

Senior Seminar in Sociology
Sociology 460W-01
Rhode Island College, Spring 2021

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)

Virtual Drop-In Hours: I am usually available directly after class & can meet you without an appointment as long as I'm available. I'm also available for scheduled meetings via Zoom or phone at other times, and you can book an appointment at <https://calendly.com/mmlarthur> (the "class office hours" option gets you a 30-minute time slot; the "advising meeting" option gets you a 15-minute time slot). If no time slots are available that fit your schedule, email me for an alternative time, being sure to say when you are available.

Phone: 401.456.8681—be sure to leave a callback number & note when is a good time to reach you

This course is a virtual classroom course. You will need to have reliable Internet access on a computer or tablet. You will also need to check your email regularly and be available during scheduled meeting times. Live Zoom meetings will take place on Tuesdays beginning at 12 noon, so please plan to be ready on your device with Internet access on Tuesdays at noon, and don't plan to join class while driving or in other circumstances where you will not be able to fully engage. While we will only meet as a full class once a week, you will be asked to meet with me and with smaller groups of classmates outside of scheduled class time.

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

Clair, Matthew. 2020. *Privilege and Punishment: How Race and Class Matter in Criminal Court*. Princeton University Press. ISBN: 9780691194332

Jack, Abraham Anthony. 2020. *The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges are Failing Disadvantaged Students*. Harvard University Press. ISBN: 9780674248243

Meadow, Tey. 2018. *Trans Kids: Being Gendered in the Twenty-First Century*. University of California Press. ISBN: 9780520275041.

Additional reading materials will be made available via Blackboard.

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

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 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. **50 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. **20 points.**

Note: federal guidelines (https://www.nasfaa.org/news-item/2737/GEN_11_06_Guidance_on_New_Credit_Hour_Regulations) expect students to complete three hours of work (including both in-class and out-of-class time) for every credit hour earned.

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. Please check Blackboard for more specific details. We will meet as a group on Tuesdays from 12:00-1:50 PM on Zoom—the link is available in the course Blackboard site. *Reading assignments are due no later than the class date under which they are listed.*

January 19: Intro to the class

Complete: Introductory survey by Friday, January 22 at noon

January 26

Read: Clair pp. xii-30, Meadow pp. 1-23, Jack pp. 1-24

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)

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

February 2: Career Development Center visit

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

Begin working on Career Project

Begin reading your book & schedule a Book Group team meeting

February 9

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 by February 8 at 10 am begin locating sources

February 16

Complete: Career Project

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

Book Group team #1 discussion questions due this week

Locate all sources for literature review and begin reading them

February 23: Book Club #1

Read: Pages assigned by Book Group team #1

Read: Sociology Term Paper Guide

Complete: annotated bibliography (project step #2) & read all literature review sources

Begin writing literature review

March 2:

Read: Clair pp. 197-225; Meadow pp. 229-240; Jack pp. 199-204
Complete: literature review (project step #3)
Begin developing methodology
Book Group team #2 discussion questions due this week

March 9: Book Club #2

Read: Pages assigned by Book Group team #2
Read: "The Methodology," <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/methodology>
Schedule individual or small-group meeting with me
Complete draft methods section (project step #4)

March 16

Finalize data collection instruments
Begin collecting data
Book Group team #3 discussion questions due this week

March 23: Book club #3

Read: Pages assigned by Book Group team #3
Complete data collection
Submit a progress report (project step #5)

March 30

Read: Bergin, "Communicating Findings and Visualizing Data," 193-224
Analyze data
Rewrite and finalize methods section

April 6

Read: Wang & Park, "Writing the Final Report, pp. 236-60
Write draft of analysis & findings (project step #6)

April 13

Read: Clair pp. 178-196; Meadow pp. 212-226; Jack pp. 181-198
Write draft of conclusion (project step #7)

April 20: No Class Meeting

Complete paper draft
Complete peer review
Schedule individual or small-group meetings with me

April 27: Last Class

Complete revised Pilot Study final draft
Complete educational autoethnography

May 5 (Wednesday)

Educational autoethnography due in the morning

Extensions beyond this date for any late work may not be possible given May graduation deadlines.

