

The University of Texas at El Paso  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
Fall 2024

Soci 1301-11404: Introduction to Sociology  
T/R 9:00-10:20 am; Quinn Hall 212

**Professor:** Dr. Aurelia Lorena Murga (pronouns: she/ella)  
Email: [almurga@utep.edu](mailto:almurga@utep.edu)  
Office hours: M-TR 10:30-noon & by appointment  
Office location: Old Main 305

**Teaching Assistant (TA):** Josias Abriel (pronouns: his/hers/theirs)  
Email: [jabriel@miners.utep.edu](mailto:jabriel@miners.utep.edu)  
Office hours:  
Office location: TBD

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### About this Class

This course is designed to provide students with a basic overview and understanding of the discipline of sociology, which is the scientific study of human behavior in society. Throughout the semester we will focus on a number of sociological concepts, theories, and research. We will also be discussing a broad range of social issues and the different sociological theories used to examine these. The overall objective of the course is for you to gain a general knowledge base that allows you to critically examine and understand the social issues that impact our lives.

### Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of Sociology 1301, students should be able to:

- Examine the influence of group membership on the individual.
- Explain the research process(es) used in sociology.
- Assess the dimensions of social stratification in U.S. society.
- Produce sociological explanations for social problems.

### Required Materials

1. E-book: <https://openstax.org/details/books/introduction-sociology-3e>
2. Additional assigned readings are available on Blackboard (Bb).
3. 5x8 notecards (approximately 25 cards).
4. 5 scantrons

### Course expectations

Workload: As a general rule, in any 3-credit hour course, students are expected to spend 3 hours per week in the classroom and 6-9 additional hours per week doing coursework outside the classroom. The time commitment may vary from week to week, depending on the amount of reading and other assigned work. Some weeks may require significantly fewer hours, some may require more.

Attendance & active participation: As a friendly reminder, you should log on to Bb on a regular basis (I suggest at least once a day) to check for any announcements or emails. If you encounter any problems with Bb, contact the UTEP Helpdesk (747-4357) for assistance.

You are highly encouraged to attend every class if you expect to do well in this course. I will NOT drop students from the course. If you choose to drop the course, it is your responsibility to do so. Keep in mind that failure to withdraw from the course will result in a grade of "F" for the course.

Friendly reminder: Problems with your computer are NOT an acceptable reason for deadline extensions. If you encounter computer problems that cannot be resolved in time, you should use another computer to complete the work prior to the deadlines. It's a good idea to have an alternative computer identified BEFORE you run into problems.

### **Assessments (Grading)**

#### **Exams 60%**

You will have 5 exams (each worth 12% of your final grade) throughout the semester that may include multiple choice, true/false, and short response/essay questions. Exams cover assigned readings (e.g., required readings found on Bb) and information from the lectures and class discussions. Each exam is worth up to 100 points.

#### **Attendance and Participation 30%**

Full credit for participation will be earned by coming to class prepared to discuss the readings and by fully engaging in-class assignments. We will have a series of assignments in-class or on Bb that include creation and submission of discussion questions, in-class assignments, short memos, and quizzes. Students are expected to demonstrate knowledge and critical thought of the course material. Your 5x8 notecards will be used to submit your daily participation to the instructor.

#### **Gains Report (Final Exam) 10%**

Students will be required to complete and submit a list of 10 "things I learned" in introduction to sociology. You will make a list of 10 bullet points with each including 4-5 sentences of writing. I am not asking you to simply list the topics covered, but to thoughtfully engage with what you have learned during the semester, so if you simply list topics covered in the class, you will be awarded 0 points for this exercise.

Make-Up Assignment Policy: Make-up assignments/in-class quizzes and exams are strongly discouraged and WILL ONLY BE ADMINISTERED WITH THE SUBMISSION OF A UNIVERSITY EXCUSED ABSENCE.

#### **Grading Scale**

A	90-100%
B	89-80%
C	79-70%
D	69-60%
F	59% and below

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commitment may vary from week to week, depending on the amount of reading and other assigned work. Some weeks may require significantly fewer hours, some may require more.

**Active Participation:** As a friendly reminder, you should log on to Bb on a regular basis (I suggest at least once a day) to check for any announcements or emails. All coursework (e.g., Inquisitive quizzes and exams) must be submitted via Bb (except any in-class writing responses). If you encounter any problems with Bb, contact the UTEP Helpdesk (747-4357) for assistance.

