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Group Office Hours via Zoom: W 6:00-6:30 pm  
[Individual Office hours on Google Meet](#): W 9-10 am  
TA Office Hours: TBA

# SOC: 454: SOCIOLOGY THROUGH FILM

Winter 2023

## CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Filmmakers, like sociological fieldworkers, use stories to trace the action of their subjects or characters and scenes to reconstruct their shared social worlds. Through sociological studies and documentary and narrative films, the course examines portrayals of social institutions and processes which may include education, ethnic relations, artistic production, and other fields. 4 credits. Prerequisite: SOC 200, SOC 310, or SOC 320.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Through the examination of films and using various film genres (i.e., dark humor, foreign, satire, comedy, documentary), this course is designed to develop critical thinking by using visual, oral, and aural modes of communication. We will apply theoretical perspectives to explain how society, communities, and subgroups address issues that may be controversial, complex, or mundane. Film is a useful tool to illustrate sociological concepts covered in the course material. The films are intended to help students make connections between the course material as well as broadening their understanding of the various issues covered in the course to the society-at-large.

Please be aware that this is NOT a course where you will engage in idle or mindless film viewing. There will be films that you may love, some you will hate, others that may horrify you, and others that you will want to watch over and over again. With these varied film styles and your responses to them, you are expected to apply appropriately and adequately your knowledge of sociological concepts and theories, submit writing assignments, and engage in discussions through the course modules. It may help you to take notes when viewing the films or course lectures. You may find them of use when completing the assignments.

## COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES

The goal of this course is to provide you the opportunity to apply sociological concepts and theories to films and to engage in critical thinking and critical viewing of films. Thus, you will be an active learner rather than a passive participant.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, all students will have either acquired or begun to:

- ✦ Develop the ability to discuss sociological issues/concepts as they appear in film and apply the theoretical processes that underlie them.
- ✦ Apply their knowledge of the course material by adequately and appropriately responding to quizzes, essay assignments, and exam questions.
- ✦ Enhance their ability to hear and understand the strengths and weaknesses in the arguments of others and in one's own, as well as being able to defend their arguments.
- ✦ Through the process of writing assignments, refine their individual writing skills.
- ✦ Be able to critique their writing strengths and weaknesses.
- ✦ Gain the ability to engage in critical thinking through viewing films and connecting them with the assigned course materials.
- ✦ Ability to show knowledge of sociological theory through course assignments.
- ✦ Submit work in the required American Sociological Association (ASA) Style format.

## THE COURSE MATERIALS

All of the readings are on the course website on Canvas. Familiarize yourself with Canvas by viewing the video I have prepared for you. Take time to learn how to navigate the calendar, to-do list, discussion posts, and assignments posted on Canvas.

The majority of the course videos are available through Millar library (i.e., Kanopy, Films on Demand), while others are available on YouTube, Hulu, Netflix, Movieland, Tubi, and other sources such as Amazon Prime and HBO Max Prime. There are no course texts so consider one-month free trials or paid subscriptions by film or by month for the above providers, if needed. Where to access films is noted next to each film on pages 8-10 of this syllabus.

The films have been selected after consideration of their content and the stories on, within, and behind the camera. Be we will be covering films that many of you have probably never heard of and/or have never seen. This will make it all the more imperative that you take notes when viewing films. Pay attention to characters, sets, lighting, location, and plot lines.

There may be times when we will be reading or watching or reading material that may be uncomfortable. If you feel it necessary to take a breather, please do so. Nonetheless, each student is responsible for viewing and reading the assigned materials.

While it is true that readings and videos may difficult at times, everyone is bound to find something that piques their interest so that they feel comfortable participating in the online discussions and when completing assignments. Using course readings drawn from a variety of disciplines, you will learn how to apply and understand them sociologically. It is important to participate in the online discussions and complete the assignments because they can help you to better grasp of and deeper insight into the material. I have noticed that those who consistently participate in online discussions AND submit the

course assignments on time do better in my courses than those who do not. Students also do better if they learn to take suggestions in the manner intended and not as personal attacks.

### HOW MUCH TIME SHOULD I PUT INTO THE COURSE?

In the hectic world we live in today, we are be hard pressed to find someone who is not busy, however, that does not mean that there are no expectations regarding how much work should go into each course. If you are using your time wisely (turn off the cellphone and get off of TikTok!) you can complete the work in a reasonable amount of time. Each film has the running time included. For the readings, I have taken into consideration how much time it takes on average to read or listen to them. Similarly, I know how long it takes me to write a certain number of words or pages and have increased the time for you.



