple drafts of consideration and response to research in each stage, but the final product of the Project will be a summary outline and annotations. 1) Initial and Revised Research Topic and Questions, 2) Suggested methods of answering those questions, 3) Annotations of the independent readings you completed to form a very initial literature review related to your Theory/Method/Topic, and your personal conclusions about the process of answering a question.

**EXTRA CREDIT-** The course can allow students to be active in making decisions about the class, when to take quizzes, how to study, and which subjects to focus on. And the professor will work with students to be flexible, if they are proactive. You **MUST** request an opportunity for extra credit, and negotiate a specific plan and course point value, **PRIOR TO DOING IT**. The one exception being extra reading responses. Any Student may submit as many, or inadvisably as few, of the responses as they choose. Class Notes may be submitted at the end of the semester for 1-5 points if discussed ahead of time. Extra Credit Maximum 20 Pts over the course of the semester. You are encouraged to turn in extra credit for addition to the grade, or to balance for difficulties you feel in participation. If you know you won't talk- then write. Two main forms of extra credit are additional weekly reading responses, and weekly presentations on theory, these will be discussed in class. Other forms of extra credit are available via discussion in office hours. Students may read, take notes, and write responses to the final chapters which are not assigned (on Law, Social Movements) and earn up to 4 points per additional chapter. These may be done out of order, and should not be done at the end of the semester, the material from these chapters will likely enrich understanding but will not be directly present on exams.

## **WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

### **COURSE READINGS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS OUTLINE**

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#### **WEEK 1**

##### **January 22 (Wednesday)**

First Day of Classes INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASS & SYLLABUS REVIEW

Lecture- Sociological Imagination & SOCIAL PHYSICS NO READING ASSIGNMENT QUIZ IN CLASS

##### **January 24 (Friday)**

Discussion Section about weekly topic

#### **WEEK 2**

##### **January 29 (Wednesday)**

Ch 1 TOPIC: The Sociological Imagination Foci of Sociology- Inequality, Institutions, Social Change

Lecture READING DUE: Corrigall-Brown CH 1 (p1-33) QUIZ IN CLASS

Weekly Reading Response due at time of class for on-time credit

##### **January 31 (Friday)**

Discussion Section about weekly topic

#### **WEEK 3**

##### **February 5 (Wednesday)**

Ch 2 TOPIC: Socialization: Becoming a Member of Society The Individual and Society, Social Roles

READING DUE: Corrigall-Brown CH 2 QUIZ IN CLASS

Weekly Reading Response due at time of class for on-time credit

##### **February 7 (Friday)**

Project Deadline 2/7-**Initial Research Questions Due** ( Have them with you on paper in class for discussion)

Discussion Section about weekly topic

#### **WEEK 4**

##### **February 12 (Wednesday)**

Ch 3 TOPIC: Deviance, Law, and Crime Difference, Deviance, Social Construction, Control

READING DUE: Corrigall-Brown CH 3 QUIZ IN CLASS

Weekly Reading Response due at time of class for on-time credit

##### **February 14 (Friday)**

Discussion Section about weekly topic

#### **WEEK 5**

##### **February 19 (Wednesday)**

Ch 4 TOPIC Social Inequality and Social Class Power, Karl Marx, Class Consciousness, Poverty and Affluence

READING DUE: Corrigall-Brown CH 4 QUIZ IN CLASS

Weekly Reading Response due at time of class for on-time credit

##### **February 21 (Friday)**

Project Deadline 2/21- Initial Annotation of Research Article due at class time.

Discussion Section about weekly topic

#### **WEEK 6**

##### **February 26 (Wednesday)**

**PROFESSOR WILL BE AWAY- MISSING CLASS, PLEASE WORK ON RESEARCH**

##### **February 28 (Friday)**

Ch 5 TOPIC: Race, Ethnicity, Indigenous Peoples Type/Category, Normal, Immigration and culture, Discrimination

