Introduction

The pro-seminar in sociology is designed for first-year graduate students in the sociology program at BYU. Its purpose is to prepare you for the graduate program in sociology and teach you what it is like to be a sociologist. What is sociology, and what is it that sociologists do? What are the key tools that will help you be more successful in school and in your career? Answering these questions, as well as acquiring some of these tools, will make you a better sociology student and future sociologist. Because professional socialization is not a short process, this course is two semesters long. Our discussions and readings will complement what you learn in other courses and from your faculty mentors. Other faculty members will also visit the class to share their expertise on research topics as well as writing research articles, presenting papers at professional meetings, teaching courses, applying for grants, PhD programs, and job interview skills.

Course Objectives

(1) Assist students with integration into the department, university, and discipline of sociology.
(2) Help students formulate a plan to get the most out of their graduate education, to graduate in a timely manner; and prepare for further education or professional careers.
(3) Facilitate students’ professional socialization.
(4) Help students build a supportive network with other students and with faculty.

Course Structure

The course is designed as a seminar, defined as: a select group of advanced students gathered for special study under the guidance of a professor. The topic of special study is your professional development. Critical discussion is our main tool. My role is to coordinate the course, including selecting materials and inviting guests. Your role is to make the most of this course by:

- Reading the assigned material,
- Contemplating what sociology is and your potential place in the discipline,
- Discussing course material and other relevant issues with your fellow students,
- Completing the assignments, and
- Taking an active part in making this course successful.

Essentially, what you receive from this course depends on what you invest; your participation is essential to have a successful experience in a class like this. While it may be easy to put less effort into a one-credit course, particularly one that is graded as pass/fail, I have made an effort not to overwhelm you. However, there are many topics to cover and we have only one official 50-minute period per week. Therefore, you will need to put in the effort outside of class. Please don’t shirk this responsibility. (Someone who does not make an effort to complete assignments or who is chronically tardy or absent from class will not be able to pass.)

One of the important aspects of graduate school experience is that students build a cohesive group and work together as a team. Competition tends to be the norm in many graduate programs, but it often stifles relationships among students. Academic study can be a lonely experience, yet it doesn’t have to be. I encourage you to talk to each other about assignments, review each other’s work, and consider how you can help others who may face struggles in our program.

Each week, we will discuss a topic relevant to your education and career in sociology. As shown in the course schedule, these include the topics mentioned earlier, such as writing, teaching, presentations,
interviewing, and grant applications. There are a few writing assignments. They involve outlining and reviewing articles, creating a curriculum vita, developing a thesis prospectus, organizing conference presentations, and other useful assignments. You are expected to work on research papers with faculty mentors or as part of other courses. So, although we discuss what makes a good research paper, you are not required to write one for this course. However, you may prepare a paper/poster for a conference.

**Assignment Descriptions**

*Reading assignments:*

Sociology is a discipline of the written word. Much of our time as sociologists is spent reading and critiquing. In this class there will be readings for you to read and review with the goal of being able to critically discuss the material in class. I reserve the right to add reading material throughout the semester, although I will give you ample notice.

Please complete and be prepared to discuss the assigned reading before coming to class. This involves understanding the material and being ready to present a critique, if needed.

