Introduction to General Sociology
Dr. Melissa Pirkey

This syllabus was last used in the spring of 2017 at Emory University. The ‘instructor version’ includes notes on activities used in class and other guidelines not traditionally given to students (e.g., dates of reading quizzes). For questions regarding this syllabus, please find my up-to-date contact information at www.melissapirkey.com

This course is designed to introduce students to sociological approaches to the study of social life. The course draws on readings from classic and contemporary sociology and introduces major theoretical concepts and common methodologies, enabling students to develop their own ‘sociological imagination’. Topics discussed include, but are not limited to, socialization into society, social norms and culture, deviant behavior, social structure and inequality (primarily race, class, and gender), and social institutions such as education and the family. The course is divided into three units. The first unit creates a foundation for the rest of the course. Students begin by discussing how sociology is similar to and different from other disciplines, and what it means to view the society with a sociological lens. We will then move on to research methods and theoretical frameworks commonly used within sociology. This basic understanding of methods and theory will enable students to think more critically about the research encountered in the rest of the course. Finally, the first unit concludes with readings that explore the social processes through which we come to have particular views, beliefs, tastes and habits.

The second unit explores how we as individuals both influence and are influenced by those to whom we are connected. We start with a discussion of role of norms in social life, and, relatedly, sociological perspectives on deviant (or non-normative) behavior. Next we will explore the concept of social structure, with a particular focus on race, ethnicity, and social class. The second unit concludes with an examination of the core properties of social networks, and the ways in which they impact our lives. The third and final unit broadens our scope to examine how social structures, covered in Unit 2, intersect with major social institutions such as the economy, education, and the family. Here the concept of intersectionality, meaning that the effects of factors such as race and gender must be considered together rather than independently, will play an important role. The course concludes with an exploration of processes of social change and globalization.

Introduction to General Sociology has been designed to give students a broad understanding of key sociological concepts and introduce them to core areas of study. Student progress will be evaluated through a series of brief in-class writing assignments or activities, three non-cumulative exams, and two short papers. At the end of the course students will be able to:

- discuss how sociology differs from other disciplines
- identify major methodologies used in sociological research as well as their advantages and limitation
- identify sociological arguments for the development and spread of beliefs, values, and behaviors
- define key concepts such as social structure and social institutions and describe how their intersection relates to outcomes such as inequality and social mobility
- apply their newly acquired sociological lens to contemporary social issues, problems, or matters of importance to them as student scholars and global citizens
Course Readings

All assigned readings should be completed **before** class to ensure active participation in class discussions and activities.


Readings:  Additional readings outside of the required text are available through the course Blackboard site. These readings are indicated as (BB) on the syllabus.

Power point slides: Available on course Blackboard site, sorted by date

Assignments and Grading

Assignments and Evaluations
The assignments for this course have been designed with student’s varying strengths and learning styles in mind.

- **Reading Quizzes:** Over the duration of the course there will be *at least* 11 graded ‘in class’ assignments. These assignments could range from short quizzes, individual writing exercises, or group activities. They will be graded out of 3 points. From time to time you might be asked to complete these assignments outside of class (e.g. you might be asked to write a brief reflection on an in-class activity and hand it in the following day). I will count your 8 best scores.

- **Challenge Readings:** The readings for the course vary in terms of length and difficulty. Some of the more challenging readings have been marked as ‘challenge readings’. For these readings students will complete a worksheet *prior to the start of class*. These worksheets will be used to guide discussion of the reading. Worksheets are available on BlackBoard. It is recommended that students review the worksheet **before** beginning the reading.

- **Short Reflection Papers:** Throughout the course we will engage in several activities designed to make often ‘abstract’ concepts more tangible. For a select few of these a short reflection paper will be assigned. The reflection should be no longer than 2.5 pages double spaced. A prompt and rubric will be made available on blackboard on the day the short paper is assigned. Because the papers are based on activities done during class, it is important that you do your best to attend these classes. Should you have a reasonable reason for being absent on the day of an activity associated with a short reflection paper, please make alternate assignment arrangements with the instructor.

- **Sociology in Everyday Life (SIEL) Papers:** Learning to communicate clearly, persuasively, and efficiently through writing is important for success in college and beyond. The best way to learn how to write well is to write often. During this course you are required to complete **two** reflection essays which will ask you to reflect upon course material, lectures, and readings and how they relate to your everyday experiences. There will be three opportunities for students to choose from; you **may not** complete all three. Papers should be 4 pages double spaced with 1” margins. Grading rubrics will be made available to students on the day the paper is assigned. Papers are due, in
hardcopy, at the start of class. Emailed papers will not be accepted without express permission from the instructor. Please staple your papers prior to handing them in. *It is always a good idea to ensure your full name and a page number is on each page in the case that a page becomes separated.*

- **Exams:** There are a total of three exams for this course. The exams will be comprised of two sections; the first section will include true/false and multiple choice questions, the second section will include short answer questions. Exams are non-cumulative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Late Assignment Policy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignments handed in after 9:45am on the day of the deadline will be considered late. Late assignments will be assessed a penalty of 10% per day.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Exceptions will only be made with a documented official university excuse</em></td>
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**Grading**