READING DUE: Corrigall-Brown CH 5 QUIZ IN CLASS

Weekly Reading Response due at time of class for on-time credit

Limited Discussion Section about weekly topic

## **WEEK 7**

### **March 5 (Wednesday)**

Ch 6 TOPIC: Gender at the Intersections Sex and Gender, Sexuality, Norms, feminism and Intersectionality  
READING DUE: Corrigall-Brown CH 6 QUIZ IN CLASS  
Weekly Reading Response due at time of class for on-time credit

### **March 7 (Friday)**

Project Deadline 3/7 – Revised/Second attempt at Research question & Linked Theory article annotation due.  
Discussion Section about weekly topic

## **WEEK 8**

## **MIDTERM EXAM WEEK**

### **March 12 (Wednesday) IN CLASS REVIEW**

#### **March 14 (Friday) IN CLASS EXAM- MIDTERM**

In Class Exam (don't be late, you may come early, extra time may be available)

Midterm exam is cumulative of Lectures, and Chapters 1-6 of Corrigall-Brown Textbook

## **WEEK 9**

## **SPRING BREAK**

N0- CLASSES (No Classes Meet Sun mar 16-22<sup>nd</sup>, University Campus/Buildings Open)

## **WEEK 10**

### **March 26 (Wednesday)**

Ch 7 TOPIC: The Media Language, Corporate Concentration, Advertising, How we know  
READING DUE: Corrigall-Brown CH 7 QUIZ IN CLASS  
Weekly Reading Response due at time of class for on-time credit

### **March 28 (Friday)**

Project Deadline 3/28 Compiled annotations (3-4) and Research question versions (1-3) due  
Discussion Section about weekly topic

## **WEEK 11**

### **April 2 (Wednesday)**

Ch 8- Family & intimate Relationships  
Reading Due Corrigall-Brown Chapter 8 Quiz in class  
Weekly Reading Response due at time of class for on-time credit

### **April 4 (Friday)**

Discussion Section about weekly topic

**NOTE-** Monday April 7th=Last Day to Withdraw

## **WEEK 12**

### **April 9 (Wednesday)**

Ch 9 TOPIC: Education Learning, Legitimation, Schooled, Entraining, Return to Socialization  
READING DUE: Corrigall-Brown CH 9 QUIZ IN CLASS  
Weekly Reading Response due at time of class for on-time credit

### **April 11 (Friday)**

Project Deadline 4/11- Write up 2-3 Pages an explanation experience asking and answering sociological question  
Discussion Section about weekly topic

## **WEEK 13**

### **April 16 (Wednesday)**

Ch 10 TOPIC: Work & Rationalization, Efficiency, Profit, Division of Labor , Management and Alienation  
READING DUE: Corrigall-Brown CH 10 QUIZ IN CLASS  
Weekly Reading Response due at time of class for on-time credit

### **April 18 (Friday)** Friday Good Friday - No Classes Scheduled - University Closed

Discussion Section about weekly topic

#### **WEEK 14**

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##### **April 23 (Wednesday)**

Ch 11 TOPIC: Health Social Determinants of Health, Medicalization, Health Inequality, Disease and Disability  
READING DUE: Corrigan-Brown CH 11 QUIZ IN CLASS  
Weekly Reading Response due at time of class for on-time credit

##### **April 25 (Friday)**

Discussion Section about weekly topic  
**FINAL Date to Turn in any optional work or reading responses- Please note**  
**SKIPPED = Optional Extra Credit- Chapters 12 ( Globalization) and Chapter 13 (Law & Policy)**

#### **WEEK 15**

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##### **April 30 (Wednesday)**

Ch 14 TOPIC: Social movements  
READING DUE: : Corrigan-Brown CH 14 QUIZ IN CLASS  
Weekly Reading Response due at time of class for on-time credit

##### **May 2 (Friday)**

Discussion Section about weekly topic  
**And - In-Class Semester & Exam review**

#### **WEEK 16**

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##### **May 7 (Wednesday)      CONVERSION- FRIDAY CLASSES MEET**

##### **FINAL MEETING- FINAL EXAM – IN CLASS**

WE DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE REGISTRAR SCHEDULED EXAM, That date will be used as an emergency date for students with dean of students approval



## READING STRATEGIES

### (TLDR- Be Reflexive, Preread, Framing, Intentional Skimming, Change habits)

This class is based around the idea that reflexive process, trying to think about better ways to do things, makes better outcomes more likely.

