

## SYLLABUS

### SOCIOLOGY 101

#### FRESHMAN SEMINAR: SCANDALS AND REPUTATIONS

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Class Time: TTh 3:30-4:50  
Class Location: University Library 4670

Welcome to Northwestern University! You are beginning a great adventure and a significant life transition. College not only provides an opportunity to have fun, to mature socially, but it also provides an opportunity for an *intellectual community*. You have four years in which to discuss any and all intellectual topics that you have ever been concerned about. You are surrounded by people who care about these ideas, including faculty, staff, graduate students, and other undergraduates. So, party (responsibly), but also use this time to learn about those things that matter to you. You will never have another four years like these.

College life will be for most of you a new and strange experience. Some of you will fit into campus life smoothly, and your freshman year will be a joyous highpoint of your life. Others will struggle socially, emotionally, or intellectually. If so, there are people here to help you. People at Northwestern care about you. I am one of those people. I have included my home telephone number, and will offer advice when you need it. While I do not encourage you to call in the wee hours of the morning, if you are in trouble, if you need help, if you are desperate, call at any time. Each year some first year students find themselves severely depressed, gripped by anxiety attacks, panicked, afraid of failure, or engaged in destructive or compulsive behaviors. If you fall in one of these categories, you will not be the first, you will not be alone, and there are people here who can help through difficult times. I cannot emphasize too strongly how helpful it will be for you to have someone with whom to talk. While you might feel embarrassed, it will help brighten dark nights. I am not only your professor, but your advisor for fall quarter, and will freely talk with you throughout your freshman year and beyond. While I may not know the answer to every question, you and I will together find out those answers. (In winter quarter you are assigned a college advisor, but we can

continue our discussions.)

Remember you were admitted to Northwestern because we felt that you were wonderful, *not* because we felt that you were perfect. Our goal is to help insure that every student who is admitted graduates and that each student looks back on these four years with satisfaction.

This relates directly to this course. The Freshman Seminar is designed for first-year students. We will work hard, but we will also work slowly. This is a college course, but it is a college course that recognizes that your previous experience is in high school. In the course we will be reading some articles and books that professors write for each other. I selected them because they are not hyper-technical, but they will be a challenge if you have not been exposed to this level or style of writing previously. However, there will be a lot of sharing and a lot of support, particularly in the first weeks.

Although the topic of the course is "Scandals and Reputations," the real topic of the course is "thinking, reading, researching, and writing on the collegiate level." We will spend time discussing each of these things, and, because I serve as your advisor for the fall quarter, we may also discuss other issues of your transition to college. As we are a community, there will be a lot of group discussion and you will receive a lot of feedback on your writing. Note that there has been considerable discussion about what are now called "trigger warnings," announcements about potentially sensitive topics, and about safe spaces. Given that you selected a seminar that examines scandals, I assume that you do not need such warnings (we will be discussing scandalous behavior), but if you are concerned about the content of the course, please talk with me. The only limit on what you can say is that you must show each other respect. It is my hope that you bring different perspectives to the class and that you do not feel ashamed of what you believe. In many cases it will change.

During the quarter, you will be asked to write approximately twenty pages: ranging from short essays to a lengthier research report. Some of you find writing satisfying; others find writing painful. For those in this second category, I do not suggest that you transfer to math, but I will work with you to give you the skills to write, even if you never fall in love with putting words on paper. If you are not satisfied with your grade on any paper, you can rewrite it. You will never receive a lower grade. If you receive a higher grade, your original grade is erased. You may rewrite your papers (all except paper four) as often as you wish.

On average I assign 100 pages of reading per week (some weeks more, some less), so you should expect to read 1000 pages this quarter, not including the reading for your research papers.

Grading is based on the papers and projects with class participation used for borderline grades. Attendance is expected (try to miss no more than two classes this quarter) and class participation is essential.

Each time I teach this class, it changes. I may alter the syllabus throughout the quarter, hopefully to insure that it meets your needs. But, as I will be providing you with feedback, I hope that you will provide me with feedback on those things that have worked and those things that have failed to inspire you. Make those suggestions during the quarter, not afterwards. And rely on your peer advisor, Emma Brick, who can provide indirect feedback to me. You are fortunate with the choice of Emma who has previously served as a peer advisor.