Given the advice on [PSU's Academic Planning page](#) on the amount of time allotted for classroom instruction and out of class work for a 4 credit course breaks down to about 4 hours of instruction per week and 8-12 of out-of-class time per week which includes studying, reading, and assignments. It may seem like a lot, but manage time using a calendar or alarm can help determine when there are periods of time when there is a lot to do and times when there is less to do. The course calendar and to-do list on Canvas show when assignments are due.

The course materials will be available in sections. So, while it is possible for you to do some of the material in advance or according to your own schedule, others, such as the weekly discussions will need to be submitted during a one-week period.

### PSU DISABILITY STATEMENT

PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment. I have already been notified by DRC if you receive accommodations.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and believe accommodations are required, contact the [PSU Disability Resource Center](#) site to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. You may also contact the DRC by calling 503-725-4150 or via email [drc@pdx.edu](mailto:drc@pdx.edu).

### PSU IX REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

Portland State is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment (sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender or sex-based harassment and stalking). If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, know that help and support are available. PSU has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and on-housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. Information about PSU's support services on campus, including confidential services and reporting options, can be found on [PSU's Sexual Misconduct Response](#) site or you may call a confidential IPV Advocate at 503-725- 5672.

Please be aware that all PSU faculty members and instructors are required to report information of an incident that may constitute prohibited discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. This means that if you tell me about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence that may have violated university policy or student code of conduct, I have to share the information with my supervisor or the University's Title IX Coordinator or the Office of Affirmative Action. For more information about Title IX, please visit the [PSU Sexual Assault Student Code of Conduct](#) site.

### EXPERIENCING PROBLEMS THAT MIGHT IMPACT YOUR PERFORMANCE IN THIS CLASS?

Please be sure to let me know if you begin to encounter problems understanding the material. If you need assistance, ask for it. Do not feel you are alone. There is help available. If you are dealing with a matter that requires your professors to be notified or where you need help and need to talk to someone on the CARE Team, contact the [Dean of Student Life](#) for assistance. They are located in 433 Smith, by phone at 725-4422, or by email at [askdos@pdx.edu](mailto:askdos@pdx.edu). There are deadlines for requesting permission for a late withdraw and they are only given for extenuating circumstances. However, prior to this deadline, there is the ability to withdraw from a course without permission. Deadlines are on the [Office of the Registrar website](#).

### SOME RULES OF THE ROAD

Please refer to me as either "Dr. Jackson" or "Prof. Jackson". You can always reach me during online office hours or by email. You may leave a message on my voicemail which will come to me via email. It is rare that I will not be available during scheduled office hours. If something comes up, I will post a message under Announcements on Canvas or through email.

- Adhere to all deadlines. Use a calendar, hard copy or virtual to help keep you organized. This is especially important because I do not accept late assignments. Submit assignments early if you believe you will have a problem conforming to deadlines. If you are not checking in to the course site regularly, you will likely miss announcements or assignments. I do not offer extra credit. If you miss an assignment, you have missed it.
- Professors are asked to report students' progress midway through the term to the Registrar's Office and I will be responding to their request for all undergraduate students. In addition, progress reports will be sent to Student athletes or students in the TRIO Student support Services program.
- If you are a student who is already receiving accommodations through the Disability Resources Center (DRC), I have this information. If you require accommodations but have not requested them, please contact DRC immediately.
- Ethical and professional behavior is standard in all classroom settings (face-to-face and remote). Students must adhere to the university's academic honesty policy and to the professional standards required in all courses in the Department of Sociology.
- If you do not understand a word or phrase I am using in the course videos, assignments, or elsewhere on the course site, please ask. Someone else probably is wondering the same thing! - Get help when you need it. Do not ignore a problem because you feel embarrassed. If you have trouble with note-taking or writing papers, please visit the Writing Center for help. See the Helpful Resources link on Canvas.
- I expect you to do well in the course and you should expect to do well too. I have years of experience as a professor. If I recommend that you do something (i.e., edit your work before submitting it, write more, read the comments provided in graded assignments and/or rubrics,

read more, participate more frequently, etc.), it is because I believe it will help you, not because I am mean or do not like you (it is sad that I have to add this, but it is usually these two that students use to make themselves feel better, but not only are these untrue, they are not helpful). Try to adjust your habits so you are more productive. I want you to be successful not only in this course but in any course.

- I have had countless students over the years. I have heard everything. Do not hesitate to see me if you are having a problem with the class. If you need help with things issues that are not related to the class, please seek help from your advisor, the counseling office, DRC, your coach, or whomever is there to assist you. If you want advice about applying to graduate school, looking for internships, etc., please feel free to contact me.