So, you can get the end result you wish more of the time if you've paused and thought about and tried to do things correctly, and what is correct isn't always exactly the same. Sometimes you have to skim, sometimes you can't skim. Skimming is reading parts and not all of a reading, and it can be a useful strategy, but it isn't always appropriate. While we want to balance the amount of effort, with the available time, and the requirement, there may be a basic demand that we do all the reading, and if we don't we're sacrificing something we have an obligation to do. That may be the right choice in a context or circumstance, but if you do it, you accept the consequences.

I'm actually dyslexic. And when I was in graduate school that meant that there were times I needed to spend an excessive amount of time working through a reading. And there were times I chose not to spend the time to do a close reading, but in those cases I accepted I might not do well in the class. The challenge isn't always doing everything correctly, the real issue is accepting the consequences that you produce by not doing everything correctly. Some of my classmates thought it was crazy that I'd work towards a B, not towards an A, but I worked hard to know my limits and do the best I could within the limitations. You don't always have to get an A, and you don't always have to do every piece of work. The nature of decisions is complicated.

So the first thing about reading, is:

**Be Reflexive about Process, Develop Tactics:** You are still learning different ways to read, and now you when you do it, be conscientious and choose how you want to read. Keep going back over how you're reading, try to find mechanisms that work for you. And sometimes the mechanism will need to change as consequence of circumstances/context.

The second thing about reading is:

You should be working on **Active Learning**: reading isn't listening to a story or passing your eyes over words; it is engaging with the words and ideas.

Not every time you read something is meant to be close reading. Skim something, then go back and close read parts? Fine. Skim and then call that good enough because you understand it. Fine. Did you really understand it? Not actually? Then go back and close read parts now.

Lei Et al. :“Students must learn to adjust their speed and style of reading to their reading objectives and the type of materials to be read... Some reading materials can be scanned, skimmed through, and read lightly, while others must [be] read closely and critically” (pg 40). Lei, S. A., Rhinehart, P. J., Howard, H. A., & Cho, J. K. (2010) Strategies for improving reading comprehension among college students. *Reading Improvement*, 47 (1), 30-42.

Of course the most obvious difference between modes or ways of reading is how much of the depth and detail of the reading you're trying to capture or take-in. We are trying not to have wasted efforts or produce unintended outcomes, but also we are trying to learn as much as we can, and in particular to learn what it is we need to learn. What the purpose of the reading, as an activity is, helps us decide how to read it.

You may not have to read all the articles with equal care, because you are willing to sacrifice some of the information, by your choice. In general, you should try to read all assigned material, but the reality is we all work within a context of limitations and decisions. That means we do have to make careful decisions. Okay, first the bad news:

The reality is, part of the issue with long readings taking a while to read is that you're not used to long readings. I assigned Long readings, that contain a lot of information. There isn't anything to fix that besides practice. The practice won't make them shorter, but it will help you feel less frustration.

Additionally, everyone's reading speed and comprehension will be greater with more familiar content. The reality is that if you're "spending time" trying to understand the work it should be slower, so you will take longer to read material which is new to you.

You will have to spend time and effort to read and to understand the new material.

Cognitive scientists who study reading have shown that people reading familiar things tend to actually be skimming, they are finding the signals that the material is what they *EXPECT* and that counts as the main part of their reading. Even when pleasure reading, people rely on familiar clues, frames and tropes, so that they don't spend time really reading the details of the text they are running their eyes over.

This unintentional habit of skimming is even more pronounced on screen than on hard-copy/paper tends to mean that long form reading and new material/unfamiliar forms of reading, are an even bigger challenge on screen. Because we're so used to going fast online/on-screen, truly reading everything, or deep/close reading on screen as opposed to reading hard-copy on paper is especially likely to be a challenge, or result in not comprehending/absorbing the material.