Zoom Etiquette

- When you are in an environment with background noise, please keep yourself muted unless you are speaking. We love the dogs/cats/babies/TV shows in your house too, but we don't need to hear them during class time—*seeing* the dogs, cats, and babies, on the other hand, is totally fine!
- If you are comfortable, it would be great if you could keep your camera on. However, I know there are situations where that may not be possible due to your Internet connection or living conditions, and I'd certainly rather have you present in class with your camera off than having you not there at all. If you'd rather not share your living situation, you can use a [virtual background](#). If seeing yourself on screen makes you uncomfortable, you can [hide your own video](#). If you can't keep your camera on, please do put a photo of yourself or something that represents your identity [in your Zoom profile](#). Please keep pictures appropriate for a professional setting and turn off your camera if something you might not want to share is happening in the background (roommate just got out of the shower?).
- Be present. Listen actively. Participate in your breakout group sessions. Ask questions, either out loud or in the chat. Answer other students' questions in the chat. Use reactions or raise your hand (you can find these options under the "participants" icon). Let us all know you are there.
- If your Internet drops, try to reconnect. If you can't, or your Internet is out for the day, you can join by phone—see the session info for the phone number.
- Do not invite others to join our Zoom session without permission, and always keep your name on your Zoom account so I will know who you are to let you into class. If you need to change the name on your Zoom account, you can learn how to do so [here](#).
- Try to join the session on time, *but not while you are driving*. We all benefit if everyone is there and participating to their fullest. If you'll be late you should still join us, though depending on timing you may not be able to participate in all breakout group activities. Note that when you join you will be added to the waiting room and there may be a delay before I admit you, especially if you are either early or late.
- Do not record sessions or take screenshots of the Zoom. If you are working in a small group and would like to take a screenshot of what you are working on, get permission from all of your group members.

Course Technology

Students are expected to check their RIC email addresses and Blackboard frequently. Given that this course will take place online, you should expect to check your email and Blackboard multiple times per week. 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. Students are also responsible for being able to access Blackboard. If you are not able to access email or Blackboard, you should seek assistance from User Support Services (<http://www.ric.edu/uss/> or x8886) right away. You will also need to have access to the Internet and to a device that can manage Blackboard, office applications, and Zoom in order to be successful this semester.

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:

- 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 reference the RIC Sociology Term Paper Guide at <http://www.ric.edu/sociology/pages/term-paper-guide.aspx>
- 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.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a **disability** that might interfere with your ability to perform at your best 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 <http://www.ric.edu/disabilityservices/>

Course Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to meet learning outcomes of the Sociology program (see <http://www.ric.edu/sociology/Pages/Program-Goals.aspx> 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 (<http://www.ric.edu/sociology/Pages/Writing-in-the-Discipline.aspx>).

Extensions, Absences, and Attendance

Please make every effort to attend all scheduled live Zoom sessions. These will not be recorded to protect other students' privacy. We will often complete graded activities during the Zoom sessions, but you will have the opportunity to make these up individually. If you consistently miss sessions, however, you may find it difficult to excel in this course.

Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due in Blackboard at specific times as indicated in Blackboard. Assignments that are not posted directly to a Blackboard application (like blog posts) **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. If unavoidable circumstances require you to seek an extension on your work, I am generally open to providing one **if** you request the extension via email at least 24 hours prior to the due date (unless the extension is due to a major emergency such as a health crisis or death in the family), though this may not be possible for all assignments (e.g. things we do together in class).

Supplemental Services

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

- 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: <http://www.ric.edu/writingcenter/>
- Seek support to develop your academic & study skills at **OASIS**: <http://www.ric.edu/oasis/>
- Visit the **Counseling Center** to obtain support with anxiety, depression, or other distress you may be experiencing. Services are free & confidential: <http://www.ric.edu/counselingctr/>
- It's never too early (or too late) to work on your career plans, improve your resume, practice interviews, or think about graduate school. Visit the **Career Development Center**: <http://www.ric.edu/careerdevelopment/>
- **Any student who faces challenges securing food, housing, or other basic needs is urged to contact the Learning for Life (<http://www.ric.edu/learningforlife>) and/or the Dean of Students' Office (<http://www.ric.edu/studentlife/Pages/need-assistance.aspx>). *If you are comfortable doing so, please let me know what is going on in case there are other ways I can provide access to resources.***