

Senior Seminar in Sociology
Sociology 460W-01
Rhode Island College, Fall 2023
Gaige 302

Prerequisite: Soc 302, 404, and 300; Soc 400 must be taken prior or concurrently

Instructor Information

Dr. Mikaila Mariel Lemonik Arthur

marthur@ric.edu (preferred) or 401.456.8681 (be sure to leave a callback number & when to call)

Drop-In hours Tuesdays 4:30-5:30 & Wednesdays 2:30-3:30, Gaige 351, or immediately after class most weeks; You can also book an in-person, Zoom, or phone appointment at

<https://calendly.com/mmlarthur> or let me know if you need an alternate time (I am often sometimes free before or after class on Thursdays)

This course is scheduled in a **hybrid modality**. We will meet in person most weeks on Wednesdays from 4-5:50, with other components of the course completed outside of in-person meetings. You will be asked to meet with me and with smaller groups of classmates outside of scheduled class time; these meetings may occur via Zoom or in-person depending on availability. You will need to have reliable Internet access on a computer or tablet and to check your email regularly.

Course Description

The Senior Seminar in Sociology is the integrating capstone experience for sociology majors. In this course, you will bring together what you have learned in the sociology program to complete a pilot research study, reflect on your educational experience, and prepare for the world beyond RIC. The coursework will help you strengthen and solidify your sociological reading, writing, research design, data collection, and data analysis skills so that you are ready to put them to use in further education and future employment.

Materials

Hardie, Jessica Halliday. 2022. *Best Laid Plans: Women Coming of Age in Uncertain Times*. University of California Press. ISBN: 9780520297883

Misra, Joya and Kyla Walters. 2022. *Walking Mannequins: How Race and Gender Inequalities Shape Retail Clothing Work*. University of California Press. ISBN: 9780520384651

Weinstein, Emily and Carrie James. 2022. *Behind Their Screens: What Teens are Facing (and Adults are Missing)*. The MIT Press. ISBN: 9789262047357

Additional reading materials will be made available via Blackboard.

While the books should be available on reserve, I strongly encourage you to purchase a copy of at least the one book you will focus on more intensely (to be assigned in Week 2 of class).

****TO PROTECT THE HEALTH & SAFETY OF ALL MEMBERS OF THE CLASS, MASKS WILL BE REQUIRED IF/WHEN COVID CASE RATES INCREASE. PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CLASS IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING COVID/FLU SYMPTOMS OR HAVE BEEN EXPOSED. ****

THIS SYLLABUS IS TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Course Requirements

This course is graded out of 110 points; the cutoff for an A grade is roughly 95. However, students will not be able to pass without at least minimally-acceptable submissions for all major assignments, given that this is a senior seminar.

- 1) *Class participation*: Participation includes engaging respectfully in large- and small-group discussion, attending all required individual & small group meetings, completing surveys & other low-stakes assignments on Blackboard, and attending Zoom sessions in a respectful and appropriate fashion. Not all activities will be graded; not all will be announced in advance. Should these requirements present personal difficulties for you, please contact me *right away*. In addition, you will be expected to complete all assigned reading and be prepared to discuss it in class. **15 points.**
- 2) *Career project*: each student will select a job they are interested in applying for post-graduation. They will complete—with the assistance of the Career Development Center—a cover letter and resume suitable for applying for the job and will write a short (2-3 page) paper profiling the career this job would be building towards. Students will share what they have learned about their chosen career in an informal in-class presentation. **15 points.**
- 3) *Book groups*: students will be split into teams to read one of our assigned texts more intensively and lead a book-group discussion a portion of that book. This will require your group to choose 60-90 pages to assign and to prepare discussion questions for the class and lead the discussion in small groups. **10 points.**
- 4) *Pilot research project*: you will conduct an individual pilot research project based on a theme or topic in your assigned book. This will require a literature review, the development of a research question and methodology, pilot data collection, analysis of the data, and the writing a final paper in the style of a sociological journal article. There will be options to work collaboratively on this project, but each student must complete some portions of the work individually. This project will be completed in stages, with feedback and opportunities for revision. **60 points (including work-in-progress submissions).**
- 5) *Educational autobiography*: In lieu of a final, each student will complete a short educational autobiography in which they write about their experiences in education, including what they have learned in the Sociology BA program, and connect their experiences to sociological ideas and concepts. **10 points.**

Instructions for requesting extensions are available under “course assignments” in Blackboard.