Despite the limitations of reading that on-screen reading can increase, we're generally not able to decide to do our school reading all on-paper in hard-copy. The amount of paper, the inconvenience of the printing, the cost of the books, and so many other factors shape the situation to make it more likely, and possibly still desirable to read online, on-screen. Because we all have a limited amount of time to do the readings the convenience of distributing and reading online may balance out for the problems, if we can take a moment to deal with them. In some cases the skimming may be acceptable. In other cases, we need to force ourselves to slow down, work against habit, and build new reading habits that respond to the limitations of how our brains and screens work.

So we have two big issues here in a class like this, 1) you're reading very unfamiliar material in most cases, and it isn't good to apply your expected ways to read, and your prior experience/knowledge, which would speed it up- because applying those ideas means you won't understand the new thing properly.

Also 2) You're in a situation where speed and convenience make reading on screen necessary, so you're going to have a harder time reading longer things, and you're going to understand and absorb less because we select the form of media that is online.

You cannot avoid these two problems, but you can minimize the harm of these aspects. The best ways to respond to the problems: Do the right kind of reading, and use techniques that work for you to get the most out of your reading. So what I urge you to do is make a careful decision with each assignment - what sort of reading is it, how much time you have, and how to read it.

## **PRE-READING/FRAMING**

Before you start reading, consider how to read it, what the reading/text is, and why you're reading it. For example the syllabus implies, and the first lecture explains that the first two units of the Ethics class are the core 'theory' that you'll be using to read all the rest of the cases and with which you'll consider all the other ideas of the class. So that suggests you want to spend extra time on those to make sure you get the main ideas, and understand what theory they ask you to think about.

Similarly, core definitions and vocabulary, which will both appear in other readings, and is the subject of the class, often cannot be skimmed or skipped without missing something important, so you're asking what kind of reading to do, based on what kind of text/reading is the thing you were assigned? There isn't really one specific set of categories for that. Instead what you'll do is ask a series of questions, including:

- Is the articles structured so that it is easy to read, or will it be difficult?
- Is the article something I'm familiar with or totally new to me?
- Is this article providing basic and fundamental information that is new?
  - Or is the text providing example/expansion/clarification of something I've already seen?

- Does the article have a lot of new words/vocabulary to slow me down?
- Does the context demand I know the details or get the general idea?
- Do I have time for a close reading, or is it not possible?

These questions don't tell you what the reading is about, and they don't capture what the reading is going to teach you - they help you decide how to read the text/article/book. And you may want to add or change those questions. You may know that your attention or habit or situation requires you to pay attention to other things. These are part of what is sometimes called "**Pre-Reading**" consideration, or "**Framing**" that is you know how to look at something. Framing is a broad concept, but metaphorically consider that you see different things through different windows, shaped differently, even if they aim at the same part of the world. You're only going to get what your frame allows.

When you're considering Framing, you're not wasting effort because you're able to make better choices about how to read, and you'll be able to get more out of your reading. If you don't know why or what the reading is, you won't know how to read it. So figure that out first:

### **Frame the reading:**

Why are you reading? What are you trying to get from the reading? How should this particular reading be considered? Consider the situation and purpose. Think about the class or context as a whole. Ask why you'll look at it, what it is for. Look stuff up, decide on a reading Process & strategy if and how to Take Notes. For any class, I recommend: the first Step is to look at the syllabus, listen to the lecture, check the review sheet before you do the reading.

That leverages the most material to allow that you'll a) be a bit more familiar with the contents, knowing what to expect, and b) you'll know why you're reading it to make better choices. This is sometimes called "**Pre Reading**" and it is the part of reading that happens before you begin the main reading.

**Note:** You could look up other techniques- such as 'SQ3R Method' an active reading strategy, the name is the five steps: Survey, Question, Read, Recall (or Recite), and Review.

After you've worked on framing you'll consider the article/text/reading itself. look at the kind of writing, and read differently depending on what style the author wrote in.

Is the language very difficult, in which case you'll need to take more time? Is the language very quick and easy, casual or colloquial, which will tend to make you go faster, and you'll miss the point but get past it quickly? How do they seem to organize it? Is it organized?

