SOC201: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY



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Detailed Licensing

Licensing

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: Getting Started- What is Sociology?

Welcome to Introduction to Sociology

In this course, you'll journey into the world of sociology—the systematic study of society and human interaction. We'll start by exploring what sociology is as a social science, diving into the research methods sociologists use to examine the social world. You'll then get acquainted with the foundational theories of Western sociology and explore non-Western perspectives that offer alternative insights.

From there, we'll focus on core areas that shape our understanding of society, including:

- ***Culture***
- ***Crime & Deviance***, with both individualistic and sociological perspectives
- ***Social Stratification***, exploring class and inequality
- ***Gender Studies***
- ***Race & Ethnicity***

Module 1: Getting Oriented

In this opening module, you'll:

1. Learn and define essential sociological terms.
2. Engage with key texts and readings.
3. Collaborate in small groups during class activities.
4. Explore the distinctions between social sciences and natural sciences through guided questions and discussions.

Let's embark on this exploration of society together—seeing how sociology illuminates the structures, interactions, and ideas that shape our lives.



Sociology is the systematic study of society and social interaction. The word "sociology" is derived from the Latin word *socius* (companion) and the Greek word *logos* (speech or reason). Sociology is the study of society, social behavior, and the structures that shape human interactions. By critically exploring patterns of social relationships, inequalities, and change, sociologists examine how individuals, groups, and institutions influence and are influenced by social forces, such as culture, education, politics, and economics. Sociologists use various research methods, including qualitative and quantitative approaches, to uncover the underlying social processes that govern our everyday experiences.

The sociologist Dorothy Smith (1926 –) defines *the social* as the "ongoing concerting and coordinating of individuals' activities" (Smith, 1999). Aspects of social life never simply occur; they are organized processes. They can be the briefest of everyday interactions—walking past someone on the sidewalk or going to the store—or the largest and most enduring interactions—such as the billions of daily exchanges that constitute the circuits of global capitalism. Like a child just discovering the world, sociologists incessantly ask "why" about human behavior, especially that which seems to be taken for granted. Why in the US do we walk to the right on the sidewalk? What collective processes led to the decision that moving to the right rather than the left is normative?



Sociologists also look behind what is visible to uncover deeper and more complex relationships. Examining the coffee you drink in the morning can reveal a series of interactions, both local and global. Where are the coffee beans grown? Who picked the coffee beans? From where is coffee exported? To where is it imported? What cultural rituals involve coffee? Is coffee drinking gendered? These are the type of questions that point to the unique domain and puzzles that sociology seeks to explore and understand.

Have you ever paused and realized that *your* way of thinking and behaving isn't the *only* way? Maybe this shift happened:

- When you traveled and encountered a new culture
- While visiting a different neighborhood in your city
- Through reading a novel set in another world or listening to someone whose life is very different from yours

Consider the tiny things: we line up to pay at stores, eat cake with a fork but pizza with our hands—do these habits ever make you stop and wonder *why*?

That exact moment—when the familiar becomes strange—is when we begin to notice the invisible social rules that guide our daily behavior, also known as *social norms*. These norms are the unspoken expectations we learn from our culture—like shaking hands on meeting someone, standing in line, using chopsticks in some countries, or using our hands for pizza in others. They're the unwritten etiquette that shapes our interactions and makes social life largely predictable.

As we go further in this course, we'll explore how these norms form, vary across cultures, and influence the way we live, think, and relate to one another.

References:

Smith, D. E. (1999). *Writing the social: Critique, theory, and investigations*. University of Toronto Press.

1.1: Readings
1.2: Getting Started--What is Sociology--Classroom Activity
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1.1: Readings

1) Read *What is Sociology* From the American Sociological Association website. This brief passage provides an overview on society and culture, how sociologists look at human behavior as patterned, and the concept of social structures and social institutions. As you read, think about the concepts of society and culture, the perspectives sociologists use to study the world around them, and the patterns of human behaviors.

What is Sociology?

Sociology is the study of social life, social change, and the social causes and consequences of human behavior. Sociologists investigate the structure of groups, organizations, and societies and how people interact within these contexts. Since all human behavior is social, the subject matter of sociology ranges from the intimate family to global communities; from deviance to organized crime; from religious traditions to state institutions; and from the divisions of race, gender and social class to the shared beliefs of a common culture.

2) Watch the video *Sociologists on Sociology* on Vimeo from June 2018. Sixteen sociologists speak about the impact of sociology.

sixteen sociologists speak briefly to the need for and impact of their field.

“Sociologists on Sociology” is a primer on a discipline that studies many of the major issues confronting American society. As one respondent puts it: “So much of what is going on with our political climate and the rhetoric right now is all about talking about individual people or individual communities. The reality is, these are collective problems that have structural bases.”

2) Read *Invitation to Sociology* by Peter Berger (1929-2017) which discusses key points about the field of sociology including:

- **Sociology as a Lens**: Understand society through unique perspectives and patterns.
- **Freedom vs. Control**: Explore how individuals navigate societal rules and find moments of choice.
- **Society as Drama**: See life as a stage where people play roles within social structures.
- **Teaching Tool**: The book helps students question individualistic views of behavior.
- **Human Choice**: Highlights personal freedom and the ability to challenge societal norms.

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1.2: Getting Started--What is Sociology--Classroom Activity

In this classroom activity, you will interpret a quote and connect it to sociological ideas. You will share your ideas with the class. This activity will get you thinking about what it means to be in a society and how we can discuss human interaction. As you discuss your interpretation of the quote, think about the following ideas that connect to readings in this section:

1) Patterned social interactions

2) Social structures and institutions

3) Freedom vs. control or agency vs. constraint

Read the following quote by Herukhuti (Sharif Williams, PhD, MEd), known as Dr. Herukhuti. Watch the video Race. Resistance. Love.: A Radical Reading and Discussion by Herukhuti to dig deeper into Dr Herukhuti's ideas.

"If you love a person, you are a lover, if you love people, you are a revolutionary."



[1] *H. "Herukhuti" Sharif Williams, PhD, MEd, known as Dr. Herukhuti, is a cultural studies scholar, sex researcher-educator, systems theorist, cultural worker (i.e., filmmaker, playwright, poet, and performance artist), interdisciplinary sociocultural scientist, and hem netcher tepi (priest-conjurer-healer in the Kemetic/Ancient Egyptian tradition) whose work operates at the intersection of race, culture, sexuality and spirituality. They are of Akan and Lissongo genetic ancestry. A bodeme (community healer and peacemaker in the Dagara tradition), Dr. Herukhuti uses a mix of pronouns. She draws upon the arts, social sciences, performance studies, and cultural studies in his research—using a variety of methods including narrative/storytelling, autoethnography, close readings of media, literary criticism, Theatre of the Oppressed, oral history interviewing and critical theory.*

Information from the Center for Culture, Sexuality and Spirituality LLC

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1.3: Getting Started--What is Sociology?--Homework

The sciences have been divided into the natural and the social. What divides them? The *natural sciences* represent a branch of science concerned with the description, understanding and prediction of natural phenomena, based on empirical evidence from observation and experimentation and includes physics, chemistry and biology. The *social sciences* represent a branch of science that examines human behavior in its social and cultural aspects, from small scale groups such as the family and peer groups to medium scale institutions like corporations and educational institutions to macro level institutions such as religion, racialized and gendered systems. These includes sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, history and political science and geography.

Before starting this activity let's take a moment to understand what a makes a question biased and to define the concept of Eurocentricism.

1) Biased Questions: Here are a few examples

It is important to focus on how we ask questions when conducting sociological research (really any type of research). Below is a list of ways in which research questions can be biased:

a) Leading questions = this is when the questions implies or encourages a particular answer.

example: Why do people prefer urban areas over rural areas? This implies the person is angry and they must answer why they ae angry. We should not assume a person's emotional state.

b) Loaded or emotional language = This is when the language is strongly negative or positive.

examples: Why are video games so harmful to youth?

c) Framing bias = the way the question is framed influences how respondents will interpret it.

example: How can we ensure AI is not used in the classroom?

d) Binary bias = the question only provides respondents with two answer choices.

Do you think video games are good or bad for mental health?

e) Qualifying bias = this is a linguistic device that subtly gives preference to or constructs one category as the standard.

When my cousin had a brain injury we saw a female neuroscientist This implies that female is the non standard category.

2) What is Eurocentrism?

Eurocentrism is positioning European or Western culture as the standard by which to define all other cultures. This perspective views The West (which includes the United States) as the center or history, progress, knowledge and values. This in turn minimizes the contributions of other cultures and marginalizes entire groups of people, their ways of life, knowledge systems and values.

Now you are ready to do the homework assignment.

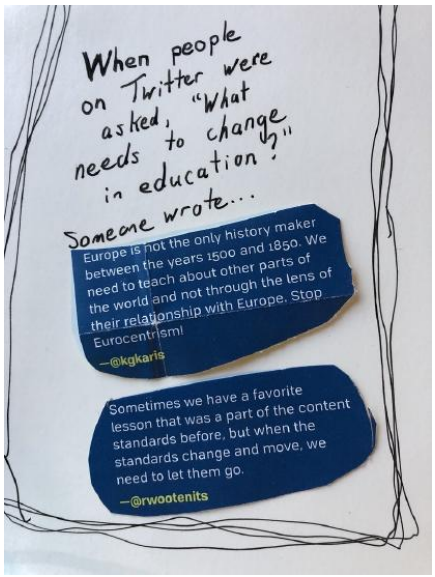
Read the assigned interview excerpt (below) and answer the following 3 questions:

1. **How might the framing of the question itself be biased or reflect certain assumptions?**

2. **What is the stated difference between the social and natural sciences?**

3. **In what ways does the answer reflect a Eurocentric perspective?**

Warburton: Is there something distinctive about being a social scientist, as opposed to being a scientist, or a philosopher?



Haidt: The natural sciences form the prototype of what we think the sciences are. If you're studying rocks or quarks, and there's this definitive experiment, and you design this experiment and get the results, it's very clear, it's easy to understand. But rocks and quarks do exactly what the laws of physics tell them to. The social sciences are necessary because our subjects have these properties of consciousness and intentionality. There are these emergent properties that rocks and quarks don't have. Studying people and social systems requires a different set of tools and different ways of thinking, and you can't avoid questions of meaning. For the natural sciences, meaning is not a relevant concept, but it is unavoidable in the social sciences.

Jonathan Haidt is a social psychologist and professor of ethical leadership at New York University's Stern School of Business. He is author of *The Happiness Hypothesis* and *The Righteous Mind* and is currently writing a book about morality and capitalism.