You are highly encouraged to attend every class if you expect to do well in this course. I will NOT drop students from the course. If you choose to drop the course, it is your responsibility to do so. Keep in mind that failure to withdraw from the course will result in a grade of "F" for the course.

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### **Email Policy**

Please feel free to reach out to me via email with any questions you may have regarding the class or assignments. During the week (Monday-Friday) you can expect a reply from me within 24-48 hours. If you email me over the weekend, I will respond on the next weekday. Before emailing make sure the answer(s) to your question(s) cannot be answered from reading this syllabus. I will not respond to questions that could be answered in this syllabus. Finally, please include **Soci 1301** in the subject line of all your correspondence.

### **Classroom Conduct**

You must demonstrate the highest level of respect for your peers and for the instructor. All points of view will be welcomed and respected; however, statements or behaviors that are disrespectful towards individuals or groups will not be tolerated. Behaviors that are distracting to your peers and to the instructor are not acceptable (e.g. coming in late, packing up or leaving early, using cell phones, and having side conversations).

### **Academic Integrity**

This course is based on the principle of academic integrity. Students are responsible for their own academic behavior, and for making themselves fully aware of UTEP's policies. Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.

- Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student and possessing unauthorized materials during a test.
- Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as one's own.
- Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act.

Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students' Office for disciplinary action. In addition to receiving a failing grade in the class, the student may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Further information can be gained from the UTEP Dean of Students' web page. Go to <http://www.utep.edu/dos>, then click the "Student Conduct" tab on the top.

## AI and ChatGPT<sup>1</sup>

The use of ChatGPT or any other AI platform or tool to generate either ideas or written content (not including spelling/grammar check such as Grammarly), or to produce any other material is prohibited in this course.

This policy is for a number of reasons:

- This class is designed to improve your writing skills; if you're not writing, you're not improving.
- Using AI opens up academic honesty issues, both because it raises the question of whether the work is "your" work, and also because tools like ChatGPT rely on taking uncredited material from scholars and writers.
- Using AI does not produce reliably accurate results.
- ChatGPT has serious negative environmental impacts, particularly in relation to water usage.
- OpenAI has exploited workers from the global south, especially workers in prisons and refugee camps, and workers in Kenya, the Philippines, Colombia, and elsewhere.

## ADA Policy

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at [www.sa.utep.edu/cass](http://www.sa.utep.edu/cass). CASS' Staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

Please note: Instructor reserves the right to modify the schedule/syllabus at any time during the semester—any modifications will be announced during class and/or through Bb.

## Texas Senate Bill 17

[Texas Senate Bill 17](#), the recent law that outlaws diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at public colleges and universities in Texas, does not in any way affect content, instruction or discussion in a course at public colleges and universities in Texas. Expectations and academic freedom for teaching and class discussion have not been altered post-SB 17, and students should not feel the need to censor their speech pertaining to topics including race and racism, structural inequality, LGBTQ+ issues, or diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## Class guidelines and ground rules<sup>2</sup>

Discussing to Learn: Contribute ideas and views in the spirit of inquiring and learning together, rather than trying to debate or win arguments (unless the activity is designed as a debate or to assess best arguments).

Mindful Listening: Listen actively with attention and respect for what others are saying, without interrupting or tuning out to focus on preparing one's own contribution.

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<sup>1</sup> AI policy for syllabi from Olivia Stowell

<sup>2</sup> Written or compiled by Jason Schreiner, Teaching Engagement Program, University of Oregon 3 updated February 2017

**Stepping Up/Stepping Back:** Pay attention to the voices in the room and be mindful of one's contributions. Are there patterns regarding which voices are being heard and which are not? How do I fit in these patterns? Is there need to step back and let others have opportunity to contribute? Is there need to step up and contribute more? Do we feel empowered to hold ourselves accountable for our class participation dynamics?

**Listening Lenience:** Remember that we are learning together and may not necessarily get something right the first or even second try. Practice being lenient with oneself and with others. Restating what someone just said can provide them an opportunity to clarify or revise their statement. Similarly, it is good practice to state when you say something not quite right and then try to state it again or ask for help in saying it.

**Seek Clarification:** Seek clarification when you are confused or have doubts, and also before you pass judgment on what another is saying. Practice statements such as "Are you saying that...?" or "What I hear you saying is..." or "If I understand you correctly...."