Assignments that are submitted late without a request for an extension will receive lower grades & will not be prioritized for feedback. Extensions are not possible for presentations or peer reviews.

Note: federal guidelines expect students to complete three hours of work (including both in-class and out-of-class time) for every credit hour earned.

(<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/reg/hearulemaking/2009/credit.html>)

Course Schedule

The schedule below is tentative and may be rearranged as needs dictate. I will attempt to honor your collective preferences about certain due dates & will repost the syllabus and edit Blackboard after they are finalized. Please check Blackboard for more specific details. *Readings & other assignments we will discuss in class are due no later than the beginning of class on the date for which they are listed. Assignments marked with an ♦ are due at TBA. Any other dates are noted specifically.*

August 30: Intro to the class

Complete: Introductory survey by Friday, September 1 at 10 am

Let me know if you have a strong preference about which book to focus on this semester

September 6:

Read: Hardie pp. 1-12; Misra & Walker pp. 3-26; Weinstein & James pp. 1-15

Locate: job advertisement for a job you would be interested in applying for after graduation; determine (with my help if needed) a career path this job is part of

Watch: ASA webinar on careers in sociology (2 options—choose at least one)

Sept 11: drop deadline

September 13: After Graduation...

Read: materials from the Career Development Center (in Blackboard)

Begin working on Career Project

Schedule individual meeting with the Career Development Center

Begin reading your book & schedule a Book Group team meeting

September 20:

Read: as much as possible of your assigned book by this week

Read: Edwards, “Turning Ideas into Researchable Questions” and “Overview of Writing a Research Paper,” 7-24

Meet with your Book Group team

♦ Develop a research question for your Pilot Project (project step #1)

♦ Complete: Library Tutorial & begin locating sources

Reading assignments (pages) due for all groups no later than **Sept 25 at noon** (email me)

September 27: Small-group meetings as scheduled

Complete: Career Project

Read: Harris & Tyner-Mullings, “Annotated Bibliographies” and “Literature Reviews, 80-88

♦ Book Group team #1 discussion questions due this week (email me)

Locate all sources for literature review and begin reading them

October 4: Book Club #1 (*Behind Their Screens*)

Read: Specific list of pages available [here](#) (or see Blackboard under Readings)

Read: Purdue OWL ASA Style Guide

Read all literature review sources

◆ Complete annotated bibliography (project step #2)

Begin writing literature review

October 11:

Read: pp. 179-189; Yano Wilson pp. 241-429, Weinstein & James pp. 179-192;

“The Methodology,” <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/methodology>

◆ Complete: literature review (project step #3)

Begin developing methodology

◆ Book Group team #2 discussion questions due this week (email me)

◆ Book Group team #1 peer assessment due

October 18: Book Club #2: *Best Laid Plans*

Read: 25-66, 76-80, 82-86, 106-115, and 133-149

Schedule individual or small-group meeting with me

◆ Book Group team #3 discussion questions due this week (email me)

◆ Complete draft methods section (project step #4)

***Note: I encourage earlier submission if possible so you can get started on data collection sooner

October 25: Book club #3: *Walking Mannequins*

Read: Chapter 5, “Beautiful Bodies on the Sales Floor,” 145-83

Begin collecting data (**You must have final approval from me on your data collection instruments before you begin collecting data.**)

◆ Book Group team #2 peer assessment due

October 31:

Read: Bergin, “Communicating Findings and Visualizing Data,” 193-224 and Wang & Park,

“Writing the Final Report”, pp. 236-60

◆ Complete data collection & submit a progress report (project step #5)

◆ Book Group team #3 peer assessment due

Rewrite and finalize methods section (submit with next week’s work)

November 8 is the deadline for withdrawals for academic reasons. After that date if you need to withdraw, you must go through student life & have a documented non-academic reason (e.g. illness or military deployment).

November 8:

Read: Jack pp. 181-98, Yano Wilson pp. 159-74, Weinstein & James pp. 161-74

Analyze data

◆ Write draft of analysis & findings (project step #6)

November 15: *No class meeting—Monday classes meet*

◆ Write draft of conclusion (project step #7)

November 22: Individual/group meetings

As scheduled

November 30:

◆ Complete paper draft (no extensions for peer review draft)

Complete peer review (due **TBA**)

December 6: Last Class

Complete revised Pilot Study final draft

Complete educational autoethnography

December 13:

Individual meetings if needed

◆ All remaining work due

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

All students enrolling in this course are expected to abide by the Rhode Island College guidelines on academic honesty. More information about academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism, as well as RIC policies, can be found at <http://ric.libguides.com/proethics>. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

