The Social Scientific Imagination

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OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays/Thursdays Noon to 1 PM

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This course introduces students to some of the most relevant, controversial, and puzzling issues in contemporary society: inequality, residential segregation, mass protest, incarceration, migration, environmental suffering, etc. We will debate about these issues using concrete, “real life” examples from the Americas: heat-related death in Chicago, student participation in the Civil Rights movement, gender inequality and socialization, growing up undocumented, social polarization in Austin, the drama of evictions, police violence in the U.S.; poverty, sex work, etc.

Together, all these cases will help us to figure out the specific contribution that different social sciences (sociology, anthropology, and political science) can make to the understanding of our surroundings and of ourselves.

During the semester we will watch documentaries and TED talks that will help us to illustrate (and further discuss) the topic at hand (Eyes on the Prize, 13, Miss Representation).

☞Course Requirements and grading policy:

Since the class is organized around lectures, discussions of the required readings, group presentations, and films ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY. Religious holidays count as excused absences.

Grades :

One paper : 30%

Best five of six quizzes : 50%

Attendance to sessions : 20%

You are supposed to write your OWN essay citing your sources. Otherwise it will be a case of academic dishonesty.

There will be SIX quizzes on the assigned readings. Dropping your lowest score, the sum of the remaining FIVE stands for 50% of your final grade. Note on grades: If your final grade (addition of paper, six best quizzes, and assignment) is: 100-93, then your grade is an A; 92-90, then your grade is an A-; 89-85 then you grade is a B +; 84-80 then your grade is a B; 79-76 then your grade is a C; 75-65 then your grade is a D; 64 or below is an F.

THIS SYLABUS IS SUBJECTED TO CHANGE IN CASE DURING THE SEMESTER

Students with Disabilities
Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (Video Phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

I would really appreciate if you do not bring your gun to my class. If you want to know my opinion about this issue, you may read:

<https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2016/05/31/should-guns-be-permitted-on-college-campuses/guns-on-campus-make-colleges-less-safe>

<http://time.com/4061114/gun-control-texas/>

<http://www.chron.com/opinion/outlook/article/Ayuero-If-we-don-t-push-back-now-on-campus-6547171.php>

REQUIRED READINGS (AVAILABLE @ COOP and CANVAS)

BOOKS:

Desmond, Matthew and Mustafa Emirbayer. *Race in America*

Auyero, Javier (editor). *Invisible in Austin*

McAdam, Doug. *Freedom Summer*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. *Dear Ijeawele, or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions*

ARTICLES: (on Canvas)

Gonzalez. “Learning to Be Illegal: Undocumented Youth and Shifting Legal Contexts in the Transition to Adulthood.”

Klinenberg. “Denaturalizing Disaster: A Social Autopsy of the 1995 Chicago Heat Wave.”

Desmond. “Forced Out. For Poor Americans Eviction Never Ends.”

Wright Mills, C. “The Sociological Imagination.”

Logan “Life and Death in the City.”

Sampson “Rethinking Crime and Immigration.”

Sullivan and Ledesma “Same Trailer, a Different Park.”

Weitzer “Prostitution: Facts and Fiction.”

Rank “As American as Apple Pie: Poverty and Welfare.”

Quade “Youth from Every Quarter.”

Goffman “On the Run.”

For the week of class PLEASE READ: “How to Email Your Professor (without being annoying)” (on CANVAS)

SCHEDULE

9/30 FIRST CLASS: Why is reading important?

TED TALK CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE

<https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en>

September 4 to 6. WEEK ONE: Individual and Social Structure

Excerpt from “The Sociological Imagination,” by C. Wright Mills (CS)

Excerpt from “Denaturalizing Disaster: A Social Autopsy of the 1995 Chicago Heat Wave,” by Eric Klinenberg (CS)

Logan “Life and Death in the City” (CS)

Rank “As American as Apple Pie: Poverty and Welfare” (CS)

September 11 to 13. WEEK TWO : The Sociological Imagination in Practice

Read Chapters from *Invisible in Austin* – in this order

Kilanski, Cuvi, Borja, Scott,

September 18 to 27. WEEKS THREE and FOUR: Race and Collective Action in the U.S: The Civil Rights Movement

Film: Eyes on the Prize “Awakenings 1954-56”

READ Prologue, Chapters 1-2 *Freedom Summer*

READ Chapters 3 to 6 *Freedom Summer*

October 2 to 4. WEEK FIVE: Privilege and the color of our skin

Read Chapter 1 Race in America

Read Chapter 4 *Race in America*

October 9 to 18. WEEKS SIX and SEVEN: Gender privilege

Watch: Miss Representation

Read Dear Ijeawele, or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions.

TED TALK: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. We Should All Be Feminists

Chapter from *Invisible in Austin*: Collins

Weitzer “Prostitution: Facts and Fiction” (CS)

October 23 to 25. WEEK EIGHT: Race and Class in present tense. Housing.

Read Chapter 5 *Race in America*

Desmond, M. “Forced Out. For Poor Americans Eviction Never Ends” (CS)

Sullivan and Ledesma “Same Trailer, a Different Park” (CS)

TED TALK: Esther Sullivan. America’s Most Invisible Communities.

October 30, November 1. WEEK NINE: Race in Present Tense. The Criminal Justice System.

Read Chapter 6 *Race in America*

Read Goffman, A. “On The Run” (CS)

TED TALK: Alice Goffman. How we are priming some kids for college.

November 6 to 8. WEEK TEN: Relax. No reading!!!!

In class presentation from WRITING CENTER

Visit to PCL to learn how to use library and databases

November 13 to 15. WEEK ELEVEN. Schooling/Education/Inequality.

Read Chapter 7 *Race in America*

Quade “Youth from Every Quarter.”

THANKSGIVING BREAK! November 21 to 23

November 28 to December 6. WEEKS ELEVEN to TWELVE: Undocumented Lives

Gonzalez, Roberto. “Learning to Be Illegal: Undocumented Youth and Shifting Legal Contexts in the Transition to Adulthood.” (CS)

Sampson “Rethinking Crime and Immigration” (CS)

*WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE LAST DAY OF CLASS. DECEMBER 6.*

WRITING ASSIGNMENT:

Choose a topic you want to conduct research on (for ex. Homelessness in Texas). Drawing on at least one NEWSPAPER source (New York Times, The Guardian, Houston Chronicle, Austin American Statestman, or Dallas Morning News), provide a general description of the problem. Then write two paragraphs about a) why do you think this topic is important, and b) what questions you want to address.

Go to the library. Using electronic database, find 5 peer-reviewed social science sources on your topic. Copy title and source. Write 2 or 3 sentences per source explaining why it is important for your research to consult such source.

Don’t forget to write your name and UT EID.

Please spell check!!!!!

Paper should look like this:

Homelessness in Texas

Charles Marx (cmaj4321)

I’d like to know more about homelessness in Texas. According to the Austin-American Statement (cite date) there are X people who every night sleep on the streets. This number has been growing…. State authorities have said that….

XXXXXX

I believe this is an important issue because XXXXXXX.

I’d like to know what types of people tend to be homeless, where do they come from, and what has been done to address the problem? I’d also like to know…. XXXXX…..

SOURCES:

## **Homelessness** Among Older Adults in a **Texas** Border Town.

## Authors: Hatchett, Bonnie F.

## Source: Journal of Aging & Social Policy. 2004, Vol. 16 Issue 3, p35-56.

This article helps me to contextualize the problem….XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

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