**Course Description**

This seminar is intended for students majoring or minoring in sociology. Its goal is to encourage students to draw together and reflect upon their multiple experiences in the discipline by examining different theoretical and substantive issues in sociology since World War II. The course moves back and forth between different types of texts: theoretical texts, self-reflective essays, and empirical research. Throughout the course, we will examine critically how sociologists think about the world: how they define knowledge; how the knower is connected to what s/he knows; the role sociologists have or should have in relation to social policy. This year, we will be reading work that might help us to make sense of global affairs, including the role of the U.S. in the world, the way the West sees “the rest,” and the way others see the U.S. The success of the course will depend entirely upon students’ preparation for and participation in class discussions; assignments are designed to foster critical reading, thinking, and writing, as well as listening to and engaging in dialogue with one another.

**Course Requirements**

1) **Attendance/Participation.** Everyone is encouraged, not only to be in attendance during class and films, but to participate actively. This will be graded according to your general participation in class and according to your leadership of class discussions.

   **General Participation:** For class, I will endeavor to make the classroom as comfortable as possible for you, so that you will feel free to ask questions and make observations, comments, or critiques. I will expect you to take initiatives in group discussions, present current news items, ask questions about unclear or controversial issues, and engage one another in active debate. Active participation is crucial to the learning process. Ideally, the class will be a place of experimentation in which you and I can engage in thought exercises and debates on issues with a critical, non-judgmental, and open mind. That is, whatever your opinions may be I consider them valid contributions to the class and, like my own, always open to re-evaluation and change. Most importantly, without active participation the course and your education will be severely impaired, so please take your fellow classmates and your own development seriously by participating regularly and actively.

   **Leading Discussions:** As a part of your participation grade, you will be asked to lead class discussions of the readings. This is a seminar course and therefore I will not lecture very much, if at all. You will have the opportunity to sign up for particular days/topics at the beginning of the semester, so please review the **Course Schedule** below and determine which weeks are most interesting and challenging for you. Each of you will be responsible for leading group discussion at least three times in the semester. For each discussion, you will be responsible for 1) reminding the class about similar issues covered previously in the course, 2) designing the class for debate and discussion, 3) providing summaries and commentaries on the reading when necessary.
2) **Reading.** All assignments assume that you will be reading carefully the texts below. For each week, you will be asked to read approximately one hundred pages of material, which should be completed by the first day of the week they are to be discussed. No assignment is as important for your progress in this class as reading. Therefore, I expect for you to keep up and be an active critical reader.

3) **Briefs.** Throughout the semester you will have to write 10 briefs, due on days highlighted throughout the **Course Schedule.** I will look for you to reflect on the central arguments for that week’s readings, including a summary of basic themes and a commentary. The commentary should be based on your own analysis of the readings. In these commentaries, you should try to integrate the themes of the reading into personal experiences, current events, and sociological insights drawn from other courses you have taken.

4) **Papers.** Here, you will have two options:
   
   A) **Two Short Papers.** These will be 5-7 page papers on topics of your own choosing. They may cover issues that are central topics of the readings, but they be more tangentially related to the course. Please discuss your topics with me before you write them. Each paper should include at least four outside academic sources. You may use newspapers, websites, or general reference material, but it must be in addition to academic books and journal articles.
   
   B) **A Community Service Report** (with a Community Partner). The object of this assignment is to have you engage in the preliminary stages of a Problem-Based Service-Learning (PBSL) project. Although this will be covered in greater detail as the course continues, typically a PBSL project entails a student, under the guidance of faculty, working with a “community partner” or “client” to solve a problem. If we were to have complete PBSL projects for the class, I might work with one or more of you and a community organization, to solve a problem. The “problem” is one that the community partner needs solved through the student’s service, but it also is one that satisfies the learning requirements of the course, hence “service-learning.” However, your assignment will not include actually solving the problem, but only contributing to a growing inventory of community partners and potential PBSL projects for Bowdoin students in the future. Therefore, your assignment will be to 1) pick a topic of social inquiry that is of particular interest to you, 2) research potential community organizations in the region that address this set of social issues, 3) conduct interviews with representatives of one of these organizations to learn about its history and to help define one or more problems they need solved, and 4) write a thorough 15 page report that discusses the community partner in the context of its broader movement, and the problems that student service-learners may begin to address in future courses. The final report will not only be submitted to me, but it will be presented to the class in the final weeks, and it will be shared with the community partner for review.