Rubric (12 points total)

Criteria	Excellent (3-4 pts)	Satisfactory (2-3 pts)	Needs Improvement (0-1 pts)
Question Bias Analysis (4 pts)	Thoughtfully identifies underlying assumptions, cultural framing, or implied value judgments in the question itself. Provides a clear example or reasoning.	Identifies some bias or assumption but with limited explanation or example.	Fails to identify or explain any assumptions or biases in the question.
Difference Between Social & Natural Sciences (3 pts)	Clearly and accurately explains the distinction as presented in the text, noting areas of overlap or complexity if applicable.	Summarizes the difference with minor inaccuracies or lacks detail.	Misunderstands or omits key distinctions between the disciplines.
Eurocentric Perspective Analysis (3 pts)	Insightfully explains how the answer reflects Eurocentric ideas (e.g., privileging Western epistemologies, excluding other worldviews, etc.) with a specific example from the text.	Mentions Eurocentrism but lacks clarity, specificity, or depth in explanation.	Does not address or misinterprets the Eurocentric aspect of the response.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: The Sociological Imagination



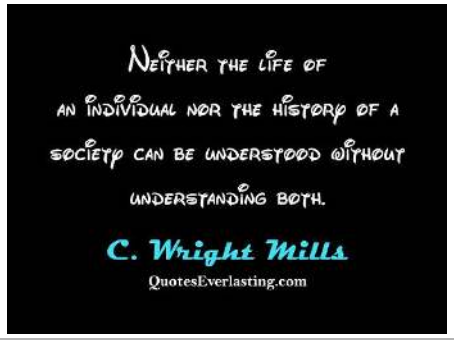
In this module we will explore the work of C. Wright Mills (1916–1962) and his important and lasting contribution to the field of sociology. Mills was an American sociologist best known for his concept, the "sociological imagination," which describes a vision or a lens through which we can see the connection between the problems of individuals to that of broader society. You will engage with this idea by doing a classroom activity in which you will analyze different social issues using the Sociological Imagination. Finally you will complete an assignment in which you will watch a video that uses the Sociological Imagination to analyze coffee and then do your own analysis of an object.

Mills argues that we should understand personal issues in the context of the broader social world. He famously said, “Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both.” Personal problems like unemployment, eating disorders or alcoholism can be understood my looking at larger social forces such as the economic system, war and beauty culture. Mills’ book, The Power Elite (1956), examined the concentration of power in the hands of a few elites in the military, corporate, and political spheres. His work continues to influence sociological thought and activism. Mills believed that American society suffered from the fundamental problems of alienation, moral insensibility, threats to democracy, threats to human freedom, and conflict between bureaucratic rationality and human reason, and that the development of the sociological imagination could counter these. While many of his contemporaries focused on larger social systems, such as the structural functionalists, Mills argued that solely focusing on the macro level ignored the role of the individual. He saw the social and the individual in a dynamic relationship, which asks us to distance ourselves from our personal circumstances and view social issues is a broader context. While there is always agency in structure; seeing both gives us a more complex understanding of human behavior and personal lives.

References

Mills, C. W. (1956). *The Power Elite*. Oxford University Press.

2.1: Readings
2.2: Classroom Activity
2.3: Homework



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2.1: Readings

1) Read C Wright Mills chapter one of the Sociological Imagination, The Promise (1959). In this chapter Mills outlines his concept, the Sociological Imagination and provides a number of examples. Make sure to focus on how our private lives, in which we can often feel alone and isolated, are connected to public issues, including the particular moment in history. Mills highlights how our own circumstances can make us feel like failures, yet we must also see how our lives are influenced by the society in which we live.



2) Watch this Crash Course video, which will provide examples of how we can use the Sociological Imagination to analyze the following:

Social class

Gender and power

Social class

Race and racism

Globalization

Crime and deviance

Education religion

Family and marriage

Health and illness

Technology

Political issues

References

Mills, C. W. (1959). The promise. *The sociological imagination*, 3-24.

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2.2: Classroom Activity

Below are different pairs of words used to refer to the two levels private vs public used in the *sociological imagination*

Individual -------- Society

Personal/Private---------- Public

Micro ---------- Macro

Biography ---------- History

Mills uses Personal/Public ----- Public and Biography ------ History most often.

Now it's time to put the *sociological imagination* into practice. Below are a series of scenarios. The class can be broken into 7 groups with each group assigned one scenario and then share with the whole class or the class can go through each scenario together. For each scenario discuss how you could explain this personal issue by relating it to larger social factors.






•***SOMEONE HAS AN EATING DISORDER***

•***SOMEONE LOSES THEIR JOB***

•***SOMEONE GETS A DIVORCE***

•***SOMEONE BECOMES HOMELESS***

•***SOMEONE IS ADDICTED TO DRUGS***

•***SOMEONE'S CAR GETS BOOTED***

•***SOMEONE GET'S THEIR DREAM JOB***

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2.3: Homework

For this analysis you will be writing up a sociological analysis of a object following the analysis you will watch in the following video.

Sociology of Coffee video by Professor Ben Cushing.

1) Discuss how Professor Cushing analyzes coffee from the following topic angles. Separate your answers into paragraphs by topic.



- 1) Norms / deviance
- 2) Cultural rituals
- 3) Symbolism/class/privilege
- 4) Colonialism
- 5) Global economy
- 6) Social relations

2) Now analyze coffee from the following topic angles, which are not discussed in the video.

- 7) Gender
- 8) Race

3) Finally choose an object from the following list and analyze it using the 8 topic angles from above.

- Toilet paper
- Soap
- Bicycle
- Camera
- Tattoo
- Perfume/Cologne

3) You should have a total of 16 short paragraphs.

RUBRIC (Total: 80 points)

Each of the four criteria is worth 5 points. Students address all 8 topics in structured paragraphs.

Criterion	5 – Excellent	3–4 – Proficient	1–2 – Needs Improvement
Depth of Sociological Analysis	Insightful, nuanced treatment across all topics (e.g., colonialism, gender, race); strong sociological terminology	Covers most topics with adequate analysis; some sociological terms used	Superficial mentions, missing key topics or terminology
Use of Evidence & Examples	Specific, relevant examples connecting video and chosen object; draws from multiple sources or perspectives.	Some specific examples; uses a few perspectives to discuss each topic	Vague or generic examples; little connection to topics or evidence
Structure & Argument Coherence	Each paragraph clearly organized, with topic sentence and cohesive argument	Paragraphs generally clear, may lack transitions or depth	Disorganized paragraphs, unclear or absent topic focus
Writing Mechanics & Style	Fluent, polished writing with proper grammar, minimal errors	Generally clear writing with minor errors	Frequent errors that impede clarity

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Sociological Theories

The term sociology was first coined in 1780 by the French essayist Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès (1748–1836) in an unpublished manuscript (Fauré et al. 1999). In 1838, the term was reintroduced by Auguste Comte (1798–1857) who is most often credited with introducing the academic discipline of sociology.

In this module we will explore key terms such as *positivism* and *anti-positivism*, after which you will demonstrate your understanding by sharing ideas about both. You will engage with the key theories that arose in the West as frameworks for understanding the social world and human behavior. You will learn about two sociological theories that arose in Europe in the 19th century: *Structural functionalism* and *Conflict Theory*, and one theory that developed in the United States in the mid 20th century, *Symbolic Interactionism* . We will also explore Social Constructionism, which most often is not included as one of the sociological theories. We will explore it as an influential perspective that has many similarities to Symbolic Interactionism. These are the theories that arose in the West, at a particular historical moment and developed by individuals of a particular social status, as frameworks for understanding the social world and human behavior. The module ends with an assignment in which you will apply these theories to understandings of the police. In module 4 we will explore ideas from social thinkers from other parts of the world



whose ideas arose in different time periods.

References

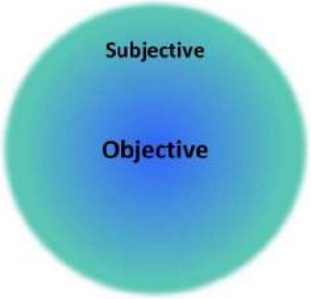
Fauré, Christine, Jacques Guilhaumou, Jacques Vallier, and Françoise Weil. 2007 [1999]. *Des Manuscrits de Sieyès, 1773–1799*, Volumes I and II. Paris: Champion.

3.1: Readings
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3.1: Readings

A) Positivism and Anti Positivism

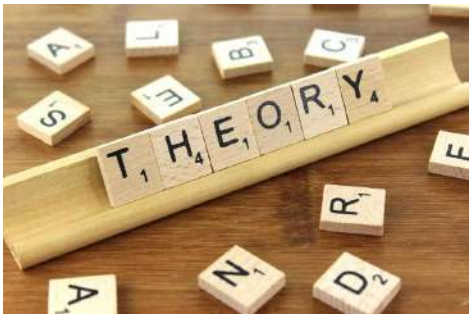


Comte emphasized the scientific study of society, using methods that replicated those of the natural sciences, with the goal of uncovering "social facts." He also introduced the idea of *positivism* into the social sciences. Watch the two videos below on *positivism* and *anti-Positivism*.

1) Watch this video on positivism, which details Comte's idea of positivism and how it guides sociological inquiry. It details positivism as a scientific and systematic approach, emphasizing empirical observation and the experimental method. These guiding principles for sociological inquiry aimed to overcome metaphysical and religious explanations and uncover social and behavioral regularities. Comte believed there are stages of societal development; The theological, metaphysical and the positivist. Positivism's goal is to identify both social statics and social dynamics.

2) Watch this video on anti-positivism, introduced in the late 19th and early 20th century. It outlines the key proponents, Wilhelm Dilthey, heinrich rickert, Max Weber, ThomasKuhn and Talcott Parsons. The anti-positivism movement introduced humanistic sociology or interpretivist sociology.

B) The Sociological Theories



Below is a brief definition of the 3 major sociological theories; *Structural Functionalism*, *Conflict Theory* and *Symbolic Interactionism*

Structural Functionalism (macro-level analysis): Sees society as interrelated parts or structures (social institutions) and focuses on social stability. When instability occurs, institutions must adjust to reestablish social order and harmony.

Conflict Theory (macro-level analysis)- Sees society as characterized by inequality and power dynamics and challenge the status quo and encourages social change in order to equitize these power imbalances.

Symbolic Interactionism (micro-level analysis)—sees society as meaning making that occurs through social interaction. Meanings is fluid in that it can vary over time and from group to group.

Social Constructionism is most often not included as one of the sociological theories, yet it is an influential set of ideas about the social world that that has many common assumptions to Symbolic Interactionism. In their pinnacle book, *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966), Berger and Luckmann argue these points:

- Categories are not innate or inherent to objects or ideas; people create categories and concepts which shape (construct) reality
- People develop knowledge of the world in a social context and that much of what we perceive as reality depends on shared assumptions
- Knowledge is socially constructed – knowledge arises out of human relationship. What we take to be true and objective arises in cultural and historical contexts
- Language is central to social constructionism…language is not neutral; it is rule-governed, and it places parameters around what we can and do know (Sapir Whorf Hypothesis)
- Knowledge construction is politically driven

Now watch this CrashCourse video, which defines the idea of a theoretical paradigms (this is another way to say theories), looks at micro macro level analysis, and explores the three major paradigms : *Structural Functionalism*, *Conflict Theory* and *Symbolic Interactionism.*

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3.2: Classroom Activity

After exploring the ideas of *positivism* and *anti-positivism* you will now debate these viewpoints.

The class is divided into two groups, one is assigned positivism and the other anti-positivism.



Get into your group and discuss the main ideas of the viewpoint you are assigned.

Develop an argument for why this is this viewpoint should be followed in sociological inquiry. Review the ideas of the key proponents of your viewpoint as group members can take on their roles. Remember different proponents within the same viewpoint hold slightly different ideas and beliefs.

Create a platform for debate by prompting with one or many of the following questions and have the two groups debate.

1. Why is your viewpoint the one that should be the guiding principle for sociological inquiry?
2. How do you interpret and argue the possibility (or lack thereof) of objectivity in sociological inquiry?
3. Is understanding meaning important in sociological research? Why or Why not?
4. Let's go with meaning is important how can researchers get at meaning using either of the two viewpoints?
5. Not yet having this knowledge from our course do you believe that the historical development of sociology makes one of these viewpoints more relevant? Why?

