

SOC 316: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY (REMOTE)

Prof. Sarah Quinn

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Office Hours: <https://calendly.com/slquinn>

Anonymous suggestion box: <http://freesuggestionbox.com/pub/btzdoad>

ABOUT THIS CLASS

The course is an introduction to sociological theory. It is organized around a series of foundational sociological concepts. These concepts include, but are not limited to: racialization and race, gender and sexuality, intersectionality, power, status, domination, class, capitalism, and culture. Students will read key works on these topics in order to gain a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the core insights that inform contemporary sociological research.

Course lectures and activities will emphasize how we can use theories to better understand social life today. To that end, we will read chapters from Tressie McMillan Cottom's book *Thick: And Other Essays*. We will use *Thick* in multiple ways: as an example of how sociological concepts can hone the sociological imagination; as a series of applications of foundational sociological theories to today's world; and as a work of theorizing in its own right.

This course meets the University of Washington's writing-intensive "W" course requirement, which means that assignments must include at least 10 pages of written work, plus an opportunity for revision of some of that work. You will write two essays (5-6 pages each) that use concepts from the class to analyze current events, pop culture, or some aspect of your life. You will then pick one of those papers to revise as your final assignment. Your grade for your final assignment will be based on how well you incorporated feedback in your revision and the degree of improvement in your writing. To support students in their writing, the class will include a series of writing workshops.

The learning goals for the course are:

1. To understand the main points of each author we read
2. To understand similarities and differences among the authors we read
3. To analyze current events and everyday practices in view of sociological theories
4. To advance students' critical reading skills
5. To advance students' writing skills

LEARNING IN UNSETTLED TIMES

Everyone is dealing with a lot right now. A global pandemic. Ongoing uprisings against racial oppression. Economic instability and financial strain. All of this is layered on top of the other stressors that make up our everyday lives. Almost every part of this class, from the reading to the grading, is designed with this particular historical moment in mind. When choosing assignments and deciding on requirements, I have tried to build in as much support and flexibility as possible. My guiding principle for this class is compassion. If you are struggling to keep up, I encourage you to reach out to me, or one of the TAs, as soon as possible. We will work with you to help you figure out solutions to whatever problems may arise. We pledge to treat you with compassion, and ask that you extend the same to your fellow classmates and all class instructors. We're in this together.

REMOTE LEARNING STRUCTURE

This class will be asynchronous. Every required part of this class can be done on your own time during the course of a week. We will have some live class meetings with group discussion and breakout rooms, these will all be optional (that includes live discussions and quiz sections). Here is how the course is organized:

- **MODULES (REQUIRED):** Each week will have a module, posted on Canvas. Modules will include a combination of readings, videos (which will include pre-recorded lectures), and activities. These activities will vary: sometimes you will be asked to reflect on points from lecture, or take a survey or non-graded quiz, or contribute to the class discussion board. Modules will be posted by end of day on Tuesday
- **TUESDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS:** On Tuesday I will post an announcement with news for the upcoming week.
- **LIVE DISCUSSION (OPTIONAL):** To support students who learn best through discussion, periodically on Thursdays during the 10:30-12:20 scheduled lecture time Prof Quinn will lead a live discussion, which will be recorded so that anyone not in attendance can view the discussion at a later time.
- **TA-TIME (OPTIONAL):** To provide additional support for students, each week during section the TAs will be available to discuss the course. These sessions will be run like group office hours, which means that they are informal chances for you to ask questions, and will not be recorded.

READINGS

All course readings will be available online and linked via the modules.

ASSESSMENT

Your grade for this class will be based on the following activities and essays

PERUSALL – 20%

Perusall, a free software that allows you to annotate the texts together. Each week you should post 3 or more comments for each reading posted on Perusall, and Perusall will grade your comments automatically. The lowest two weeks on Perusall will be dropped.

PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES – 20%

More on these in Module 1

ESSAY PREPARATION ACTIVITIES – 10%

Two short activities, due before each paper.