Final grades will be determined by the total number of points earned on exams and assignments; I do not round up grades.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes (8 @ 3pts ea)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Reflection Papers (3 @ 12pts ea)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIEL Papers (2 @20 pts ea)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge Readings (3 @ 12pts ea)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams (3 @ 44 pts ea)</td>
<td>132</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>268</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>&gt;93%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-92.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
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**Expectations and Policies**

**Attendance**

While I don’t take attendance, attendance does factor into your grade as material presented in class will appear on exams and will aid in your completion of other graded assignments. If you miss class you are still responsible for the reading due on that day, and for getting notes from a classmate; I will not provide lecture notes to students. Additionally, office hours are not to be used as regular review sessions. Finally, missing class puts students at risk of missing graded in-class assignments and activities, which cannot be made up.

**Participation**

Students who participate in class not only enjoy their experience in the course more, but also tend to learn more and earn higher grades. Other students benefit from others’ participation as well; the student who is participating gets the answers they need and others in the class gain a better understanding of something they might also need help with. I will not evaluate you directly on your participation, but I do strongly encourage you to find ways to stay tuned in. If you need me to slow down or to go over something again,
please raise your hand and let me know. If you have a question, please ask. And if you have an example that
may better illustrate something we are talking about, please share it- you and your classmates will benefit
from the discussion.

**Class Conduct**
Please do your best to get to class on time. Coming in late, stepping out, and leaving early are distracting to
your fellow classmates. *Laptops are allowed only with a documented accommodation.* Please don’t read,
talk with your friends, or pass notes during class. These activities are distracting to the learning
environment, disrespect me and your classmates, and limit your ability to pay attention and stay engaged
during class.

**Blackboard:**
We will use the Blackboard site for this course regularly. Please check the site regularly in order to ensure
that you are aware of class announcements and so forth. Readings marked with (BB) on the syllabus can be
found on BlackBoard under course reserves.

**Extra Credit**
There will be two opportunities for extra credit; one prior to the second exam, and one prior to the third
(final) exam. These opportunities allow students to earn points that will be applied to their exams.
Additional extra credit opportunities are at the discretion of the instructor. No extra credit will be given on
an individual basis. That is, all opportunities for extra credit will be made available to the entire class.

**Honor Code:**
The Honor Code is in effect throughout the semester. By taking this course, you affirm that it is a violation
of the code to cheat on exams, to plagiarize, to deviate from the teacher’s instructions about collaboration
on work that is submitted for grades, to give false information to a faculty member, and to undertake any
other form of academic misconduct. You agree that the instructor is entitled to move you to another seat
during examinations, without explanation. You also affirm that if you witness others violating the code you
have a duty to report them to the honor council.

The Emory University honor code applies fully to this course. When you sign an exam or submit your
assignments, you are pledging to the honor code. For reference, please consult
http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor_code.html.

**Disabilities:**
Students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services ([http://www.ods.emory.edu/](http://www.ods.emory.edu/); 727-6016) to obtain proper documentation if accommodations are needed. Please do this early in the semester
in order to make sure that everything is in order. Students requiring accommodations for exams are
required to receive approval for their accommodation *for each exam.* If the exam is to be taken at ADSR it is
the student’s responsibility to ensure that the instructor is made aware of the date and time the student
will be taking the exam.

**Email:**
Email is the best way to reach me. While I generally respond quickly, please allow *at least 24 hours* for
replies to emails. Any questions about an exam should be sent no later than 5 p.m. the day prior to the
exam to ensure a response. Do not use email to submit assignments unless prior arrangements have been
made.
# Course Outline