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3.3: Homework

The homework assignment is to write an essay (30 points) in which you apply the three sociological theories; Structural Functionalism, Conflict Theory and Symbolic Interactionism.

Write at least a paragraph for each theory that details how someone from that theoretical perspective would understand and analyze the police.

This can include explaining why the police exist and how they operate in society.



RUBRIC (total 36 points)

Criteria	**Structural Functionalism** (10 pts)	**Conflict Theory** (10 pts)	**Symbolic Interactionism** (10 pts)
Thesis & Theory Explanation (4 pts)	• States that policing enforces social norms, maintains order, promotes cohesion and manages dysfunction. (Macro focus)	- Frames police as tools of power serving elite interests. - Mentions class conflict, resource control, inequality (macro level).	- Highlights importance of symbols (badges, uniforms), labeling, meaning in policing. - Connects micro-level interactions to identity & perception.
Depth of Concept Use (4 pts)	- Applies: manifest/latent functions, social cohesion, dysfunctions.	- Uses: power dynamics, inequality, oppression, class struggle.	- Uses: symbols, meaning-making, labeling, self-fulfilling prophecy.
Examples & Analysis (2 pts)	- e.g., enforcing traffic laws (manifest); over-policing erodes trust (latent dysfunction).	- e.g., racial profiling, protecting elite interests, reproducing inequality.	- e.g., badge/uniform shaping trust/fear, body cam interactions, meaning in traffic stops.
Writing Quality & Structure (evaluative across all) (2 pts)	- Coherent, well-structured writing with clear transitions and minimal errors.	—	—

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Western and non-Western perspectives

In this module we explore and analyze the differences between Western and non-Western ways of understanding the world.



Sociology is a western discipline that developed in a particular context at a particular time. Its beginnings are attributed to and written by white men of a particular social status. August Comte (1798-1857) and other “founding fathers” (gender intentional) were white men of a certain class who had a specific perspective on society that was presented as universal truths These founders aligned with the Structural Functionalist perspective and viewed the ideas of modernity as the way towards progress. Key aspects of modernity are: Industrialization and capitalism, rationalization and bureaucracy, secularization, individualism, democracy and nation states. Since many other parts of the world did not follow what characterized European modernity these cultures were often seen as uncivilized and in need of help from the West, which helped justify Western Imperialism.



While University of Chicago takes credit for the first sociology department in the United States, WEB DuBois was a contemporary who theorized and empirically documented the causes of racial and social inequality yet was largely ignored by the field in its inception. Dubois initially taught at Wilberforce University. He later worked at University of Pennsylvania where he studied Black communities in Philadelphia and then he taught for many years at Atlanta University doing much of his work on race and society.

Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) was also doing sociology in its inception, yet was largely ignored as a contributor to the inception of the field. She was born in England She translated Comte’s work into English, allowing the English-speaking world to access his ideas. Martineau visited the United States from 1834–36 during which she spanned great distance fro New York to Boston, and from Chicago to Atalanta throughout Georgia. Upon returning to England, she published a critique of the United States. Her work at this point primarily focused upon the abolition of slavery and the emancipation of women. She criticized the Declaration of Independence by stating that the principle of equal rights focused solely on men and ignored the rights of women. Given the societal focus on male dominance it is not surprising Martineau’s work and ideas were sidelined in the 1800s.



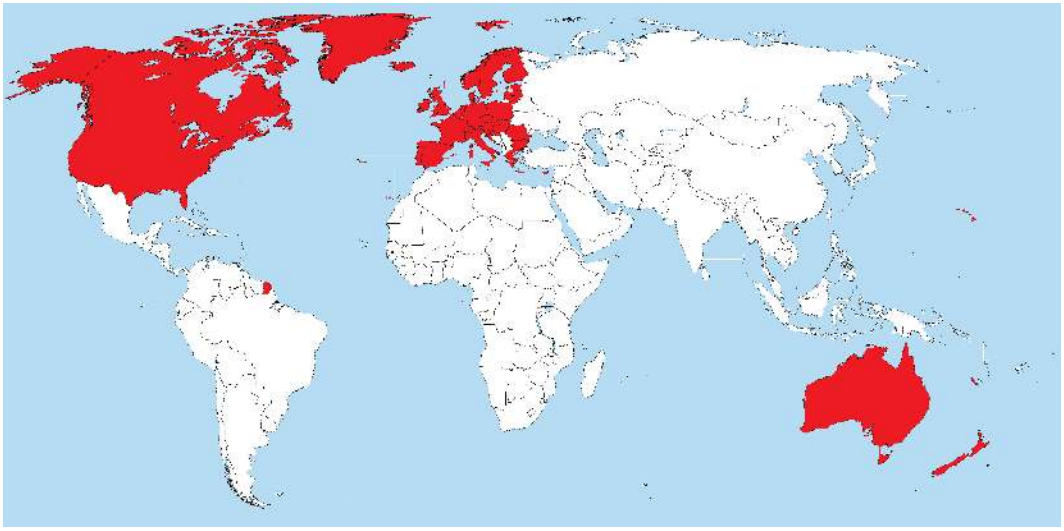
References

Morris, A. (2017). *The scholar denied: WEB Du Bois and the birth of modern sociology*. University of California Press.

4.1: Readings
4.2: Classroom Activity
4.3: Homework

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4.1: Readings



This is an introduction to sociology course and sociology developed as a Western discipline; therefore, it is steeped in Western epistemology. To understand that this is one way of understanding the world we will compare Western epistemology and non-Western/indigenous epistemologies. Have you ever pondered that your way of understanding the world, what you consider to be true and part of your knowledge base, is not universal? Epistemology is the theoretical perspective that explores what knowledge is, how we acquire it, and what its limits are. Many writers highlight the distinctions between Western epistemology and non-Western/indigenous epistemologies. (see W. Mignolo, 2012; D. Foley, 2003; Ahenhead and Ogawa, 2007; Hlabangane, 2021; Ahmad, 2021; F. Mazzocchi, 2018; Stein, Ahenakew, Valley, Sherpa, Crowson, Robin, Mendes, Evans, 2024). Many non-Western thinkers challenge the dominance of Western perspectives in social science, highlighting the limitations of applying Western theories to diverse societies.

As you read the following texts think about how Meghji's perspective on decolonizing sociology and how it overlaps as well as differs from Reiter's ideas.

1) Read the following article, *Fuzzy Epistemology: Decolonizing the Social Sciences* (2019) By Bernd Reiter

In this article Reiter discusses the characteristics of Western epistemology as grounded in Aristotelian binary logic, which is characterized by clear distinctions and mutual exclusivity, and a this or that framework. Fuzzy epistemologies, or indigenous cultures in Africa, India and South America embraces ambiguity, non-discreteness, and a this and that framework. Reiter also highlights how our methodology is rooted in binary ways of understanding, such as the) and 1s that program computers, linear regression and the binary: independent variable and the dependent variable. He claims we need to use a different methodological tool, Charles Ragin's Fuzzy Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) and in doing so he questions the notion of objective value-free research. Reiter discusses the suppression of non-Western epistemologies due to colonialism and advocates for their revival and reintegration.

2) Read the introduction to the book, *Decolonizing sociology* by Ali Meghji (2021)

In this introduction Meghji outlines how sociology developed in the Global North and universalized Western experiences and perspectives while I t marginalized and misrepresented epistemologies and ways of living and being in the Global South. Meghji calls for a reconfiguration of sociological theory and methodologies to address historical biases and promote epistemic justice. This can be accomplished through horizontal dialogues between different knowledge systems which will move us away from intellectual imperialism to a more equitable and comprehensive understanding of social phenomena.

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4.2: Classroom Activity

Watch the video Decolonised Education Explained in Simple Terms by Dr Lwazi Lushaba, a South African political scientist and faculty member in the Department of Political Studies at the University of Cape Town, whose work critiques colonialism, modernity and the epistemological foundations of the social sciences. In this video Dr Lushaba discusses why we need to decolonize education and ways we can do that by providing two examples, architecture and medicine.







Break the class into two groups. Assign one group to architecture and the other to medicine. The groups present their ideas that address the following:

Discuss the field you are assigned by highlighting how it is seen as colonized.

Provide ways in which the field can be decolonized.

Address why Dr Lusha, as well as members of the group, believe the field should (or should not) be decolonized. Explain your rationale.

Discuss with your group, or as a whole class, what other fields can be decolonized, how, and why is that important.

Illuminate how these ideas converge with and deviate from both Reiter's and Meghji's ideas.

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4.3: Homework



For the assignment you will be further analyzing Western vs non-Wester/indigenous understandings. The assignment includes two parts. The first part requires you to further discuss the reading by Bernd Reiter. The second part is to find a text that discusses non-Western/indigenous understandings and compare and contrast to the understandings in your own culture.

1) After reading the Bernd Reiter article *Fuzzy Epistemology: Decolonizing the Social Sciences* (2019) you are prepared to discuss the ideas in more detail. Review the article and then write up a discuss of the article that addresses the following:



*How does Reiter describe Western Epistemology? What are its characteristics?

*How does Reiter describe Fuzzy Epistemology? What are its characteristics?

*What does Reiter say about statistical analysis and computers?

*Find a quote you like, attach it and state what it means to you and why you like it.

*What is one question you have about the article? Why is this something you either do not understand fully or want to know more about?

2) In order to further explore non- Western/ indigenous cultural understandings about the world find a scholarly article and discuss the beliefs/practices in the culture and explain how they are similar and different than your own.



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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: The 90s- Introduction of New Theories

The Sociological theories introduced in Module 3; Structural Functionalism, Conflict Theory were both introduced in the 19th century and Symbolic Interactionism in the 1960's. In this module we will explore a few newer theories, those introduced into the field beginning in the 1990s. We will cover Postmodernism, Feminist Theory-including Standpoint Theory, Queer Theory, and Critical Race Theory.

You will engage with the ideas in these perspectives by analyzing the healthcare system in the US. Finally you will use the knowledge you gained in this section to compose an essay that critically assess and applies one of the theories.





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5.1: Readings
5.2: Classroom Activity
5.3: Homework

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5.1: Readings

Postmodernist Theory in sociology is a perspective, which emerged in the mid 20th century as a rejection of the Modernist project.

The Modernist project emerged in the late 19th century in the west with the transition from agrarian to industrial societies. Enlightenment ideals were a major influence in the principles of modernity with its emphasis on rationality and a trust in science and technology as the primary ways to understand the world and the routes to progress. In contrast Postmodernism rejects this confidence in science and technology as it rejects the idea of a metanarratives, absolute or objective truths urging us to see knowledge and truth as subjective and multiple. Furthermore, it addresses the role of language, and discourse in shaping knowledge, which is seen as a non-neutral political project.

Modernism constructs a uniform understanding of societies, while postmodernism sees the complexity, fluidity and instability of social realities. Furthermore, rather than static, identities are seen as multiple, changing and at times fragmented in contemporary society (see Stuart Hall, 1990; Judith Butler, 1990; Zygmunt Bauman, 2000; Paul Gilry, 1993; Anthony Giddens, 1991).

Hall, S. (1990). *Cultural identity and diaspora*. In J. Rutherford (Ed.), Identity: Community, culture, difference (pp. 222–237). Lawrence & Wishart.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.