Throughout the course, you will be asked to complete this project in a sequence of assignments. These include the following tasks and due dates:

- **Tuesday, Feb. 24th – Two page introduction to the issue and the organization with which you will be working.**
- **Thursday, March 30th – Issue report.** This is the historical/sociological section of your final project, where you will apply your sociological imagination to the issues addressed by the community partner. It should be ten pages, at least. This presumes that you will have met with
the directors/leaders of your organization and discussed their history, their current programs, their needs, and how Bowdoin students may be able to help. If you find that you are able to help this organization by meeting some of their needs, by all means, discuss it with me and we can try to incorporate it into your final project.

- Tuesday, April 27th – Problem Statement is due. This entails the introduction and issue report, modified to accommodate any new insights or research. It also includes a full report on the operations and needs of the community partner, and a statement of service options for Bowdoin students. If you decide to help to meet the needs of the organization through your own volunteer service, you should also include a report on what you did, how it helped you to understand the organization, and how it enhanced your understanding of the social problems they try to address.

For more information on service learning as a method, please see the following websites
- My teaching webpage: academic.bowdoin.edu/faculty/J/jbandy/teach.shtml
- Bowdoin’s Community Service webpage:  www.bowdoin.edu/communityservice/
- Service Learning on the Web: csf.colorado.edu/sl/index2.html
- AAHE service learning resources: www.aah.org/service/

In all writing assignments, please use the front and back of each sheet of paper. Please note that late assignments will not be accepted unless you have an excuse from the Dean’s Office. The fact that you may have assignments due for other classes on or near the same days as this class is not a valid excuse for late papers. If you do not have a valid excuse, late assignments will receive lower grades. For each day the assignment is late, the paper grade will be reduced by a third of a letter grade.

**Grade Distribution**
- Participation and Presentations 30%
- Briefs 35%
- Paper assignment 35%

**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Required Readings**


All other readings not contained within the books are on reserve in H/L and in the Riley House, or located via the web at addresses that accompany the citations below.

**Course Schedule:**

**Section 1 – The Promise of Sociology**

**Week 1, Jan. 27**
    Ch. 1-3, 9-10, and Afterword by Todd Gitlin.

Optional:
   *American Journal of Sociology* v. 65, March 1960, pp. 517-518 (by George C. Homans)
   *New Republic* v. 140, June 22, 1959, p. 19 (Everett C. Hughes)
   *New Statesman*, v. 58, September 5, 1959, pp. 281-282 (Charles Madge)
   *The Nation* v. 189, August 1, 1959, pp. 55-56 (W. J. H. Sprott)

**Section 2 – Rethinking Sociological Method**

**Week 2, Feb 3**

**Insiders and Outsiders**
   (available online through JSTOR)

**Personal Values, Public Policy and Social Criticism**

**Brief due, on readings for Feb 3**

Week 3, Feb. 10

**Brief due, on readings for Feb 10**

**Section 3**
Week 4, Feb 17

**Brief due, readings for Feb 17**

Week 5, Feb. 24

**Patricia Williams, Common Hour Feb 27th**

**First Paper Due or Service-Learning Introduction due**

Week 6, March 2

**Brief due, readings for March 2**

Week 7, March 9

**Brief due, readings for March 9**

**SPRING VACATION (March 13-28)**

Week 8, March 30

**Brief due, readings for March 30**
Service-Learning Issue Report

Week 9, April 6

**Brief due, readings for April 6**

Week 10, April 13

**Brief due, readings for April 13**

Week 11, April 20

**Second Paper Due**

**Robert Bullard, Common Hour, April 23rd**

Week 12, April 27

**Service-Learning Problem Statement Due, April 27**

Week 13, May 4

**Brief due, readings for May 4**

Week 14, May 11 – Conclusions

**Student presentations of final project**