- Using AI writing systems and turning in the results as if they are your own work.
- Plagiarizing written work, including copying some or all of your work from a book, a website, or another student's paper. Think about how you would feel if someone passed off your hard work as their own.
- Using sources without proper attribution. Remember that all claims in a paper that did not spring fully formed from your own head need attribution, regardless of whether or not they are paraphrased, and all direct quotes should appear in quotation marks. If you are unsure how to document sources, please see me or check the links in Blackboard.
- Turning in research reports that are fabricated or which do not accurately represent the research activities in which you engaged.
- Turning in work completed for other classes without prior permission.
- Working together with other students or seeking help from professionals or peers on assignments which prohibit such activities.
- Destroying course materials or otherwise preventing other students from achieving fully in this course.

Cheating successfully is often harder than you think, and you might as well just put your effort into doing the assignment legitimately. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe, and include receiving a 0 on the assignment for the first minor offense, receiving an F for the class for a repeated offense, and report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs at RIC for all offenses. If you feel the urge to engage in academic dishonesty, stop and think about what you are doing, and then come see me so we can work out a plan together to ensure your success in the course.

Extensions, Absences, and Attendance

Please make every effort to attend all scheduled class sessions. Class sessions will not be recorded and group activities cannot be made up. However, we can work out a plan for alternative assignments if you become ill, face quarantine, or otherwise will miss more than a class or two. If you need an extension, instructions for requesting one are available in Blackboard.

Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due in Blackboard at specific times as indicated in Blackboard; you can request an extension for eligible assignments using the link in Blackboard. Assignments **must** be saved in *.rtf, *.doc, or *.docx (preferred). Blackboard does log your submissions; you can return to an assignment yourself to see if you have submitted it correctly, and I am happy to show you how to do this so that you will not need to email me to see if I have received your work.

Course Technology

Students are expected to check their RIC email addresses and Blackboard frequently, at least a couple of times per week, and to have sufficient Internet access to complete readings & assignments via Blackboard. If you primarily use another email account, you must forward your RIC email, as I do use email to disseminate important information about the course. If you are not able to access email or Blackboard, you should seek assistance from User Support Services right away (<https://www.ric.edu/department-directory/user-support-services> or 456-8803).

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that requires or would benefit from accommodations to ensure you have equal access to success in this course, it is your responsibility to come and speak with me as early as possible in the semester so that we can develop a plan together. All reasonable accommodations will be made. Students with disabilities should be sure that they are registered with Disability Services in order to ensure access to the full range of services available at Rhode Island College. Information about these services and about registration is available at <https://www.ric.edu/department-directory/disability-services-center>

Supplemental Services

Everyone, even excellent students, benefits from having another set of eyes on their writing, so visit the **Writing Center** early often to help develop your ideas, organize your writing, and improve your drafts: <https://www.ric.edu/department-directory/writing-center>

- Seek support to develop your academic & study skills at **OASIS**: <https://www.ric.edu/department-directory/office-academic-support-and-information-services-oasis>
- Visit the **Counseling Center** to obtain support with anxiety, depression, or other distress you may be experiencing. Services are free & confidential: <https://www.ric.edu/department-directory/center-health-and-wellness/counseling-services>
- **Any student who faces challenges securing food, housing, or other basic needs is urged to contact the Learning for Life (<https://www.ric.edu/department-directory/learning-life>) and/or the Dean of Students' Office (https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?RhodeIslandCollege&layout_id=33).**

If you would like more information about the resources available, you can ask me at any time this semester. You do not need to tell me why you are asking to get help for a friend, another student, or yourself.

These services are available and free to all students. Use them!

Course Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to meet learning outcomes of the Sociology program (see <https://www.ric.edu/department-directory/department-sociology/sociology-ba> and click on “Program/Learning Goals” for more details):

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between sociological theory, research design, and interpretation and engage in work developing their research literacy
2. Students will understand and engage in qualitative and quantitative data collection and analytical processes
3. Students will be able to communicate, in written and oral form, sociological arguments
4. Students will be able to exercise their sociological imaginations toward examining our social world as well as its practical uses and applications

This course is designated as a Writing in the Disciplines (WID) course for the Sociology major. For more information on WID and writing in our field, please visit the Sociology Department WID page (<https://www.ric.edu/department-directory/department-sociology/sociology-ba> and click on “Writing in the Discipline”).