Gilroy, P. (1993). *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. Harvard University Press.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*. Stanford University Press.

Postmodern theorists such as Jean Baudrillard coined the term *hyperreality***,** which describes a media-saturated society in which the distinction between reality and simulation is blurred. Jacques Derrida was a major proponent of deconstructionism, a process that looks at texts, language and symbols to uncover deeper and hidden meanings. Michel Foucault work looks at power relations and how they shape knowledge and how institutionalized power exerts control over bodies. These perspectives ultimately question who gets to define truth and why. Postmodernism has been criticized for being radically relativistic leaving no ability to take a moral stance as every position is seen as equally valid.

Now Read the Simple Psychology article that provides a clear and concise definition of postmodernism as well as a comprehensive comparison between modernism and postmodernism.

Feminist theory is a broad framework that looks at gender inequities, including how social institutions under patriarchy create and perpetuate these inequities and how these power dynamics influence the lived experiences of individuals. Feminists see gender as a social construct, which means gender differences are not innate and hence are not fixed. Feminists critique the male-centric biases in traditional sociology and advocate for a standpoint that includes, if not prioritizes, the perspectives and experiences of women and other marginalized genders that have been largely ignored to generate a comprehensive understanding of society.

There are many different branches of feminist theory, some more theoretical and some with activist leanings. Liberal feminism advocates for legal equality and policy reforms within the given structures. Radical feminism focuses on society as patriarchal, which solely benefits men. They believe the entire system needs to be dismantled and rebuilt in order for women to be liberated. Some radical feminists advocate for a TERF (trans exclusionary radical feminism) position. Marxist/socialist feminism looks at the intersection of capitalism and gender oppression. Black Feminism/Afro feminism centers the experiences of black women as it critiques mainstream feminism as white and middle-class centric. Eco-feminism is a branch of feminism that examines the connections between women and nature. Its name was coined by French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974. This branch of feminism is a philosophical and activist movement that connects the exploitation of women and the natural environment, arguing that the same systems of power—particularly patriarchy and capitalism—oppress both.

d'Eaubonne, F. (2022). *Feminism or Death: How the women's movement can save the planet*. Verso Books.

Watch the video *What is Feminism?: Feminism explained simply*. This video details the origins of feminism, the waves of feminism and modern feminism. The video opens by stating that feminism is equality of the sexes. It is more common to state equality of the genders. Sex is associated with biology (we will discuss this in module 15) and gender with the way an individual defines their gender identity. An individual's body is not always aligned, as culture defines this, with gender identity. One's body can align with the medical profession's and hence cultural, definition of the male or female body (In module 15 we will discuss intersex bodies, those that do not align with the culturally accepted idea of the female and male bodies in Module 15) and if that individual's gender aligns with that assignment, we call that cisgender. For example, if one is assigned female at birth and whose

gender identity is female/woman then that individual is cisgener. Yet one can be assigned female at birth and identify as a gender other than female/woman. In the more inclusive feminisms one's gender identity not biology is used to define women.

Watch this video Why is Feminism so Controversial by Amy McPhie Allebest, which explains the origins of the word "Feminism," what Feminism means, radical Feminism, First Wave & Second Wave Feminisms, and Intersectionality. Amy McPhie Allebest is a scholar, historian, writer, and independent podcast host. Allebest began the *Breaking Down Patriarchy* project during her master's degree at Stanford University in 2020, which uses essential historical texts to better understand the origins of patriarchy and to deconstruct its unjust effects on our minds, relationships, and communities.

Standpoint Theory asserts how knowledge is shaped by social positions, and the perspectives of marginalized groups, especially women, offer a more complete and critical understanding of society. Standpoint theory makes three principal claims: (1) Knowledge is socially situated. (2) Marginalized groups are socially situated in ways that make it more possible for them to be aware of things and ask questions than it is for the non-marginalized. (3) Research, particularly that focused on power relations, should begin with the lives of the marginalized. Two of the more influential texts on Standpoint Theory are Dorothy Smith The Everyday World as Problematic and Sandra Harding Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?

Smith, D. E. (1987). *The everyday world as problematic: A feminist sociology*. University of Toronto Press.

Harding, S. (1991). *Whose science? Whose knowledge?: Thinking from women's lives*. Cornell University Press.

Read the article *Transforming the Inner Circle: Dorothy Smith's Challenge to Sociological Theory* by Patricia Hill Collins, that delineates Smith's critiques of traditional sociological theory, emphasizing the need for a more inclusive approach that centers women's experiences and challenges the male-dominated inner circle of sociology. The key ideas addressed are:

1. Critique of Male-Dominated Sociology
2. Advocacy for a Sociology Rooted in Women's Experiences
3. Role of Objectified Knowledge in Domination
4. Underemphasis on Diversity and Local Knowledges
5. Tension in Transforming Sociological Frameworks, especially in the separation between the theoretic and the empirical.

Collins, P. H. (1992). Transforming the inner circle: Dorothy Smith's challenge to sociological theory. *Sociological Theory*, *10*(1), 73-80.

Queer Theory emerged in the late 20th century and seeks to disrupt binary thinking including male/female, gay/straight as it questions the normative categories that define sexuality. In doing so, queer theory deconstructs the rigidity of categories which limit personal expression. It sees these categories as fluid and dynamic as opposed to fixed or innate and challenges power structures. While the term queer has historically been used in a derogatory way, it has been reclaimed by the LGBTQIA+ community as a statement of resistance. Some of the prominent academics in the field are Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Michel Foucault, Gayle Rubin, Jack Halberstam, and Jose Esteban Munoz.

Read this article by Steven Seidman, *Queer-Ing Sociology, Sociologizing Queer Theory: An Introduction,* in which Seidman explores the intersection of queer theory and sociology, highlighting the historical neglect of sexuality in sociological studies and advocating for a deeper integration of queer perspectives into the prevailing sociological paradigms. The author highlights sexuality as a political fact and sees sexuality as unstable and fluid, going against the prevailing conceptualization of the time.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged in the US in the 1970s/early 1980s amongst legal scholars, led by Derrick Bell, Kimberlie Crenshaw, Richard Delgado and Mari Matsuda. As a theoretical framework CRT examines the limitations of the civil rights movement by examining race and racism from a macro level perspective. Some of the main ideas of CRT are that racism is part of fabric of our institutions; race is not biological, but rather a social construct created to establish racial hierarchy; identities are intersectional and one's racialized experience is influenced by other aspects of our identities such as gender, class, disability, age, sexuality, religion, among others.

1. Read The article, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction,* by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic provides an overview of the foundational concepts, history, and key themes of Critical Race Theory (CRT) by exploring the work of scholars and activists focusing on examining and transforming the relationship between race, racism, and power. The article covers the definition of CRT, its origins and influences, the major themes expansive spread. The article concludes by examining the criticism and responses and the key current issues. The article includes classroom exercises, judicial excerpts, and a glossary for deeper understanding.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2023). *Critical race theory: An introduction* (Vol. 87). NyU press.

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5.2: Classroom Activity

After all of the reading on the newer sociological perspectives you will put this knowledge to use.

As this classroom activity divide students to five groups, each assigned one of the theories; postmodernism, feminism, queer theory and critical race theory. Each group woll discuss how that perspective would analyze the healthcare system in the United States.

Each group will share their perspective and as a group discuss the pros and cons and the limitations of each of the theories.

Among the issues you can address are



1) treatment access

2) treatment discrimination

3) racialized and gendered research, practices and understandings

4) Alternative medicine (that which health insurance companies in the West will not cover)

5) Demographic of the medical profession; who is included and who is excluded

6) Mental Health and medical assess and coverage

7) Analysis through the lens of the perspective of the current changes and proposed changes in the US

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5.3: Homework

For this assignment choose one of the theoretical paradigms discussed in this module, one that you were not assigned for the group activity. You will apply your knowledge of the theory that you gleaned from the readings and videos as well as what you learned from the in-class group discussions.

Write an essay that details how the perspective you choose is situated historically, highlighting how the ideas are a response to the historical moment, in and out of academia.

Next provides a detailed critique of the theory illuminating the pros and cons and limitations.

Conclude with a discussion of how you see this perspective as useful or not useful in our current socio-political context, explaining why.

RUBRIC (40 points)



Criteria	Points	Excellent (full points)	Developing	Needs Improvement
1. Historical Context & Understanding	**10 pts**	Identifies paradigm clearly (unused in group); deeply situates it historically and academically.	Adequately explains origin/context; may lack depth or detail.	Paradigm unclear; historical placement is weak or missing.
2. Critical Analysis	**10 pts**	Balanced and insightful critique; well-supported strengths and limitations using evidence.	Identifies pros and cons; analysis is basic or unbalanced.	Superficial critique; few or no weaknesses discussed, lacking support.
3. Contemporary Relevance	**10 pts**	Applies theory to current socio-political issues with clear, relevant examples.	Makes some connection to today; examples may be vague or weak.	Little to no demonstration of real-world relevance or evidence.
4. Writing Quality & Structure	**10 pts**	Clear, logical essay structure (intro, body, conclusion); polished writing with minimal errors.	Generally organized with occasional lapses; several minor errors.	Disorganized; frequent grammar/mechanical errors hinder clarity.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Marginalized and Non-Western Social Thinkers



In Module 3 we discussed the three canonical sociological theories, Structural Functionalism, Conflict theory and Symbolic Interactionism and in Module 5 some newer theories. All theories come out of a particular place at a particular time written by particular individuals, which means particular perspectives are included and others excluded. In order to get a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the social world, we need to incorporate many different perspectives.

In this module, we will examine the contributions of several influential social thinkers who have been marginalized for various reasons: W.E.B. Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, Ibn Khaldun, Pandita Ramabai, Julian Samora, and Edward Said. We will explore their ideas through readings and discussions, followed by a classroom activity that deepens our engagement with their work. Additionally, you will complete an assignment that involves a detailed analysis of selected quotes from each thinker.



By the end of this module, you'll gain a deeper appreciation of diverse intellectual traditions that challenge mainstream sociology and enrich our understanding of society.

6.1: Readings
6.2: Classroom Activity
6.3: Homework

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6.1: Readings

Read the text and watch the following videos on each of the social thinkers:

1) WEB Dubois (1868-1963): William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, better known as W.E.B. Du Bois, was born on February 23, 1868, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. was a philosopher, sociologist, historian, and a civil rights activist. He wrote prodigiously and established himself as the leading intellectual on race and the plight of black Americans.



Watch the this short video bio on DuBois:

2) Frantz Fanon (1925-1961): Frantz Fanon, born in Fort-de-France, Martinique, then a French colony, was a psychiatrist, philosopher, revolutionary, and an influential thinker in postcolonial studies, critical race theory and psychiatry. His most read works are Black Skin, White Masks (1952) and The Wretched of the Earth (1961).

Watch this video on Fanon's "On Violence," the first section of his book *Wretched of the Earth*:



3) Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406): Ibn Khaldun was an Arab Muslim scholar who is regarded as an influence in the development of many fields including sociology and history. His magnus opus, the Muqaddimah (The Introduction, 1377) is considered one of the earliest works of sociology. His concept *asabiyyah* (translated as "nerve" and "social cohesion") can be seen in the work of the Structural Functionalists who emphasize social solidarity as part of a healthy society. He proposed that history follows a cyclical pattern not linear.