ESSAY 1 – 20%

ESSAY 2 – 20%

REVISION – 10%

COURSE, DEPARTMENTAL & UNIVERSITY POLICIES

ACCOMMODATIONS: We want students to learn as much as possible and do well in this course, and will work with you to accommodate learning-related needs. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please share your approved accommodations either with Prof Quinn or the Head TA in the first three weeks of class.

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](#).

Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form](#). If you require accommodations for any other reason, please contact Prof Quinn or the Head TA as soon as possible.

GUIDANCE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: Faculty members at U.S. universities – including the University of Washington – have the right to academic freedom which includes presenting and exploring topics and content that other governments may consider to be illegal and, therefore, choose to censor. Examples may include topics and content involving religion, gender and sexuality, human rights, democracy and representative government, and historic events. If, as a UW student, you are living outside of the United States while taking courses remotely, you are subject to the laws

of your local jurisdiction. Local authorities may limit your access to course material and take punitive action towards you. Unfortunately, the University of Washington has no authority over the laws in your jurisdictions or how local authorities enforce those laws. If you are taking UW courses outside of the United States, you have reason to exercise caution when enrolling in courses that cover topics and issues censored in your jurisdiction. If you have concerns regarding a course or courses that you have registered for, please contact your academic advisor who will assist you in exploring options.

CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES. If you are experiencing food insecurity, housing insecurity, or financial struggles, you can find a list of resources on the [Campus and Community Resources](#) page.

ACADEMIC HONESTY. All students are expected to comply with Departmental and University standards for [academic honesty](#). We will discuss this in more detail before the first essay is due, but in the meantime if you have questions about this please consult with Prof. Quinn or the Head TA.

CLASS CONDUCT. At all times I expect class members to treat everyone, their experiences, and embodiments with respect. I reserve the right to ask a student to remove themselves from a discussion if they are not treating others with respect.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Each Module covers a week in the quarter, so Module 1 corresponds with week 1, Module 2 with week 2, and so on.

MODULE 1: THEORY AND THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

- C. Wright Mills, *Sociological Imagination* (an excerpt)
- Cottom, "Thick"

MODULE 2: RACIALIZED MODERNITY, RACIALIZED SUBJECTS

- DuBois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings"
- Itzigsohn and Brown, *The Sociology of W.E.B. Du Bois*, selected pages
- Fields & Fields, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life*

MODULE 3: GROUP IDENTIFICATIONS

- Durkheim on "Social Facts"
- Durkheim, selections from *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*

MODULE 4: GENDER, SEXUALITY

- DeBouvoir, Selected pages
- Connell and Messerschmidt, selections from "Hegemonic masculinity"
- Pascoe, *Dude, You're a Fag*, Chapter 4

MODULE 5: INTERSECTIONALITY

- Vox Interview with Crenshaw on Intersectionality
- Collins, "Controlling Images"
- Collins, Matrix of Domination
- Cottom: "Dying to be Competent"

MODULE 6: CAPITALISM

- Selections from Marx-Engels Reader: Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx; Speech at the Anniversary of the People's Paper; Marx on the History of his Opinions; "Estranged Labour"; *Manifesto of the Communist Party*

MODULE 7: COLONIALISM AND RACIAL CAPITALISM

- Itzigsohn and Brown, "Racial and Colonial Capitalism"
- Fanon, Frantz, "Colonial War and Mental Disorders."
- Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks* (selected pages from introduction)
- Beaman and Taylor, "CouragelsBeautiful but PPE is Better: White Supremacy, Racial Capitalism, and COVID-19"

MODULE 8: AUTHORITY, POWER, STATUS (WEBER)

- Weber: Types of Action; Types of Legitimate Domination

MODULE 9:

- Weber: Bureaucracy, selected pages; Class, Status Groups, and Parties
- *Moneyball*

MODULE 10: COURSE WRAP UP

- Re read Cottom's "Dying to be Competent"