Senior Seminar in Sociology
Sociology 460W-01
Rhode Island College, Fall 2024
Gaige 301

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)
Student Meetings: Drop-In hours Tuesdays 3:30-5:30 PM, Gaige 351. You can also book an in-person, Zoom, or phone appointment with me at https://calendly.com/mmlarthur or let me know if you need an alternate time. I can sometimes meet immediately after class.

Graduate Assistant
Reem Said, a graduate student in the MA in Justice Studies Program, is available to provide extended support for your work in this course, including brainstorming ideas, talking about writing and research, and tutoring/review of skills. You can schedule an appointment with her via email at rsaid_8799@email.ric.edu and she will have drop in hours TBA in the Sociology Department.

This course is scheduled in a **hybrid modality**. We will meet in person most weeks on Tuesdays from 6-7:50, 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
Calarco, Jessica. 2024. *Holding it Together: How Women Became America's Safety Net.* Penguin Random House. ISBN: 9780593538128
Osborne, Melissa. 2024. *Polished: College, Class, and the Burdens of Social Mobility.* University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 9780226833040
Williams, Terry. 2024. *Life Underground: Encounters with People Below the Streets of New York.* Columbia University Press. IBSN: 9780231177931
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, 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 (including classmates' book group sessions), attending all required individual & small group meetings, etc. 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. Most assignments will be due on Sundays at 11:59, with a no-questions-asked extension until Tuesday morning. Any other dates are noted specifically.*

August 27: Intro to the class
- ☑ Read: entire syllabus
- ☐ Complete: Introductory survey, due August 30 (including book preferences)
- ☐ Read: Willingham, "How to Read Difficult Books"

September 3:
- ☐ Read: Calarco 1-17 (Introduction)
- ☐ Read: Osborne 1-18 (Introduction)
- ☐ Read: Williams xi-xvi & 1-11 (Prologue & first parts of Introduction)
- ☐ 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 (due 9/8)
- ☐ Complete: read ASA Careers in Sociology page & watch at least one of the webinars
September 9: Drop Deadline

September 10: After Graduation…
- ☐ Read: materials from the Career Development Center (in Blackboard)
- ☐ Begin working on Career Project
- ☐ Complete: Indiana University Plagiarism Certification Test (due 9/15)
- ☐ Schedule individual meeting with the Career Development Center
- ☐ Begin reading your book & schedule a Book Group team meeting

September 17:
- ☐ Read: as much as possible of your assigned book by this week
- ☐ Read: Edwards, "Turning Ideas into Researchable Questions" & "Overview of Writing a Research Paper," 7-24
- ☐ Read: Jack, "(No) Harm in Asking," 1-4
- ☐ Meet with your Book Group team & submit reading assignment pages via email
- ☐ Develop a research question for your Pilot Project (project step #1), due 9/22
- ☐ Complete: Library Tutorial (due 9/22) & begin locating sources

September 24: Individual meetings as scheduled
- ☐ Read: Harris & Tyner-Mullings, "Annotated Bibliographies" & "Literature Reviews, 80-88
- ☐ Complete: Career Project, due 9/29
- ☐ Book Group team #1 discussion questions due this week (**email me**), due 9/26
- ☐ Locate all sources for literature review and begin reading them (optional: meet with Reference Librarian Dragan Gill--https://ric.libcal.com/appointments/gill)

October 1: Book Club #1
- ☐ Read: TBA
- ☐ Read: Purdue OWL ASA Style Guide
- ☐ Read: all literature review sources
- ☐ Complete annotated bibliography (project step #2), due 10/6
- ☐ Begin writing literature review

October 8:
- ☐ Read: Calarco 211-215 (Appendix: Data Collection and Methods)
- ☐ Read: Osborne 187-200 (Methodological Appendix)
- ☐ Read: Williams 11-19 & 237-245 (Second part of Introduction & Appendices B & C)
- ☐ Read: "The Methodology," https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/methodology
- ☐ Complete: literature review (project step #3), due 10/13
- ☐ Begin developing methodology
- ☐ Book Group team #2 discussion questions due this week (**email me**), due 10/10
- ☐ Book Group team #1 peer assessment due 10/13