Watch this short video bio on Khaldun:

4) Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922): Pandita Ramabai was an Indian social reformer, educator, Sanskrit scholar and women's rights advocate whose work challenged the social norms by pushing for the emancipation of women through education and an end to child marriage in colonial India. Pandita and her mother were educated by her father at a time when women's education was discouraged. In fact, she was the first woman to be awarded the titles of Pandita as a Sanskrit scholar.

Watch this short video bio on Ramabia:

5) Julian Samora (1920-1966): Julian Samora was an American teacher, scholar and community activist who helped to pioneer the field of Latino Studies. Samora was the first Mexican-American to ever receive a doctorate in sociology and advocated for education for the Mexican-American community. Samora is considered by many to be a pioneer in Mexican-American Studies and U. S./Mexico Border Studies in the Midwest, which inlcuded research in the 1950s and 1960sn that influenced government policies toward Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants. He was named Professor Emeritus at the University of Notre Dame where he taught for 26 years.

Watch this short video bio on Julian Samora:

6) Edward Said (1935-2003): Edward Said, was a Palestianian public intellectual, holding a position at Columbia University as professor of English and Comparative Literature for nearly 40 years. He has been credited with laying the foundation for postcolonial studies and for being an advocate for Palestinian rights. He is most known for his work, Orientalism (1978), which critically examines global power dynamics and knowledge production, by detailing how the West has constructed and represented the East in ways that perpetuate stereotypes and justify colonialism.

Watch this video on Edward Said's detailing his concept *Orientalism*:



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6.2: Classroom Activity

In this classroom activity you will use the information learned in the reading section of Module 6.

Preparation

Divide the class into 6 groups and assign each group one of the social thinkers: WEB DuBois, Frantz Fanon, Ibn Khaldun, Pandita Ramabai, Julian Samora, Edward Said whom they will embody.

1) Research
Students review the information that read and watched in the reading section of Module 6, and gather key information about their social thinker, focusing on:

Early life and background

Major achievements or contributions as a social think

Challenges faced and how they were overcome

2) *Develop Interview Questions (10-15 minutes):*

Students prepare 5–8 thoughtful questions they would ask their figure. Example prompts include:

What inspired you to pursue your career?

Can you describe a pivotal moment in your life?

What challenges did you face, and how did you overcome them?





Activity Execution (20–30 minutes)

Pair students from different groups and assign one the role of interviewer and the other role of interviewee.

Role-Playing:
Students conduct the interview, with the "interviewee" staying in character and the "interviewer" posing their prepared questions.

Rotation:
After 10 minutes, rotate roles or partners to allow students to experience all the perspectives.

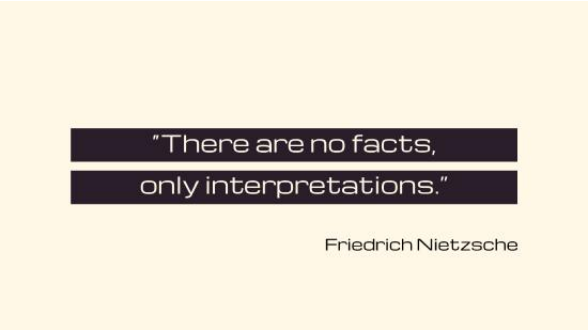
Reflection and Discussion

- Group Sharing:
  Invite students to share interesting insights or surprising facts they learned during the interviews.
- Class Discussion:
  Discuss the importance of understanding historical and contemporary figures and how their experiences shape our world today.

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6.3: Homework

For this assignment you will further explore the ideas of the social thinkers introduced in Module 6. Ponder this quote by Nietzsche. What do you think he mean? Remember this was written at a historical moment before the internet and often heard "fake facts."



Follow these instructions

For each assigned thinker (quotes below):

1. **Choose a quote** (from list or elsewhere).
2. **Explain** why you chose it.
3. **Contextualize** briefly—time, place, key events shaping the thinker.
4. **Interpret** it—what does it mean, given their ideas?
5. **Connect** to module themes/readings.

Introduction (1 paragraph)
– Introduce the assignment and list thinkers.
– Present a clear thesis: *What common insight links these quotes?*

Body (one section per thinker):

- **1. Quote & Choice Reason** — "I chose X because…"
- **2. Context Snapshot** — time, place, historical conditions.
- **3. Thinker's Focus & Interpretation** — what core idea does the quote show?
- **4. Module Link** — tie it to themes/readings (e.g., power, modernity).

Conclusion (1 paragraph)
– Summarize key findings across thinkers.
– Highlight why understanding context + quote deepens insight.

DuBois quotes:

"A system cannot fail those whom it was never meant to protect."

"It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity."

"Either America will destroy ignorance, or ignorance will destroy the United States."

Fanon Quotes:

"Colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence."

"He who is reluctant to recognize me opposed me."

"Speaking French means accepting the collective consciousness of the French, which identifies blackness with evil and sin."

"Colonization is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the natives' brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it."

Khaldun quotes:

“The past resembles the future more than one drop of water resembles another.”

“If the soul is impartial in receiving information, it devotes to that information the share of critical investigation the information deserves, and its truth or untruth thus becomes clear. However if the soul is infected with partisanship for a particular opinion or sect, it accepts without a moment’s hesitation the information that is agreeable to it. Prejudice and partisanship obscure the critical faculty and preclude critical investigation. The result is that falsehoods are accepted and transmitted.

“The term of life of a dynasty does not normally exceed three generations. For in the first generation are still preserved the characteristic features of rough, uncivilized rural life, such as hard conditions of life, courage, ferocity and partnership in authority. Therefore, the strength of *asabiyyah* is maintained.”

Said Quotes:

“Every empire, however, tells itself and the world that it is unlike all other empires, that its mission is not to plunder and control but to educate and liberate."

“All knowledge that is about human society, and not about the natural world, is historical knowledge, and therefore rests upon judgment and interpretation. This is not to say that facts or data are nonexistent, but that facts get their importance from what is made of them in interpretation… for interpretations depend very much on who the interpreter is, who he or she is addressing, what his or her purpose is, at what historical moment the interpretation takes place.”

“Humanism is the only - I would go so far as saying the final- resistance we have against the inhuman practices and injustices that disfigure human history.”

Julian Samora Quotes:

"I think the thing that has gotten me going is discrimination. I tried to be equal to, and as good as, the Anglos. I wanted to make as much money, speak as well, and have all the goodies as the dominant society. But no matter what I did, I was always a 'Mexican'."

"I have never doubted that our history, our heritage, was important, nor that we had something to contribute to society."

"As I told the gathering, it's about time a major university established a research center for Latinos; that it bears my name is very emotional to me."

Pandita Ramabai Quotes:

"A life committed to God has nothing to fear, nothing to lose, nothing to regret."

"People must not only hear about the kingdom of God, but must see it in actual operation on a small scale perhaps and in imperfect form, but a real demonstration nevertheless."

RUBRIC (12 points per thinker total 72) points

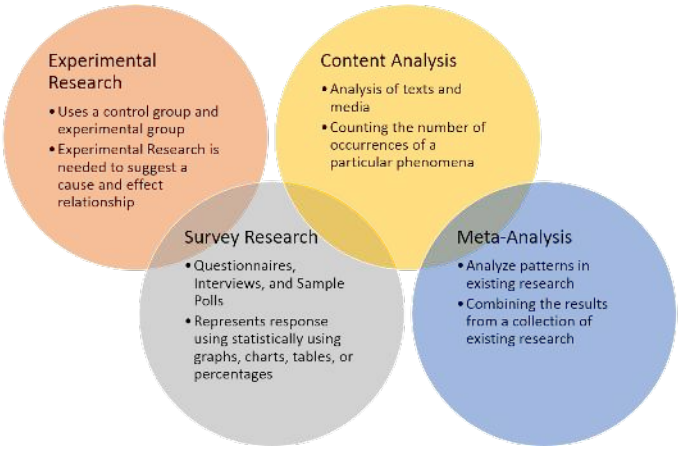
Criterion	Excellent (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Needs Improvement (1–2)
Analysis & Interpretation	Quote is insightful; choice is justified; interpretation is deep and linked to thinker’s ideas and module themes.	Quote is reasonable; interpretation is basic and partly tied to ideas/themes.	Quote unclear or poorly justified; interpretation is shallow or missing theme links.
Context & Evidence	Historical context (time/place/events) is precise; module materials/readings are well-integrated.	Context is stated generally; some use of module evidence.	Context missing or incorrect; lacks supporting evidence.
Structure & Writing	Clear intro/thesis and conclusion; each thinker’s section follows logical structure; writing is polished.	Basic structure present; minor organization or clarity issues; some writing errors.	Disorganized or missing key parts; writing clarity and mechanics need work.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Sociological Methodologies

In this module you will learn about *positivism*, *anti-positivism* or *interpretivism* and how they connect to sociological research methodologies. You will explore the different research methods in the social sciences including quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods.



Studying human behavior is complex and the choices researchers make about the design of their studies is crucial. The following are the decisions a researcher must make before beginning their research:

1) What question are you addressing? What are you seeking to know?

2) Which method will you use? The strength of a study depends on the choice and implementation of the best suited method, so this is a critical step. We will explore a variety of options.

3) What participants will you choose? This decision includes deciding how many participants will be included, The selection method and qualifying criteria you will use.

4) How will you collect the data? Will you use questionnaire? Interviews? Observation? Lab experiment? Depending on the topic and research question, a study might use a single method or a combination of methods.

The data gathered may be unexpected, and the study design should allow for the analyzing of predicted and unpredicted data. The sociologist Max Weber referred to this as "inconvenient facts," describing evidence that counters what we feel, wish, or accept to be true about the world. This is an important reminder to keep your mind open to new ways of seeing, interpreting and understanding. When we remained closed we miss the change to grow and we participate in reproducing what has been as opposed to what could be.

7.1: Readings
7.2: Classroom Activity
7.3: Homework

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7.1: Readings

Read Chapter 2: Sociological Research of OpenSax Introduction to Sociology which explores approaches to sociological research including the scientific method and interpretive methods. This chapter also discusses the different methods used in sociological research, which include survey, field work, experiment, secondary and primary source data analysis. The chapter highlights some of the ethical questions and concerns that come up when doing research on human subjects



Watch the video Sociology Research Methods: Crash Course Sociology #4 in which Nicole Sweeney discusses in detail how sociologists employ the scientific method, qualitative vs quantitative research designs, what it means to use and operationalize variables, and some of the common research methods used in sociology.

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7.2: Classroom Activity



Role Play activity: Researchers in the Field

- Divide the class into 4 or 5 groups and assign each group member a role typical of sociological research:
  - **Lead Researcher** (decides method)
  - **Ethics Officer** (assesses ethical concerns)
  - **Media Analyst** (evaluates how a method applies to current media claims)
  - **Participant/Community Member** (provides voice from "the researched")
  - *(Optional)* **Observer/Reporter** (takes notes, evaluates the process)
- Create a brief scenario. Example: *"Your team is studying online misinformation related to a recent local protest."*

Role-Play Steps

- **Preparation**
- Each role reviews key responsibilities:
  - *Lead Researcher* chooses a method (survey, interview, observation).
  - *Ethics Officer* identifies possible risks (privacy, harm, informed consent).
  - *Media Analyst* articulates how this method helps evaluate media claims.
  - *Participant* shares expectations or concerns about being studied.
- **Execution (10 min)**
- Play out a mock research meeting:
- - Lead Researcher proposes the design.
  - Ethics Officer raises concerns.
  - Participant asks questions—e.g., about confidentiality.
  - Media Analyst critiques how findings might be reported.
- **Observation**
  Observers note dynamics, strengths, weaknesses, and ethical tension points.