*Modifications may occur as the course progresses*

## Unit 1: Laying the Groundwork

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings / Assignments</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 10</td>
<td>Getting to know you/ What is Sociology?</td>
<td>Spit in a Spoon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 12</td>
<td>The Sociological Imagination</td>
<td>Group Work: Academic Dishonesty as Personal Trouble and Public Issue</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>The Promise</em> (pp.20-28)</td>
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<td>• <em>Body Ritual Among the Nacirema</em> (87-92)</td>
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<td>Jan 17</td>
<td>Research Methods in Sociology</td>
<td>Reading quiz 1: syllabus quiz</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>How Sociologists Do Research</em> (pp.35-47)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>Would You Hire an Ex-Convict?</em> (pp.63-72)</td>
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<td>Jan 19</td>
<td>Social Construction</td>
<td>Reading quiz 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>Have You Ever Tried to Sell a Diamond?</em> (BB)</td>
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<td>Jan 24</td>
<td>Major Theoretical Frameworks</td>
<td>Sumerian Irrigation Activity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>Theoretical Perspectives in Sociology</em>--an introduction to the primary theories used in sociology* by Hunter and McClelland (BB)</td>
<td>Short reflection paper on major theoretical frameworks assigned</td>
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<td>• <em>Short reflection paper 1 assigned. Due Jan 31.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 26</td>
<td>Socialization Part I</td>
<td>Reading quiz 3</td>
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<td>• <em>Becoming a Marihuana User</em> (BB)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>Extreme Isolation</em> (pp. 151-160)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 31</td>
<td>Socialization Part II</td>
<td>Board game activity, in lieu of reading quiz, have students hand in work sheets (RQ4)</td>
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<td>• <em>On Becoming Male</em> (pp.161-172)</td>
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<td>• <em>On Becoming Female</em> (pp. 173-179)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>Short reflection paper 1 due</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Assignments</td>
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| Feb 02 | Impression Management                                               | - *Challenge Reading 1: The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (pp. 135-144)  
<pre><code>                      |                                                                  | - SIEL option 1 assigned                                                 |
</code></pre>
<p>|        |                                                                     | (challenge reading 1-worksheet)                                               |
|        |                                                                     | Hyperbole and a Half ‘party’ example.                                        |
|        |                                                                     | Take time for connecting concepts                                            |
|        |                                                                     | SIEL 1: Socialization and Impression Management                             |
| Feb 07 | EXAM 1                                                               |                                                                           |
| Feb 09 | Norms and Values: Part 1                                             | - No reading due today                                                       |
|        |                                                                     | Activity: Doing Nothing                                                     |
|        |                                                                     | RQ 5: short response to activity.                                            |
| Feb 14 | Norms and Values: Part 2                                             | - <em>Eating Your Friends is the Hardest</em> (pp.277-286)                         |
|        |                                                                     | - <em>The Argument for Eating Dog</em> (BB)                                         |
|        |                                                                     | - SIEL option 1 Due                                                          |
|        |                                                                     |                                                                           |
| Feb 16 | Deviance and Labeling                                                | - <em>The Saints and the Roughnecks</em> (pp. 299-315)                             |
|        |                                                                     | - <em>On Being Sane in Insane Place</em> (pp. 322-334)                             |
|        |                                                                     | Reading quiz 6                                                              |
| Feb 21 | Deviance and Social Control                                          | - <em>The Pathology of Imprisonment</em> (pp. 315-221)                             |
|        |                                                                     | - <em>If Hitler Asked You to Electrocute a Stranger...</em> (pp.269-278)           |
|        |                                                                     | - SIEL option 2 assigned                                                    |
|        |                                                                     | SIEL 2: deviance/conformity                                                  |
| Feb 23 | Social Structure: Race and Ethnicity                                 | - <em>Challenge Reading: Racial Measurement in the US Census</em> (BB)              |
|        |                                                                     | <strong>announce midterm evaluation bonus</strong>                                      |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 28</td>
<td>Social Structure: Race and Ethnicity</td>
<td>Reading Quiz 7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>Showing My Color</em> (pp. 360-368)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- <em>The Racist Mind</em> (pp. 369-375)</td>
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<td>- SIEL 2 Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 02</td>
<td>No Reading: In class viewing of A Class divided</td>
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<td>Mar 07</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 09</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>Mar 14</td>
<td>Social Structure: Social Class</td>
<td>Reading quiz 8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- <em>Moving Up from the Working Class</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(383-394)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- <em>Wealth, Power, Privilege</em></td>
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<td>(395-406)</td>
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<td>Mar 16</td>
<td>Social Structure: Social Structure and Culture</td>
<td>Step-Taking Activity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- <em>Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing...</em> (BB)</td>
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<td>- <em>Short reflection paper 2 assigned. Due Mar 23.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 21</td>
<td>EXAM 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 23</td>
<td>An Introduction to Social Institutions</td>
<td>Use Education as the first example to introduce the challenge reading</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- No reading</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>Short reflection paper 2 due</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 28</td>
<td>Social Institutions: Education</td>
<td>Go through challenge reading, foreshadow higher education to allow for tomorrow’s loss of time due to activity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>Challenge Reading: School Rules (BB)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 30</td>
<td>Social Institutions: Education</td>
<td>Use end of class for paper chain activity. Assign paper with caveat that they need the April 4th lecture to complete it</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- <em>The (Mis)eduction of Monica and Karen (BB)</em></td>
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<td>- <em>Short reflection paper 3 assigned</em></td>
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<td>Apr 04</td>
<td>Social Institutions: Economy</td>
<td>RQ 9</td>
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<td>- <em>Social Institutions &amp; Nickel and Dimed (407-424)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading/Assignments</td>
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</table>
| Apr 06 | Social Institutions: The Military | - *Anybody’s Son Will Do* (481-492)  
- *Women in the Military* (518-534) | RQ 10                            |
- *We Are Family* (BB)  
- *Short reflection paper 3 due SIEL option 3 assigned* | SIEL 3: social structure and institutions |
| Apr 13 | Social Institutions: Religion  | - *India’s Sacred Cow* (pp. 461-69)  
- *Social Change Among the Amish* (pp. 508-517) | RQ 11                            |
| Apr 18 | Social Institutions: Intersections | - No reading. In class viewing of short films  
- *SIEL option 3 due* | NYT class matters audio slideshows |
| Apr 20 | Course wrap up                 | - Discussion of short films and overall review of social institutions |                                |
| Apr 27 | Final Exam                     | | 3 – 5:30pm                        |