The university provides \$100 in support for the class attending a play or other event, or inviting a speaker, and also provides an additional \$100 for a social event. We should think how to use this support during the fall quarter. If any of you like to arrange social events, let me know.

#### READINGS

Joel Best, Damn Lies and Statistics

Patricia Bonomi, The Lord Cornbury Scandal

John Caughey, Imaginary Social Worlds (unavailable at Norris, but a selection will be on electronic reserve)

Gary Alan Fine, Difficult Reputations, chapter to be provided

Sanford Levinson, Written in Stone

Donileen Loseke, Thinking About Social Problems, Second Edition, chapter on electronic reserve

Northwestern University Report of the John Evans Study Commission, report online

Kirk Savage, Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves (Chapter to be provided)

Michael Schudson, Watergate in American Memory (unavailable at Norris, but a selection will be on electronic reserve)

Barry Schwartz, Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory

Daniel Solove, The Future of Reputation

Craig Wilder, Ebony and Ivy, chapters to be provided

All books should be available at library reserve or chapters will be emailed to you. Even though there are a lot of books listed, you will typically be reading a chapter or two. I recommend that you purchase Bonomi and Levinson because of the amount of reading in those books, but if you love books (or love scandal), you might consider purchasing all.

#### SCHEDULE

September 19 INTRODUCTION: SCANDALS IN POLITICS AND THE ARTS

Discussion: Academic Honesty: Are politicians who have speech writers plagiarists? Why or why not?

September 21 PERSONAL REPUTATION

Donna Eder, "The Cycle of Popularity: Interpersonal Relations Among Female Adolescents," Sociology of Education, 1985, 58: 154-65.

Cathy Evans and Donna Eder, "'No Exit': Processes of Social Isolation in the Middle School," Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 1993, 22: 139-70.

September 26 DISCUSSION OF SCANDALS: HOW DO WE "KNOW" THE FAMOUS?

John Caughey, Imaginary Social Worlds, Prologue

September 28 REPUTATION ON THE INTERNET

Daniel Solove, The Future of Reputation, Chapters Three and Four

Jon Ronson, "How One Stupid Tweet Blew Up Justine Sacco's Life," New York Times Magazine (February 12, 2015), <http://nyti.ms/1zaehJD>

For those who are willing, we will display and discuss your social media pages (Facebook, etc.) and my blog. Be prepared.

PAPER # 1: ANALYSIS OF THE REPUTATION OF A FRIEND OR ACQUAINTANCE (1-2 pages)

October 3 POLITICAL SCANDAL

Michael Schudson, Watergate in American Memory, Chapters Introduction, Chapter 1

Gary Alan Fine and Emily Eisenberg, "Tricky Dick and Slick Willie: Despised Presidents and Generational Imprinting." American Behavioral Scientist, 2002, 46: 553-65.

October 5 CONSTRUCTING A SCANDAL

Gary Alan Fine, Difficult Reputations, Chapter Two (Warren Harding)

Joshua Gamson, "Old Stories, New Rules: Scandal in the Age of Sexting." Forthcoming in Gina Chen and Hinda Mandell, eds. Scandal in an Age of (Self) Surveillance. Essay to be provided

October 10 IMAGE AND SCANDAL: LEARNING FROM CULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

No Reading

SCREENING OF "WAG THE DOG" (class will run until about 5:30 p.m.: to be held in Library Video Theater, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)

October 12 HISTORICAL SCANDAL: HOW TO SKIM

Patricia Bonomi, The Lord Cornbury Scandal: The Politics of Reputation in British America, all, skim (limit reading time to one hour)

October 17 THE POLITICS OF MONUMENTS

Sanford Levinson, Written in Stone, pp. 3-74

October 19 CIVIL WAR COMMEMORATION

Sanford Levinson, Written in Stone, pp. 75-139  
Kirk Savage, Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves, Chapter Five  
Bring in two articles on Civil War commemoration from 2017