Debrief & Reflection

- Reconvene as a full class.
- Observers summarize key takeaways:
  - What surprised them in the research discussion?
  - Where did ethical or methodological tensions arise?
- Rotate roles and repeat if time allows—students learn from multiple perspectives.

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7.3: Homework

For this assignment you will explore the work of Anthropologist Renato Resaldo (b. 1941) and write a two part paper that includes a reflection on his research perspective and an argument essay. Resaldo is an American cultural anthropologist and poet. He earned his Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from Harvard University in 1971 and is known for his fieldwork among the Ilongot people of the Philippines and his studies on cultural citizenship in San José, California. He has authored influential anthropological works such as *Ilongot Headhunting* (1980) and *Culture and Truth* (1989).

Begin by watching these 2 videos.

Watch the video '*Culture & Truth' By Renato Rosaldo* (read by an AI generated voice) that discusses Renato Resaldo's book *Culture & Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis.* This groundbreaking work challenges conventional approaches to social analysis by exploring the complex relationship between culture and truth, offering a fresh perspective on how we understand and interpret social phenomena. The photo on the right is a young man from the Konyok Naga tribe in India, also a headhunting tribe.



Watch this video that details Renato Resaldo's ethnographic study of the Llongots.

Paper Instructions:

Part 1- Reflection on Research Perspective (2 paragraphs)

Prompt:
In two paragraphs, discuss Rosaldo's research perspective in relation to the following:

- The tension between *objectivity and subjectivity* in research.
- The relationship between the researcher and the people they seek to understand.

Be sure to reflect on how Rosaldo's personal experiences affected his understanding, and how this challenges or supports traditional views of "neutral" research.

Part 2 – Argument essay (1 page)

Now, consider Rosaldo's discovery about Ilongot headhunting and contrast it with U.S. cultural norms around grief and violence.

Write a one-page argument paper responding to these questions:

- Should a researcher aim to understand cultural practices without judgement, even if those practices are disturbing? Why or why not?
- Do you think it is ever appropriate for a researcher to try to change a culture's behavior if they consider it harmful or unacceptable? Why or why not?
- If you support understanding without judgment, are there any cultural behaviors that would cross a line for you—something so troubling that you would feel compelled to intervene?

References

Rosaldo, R. (1980). *Ilongot headhunting, 1883-1974: A study in society and history*. Stanford University Press.

Rosaldo, R. (1993). *Culture & truth: The remaking of social analysis*. Beacon Press.

RUBRIC (12 points)

Criterion	Excellent (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Needs Improvement (1–2)
Part 1 – Reflection	Thoroughly addresses objectivity vs. subjectivity and researcher relationships; clearly links Rosaldo's perspective to his methods.	Covers both points but lacks depth or specific linkage.	One or both elements missing or inaccurately discussed.

Criterion	Excellent (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Needs Improvement (1–2)
Part 2 – Argument	Presents well-structured responses to (a), (b), and (c); ideas are clear, logical, and well-supported with examples or reasoning.	Addresses all questions but responses are general or lack clear rationale.	Responses are partial, unclear, or unsupported.
Writing & Structure	Clear organization with smooth transitions; writing is polished and free of errors; assignment formatting is correct.	Generally organized; some writing or formatting issues.	Disorganized, many errors, or formatting not followed.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Culture

There is no single best definition of culture. In fact, numerous researchers have done content analyses on definitions of culture in the literature and have found no consensus. We can say that in general, culture is a system of learned and shared beliefs, language, norms, values, and symbols that groups use to identify themselves and provide a framework within which to live and work and define who they. Sociologists define *material culture* as that which is tangible or sensory such as music, food, architecture and *immaterial culture* as that which is intangible such as values, beliefs, and norms.

In this module you will explore definitions of culture, looking at what elements are a part of culture. You will do activities that explore ideas of cultural relativity and ethnocentrism, and a homework assignment that will provide further exploration into the concepts of cultural norms and values.



8.1: Readings
8.2: Classroom Activity
8.3: Homework

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8.1: Readings

Read Chapter 3:Culture in OpenSax Introduction to Sociology. You will be introduced to definitions of culture, including the concepts ethnocentrism, cultural relativism and xenocentrism. You will discover the elements that make up culture, which include both material and immaterial elements. The chapter explores counter-culture and cultural change and ends with a discussion of the theoretical perspectives on culture.



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8.2: Classroom Activity

There are 2 classroom activities in this module:

Below are examples of two norms, which you will deconstruct by identifying the values or beliefs behind them. This activity can be done in small groups or as the class.

1) ACTIVITY 1: Deconstructing Cultural Norms

Cultural norms do not exist in isolation; they are expressions of the underlying values and belief systems that a society holds. These norms function as guidelines for acceptable behavior, but they are ultimately rooted in what a culture deems significant, moral, or desirable. To critically deconstruct social norms, it is essential to examine the cultural values and beliefs that sustain them, as these foundational ideas shape not only individual behaviors but also collective social expectations and institutions.

Below are 2 examples of cultural norms. This can be done in small groups or as a whole class. Your task is to deconstruct the norms by identifying the cultural values and beliefs they reflect and to examine the reasons for their development within the social context.

Norm 1: The Urinal Norm


A row of urinals in a public restroom. Toilet men urinal.

What is the "urinal norm"?
Reflect on this behavior:

- If you walk into a restroom and someone is using urinal #3, which urinal do you choose?
- If people occupy urinals #2 and #4, where do you go?

Most will keep at least one empty urinal between themselves and another person.

Questions to consider:

- Why do we do this?
- What cultural values or beliefs support this norm?

Norm 2: The Heterosexual Dating Norm

What is the "heterosexual dating norm"?
Think about these traditional expectations:

- Who typically pays for dinner on a heterosexual date?

Historically, and in many cases this remains today, it's been the man's responsibility.

Questions to consider:

- Why has this become the norm?
- What cultural values or assumptions underlie this expectation?

---

c) Your Own Social Norm

Choose a norm you've observed.

1. Describe the behavior: What is expected/considered my most people socially acceptable?
2. Explain the why: What values or beliefs uphold this norm?

ACTIVITY 2: Cultural Relativism and Ethnocentrism

Let's now take a look at two important concepts when discussing culture.



Cultural relativism – the belief that cultures should be assessed on their own terms. This position avoids looking at any cultures as a standard of "good" by which others should be compared.

Ethnocentrism – the belief that your culture (ethnic group) is central or superior to others. This viewpoint encourages comparison to your own culture which is considered the standard to which to aspire.

The Albatros Activity can be done in small groups or as a class.

Read the text and answer the following questions:

1) How many genders are there in the Albatros culture? What in the text leads you to that conclusion?

2) Is one of the genders in higher status than the other(s) What in the text leads you to that conclusion?

3) Additionally think about observation vs Interpretation. Look at the last paragraph and identify each sentence as observation or interpretation (no statement will be pure observation or all interpretation). If there is any interpretation in the sentence then list that sentences as interpretation. State why you believe the sentence is observation or interpretation.

TEXT:

We walked into a room where a man was dressed in Eastern or Asian garb but in a somewhat indistinguishable manner; he could have been a king or a Buddhist monk. A woman sat beside him, and she was also dressed in a similar indistinguishable fashion.

There was no talking whatsoever in this training session, which lasted for about 10 minutes. The "king" beckoned the males to sit on chairs, after which he indicated that the females should sit at their feet. He then greeted each male silently and in standing position; he clasped each male by the arms and then gently rubbed his hands on the males' sides. The males did as the king instructed, but there was some nervousness and laughter, although no talking. The king then bowed to each female.

Next, the king presented a large vase of water to each male, and he drank of it. The King then did the same thing with each female. The king and queen then talked before the volunteers, peering intently at the females. After a minute or two, the king put on a satisfied look and made a noise as if satisfied. He then looked at the queen, who nodded in agreement. The queen then took the hand of one female in order to lead her to a sitting position on the ground between the king and queen. Next, the king and queen tried to push the female's head toward the ground as she sat on the ground between them (they were on chairs), but she resisted. They tried once again, but she still resisted

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8.3: Homework

Homework Assignments: Norms and New Yorker Cartoons

For this assignment you will be identifying cultural norms and connecting them to the various areas of sociological inquiry.

1) Before you begin:

Before you begin your analysis and write up think about the follow; the areas in which sociologists work. Below is a list of some of these areas. What can you add to this list? Remember anything can be studied sociologically. It is all about the questions we ask and the methods we use.



Let's also take a closer look at two aspects of immaterial culture; norms and values.

Norms are the rules or standards prescribing how one ought to act, think, even feel in a particular social/cultural context.

Norms are internalized and can become taken-for-granted

Values are the belief that certain actions, behaviors and beliefs are good or bad, moral or immoral, ethical or not ethical etc.

Looking at the relationship between values and norms reveals a great deal about cultural ideology. Norms don't emerge arbitrarily—they reflect underlying cultural values and beliefs. Because values shift over time and vary by context, social norms are equally fluid and diverse.

For example, in Aristotle's time, many believed that women were less capable than men in public discourse—whether in law, philosophy, or politics. Over time, women have fought for equal rights and access to these arenas. Today, women actively participate in spheres of cultural influence that were once off-limits.

Although gender inequality has persisted for millennia—with women often excluded from formal social domains—many women made significant contributions within their cultural contexts. Sadly, their achievements were frequently erased from written history.

Before we get to the assignment:

a) Watch this video and find out more about norms and values .

b) Watch this short film and identify the norms and values that are both followed and/or violated. Even forms of discrimination can become normalized in a culture, even though they are hurtful and damaging.

2) Let's begin: A closer look at humor and cultural norms.

While there are many types of humor, what makes something funny using the idea of a cultural norm?

A situation can be humorous if it exaggerates or violates a cultural norm



"You tend to overuse the exclamation point."

Overview:

Sociology Assignment: Analyzing New Yorker Cartoons

Select five New Yorker cartoons (current or archived). You can use this site for options New Yorker Cartoons. For each cartoon, answer the following questions in a brief paragraph (3-5 sentences).

Cartoon Analysis Questions

1. **Social Norm(s) Addressed**
   - Identify the social norm(s) being referenced or critiqued.
     Example: "The cartoon highlights our cultural reliance on smartphones in social settings."
2. **Exaggeration or Violation of the Norm**
   - Does the cartoon exaggerate the norm to the point of satire, or depict its outright violation?
     Example: "It exaggerates how everyone has their head buried in their phone—even if they're at a party."
3. **Sociological Alignment**
   - Which area(s) of sociology does the cartoon touch on? (e.g., social norms, deviance, labeling theory, social interaction, institutions, globalization)
     Example: "This cartoon connects to **social norms** and **interaction ritual chains**, emphasizing how digital habits shape our everyday face-to-face interactions."