October 15: Book Club #2:
- ☐ Read: TBA
- ☐ Schedule individual or small-group meeting with me
- ☐ Book Group team #3 discussion questions due this week (**email me**), due 10/17
- ☐ Complete draft methods section (project step #4), due 10/20

October 22: Book club #3:
- ☐ Read: TBA
- ☐ 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 3/27

October 29: Meet the Authors!
- ☐ Come to class with questions!!
- ☐ Complete data collection & submit a progress report (project step #5), due 11/3
- ☐ Book Group team #3 peer assessment due 11/3
- *November 6 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 5: **No Class Meeting**
- ☐ Rewrite and finalize methods section (submit with next week's work)
- ☐ Read: Jack, "(No) Harm in Asking," 4-6
- ☐ Read: Bergin, "Communicating Findings and Visualizing Data," 193-224
- ☐ Work on data analysis

November 12:
- ☐ Read: Wang & Park, "Writing the Final Report," pp. 236-60
- ☐ Read: Jack, "(No) Harm in Asking," 6-13
- ☐ Analyze data
- ☐ Write draft of analysis & findings (project step #6), due 11/17

November 19:
- ☐ Read: Calarco 189-202 (Conclusion)
- ☐ Read: Osborne 165-178 (Conclusion)
- ☐ Read: Williams 199-235 (Reflection on Life On the Street, Endnote, & Epilogue)
- ☐ Write draft of conclusion (project step #7), due 11/24

November 26: Individual meetings on Zoom
- ☐ Read: Jack, "(No) Harm in Asking," entire paper
- ☐ Complete: paper draft for peer review, due **12/3** by class time (no extensions possible for peer review)
- ☐ Complete: peer review, due 12/8

December 3: Last Class
- ☐ Work on paper revisions
- ☐ Complete: final pilot project (due 12/15 at 11:59 pm)
- ☐ Complete: educational autoethnography (due 12/17 at noon)

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 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 Academic Integrity Committee 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: 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 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.

Discrimination and Sexual Harassment: Rhode Island College and its faculty are committed to creating a safe and open learning environment for all students. The College prohibits all forms of discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. RIC encourages all members of the community to seek support from, and report to, the Office of Institutional Equity. You may contact the Office at 401-456-8218, or learn more about college policies by visiting the Office of Institutional Equity's website. If you have experienced, witnessed, and/or received information about a potential violation, you may submit an incident report. Incident reports are routed to the Director of Institutional Equity / Title IX Coordinator, and will initiate outreach from the Director to the individual(s) who have experienced harm.
All faculty and staff are now mandatory reporters. This means that if we learn about something that might be sex discrimination (e.g., sexual harassment, sexual assault, intimate partner violence,

stalking, pregnancy discrimination, LGBTQ discrimination), then we must report what we know to the Title IX Office. Usually, reports will only leave a record of concern, but sometimes, a report can be escalated into an investigation without a victim's consent. Mandatory reporters are expected to share information learned in all settings, including during class activities, assignments, office hours, and outside of class. **Please be thoughtful about what you disclose to me.**

Pregnancy Modifications: Rhode Island College prohibits differential treatment or discrimination against students based on their current, potential, or past parental, family, marital status, or pregnancy or related condition. Students experiencing pregnancy or related conditions may meet with the Title IX Coordinator to discuss reasonable modifications by initiating a request. The College's Pregnancy Policy is available at https://www.ric.edu/pregnancy. College policy requires all employees, upon receipt of a disclosure of pregnancy or related condition from a student, to refer that student to the Title IX Coordinator.

Basic Wellness Needs: To learn effectively, you must have basic security: a roof over your head along with a reliable place to sleep and enough food to eat. If you're having trouble with any of those things, please contact Learning for Life (l4linfo@ric.edu, or phone 401-456-6320). Students dealing with heightened feelings of sadness or hopelessness, thoughts of harm or suicide, or increased anxiety may schedule an appointment at the Counseling Center (401-456-8094). Students in distress can call 401-456-4673 (HOPE) to confidentially speak with licensed clinician 24/7 at no cost. If you are experiencing a financial emergency, the FAST Fund provides small grants, outside of the RIC financial aid system. Learn more or apply at https://fastfundric.wixsite.com/fast.

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

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

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").