### OFFICE HOURS – GROUP and ONE-ON-ONE OPTIONS

✓ The **group office hour** is just that, an open format that gives you an opportunity to discuss topics that you might be stuck on. The day and times are at the top of the syllabus. The link to group office hours is on Canvas in the calendar. Offices hours are not mandatory and students in asynchronous courses rarely take advantage of them, but I offer them for those who want or need them. You have the option of turning your camera off or on (I tend to have my camera off) and for some students, this is a better option if their Wi-fi is inconsistent. There is also a chat box option for you to type your questions.

✓ **One-on-one office hours** give students an opportunity to discuss anything of a more private nature (i.e., DRC related, confusion about an assignment, clarification about a grade, individualized ideas for how to study and prepare for writing assignments, quizzes, advising, and other types of personal concerns or issues). You can request a one-on-one appointment in one of the available slots as noted at the top of the syllabus. I will send you a confirmation once you have requested your appointment. Although these time slots are limited, if you need more time, we may be able to expand our meeting if no one else is scheduled in the next time slot.

### TECHNOLOGY

✓ Your enrollment in this course is because you are eager to learn the material and to complete the requirements for your degree. If you have Wi-fi limitations, please consider whether the course will work for you given its asynchronous format and required film viewings. You will be required to watch films, many of which, but not all, are free. [NOTE: For those that are not, and if there are enough students interested in viewing as a group, I *may* be able to stream these and hold discussions during and immediately after. Let me know if this is something you would like to do.]

✓ In order to address concerns about technology, you have deadlines to complete the work but do not wait until the last minute. Submitting assignments early is a much better tactic than waiting five minutes before you hit the upload or send button. [See Timeliness below for more on this topic.]

### TIMELINESS

✓ Early assignments are not penalized, but late assignments are heavily penalized—they aren't accepted. Thus, you are encouraged to start assignments early and submit them early on Canvas where indicated. If you need a “nudge” to get you to focus on writing, I highly recommend [Focusmate.com](https://www.focusmate.com) and [TomatoTimer.com](https://tomatotimer.com), writing and time management accountability sites. You should also watch Tim Urban's TED Talk video, [Inside the Mind of a Master Procrastinator](https://www.ted.com/talks/tim_urban_the_procrastinator). It is entertaining and the speaker makes some very good observations. All of the above can be found on Canvas.



## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND DUE DATES (Read carefully!)

The distribution of the course assignments allows each student to know where they stand during the semester. Please review the course calendar on Canvas for the due dates. They are also in the syllabus (both the PDF syllabus and the electronic syllabus on Canvas) and on the To-Do list on the right side of the page on Canvas. The assignments total 100 points. This is important to understand as some students may erroneously and needlessly panic because they are assuming this is the same as percentages. It is not.

I aim to help you optimize your grade by assigning you projects that are small weekly ones and those where you submit small assignments throughout the semester rather than relying on one or two large projects to determine your final grade. While there are minimum page requirements, keep in mind that it is the content that matters as much as the quantity. If you tend to do a job that is last-minute, falls short of delving into the content, and is weak in its analysis, it will show. It will particularly stand out if you have peers who are really into films and who do a deeper analysis.

### Weekly Discussions 20 points

During the term, you will be responding weekly to questions or comments I provide in Canvas under Discussions in a 300-word minimum post. The purpose of the discussions is to provide your classmates and me with your analysis of the readings and films and to help you develop your thoughts for the final project as you move through the course. These are *due by midnight each Saturday*. You are encouraged to submit them early as things do come up that may prevent you from submitting them on Saturday night. **Tip! Try to avoid waiting until the last minute to post. You will not receive full credit for extremely brief or weak responses.**

### Essay Assignments 40 points

There are two (2) essay assignments worth 20 points each and are *due by midnight Saturday in Weeks 5 and 8*. There is a specific purpose for these assignments. The papers will be used to build your final paper, so it is important that you submit both. Each will have a prompt for you to follow with specific questions that you must address. Detailed information on each of these assignments will appear on Canvas approximately three weeks before their due dates. This gives you ample time in which to begin and finish. You are encouraged to attend the group office hours and visit the Writing Center if you need help with an assignment. **Tip! Read the instructions and the rubrics on Canvas so that you understand how the assignments will be graded.**

### Peer Review Assignment 10 points

You will review a draft of the final project by one of your peers. This will be due by the end of Week 6. Your comments must be constructive, thoughtful, and honest. If there is something you do not understand about the argument being made, say so. If there is something that makes a significant point, say so. Guidelines for the peer review will be posted on Canvas under Assignments.