In-class project: Design a contemporary Civil War memorial

October 24 NORTHWESTERN MEMORIES

Gary Alan Fine, Adam Mendel, Heather Menefee, and Forrest Bruce, "Sand Creek Massacre a Moral Stain on NU's Past." Daily Northwestern (January 24, 2013): 4. (To be provided)  
Stan Hoig, The Sand Creek Massacre, Chapter 9 (To be provided)  
Report of the John Evans Study Committee, Northwestern

University, May 2014, Chapters 1, 2, 4-6 (Find it online at [www.northwestern.edu/provost/committees/equity-and.../study-committee-report.pdf](http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/committees/equity-and.../study-committee-report.pdf) or through Google search)

October 26 THE RACIAL HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Craig Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy*, Chapters 3 and 4

Max Clarke and Gary Alan Fine. "'A' is for Apology: Slavery and the Discourse of Remonstrance in American Universities." *History & Memory* 22, 2010, 81-112.

PAPER #2: So much has been written recently about issues of historical commemoration of the Civil War. In this 3-5 page paper, I want you to make an argument about how we should remember the Civil War: through statues, flags, and history lessons. And - equally important - how we should not remember the Civil War. Consider remembrance in the South, but also in the North. What forms of memory bring us together, and what forms separate us? And is bringing us together the only thing to consider? Remember that there are no right or wrong answers. No references are required, but cite any sources that you use.

October 31 NO CLASS (HALLOWEEN)

November 2 REMEMBRANCE OF SLAVERY IN THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Jonathan Holloway, "The Price of Recognition: Race and the Making of the Modern University" (to be distributed)

November 7 THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Donileen Loseke, *Thinking About Social Problems*, Chapter 1

SELECT TOPIC FOR PAPER THREE

November 9 SOCIAL PROBLEMS: BIG AND SMALL

Craig Reinerman, "Policing Pleasure: Food, Drugs, and the Politics of Ingestion," *Gastronomica* 7(3), 2007, 53-61 (E-reserve)

Stephen J. Pfohl, "The 'Discovery' of Child Abuse," *Social Problems* 24, 1977, 310-23. (E-reserve)

November 14 THE CONSTRUCTION OF STATISTICS

Joel Best, *Damn Lies and Statistics*, Intro, Chapters 1-2, 6

PROJECT: DISCOVER THE ORIGIN OF A STATISTIC

SELECT TOPIC FOR PAPER #4: CHOICE AMONG FOLLOWING PRESIDENTS:  
John Adams, James Madison, James Monroe, John Quincy Adams,  
Martin Van Buren, John Tyler, James Polk, Millard Fillmore,  
Franklin Pierce, James Buchanan, Andrew Johnson, Ulysses Grant,  
Rutherford B. Hayes, Chester Arthur, Benjamin Harrison, Grover  
Cleveland, William McKinley, William Howard Taft, Calvin  
Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, Lyndon  
Johnson, Gerald Ford

November 16 COLLECTIVE MEMORY: REMEMBERING LINCOLN

Barry Schwartz, Chapters Introduction, 1, 3-6

The class will be divided into groups of three. Each group will be assigned to present one of the following chapters to the class, which you should read carefully, and skim the others, understanding the major concepts.

PAPER: ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SOCIAL PROBLEM (3-5 pages; 3-5 sources) (The paper is due today, but if it is handed in by November 21<sup>st</sup>, it will not be considered late).

November 21 DISCUSSION OF PAPER THREE AND ORGANIZING TO WRITE PAPER FOUR

This being the Tuesday afternoon before Thanksgiving, there is no reading. Those who are able to be present will discuss your third papers on Social Problems and discuss your progress on your fourth paper.

HAND OUT (OR SEND BY EMAIL) "Take Home Final"

November 23 NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK

November 28 GENERATIONAL MEMORY: READING A QUANTITATIVE STUDY

Howard Schuman and Jacqueline Scott, "Generations and Collective Memories," American Sociological Review 54, 1987, 359-81.

November 30 ORAL PRESENTATIONS OF FINAL PAPER (Class lasts until about 7:30 p.m. Pizza Dinner)

December 7 FINAL PAPER and TAKE HOME FINAL DUE

PAPER #4: ANALYSIS OF THE REPUTATION OF A PAST PRESIDENT (8-10 pages; based on significant research)

Due Thursday December 7<sup>th</sup> by 10:00 p.m. Send both as email attachments.