

SOCIOLOGY 8001 – SOCIOLOGY AS A PROFESSION
Fall 2005 Thursday 2:45-4:00 Room 1109 Social Sciences
course page: www.soc.umn.edu/~uggen/8001.htm

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DESCRIPTION

Welcome to Sociology as a Profession and to Minnesota sociology! This 1-credit two-semester seminar is designed for first-year sociology graduate students. My goal is to help you understand the professional worlds of sociology. The first semester is dedicated to many of the practical matters of professional life. In the spring we will explore more detailed discussion of topics of particular interest (marked by a “part I” on this syllabus) and be joined by a cavalcade of faculty visitors that *you* request.

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide *practical information* about sociology and academic life.
2. *Introduce resources* or refamiliarize you with resources likely to be useful to you.
3. *Discuss presentations* by student and faculty in department seminars.
4. Provide a safe place to *ask questions* and make comments.
5. Foster an environment promoting creativity and the free and good-humored *exchange of ideas*.

READING IS FORBIDDEN!

By design, there are *no scheduled readings* assigned for this course. For some topics, you will visit websites, see a list of publications on a topic, or examine some “ambient” materials that cross our paths this year. For example, we will all examine the American Sociological Association [Code of Ethics](#) as part of our discussion of professional conduct.

REQUIREMENTS

1. *Be there*. Show up for each departmental seminar (4-5:15 Tuesdays) and each of our class meetings. Unless otherwise noted, the only preparation I expect is that you ask yourself what you would like to know about each topic before and during course meetings.
2. *Be interactive*. Participate in our discussions and in the departmental seminars. Make it a goal to speak at least once in each meeting.
3. *Be yourself*. I do not want you to just “learn about” the professional world of sociology. Instead, you need to start taking the role of a professional sociologist. To do so, you will need to make some accommodation to the professional world but at the same time keep your heart -- capitalizing on your own assets and ideas.

POLICIES

1. The course is graded on an "S" or "N" basis, indicating satisfactory or "not satisfactory" performance. Your course grade will be determined solely by your participation. If you attend and participate regularly you will pass the course.
2. It is best to *avoid incompletes* in this and other classes. If something pulls you out of class for several weeks, you may be able to make up particular sessions next year. If at all possible, avoid delaying your progress by taking an incomplete.
3. Other basics:
 - a. If you have a *disability*, we can make the appropriate accommodations.
 - b. If you experience *harassment* of any sort, including sexual or racial harassment, please alert Uggem or the Chair or Director of Graduate Studies.
 - c. If you have questions about *academic honesty*, plagiarism, or other issues, please bring them to my attention.
4. Teaching Philosophy (attached)
5. Department Policies (attached)

TENTATIVE OUTLINE

1. **September 8: research, teaching and service**
 - a. "who I am and how you can be too" (I'm kidding!) ☺
 - i. fostering creativity
 - ii. secret advantage
 - b. power and purity
 - i. your advisors and committees
 - ii. ranks and positions in department and university
 - c. pulse check on resource use and interests
 - i. literature: sociological abstracts, social science citation index
 - ii. data: ICPSR, GSS, NES...
 - iii. professional associations: ASA, SWS, ASC...
 - d. blogs and websites
2. **September 15: the academic sociologist**
 - a. types of institutions
 - b. social and political environments
 - i. public sociology and public discourse
 - c. social networks
 - d. developing your own professional identity
3. **September 22: continue academic and begin the nonacademic sociologist**
 - a. government
 - b. NGOs
 - c. private
4. **September 29: professional associations**
 - a. online resources
 - b. general and specialty
 - c. national, plus local, regional, and international

- d. student membership
- 5. **October 6: funding and paying for your research**
 - a. "you lucky ****s!" -- internal support for Minnesota students
 - b. external research support
- 6. **October 13: developing collaborative relationships as a graduate student**
 - a. student/student
 - b. student/faculty
 - c. faculty/faculty
 - d. interdisciplinary
 - e. interplanetary
- 7. **October 20: preparing your CV**
 - a. local and national audiences
 - b. when can I put something on my CV?
 - c. things best left unsaid...
 - d. to blog or not to blog?
- 8. **October 27: presenting your work, part I**
 - a. local and national sociology meetings
 - b. local and national specialty meetings
 - c. underinvestment in oral presentations
- 9. **November 3: panel and evaluations**
 - a. midterm evaluations for fall course
 - b. ballots for student choice in spring course
- 10. **November 10: journal publication, part I**
 - a. publishability and "sloppiness"
 - b. peer review – blind and public
 - i. offering constructive feedback to colleagues
 - c. generalist journal hierarchies
 - d. specialist journal hierarchies
- 11. **November 17: questions and concerns for the DGS**
 - a. DGS visits
- 12. **November 24: thanksgiving (no class)**
- 13. **December 1: book publication**
 - a. edited volumes
 - b. preparing a book prospectus
- 14. **Spring Seminar: professional ethics and responsibilities, part I**
 - a. research and teaching ethics
 - b. the ASA ethics code
 - c. why other professional associations may not *have* an ethics code.

15. Spring Seminar: the job market

- a. job talks
- b. teaching portfolios and talks
- c. letters and references
- d. role transition and life of a new faculty member

16. Spring Seminar: the grad webpage

Uggen's Teaching Goals and Philosophy

1. Respect for Students.

The other points are really a subset of this one. Education is a service industry, but you cannot simply purchase a unit of education the way you would buy other commodities. Instead, you must devote time and energy to learning. I respect those students who must make work, family, or other commitments their top priority. Nevertheless, to benefit from the class and to be rewarded with a high grade, you must find time to do the work.

2. Procedural Justice or Fairness.

In my non-statistics classes, I typically grade exams and papers anonymously (by identification numbers rather than names) to avoid favoritism or other biases. Universal standards and strict deadlines are the best way I know to provide equal opportunities for all students.

3. High Standards for Excellence.

I reserve grades of A for outstanding work that engages course materials with original thought and creativity or a mastery of technical skills. You can receive a B by doing all of the work well and a C by meeting *all* course requirements.

4. Opportunities for Independent Work.

All must meet the basic requirements. For those wishing to engage the material at the highest level, I allow flexibility for more ambitious projects.

5. Responsiveness and Accountability.

You will have the opportunity to evaluate me and to critique the course in time for me to make changes that will benefit *you*. If you think I have failed to live up to the principles or philosophies here listed, please let me know about it.

6. Accessibility.

I will be available to you during office hours and flexible in scheduling appointments outside these hours (*including* nights and weekends if necessary).

7. Openness to Diverse Perspectives.

Sharing your experiences and understandings (publicly or privately) enriches the course for your fellow students, especially when you disagree with me.

8. Enthusiasm for the Subjects I Teach and for Teaching as a Vocation.

I cannot expect you to really engage the course materials if I am bored with them. Therefore, I will make every effort to make the texts, lectures, and assignments current, relevant, and intellectually engaging.

9. Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes.

I teach: (1) technical and life skills that will benefit you inside and outside of the classroom; (2) abstract and concrete knowledge about the social world; and, (3) attitudes promoting the free and good-humored exchange of ideas.