RUBRIC (total: 12 points)

Criteria	Excellent (4 pts)	Satisfactory (3 pts)	Needs Improvement (1–2 pts)
1. Identification of Norm & Presentation	Clearly names the social norm(s) and thoughtfully describes whether the cartoon exaggerates or subverts it.	Identifies norm(s) and notes exaggeration/subversion, but briefly.	Norm unmentioned or confusion about its presentation.
2. Sociological Connection	Accurately links the cartoon to a relevant sociological concept (e.g., norms, deviance, social institutions).	Mentions a relevant concept with limited explanation.	No clear or incorrect sociological link.
3. Analysis & Writing Quality	Provides insightful commentary (3–5 sentences), well-organized, and virtually error-free.	Clear writing with minor errors; analysis is basic or summary-like.	Writing is unclear or disorganized, or analysis is minimal

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

9: Crime and Deviance

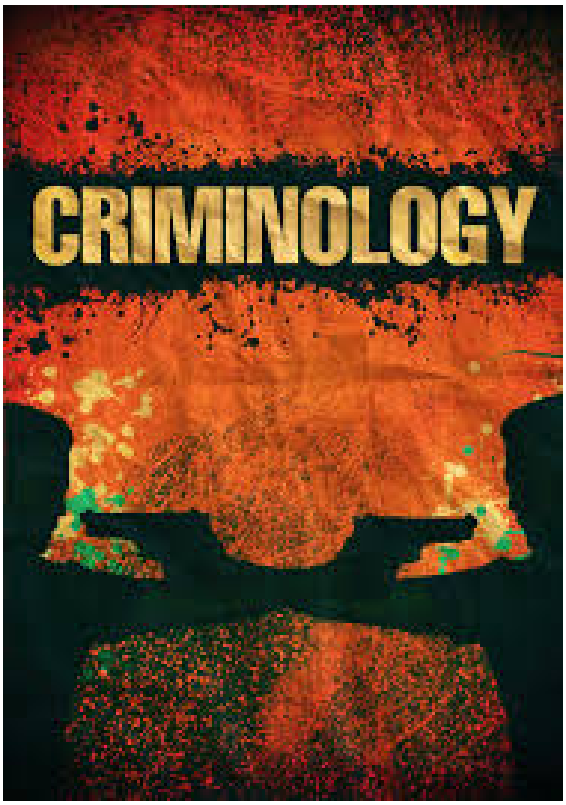


In this module, we explore Crime and Deviance through four major perspectives: Biological theories, including Lombroso's 19th-century "born criminal" concept and sociological approaches; including *Structural Functionalism* , which sees deviance as defining norms, fostering social cohesion, creating roles like policing and corrections, and inspiring social change; *Conflict Theory*, which interprets crime as rooted in power inequalities and the ability of elites to define deviance; and *Symbolic Interactionism*, covering how crime is learned via social interaction (*Cultural Transmission* and *Differential Association*), labeled by society (*Labeling Theory*), and controlled through social bonds (*Control Theory*)

9.1: Readings
9.2: Classroom Activity
9.3: Homework

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9.1: Readings



1) ***Biological Theories:*** Over at least 100 years there have been various ways people have tried to explain crime and deviance. Cesar Lombroso (1835-1909) is often referred to as the "father of criminology." During this time biological determinism was a prevailing theoretical perspective and Lombroso's theory adopts this ideology. He was the founder of the Italian school of positivist criminology, which argued that a criminal mind was inherited and could be identified by physical features and defects. He called this the theory of the 'born criminal.' Lombroso was influenced by Fraz Joseph Gall's phrenological theories, Charles Darwin and Francis Galton.

Heavily influenced by the work of Charles Darwin, Lombroso thought that people are "born criminals", and because criminality was inherited, according to Lombroso, there was no cure. The characteristics of the "born criminal" represented throwbacks to an earlier, sub-human stage of evolution. This has been called Atavistic Theory and this was seen in certain traits such large jaws and cheekbones, asymmetrical skulls, long arms. Abnormal ears and noses. Many of these features are associated with those of African descent as opposed to those of European descent, and it is significant to realize that the Enlightenment ideology of biological determinism was used to legitimate racial hierarchy. While his theories are now discredited, Lombroso is still recognized as shifting the study of crime into a scientific approach. Modern criminology recognizes that crime is influenced by social, psychological and environmental factors.

Read this article by Charlotte Nickerson and reviewed by Saul McLoed, PhD that appeared in Simple Psychology in 2024. This article addresses the biological theories of crime by investigating the history of these theories, which include Degeneration Theory, Atavistic Theory of Crime, Somotypes Theory, Two-Path Theory, and some modern biological theories of crime. The articles ends with a critical evaluation of biological theories of crime and suggestions for further readings.

2) Sociological Theories:

Is it important to realize that no one crime theory can fully explain a crime. Each can play a role in explaining criminal behavior. Let's take a look at the sociological theories of crime and deviance, keeping in mind how they can be in conversation with each other.

Read Chapter 6 of the Open Sax Introduction to Sociology book and then the following discussion of the sociological theories that explain crime and deviance.

A) Structural Functionalism- Aligning with the structural Functionalist framework that holds the view that social structures (institutions) exist because they serve the needs of those in society, crime and deviance exist because they serve a function. (Structural Functionalism does not question the fairness of the institutions nor do its practitioners ask the questions whose needs are met?)

The following are aspects of the Structural Functionalist perspective on crime and deviance:

a) Defines what is acceptable and what is not. For example, Let's imagine that you always got in trouble in grade school for talking too much. At times you had to stand in the hall alone as a punishment. This made it quite clear to the other students that talking in class at certain times is not acceptable. Historic public displays of punishment served this function as well, which served as a clear indication to the public that the behavior exhibited by the punished was against the law or a norm in the culture at the times.

b) Creates solidarity (Structural Functionalists are concerned with social cohesion). The idea is that those who are against crime in a neighborhood bond together while those engaging in the crime do the same, yet this is not always clear and visible.

c) Creates Jobs. There are myriad jobs that deal with and are dependent on crime and deviance. Name some of these occupations

d) *Leads to social change*. Throughout history we have witnessed social change that came about due to demonstrations, uprisings, protests, acts of passive resistance. This is often called positive deviance because it leads to social change. One example in the US is Rosa Parks, who refused to stand up on a bus in Montgomery Alabama during segregation. This led to the Montgomery bus boycotts, which was one branch of the Civil Rights Movement, which in 1955 led to the U.S. Supreme Court's declaration that segregation on public transportation was unconstitutional.

What are some other examples?

B) Conflict Theory – Conflict theory sees society and social institutions as characterized by inequality, domination and oppression. Because different groups have different needs, conflict as expressions of crime and deviance can occur.

Occupy Wallstreet….women's marches, LGBTQIA + ADD

C) Symbolic Interactionist theory on crime and deviance looks at a micro-level and how people learn deviance through social interaction. It will also look at who gets to define what is deviant and what is criminal. Below are the key Symbolic Interationist Theories that explain crime and deviance

> ***Cultural Transmission Theory***- Shaw and Mckay are associated with Cultural Transmission theory, which argues that crime is heavily influenced by the cultural values of a neighborhood, where socially disorganized areas with high population turnover and poverty create conditions conducive to criminal behavior. It investigates how criminal behavior is learned and passed down to individuals and through generations within communities and other influences within the social environment. For example the argument that playing violent video games leads to violence among youth is an example of CTT. Their work is closely tied to the Chicago School of Sociology, which emphasized the importance of studying urban environments to understand crime patterns.
>
> **Labeling Theory** – Howard S. Becker, in the 1960s, is the sociologist most often associated with labeling theory, which looks at how the labels individuals are given influence their behavior, including criminal and deviant behavior. Primary deviance in labeling theory, is the initial act or attitude that causes one to be labeled deviant. However, this label is not internalized and does not become part of a person's deviant identity. It is not until the act becomes labeled or tagged, that secondary deviation may occur.
>
> **Differential Association Theory** Sutherland (1939) asserts that the excess of definitions favorable to deviance over definitions unfavorable to violation of law makes a person become a deviant while associating with other persons.
>
> **Control Theor**y (Hirschi, 1969) believes that everyone has the potential to become a criminal but most people are controlled by their **bond** to society. Crime occurs when the forces that bind people to society are weakened or broken. People are born bad and must be controlled in order to be good.
>
> > People obey the law because behavior and passions are being controlled by external forces. Without controls, one is free to commit criminal acts.
> >
> > A person's behavior is controlled by his or her attachment and commitment to conventional institutions, individuals, and processes. If that commitment is absent, people are free to violate the law and engage in deviant behavior; the uncommitted are not deterred by the threat of legal punishments.

Hirschi linked the onset of criminality to the weakening of the ties that bind people to society. All individuals are potential law violators but are kept under control because they fear that illegal behavior will damage their relationships with friends, parents, neighbors, teachers, and employers. Without these social bonds, a person is free to commit criminal acts.

Elements of the social bond: (i) attachment, (ii) commitment, (iii) involvement, and (iv) belief.

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9.2: Classroom Activity

This module includes two classroom activities:

1. **Critical Assessment of Lombroso's Theory**
   Students will evaluate Cesare Lombroso's theory of criminality, which posits that criminal behavior is biologically determined and can be identified through physical traits. This theory has been widely criticized for its lack of scientific rigor and ethical implications.
2. **Exploration of Positive Deviance**
   Students will examine the concept of positive deviance, which focuses on individuals or groups who violate social norms and/or laws in order to push for social change.

To Begin:

Divide the class into small groups to encourage focused discussions.

After group discussions, reconvene as a class to share insights and foster a broader understanding.

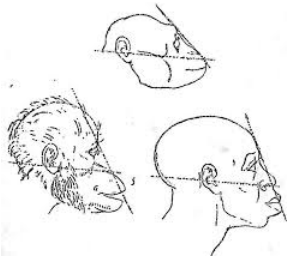


Activity 1: Lombroso's biological theory of crime and deviance

Review the following paragraph discussing Lomboro's theory. Do you identify any logical fallacies? What aspects of his assertions would you critically examine?

People Are born criminals or in other words, less evolved humans who were biologically more related to our more primitive and animalistic urges. From his research, Lombroso took Darwin's Theory and looked at primitive times himself in regard to deviant behaviors. He found that the skeletons that he studied mostly had low foreheads and protruding jaws. These characteristics resembled primitive beings such as Homo Neanderthalensis. He stated that little could be done to cure born criminals because their characteristics were biologically inherited.

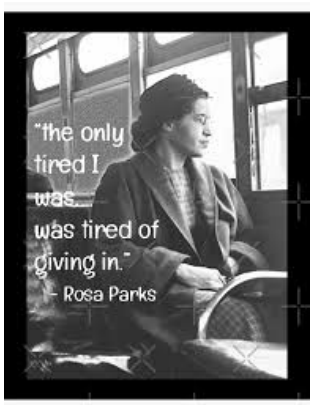




Activity 2: Positive Deviance

In the readings for this module you learned about how the Structural Functionalist perspective views crime and deviance. One of the assertions is that crime and deviance Lead to social change. Throughout history we have witnessed social change that came about due to demonstrations, uprisings, protests, acts of passive resistance and illegal acts. This is often called *positive deviance* because it the intent is social change. One example in the US is Rosa Parks (1913-2005), a seamstress and civil rights activist. On December 1, 1955 Parks refused to stand and give her seat to a white passenger on a bus in Montgomery Alabama during the Jim Crow era of racial segregation. This led to the Montgomery bus boycott that lasted 381 days, which was one of the important events of the Civil Rights Movement, which in 1956 led to the U.S. Supreme Court's declaration that segregation on public transportation was unconstitutional. The myth is that Parks was too tired to stand, yet she is quoted as saying, "The only tired I was, was tired of giving in."