## **INTENTIONAL SKIMMING**

Skimming works best with structured writing- Some authors are structured, they say in the intro what's to come, they introduce the topics in the sections, they use thesis sentences, and other mechanisms to make the order of ideas and the overall topic clear. With structured writers you can get the 'idea' without reading between the structural elements. For example, in some very structured pieces, you can get the broad ideas and see the connections by reading just the first and last lines of paragraphs that designate the theses and overall form of the information. You'll need to then go back and read between the structural parts to understand the details but you can skim across a lot and then go back and read parts.

This is the core of "Intentional skimming": focus on Intro and conclusion; Titles, subtitles, headings, Chapter/section summaries, First and last sentences of sections and paragraphs, as well as any Bold/italicized words, and get a sense of what's there. Then skim specific sections again to fill in what you missed. Finally, you've gotten your sense of the shape of things, and you can select a few parts to read more closely.

## **CLOSE/DEEP READING**

The close reading pathway is the opposite of skimming in intention, but not entirely different in goal, you want to understand the reading/text/article. But you've *Decided* to understand it you'll go through the whole thing. This is particularly important where a) the ideas are not separated out in a structured way, and

therefore to see the whole, or get the idea, you need all the parts, as well as b) it is important where the material is of such importance or so new and confusing that you're going to need to deal with all parts.

### **Synthetic Reading/Learning vs Passive Reading/Learning,**

Okay, when you take a look at the whole piece of reading all the information, you're doing one of two things. either you are seeing it as a series of pieces of information, that is often what you're doing in passive reading, you're seeing, maybe even trying to remember a number of different things, but you maybe don't see the connections between those things. Sometimes that's useful. But research shows, without serious effort to memorize, you're likely to forget a lot of what you're reading in the process of passive learning.

Without the effort to *Work* to memorize something, you're actually much more likely to absorb, understand and remember material by synthesis.

You've often been doing some of the things that help produce synthetic learning without realizing it. Particularly, many of you are in the habit of taking notes, and the reality is, most of the time you never go back and look at those notes, except to (maybe) review for an exam, and they don't help a ton with the exam, except for making it so you don't need to look at the book/articles themselves again.

In reality any note-taking you do is most useful because it forces you to do Synthetic thinking, that is thinking about the reading/text, and what it is saying, and how to make the pieces fit together into something meaningful. To take notes (or to highlight properly), you're thinking about the reading. Building your synthetic understanding, and you're asking questions of the work:

- Deciding which parts are important?
- Thinking about how to organize the ideas, how the ideas are organized in the article/text?
- Wondering what would be on the exam/used later in the class?
- Prioritizing some parts over other? Basic theory or example? Issue one or Issue two?
- How many topics are they? Or do the topics form a part of larger topics?
- Do you need to connect this to other readings?

Are there key words or vocabulary, are there ideas that don't have specific words for them?

When you take those notes, you may do it in different ways, but what you're working through is how to think about, how to make sense of the reading itself. Be intentional and reflexive about that. You're not "Just Taking Notes" you're doing part of the synthetic and active reading process.

Another time we could talk about note taking, and how to link that with research and active reading, but whatever version you choose, taking notes ( Schematic list or Outlining, Concept mapping, Summary or Annotation) the main point is to work through the ideas, thus your teachers have so often told you to do it.

### **OKAY, so that's all for today's explanation, I'll end with a few reminders/tips:**

- If you're losing focus and can't understand or remember what you're seeing on the page, stop and come back to the reading later. You're not reading if you look at words, you're reading when you are able to understand those words. Read in small batches, while taking notes, if that works better for you.
- If you're having trouble reading and processing/focusing, please consider reading aloud, not in public where you'll bug someone, but out loud, and sometimes it helps make your brain process the words.
- There are ways to get pdfs to read to you, there are ways to translate languages (never great) but if you're having trouble, it is better to experiment with ways to read differently. Don't "Bang your head against the wall." Try something different, take a break, come back to it. Readings aren't a punishment.
- Take notes as you go, as a way to process what you're reading, not as a way to memorize, write what's important, don't write everything.
- Distinguish structured and unstructured writing by authors, and make a note that examples and explanations often follow or precede the thing they are meant to clarify- but they aren't the goal.
- Look for the topic/article/book on google if you need material for your framing/pre-reading.
- Consider what you're trying to get out of the reading, when you get that, when you have enough, you're probably done. If you're not getting that you may need to try a different tactic/technique.

