

Fashioning Sociology
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Spring 2015
Office hours: Thursday 1-2
B634

Course Description:

The aim of this course is to think about some of the most taken-for-granted aspects of our lives (What do you eat for breakfast? How do you imagine your life in ten years?) and situate these moments, events, fantasies, feelings, and moods within the workings of society. This means we will carefully consider how our most personal experiences relate to larger social trends and movements. To do this we will have to consider history, economics, and technology. We will also pay close attention to the fashion industry and examine it through our developing sociological imaginations. A word of caution: while the focus is often on the experiences of individuals, the sociological perspective is concerned with how individuals fit into larger patterns.

Course Objectives (Or, a few questions we'll work on answering):

1. What is sociology, where did it come from, and why do we need it?
2. How can you do sociology?
3. How to sort out social science from the opinions. Or, what was your sample size?
4. Begin to map who has social power and how they keep it.
5. Finally, be able to ask and answer the following question: Can we change society?

Readings:

The Practical Skeptic **CORE CONCEPTS** (do not get the READER!) by Lisa McIntyre. 5th Edition, 2010. McGraw Hill.

Readings, Online:

Pham, Minh-ha T. "Fashion's Cultural Appropriation Debate: Pointless," The Atlantic, May 15, 2014.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2014/05/cultural-appropriation-in-fashion-stop-talking-about-it/370826/>

“We Are All Very Anxious” by Plan C

http://www.weareplanc.org/we-are-all-very-anxious/#.U_4jKYCwKj6

Abi Ishola, (an FIT alum!). “Headwraps, Hoodies, and Denim: How Clothing has Shaped Protest and Revolutions” June 11, 2014. www.scriptsandsightings.com

<http://scriptsandsightings.com/2014/06/head-wraps-hoodies-and-denim-how-clothing-has-shaped-protests-and-revolutions/>

Beauty work and class on “The Beheld” by Autumn Whitefield-Madrano

<http://www.the-beheld.com/2014/08/beauty-and-inconspicuous-consumption.html?spref=tw>

<http://thehairpin.com/2014/07/commodity-fetish-this-is-not-really-what-a-feminist-looks-like>

“White Privilege” by Peggy McIntosh:

<http://www.iub.edu/~tchsotl/part2/McIntosh%20White%20Privilege.pdf>

Katty Kay and Claire Shipmen, “The Confidence Gap,” The Atlantic, April 14, 2014.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/04/the-confidence-gap/359815/>

Jessica Valenti “The Female ‘Confidence Gap is A Sham,” The Guardian, April 23, 2014.

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/apr/23/female-confidence-gap-katty-kay-claire-shipman>

Additional Readings will be assigned throughout the semester: stay tuned!

REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance/Participation (20%):

REQUIRED. You must come to class to do well. Every class period counts as one point—if you are present, for the entire duration of the class, you get the point. If you are absent you do not get the point. We have a maximum of 16 class meetings—so if you miss two, your score would be 14 out of 16, which is an 88%/B+. If I have to cancel class for any reason, then everyone will get the attendance point. Often I will take attendance by giving an in-class writing assignment. You will get credit if you hand it in. These can never be made up so if you come late to class and miss it, you will not get the credit.

I will round up and/or give bonus participation points if you contribute to class discussion. Please write me a note or email requesting points for active and thoughtful participation points if you feel you deserve them.

EXAMS (40%):

We will have **TWO** exams—a midterm and a final. The midterm will be in class and you can bring a one-page cheat sheet. The midterm exam will be multiple-choice, short answer. The second, final exam will be take home—I’ll give it out a week before our last class, when it will be due. The final exam will NOT be cumulative—it will cover what we do after the midterm.

Blog Post/Paper (40%)

You will write your final paper in the form of a blog post to be shared on the class blog, www.fashioningsociology.com. Please check it often, as it is the first place I post readings, assignments, etc. Your paper will be a sociological analysis of a fashion trend or practice of your choosing. The final paper/"post" needs to include some type of multimedia (images, video clips, music) to illustrate your thesis. We will start working on these in class and develop them over the course of the semester.

And, we have a **class twitter account**: @fashioning_soc

Our class hashtag will be #fashioning_soc

I will use this to tweet about our class discussions, announce surprises, and provide links to help with your projects—wonderful things! We will use this for discussions and I am happy to give out bonus points for participating via twitter. For example, you can tweet questions about assignments, study questions, anything to each other or me.

PLEASE see if me you are uncomfortable with participating in online forums in any way. We will work out alternative assignments.

Grading Procedures/Evaluations:

Grades are as follows: 100-90 = A; 89-80 = B; 79-70 = C; 69-60 = D; below 59 = F. I do not give incompletes.

Guidelines for my course:

*****I reserve the right to change, delete or ADD readings to this schedule. I will always give you notice but you must come to class to stay abreast of any changes.

*****Please turn off all electronic devices when class starts—these hours are a texting time-out. AND NO COMPUTERS DURING CLASS—TAKE NOTES WITH PEN AND PAPER, TYPE UP LATER.

*****Do not be offended if I call you and do not be offended if I do not call on you! I will try to call on everyone at least once over the course of the semester so be prepared.

*****Please email me if you are having trouble with the course material in anyway.

*****Plagiarizing in anyway, shape or form will result in a zero for that assignment or test. I take this very seriously so please see me if you're nervous about properly citing your work.

Schedule (Stay tuned for modifications):

Jan 28/29: Introductions. History of Sociology

- Feb 4/5: The Sociological Imagination. Chapter 1-2, *The Practical Skeptic*
 “White Privilege” by Peggy McIntosh:
<http://www.iub.edu/~tchsotl/part2/McIntosh%20White%20Privilege.pdf>
 Personal Problem Project Assignment, Due next week
- 11/12: Chapter 3-4, “Theories of Sociology,” *The Practical Skeptic*
 “We Are All Very Anxious” by Plan C
http://www.weareplanc.org/we-are-all-very-anxious/#.U_4jKYCwKj6
- 18/19: Theories of Sociology (cont), Theories of Fashion
 Wissinger, Betsy. “Modeling Consumption: Fashion Modeling Work in Contemporary Society,” *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 9(2) (2009): 273-296.
 Please bring in questions for the author, we will tweet them to her!
- 25/26: Blog paper class work. TBA Chapter 5-6
- Mar 4/5: TEST
- 11/12: Chapter 7 “Culture,” *The Practical Skeptic*
 Pham, Minh-ha T. “Fashion’s Cultural Appropriation Debate: Pointless,” *The Atlantic*, May 15, 2014. <http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2014/05/cultural-appropriation-in-fashion-stop-talking-about-it/370826/>
- 18/19: Chapter 10 “Socialization,” *The Practical Skeptic*
 Katty Kay and Claire Shipmen, “The Confidence Gap,” *The Atlantic*, April 14, 2014.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/04/the-confidence-gap/359815/>
 AND
 Jessica Valenti “The Female ‘Confidence Gap is A Sham,” *The Guardian*, April 23, 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/apr/23/female-confidence-gap-katty-kay-claire-shipman>
- 25/26: cont
- Apr 1/2: SPRING BREAK
- 8/9: Chapter 11--Deviance
- 15/16: Chapter 12—Inequality
- 22/23: Chapter 13-14--Inequality

28/29: Chapter 14---Inequality

May 6/7: Paper presentations

13/14: Presentations, EXAM 2 due