**Course Schedule**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 30</td>
<td>Introduction and course outline</td>
<td>This week and during the next 2 weeks: Introduce yourself to the member of the sociology faculty. Spend about 5 minutes with each faculty member talking about your interests and finding out about their interest, research projects, etc. This month: Join a professional organization such as the American Sociological Association (ASA), the Pacific Sociological Association (PSA), or some other. Pay attention to deadlines; some organizations have fall deadlines so that if you join, for instance, in September, your membership is for the previous year. I recommend that you join so that your membership will be for the following year. Therefore, this assignment does not have to be completed before class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 13</td>
<td>The whats, whys, and wheres of sociology</td>
<td>(See description for September 20)</td>
<td>See Sept 20</td>
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| Sep 20  | Whats, whys, and wheres of sociology      | Find a definition of sociology and bring it to class ready to discuss what sociology is, what it should be, and where it should be going. Bring a definition of “critical thinking” to class and be prepared to discuss it - critical thinking skills are essential to sociology. Think about the following questions and be prepared to discuss potential answers in class: 1. Why study sociology? (Bring the statement of intent you submitted with your application). | Selection of 2 from the following: Cook, K. J. “The Promise of Sociology: Going Public and Enriching Community,” *Sociation Today*, Vol. 9 No. 1, Spring/Summer 2011. Marx, Gary T. 1997. “Of Methods and Manners for Aspiring Sociologists: 37 Moral Imperatives.” *The
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 27</td>
<td>Ethical issues:</td>
<td>Study human subjects and complete the BYU Office of Research and Creative Activities (ORCA) on-line tutorial available at <a href="http://orca.byu.edu/Content/ORCAMain.html">http://orca.byu.edu/Content/ORCAMain.html</a>. (Print and bring copy of certificate to class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>Reading sociology:</td>
<td>(See description for October 11)</td>
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<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>Articles (Continued)</td>
<td>Guest faculty: Find an article that appears in a recent issue of one of the following journals: American Journal of Sociology, American Sociological Review or Social Forces. The article must include research questions and/or testable hypotheses and evidence relevant for addressing the questions (review articles or book reviews are not appropriate). Use Prof. Dufur's handout and the guidelines from Evaluating Research to evaluate your article.</td>
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<td>Oct 18</td>
<td>Books (Continued)</td>
<td>Guest faculty: Find a book review of a sociology book you have found to be very interesting (check Book Review Digest Plus in BYU library’s electronic collection, Sociological Abstracts, or <a href="http://www.jstor.org">www.jstor.org</a> (use the link through the BYU library) to locate book reviews.). Read it and be prepared to discuss the reviewer's comments. Pay close attention to how the review is organized.</td>
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<td>Oct 25</td>
<td>Writing sociology</td>
<td>Bring a research paper that you are working on for discussion.</td>
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<td>Nov 1</td>
<td>Master's thesis: Organization and completion</td>
<td>Find a sociology master’s thesis. There are many available on-line through the library or around the department. Read it and bring it to class. Be prepared to discuss its organization and content. Come to class ready to discuss/brainstorm thesis ideas (it’s not too early to start).</td>
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<td>Nov 8</td>
<td>Planning a master’s thesis: I</td>
<td>See description for November 15</td>
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<td>Nov 15</td>
<td>Writing a prospectus</td>
<td>Review prospectus guide. Review the student handbook and develop your plan (including your committee, and a schedule) for completing a thesis. Outline a thesis prospectus using a topic you might be interested in developing for a thesis. Be prepared to discuss your plan in class.</td>
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<td>Nov 22</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<td>Nov 29</td>
<td>Developing a Program of Study &amp;Thesis Committee</td>
<td>Review plans for program of study and selecting a committee.</td>
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<td>Dec 6</td>
<td>A look back, a look forward</td>
<td>Plans for next semester; review of deadlines</td>
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<td>Dec 13</td>
<td>*** Turn in assignments for the semester by last day of finals. Include the following: 1. Checklist of meetings with Preliminary Advisor 2. IRB tutorial certificate 3. Program of Study 4. Thesis committee list 5. Definition of sociology and 2 issues/topics that interest you 6. Complete Survey Monkey survey on 1st semester MS program experience. 7. Online Student course evaluation.</td>
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**Librarian Information**

Name: Barbaraella Frazier  
Office: 1222 HBLL  
Phone Number: 422-6346  
Email: b_frazier@byu.edu
Reference Desk Information
Name: Social Sciences / Education
Phone Number: 422-6228
Email: No library information available
Hours: M-Th : 8am-9pm; F: 8am-6pm; Sat: 10am-6pm

Department Research Information
http://guides.lib.byu.edu/content.php?pid=59860

E-reserve Information
http://www.lib.byu.edu/reserve.html

BYU Honor Code
In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their
academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own
must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing
grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university. Students are also expected to
adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others
and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university's expectation, and my own
expectation in class, that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Please call the Honor
Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

Preventing Sexual Discrimination and Harassment
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an
educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex
discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-
to-student sexual harassment. BYU's policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of
the university, but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender-based
discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895 or 367-
5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

Students with Disabilities
Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably
accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability
to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office
(422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified,
documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD Office. If
you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of
disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures by contacting the
Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-285 ASB.