### Final Project 30 points

Your research paper and PowerPoint or lecture presentation are *due by midnight, Thursday, March 23, 2022*. This final paper is the culmination of the essay assignments that have been edited and reorganized as needed. The result is a final paper that addresses a substantive issue or theme that was covered in the films and readings and a minimum 5-minute presentation that captures the main point of your paper, research question, highlights (discussion), and conclusion. Your paper will be 15 pages, not

including citations. Your paper must have a research question, literature review, discussion, and references in American Sociological Association (ASA) style format. Formatting instructions will be posted on Canvas along with detailed instructions on what should be included or excluded.

#### “Point Pond” – Non-mandatory Assignments

There are opportunities to earn extra points (usually one or two points per week) during the term by completing low-stakes non-mandatory assignments.

#### GRADE SCALE

A+*	97-100	C+	77-79	F	59-0
A	94-96	C	74-76		
A-	90-93	C-	70-73		
B+	87-89	D+	67-69		
B	84-86	D	64-66		
B-	80-83	D-	60-63		

\*Unfortunately, Banner does not accept A+ grades, but you should nonetheless know where you stand if at the top range.

#### COURSE READINGS AND FILMS

We begin the course by discussing the social impact of the film industry on the U.S. We will also cover various film genres, characters, and plot lines that show the film industry’s attempt to address social issues. Some of the issues discussed in one week may have been touched upon in previous weeks so consider how the knowledge of issues may serve as building blocks for deeper understanding. Look for themes that focus on race, deviance, stereotypes, gender identity, conflict, social change, and others. Please allocate sufficient time for viewing the instructor video, the assigned film, and the assigned readings (links are found on Canvas). Readings vary from 2 to 3 each week and there is an instructor-created video and assigned film to view each week. If you have difficulty managing your time, use the time management tools mentioned on page 5 and on Canvas. Some films are free while others are not. Those that are not free have a \$ next to them.

#### Week 1: Socialization, Authority, and Conformity

##### READ:

- Gommans, Rob, Marlene J. Sanstrom, Gonneke W.J.M. Stevens, Tom F.M. ter Bogt, and Antonious H.N. Cillessen. 2017. “Popularity, Likeability, and Peer Conformity: Four Field Experiments.” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 73:279-289.
- Burger, Jerry J. 2009. “Replicating Milgram: Would People Still Obey Today?” *American Psychologist* 64(1):1-11.

##### VIEW:

- Instructor video
- *American History X* (1998, 1 h 41 m) \$ (AVAILABLE WITH HBO MAX SUBSCRIPTION, AMAZON PRIME PREMIUM SUBSCRIPTION, ALL OTHERS FROM \$3.99)

#### Week 2: Persuasion, Opinions, and Group Influence

##### READ:

- Asch, Solomon E. 1955. Opinions and Social Pressure. *Scientific American*, 193(5):31–35.
- Waters, Nicole L. and Valerie P. Hans. 2009. “A Jury of One: Opinion Formation, Conformity, and Dissent on Juries.” *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies* 6:513-540.

- Winter, Alix S. and Matthew Clair. 2018. "Jurors' Subjective Experiences of Deliberations in Criminal Cases." *Law & Society Inquiry* 43(4):1458-1490. [Note: 6 ½ pages in the article are tables and the last 8 pages of the article are reference pages and an appendix with more tables.]

VIEW:

- Instructor video
- *A Clockwork Orange* (2 h 16 m) \$ (AVAILABLE WITH HBO MAX SUBSCRIPTION, AMAZON PRIME PREMIUM SUBSCRIPTION, ALL OTHERS FROM \$3.99)

### Week 3: Stigma, Labeling Theory

READ:

- Chambliss, William J. 1973. "The Saints and the Roughnecks." *Society* 11(1):24-31.
- Becker, Howard. 1963. "Chapter 1: Outsiders." Pages 1-20 in *The Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. Oxford, England: Free Press Glencoe.
- Rosenhan, David L. 1973. "On Being Sane in Insane Places." *Science* 179(4070):250-258.

VIEW:

- Instructor video
- [On Being Sane in Insane Places](#) (6 m)
- [One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest](#) (1975, 2 h 13 m)

### Week 4: Race and Racism

READ:

- Nellis, Ashley. 2011. "The Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in State Prisons." Washington, DC: The Sentencing Project.
- Erigha, Maryann. 2015. "Race, Gender, Hollywood: Representation in Cultural Production and Digital Media's Potential for Change." *Sociology Compass* 9(1):78-89.
- Christian, Michelle, Louise Seamster, and Victor Ray. 2019. "New Directions in Critical Race Theory and Sociology: Racism, White Supremacy, and Resistance." *American Behavioral Scientist* 63(13):1731-1740.