## THE ANNOTATION TEMPLATE I USE

Located here, so you can think about how to ask these questions and consider the way it suggests you look at readings. (Based on the version originally from Dr. Kim Fortune, Phd)

### Annotation

#### Introduction:

When you are doing research you need to keep the information you gather organized, you'll read multiple sources and when you find one that seems useful you should take notes and keep track of the content so that you can refer back to it. Annotations are a formal set of notes on a text (book or article) that you use to keep track of the key details. You don't write an annotation for all the things you read – just for ones that you think will be useful. Part of the decision in writing the annotation is about putting work in ahead of time to make writing easier later, you need to decide how many quotes to type in, and how many key quotes to only write the citation for. I find it useful to type more quotes out as I read so that writing the outline and early drafts is easier later. Typing out the complete quote is particularly important if you won't continue to have access to the book.

Annotations start by asking yourself a series of questions, then writing down notes to answer those questions. The questions are useful to think about when you read regardless of whether you end up writing an annotation.

#### Format of the Annotation:

1) Complete Citation (Author, Date, Title, publisher, web-URL, etc. as needed so that you or someone could go back and find the text again.

2) Who wrote the article/book? Why is the source credible? What makes them trustworthy, where is the text (book or article) published, for what purpose? How was the information in it checked, such as peer-review for scientific and academic work?

3) Main Notes on key Arguments/Content:

A) What is the main argument of the text?

-Summarize in your words what the main idea of the book or article is. Don't just describe a - general subject, but what it is trying to say. If the author wrote a summary consider copying in the quotation or at least noting the page.

B) What research methods are behind this text and how is this text organized? Ways that the main argument is supported.

-How is the main argument supported? What methods and evidence are used? Where does the author get their information?

C) What quotes capture the arguments and ideas in the text?

-Note page number and write something about what makes the quote useful, or copy the quote.

D) Describe the main literatures that the text draws on and contributes to, and the particular contribution made by the text? All texts are part of conversations that are ongoing, such as newspaper articles, academic journal articles, and books. They don't stand alone. Be aware of how this text connects to – agree with- contrast other texts.

E) Explain why this book is of particular interest to you, and relevant to your research.

F)How does this text relate to other course materials in this class/ or related readings you've done?

G) Additional/Secondary Notes: Other quotations, notes, vocabulary and definitions that might be useful.

EXTRA- Notes on other sources-

Texts often mention other books or authors, at the end of the annotation keep track of other citations, and references that you should look for as part of your research.

### ADDITIONAL READING LINKS:

Taken From: [https://ctl.wustl.edu/learningcenter/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/07/Reading-Strategies\\_TLC\\_2020.pdf](https://ctl.wustl.edu/learningcenter/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/07/Reading-Strategies_TLC_2020.pdf)

Further Reading:

<https://learningcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/>

<http://gsi.berkeley.edu/gsi-guide-contents/critical-reading-intro/social-science/>

<http://lsc.cornell.edu/notes.html>.

<http://uaap.mit.edu/tutoring-support/study-tips/tooling-and-studying/tooling-and-studying-effectivereading-and-note-taking>.

<https://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/study-tips/reading-textbooks.shtml>

<https://student.unsw.edu.au/notemaking-written-text>

[http://success.oregonstate.edu/sites/success.oregonstate.edu/files/LearningCorner/Tools/preview\\_read\\_rec\\_all.pdf](http://success.oregonstate.edu/sites/success.oregonstate.edu/files/LearningCorner/Tools/preview_read_rec_all.pdf)

[http://willamette.edu/offices/lcenter/resources/study\\_strategies/reading2remember.html](http://willamette.edu/offices/lcenter/resources/study_strategies/reading2remember.html)

[https://www.ucc.vt.edu/academic\\_support/online\\_study\\_skills\\_workshops/SQ3R\\_improving\\_reading\\_comprehension.html](https://www.ucc.vt.edu/academic_support/online_study_skills_workshops/SQ3R_improving_reading_comprehension.html)

<https://ctl.wustl.edu/learningcenter/resources/note-taking-strategies/>