**Ideas not Individuals:** Focus on engaging others' ideas not judging or criticizing individuals. Asking for clarification can be helpful, and using language such as "The idea I hear you saying is..." (rather than "you said") or "I don't agree with that idea..." (rather than "I don't agree with you").

**Support Our Statements:** Offer supporting evidence of some kind to back up your contributions, such as data, clear reasoning or reference to a text, and be aware that your own experience or an anecdotal story may not fit a larger pattern. Remember that being an exception does not discredit a rule.

**Emotional Awareness:** Recognize that emotions are part of learning, and everyone can get emotionally worked up at any time. Remember that feelings are real and common yet are often temporal and will pass. Feelings also tend to be reactive and shaped by past experiences or other factors not necessarily present in the moment – this means reflecting more deeply about one's own feelings and why they might be arising, and being compassionate about what may be happening for others who express strong emotions. Feelings are also not inferences, meaning that one's feeling about something is a feeling, not an attribute about something else (e.g. feeling discomfort does not mean another person is trying to make me feel uncomfortable; or, feeling another person's anger does not mean they are angry at me).

**A Part is Not the Whole:** Remember that your view or experience is your view or experience, a partial opening onto the whole, and not necessarily a general view or experience of everyone; nor are the views or experiences of others necessarily going to match your own. And, just as you cannot represent an entire group of people, nor can anyone else represent a group of people. It is quite okay for everyone to speak their truth and their experience, but working from individual views and experiences to more general ideas or conclusions often requires considerable work.

**Complex Issues are Not Simple:** There are no easy answers or simple solutions for complex issues. The goal is not for one view to prevail over others or to arrive at consensus but to find ways to inquire and work together to advance inquiry and understanding.

**Acknowledge Offense:** If you feel offended or sense others may be offended, speak up and acknowledge that you feel offended or sense that others might be. Agree as a group to pause so that everyone can consider their own feelings and consider what may or may not have been intended by a particular comment or moment.

Please note: Instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus and/or schedule at any time during the semester. Any modifications to the syllabus and/or schedule will be announced during class and/or through Bb (check “announcements”).

DONE	Date	TOPIC: Readings & assignments
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 1, T, 8/27	<b>The first day Introductions. Sociology is EVERYWHERE.</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 1, R, 8/29	Chapter: An Introduction to Sociology
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 2, T, 9/3	Chapter: An Introduction to Sociology Required reading: Berger
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 2, R, 9/5	Chapter: Sociological Research
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 3, T, 9/10	Chapter: Sociological Research Required reading: Pager
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 3, R, 9/12	<b>Exam 1</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 4, T, 9/17	Chapter: Culture
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 4, R, 9/19	Chapter: Culture Required reading: Watson
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 5, T, 9/24	Chapter: Socialization
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 5, R, 9/26	Chapter: Socialization Required reading: Lareau
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 6, T, 10/1	<b>Exam 2</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 6, R, 10/3	Chapter: Groups and Organizations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 7, T, 10/8	Chapter: Groups and Organizations Required reading: Ray
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 7, R, 10/10	Chapter: Deviance, Crime, and Social Control
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 8, T, 10/15	Chapter: Deviance, Crime, and Social Control Required reading: Snow and Anderson
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 8, R, 10/17	<b>Exam 3</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 9, T, 10/22	Chapter: Social Stratification in the U.S.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 9, R, 10/24	Chapter: Social Stratification in the U.S. Required reading: Stewart
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 10, T, 10/29	Chapter: Race and Ethnicity
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 10, R, 10/31	Chapter: Race and Ethnicity Required documentary: <i>Race: The Power of an Illusion</i>

<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 11, T, 11/5	Chapter: Race and Ethnicity Required reading: Bonilla-Silva
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 11, R, 11/7	<b>Exam 4</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 12, T, 11/12	Chapter: Gender
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 12, R, 11/14	Chapter: Gender Required documentary: <i>The Janes</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 13, T, 11/19	Chapter: Gender Required reading: McMillam Cottom
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 13, R, 11/21	Chapter: Disability Required documentary: <i>Crip Camp</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 14, T, 11/26	Chapter: Disability
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 14, R, 11/28	University closed: No classes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 15, T, 12/3	Chapter: Disability
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 15, R, 12/5	<b>Exam 5</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 15, F, 12/6	Dead day
<input type="checkbox"/>	Finals Week	<b>Final Exam: Gains Report (see syllabus for more information)</b>