VIEW:

- Instructor Video
- [A Time to Kill](#) (1996, 2 h 25 m)

### Week 5: Gender Socialization and Cultural Norms

READ:

- Ali, Nujood, Chapter 4 (pages 49-78) of *I am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced* and pages 79-81 of Chapter 5 (feel free to read more)
- Halim, May Ling D., Abigail S. Walsh, Catherine S. Tamis-LeMonda, Kristina M. Zosuls, and Diane N. Ruble. 2018. "The Roles of Self-Socialization and Parent Socialization in Toddler's Gender-Typed Appearance." *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 47(8):2277-2285.

VIEW:

- Instructor Video
- [Osama](#) (2003, 1 h 23 m) (FREE ON TUBI AND THE ROKU CHANNEL)



## Week 6: LGBTQ

### READ:

- Lucal, Betsy and Andrea Miller. 2013. "Working the Boundaries: Bisexuality and Transgender on Film." Pp. 162-179 in *Cinematic Sociology: Social Life in Film, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed*, edited by J. Sutherland and K. Feltey. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Panfil, Vanessa R. 2020. "'Nobody Don't Really Know What That Mean': Understandings of 'Queer' among Urban LGBTQ Young People of Color." *Journal of Homosexuality* 67(12):1713-1735.
- July, Beandrea. 2021. ['Pariah' at 10: When Black Lesbian Characters Had the Spotlight.](#) *New York Times*, Dec. 28.

### VIEW:

- Instructor Video
- *Pariah* (2011, 1 h 26 m) (HULU PREMIUM SUBSCRIPTION AND \$3.99 FOR MOST OTHER SITES)

## Week 7: Stratification/Social Class

### READ:

- Farahbakhsh, Alireza and Ramtin Ebrahimi. 2021. "The Social Implications of Metaphor in Bong Joon-Ho's *Parasite*." *CINEJ Cinema Journal* 9(1):88-116.
- Kang, Inkoo. 2019. ["Parasite: Notes from the Underground."](#) *The Criterion Collection*. Online. Oct. 30.
- Taubin, Amy. 2019. ["A House Divided."](#) *Film Comment* September-October, 28-31.
- Read or view ["Social Class, Stratification, and Mobility Around the World" \(2019, 25 m\)](#)

### VIEW:

- Instructor video
- *Parasite (Gisaengchung)* (2019, 2 h 12 m) (AVAILABLE ON HULU WITH A STANDARD SUBSCRIPTION AND \$3.99 FOR MOST OTHER SITES)

## Week 8: Education and Status

### READ:

- Tyson, Karolyn. 2011. "Everyday Experience, Culture, and Acting White." Pages 17-34 in *Integration Interrupted: Tracking, Black Students, and Acting White After Brown*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ridgeway, Cecilia L. 2014. "Why Status Matters for Inequality." *American Sociological Review* 79(1):1-16.
- Booher-Jennings, Jennifer. 2008. "Learning to Label: Socialisation, Gender, and the Hidden Curriculum of High-Stakes Testing." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 29(2):149-160.

### VIEW:

- Instructor Video
- [Tested](#) (2016, 1 h 13 m)

## Week 9: Family

### READ:

- Waters, Mary C. and Tomás R. Jiménez. 2005. "Assessing Immigrant Assimilation: New Empirical and Theoretical Challenges." *Annual Review of Sociology* 31(1):105-125.
- Nguyễn, Linh Thủy. 2021. "'Loving Couples and Families': Assimilation as Honorary Whiteness and the Making of the Vietnamese Refugee Family." *Social Sciences* 10(6):209 (17 pages)

VIEW:

- Instructor Video:
- [My Family/Mi Familia](#) (1995, 2 h 6 m) OR [Rabbit-Proof Fence](#) (2002, 1 h 34 m) \$ (VUDU \$3.99)

## Week 10: Dystopian Films

READ:

- Larrieux, Stéphanie. 2010. "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil: The Politics of Race, Gender, and Power in Post-Apocalyptic Hollywood Cinema." *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 27(2):133-143.
- Domingo, Andreu. 2008. "'Demodystopias': Prospects of Demographic Hell." *Population and Development Review* 34(4):725-745.

VIEW:

- Instructor Video
- *Get Out* (2017, 1 h 44 m) \$ (HULU PREMIUM SUBSCRIPTION AND \$3.99 FOR MOST OTHER SITES)

## FINAL EXAM WEEK

Final project—paper and presentation—are due by midnight on [Thursday, March 23, 2023](#).