For this activity you will get in small groups and each group will identify someone that you consider a positive deviant. Make sure to answer the following questions and then share with the class.



1) Who is the person you chose as a positive deviant? Present a short bio of the person.

2) What law and/or norm did they violate?

3) What social change were they attempting to catalyze?

4) Why do you think this person is important?

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9.3: Homework



Assigmnent Instructions:

1. **Selection of a Criminal Case**
   Begin by identifying a criminal case—this could be a historical event or a contemporary occurrence. Ensure that there is sufficient documented information about both the crime and the offender to facilitate a comprehensive application of criminological theories to the individual's behavior.
2. **Theoretical Assessment**
   For each criminological perspective studied, analyze how a proponent of that theory would interpret the criminal's behavior. Consider the key principles and assumptions of each theory in your assessment.
3. **Personal Theoretical Evaluation**
   Reflect on which criminological theory or combination of theories you find most compelling in explaining the criminal's behavior. Justify your choice by discussing how these perspectives offer a more accurate or relevant understanding of the case.
4. **References**
   Provide a list of all sources consulted during your analysis, formatted according to APA guidelines. This includes any articles, books, or other materials that informed your understanding and evaluation.

Overview

In this written assignment, you will select a criminal case and apply three major sociological perspectives to explain the behavior of the individual involved. You will also reflect on which theory or theories you believe best explain the case and support your reasoning with evidence.

How to Structure Your Write-Up

1. Title and Introduction (1 paragraph)

- Include a title that reflects your case and the focus of your paper.
- Briefly introduce the criminal case you selected.
- Include who was involved, what happened, and why you chose this case.
- End with a sentence that previews the three theories you'll be applying.

2. Case Summary (1 paragraph)

- Describe the crime in more detail:
  - What happened?
  - Who committed the crime?
  - What were the circumstances (social, economic, personal)?
  - Include any relevant background on the offender (age, family, prior behavior, etc.).
- Keep it factual, objective, and well-supported.

3. Theoretical Analysis (1 paragraph per theory — 3 total paragraphs)

For each of the following perspectives, write one paragraph that includes:

a. Structural Functionalism (including *anomie*)

- How would a functionalist explain why the person committed the crime?
- Did the individual lack social norms or feel disconnected from society (*anomie*)?

b. Conflict Theory

- How might inequality, power differences, or lack of access to resources have influenced the person's actions?
- What does this theory suggest about how laws are applied or enforced?

c. Symbolic Interactionism

- Include at least two sub-theories here:
  - **Cultural Transmission**: How might the person have learned criminal behavior through interactions?
  - **Labeling Theory**: Was the person labeled as "deviant"? How did that affect them?
  - **Control Theory**: What social bonds may have been weak or missing?

4. Personal Evaluation (1–2 paragraphs)

- Which theory (or combination of theories) do you think best explains the case?
- Why does this theory make the most sense to you?
- Support your opinion with examples from the case and the theory's main ideas.

5. References (APA format)

- List all sources you used for your case study and theory research.
- Include proper APA citations (books, articles, websites, etc.).
- You may use your textbook and reliable news sources.

Formatting Guidelines

- Typed, double-spaced, 12-point font (Times New Roman or Arial)
- Use headings for each section if possible (optional but encouraged)
- Length: Around 2-3 pages not including references
- Submit as a Word document or PDF

RUBRIC (total: 30 points)

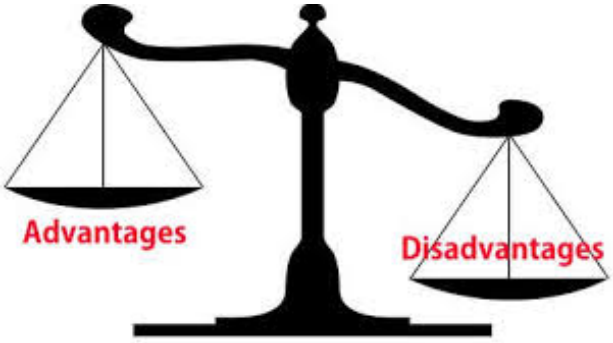
Category	Excellent (Full Points)	Good (Partial Points)	Needs Improvement (Few or No Points)	Points
1. Introduction & Case Summary (5 pts)	Clearly introduces the chosen case, provides relevant background info, and previews the theories used.	Case is introduced but may lack detail or clarity; some background or purpose unclear.	Case is unclear, missing background, or not properly introduced.	___ / 5
2. Structural Functionalism (5 pts)	Clearly explains how a functionalist would interpret the case, includes anomie if relevant.	Basic explanation of theory with some connection to the case.	Minimal or inaccurate explanation; weak or no connection to the case.	___ / 5
3. Conflict Theory (5 pts)	Thorough explanation of how power, inequality, or class relate to the case; connects well to theory.	Basic understanding shown; some attempt to connect theory to case.	Weak understanding; connection to theory is missing or incorrect.	___ / 5
4. Symbolic Interactionism (5 pts)	Includes at least **two sub-theories** (e.g., labeling, control theory, cultural transmission) with clear links to the case.	Addresses symbolic interactionism but only includes one sub-theory or weak connections.	Sub-theories not included or poorly applied; weak or no use of symbolic interactionist ideas.	___ / 5
5. Personal Evaluation (5 pts)	Clearly explains which theory is most convincing and **why**, using examples and thoughtful reasoning.	Evaluation is present but reasoning may be underdeveloped or only briefly justified.	Little to no personal evaluation or theory preference.	
6. Organization, Clarity, and Format (3 pts)	Essay is well-organized, clearly written, and follows format (2–3 pages, typed, headings optional).	Mostly clear and organized; may have minor formatting or structure issues.	Poor organization, unclear writing correctly.	
7. References and APA Format (2 pts)	All sources are cited in proper APA format; references are relevant and credible.	Some minor citation errors or limited source variety.	Few or no citations; APA format references.	

TOTAL SCORE ____/30

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

10: Stratification



In sociology we use the term *stratification*. In other context we might talk about inequality. So, what is stratification? In sociology, stratification is a term used to characterize a structure of inequality where (a) individuals occupy differentiated structural positions and (b) the positions are situated in layers (or strata) that are ranked hierarchically according to broadly recognized standards. Those at the top have more privilege and easier access to scarce resources. Most often sociology books will discuss stratification in the US as the class system. We will acknowledge all the ways in which people are grouped and ranked such as race, gender, age, neurodiversity, ability/disability and attractiveness that grant individuals different types of advantage and disadvantage.

Although the sociologist Pitirim Sorokin is often credited with first developing and then using the concept of stratification in empirical work, the clearest lineage emerges in the work of Talcott Parsons and that of his students. In his essay 'An analytical approach to the theory of social stratification', Parsons (1940, p. 841) wrote: 'Social stratification is regarded here as the differential ranking of the human individuals who compose a given social system and their treatment as superior and inferior relative to one another in certain socially important respects.'

In this module you will explore terminology used to discuss the unequal distrubution of resources and power in society. You will then engage with these terms and apply them to the contemporary context in the US. The module ends with an introduction into systems of stratification providing a framework for assessing the class system, most often identified as the system of stratification in the US.

10.1: Readings
10.2: Classroom Activity
10.3: Homework

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10.1: Readings

1) Read Chapter 9 of Open Sax Introduction to Sociology. In this chapter you will explore:

- The definition of social stratification
- Social Stratification and mobility in the US
- Global Stratification and inequality
- Theoretical perspectives on social stratification

2) Watch this Crash Course video that explains how different societies establish a social hierarchy. Nicole Sweeney discusses the basic principles of a sociological understanding of stratification including different systems of stratification.

3) Watch this Crash Course video that brings us back to the three sociological paradigms: *structural functionalism*, *social conflict theory*, and *symbolic interactionism* and investigates how these frameworks understand and explain social stratification. This video also delves into the micro level of how stratification works in everyday life.

4) Watch this Crash Course video in which Nicole Sweeney discusses the challenge in defining 'social class' and discusses how sociologists take on with this challenge.



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10.2: Classroom Activity



Begin by viewing the imagine on this Boston University site that depicts reality, equality, equity and justice.

Reality = The actual and current state of society.... the unaltered starting conditions

equality = Uniform access...everyone gets the same support. Does not consider individual needs

equity = Resource distribution based on individual needs leading to equal outcomes

justice = System change... systemic barriers are eliminated so no support is needed. Everyone has equal opportunity.

This activity can be one in small groups or as a class.

Think about the society in which you live. Can you come up with examples that align with the 4 above definitions. For example DEI initiatives in hiring would align best with equity as these initiatives are aimed at hiring previously unrepresented groups in order to create a more balanced playing field. Discuss the terms below and align them with one of the four words above (reality, equality, equity and justice). Identify other concepts, define them and align them to the four words. Share your thoughts to the class.

Capitalism

Free market

Class- based system

Affirmative action

DEI initiatives

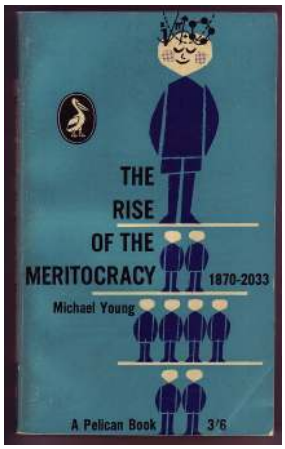
Welfare

Financial aid for higher education

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10.3: Homework

For this assignment you will explore the idea of meritocracy as a concept and how it applies to the United State's capitalist system.



In a minimum of 500 word answer the following question.

Explore the ideal of meritocracy—rewarding effort and talent—and contrast it with evidence that inherited privileges still dominate outcomes, such as educational admissions and elite career advancement. Make sure to include at least three more examples of evidence that privilege still dominates outcomes. Lastly, discuss how meritocracy is being discussed in the United States under the Trump administration and provide evidence that supports this idea. Next present a critique of this idea and then a counterargument. End with a conclusion regarding meritocracy in the United States now.

RUBRIC (total = 40 points)

Criterion	Meets Expectation (Proficient)	Does Not Meet	points
Thesis & Argument Structure	Clear thesis, coherent structure showing tension between meritocracy and privilege	Vague or missing thesis; disorganized argument	10
Evidence & Examples	Includes ≥3 strong examples of inherited privilege undermining meritocracy, well-explained Includes a strong critique and counterargument	Fewer than three examples, or examples lack explanation or relevance Does not include or includes a weak critique and counterargument	20
Analysis & Interpretation of Trump-era Discourse	Insightful discussion of how meritocracy was framed or critiqued under Trump, citations included	Limited or no reference to Trump-era policies or rhetoric; lacks evidence	10

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

11: Stratification and Attractiveness



In this module, we will explore *attractiveness* —a neutral, inclusive term that transcends gender binaries—and the advantages and drawbacks of conforming (or not) to cultural ideals of beauty. When specifically addressing women, we will use terms like *pretty* and *beauty*, reflecting their historical and societal associations.

Why focus on women's beauty?

Women's appearance has been scrutinized far more than that of men or gender non-conforming individuals—a trend rooted in historical, cultural, and religious traditions. For example, medieval European art linked women's beauty with moral virtue, while fairness of skin signified nobility and spiritual purity. Meanwhile, Western colonialism and capitalism spread narrow ideals—fair skin, slim figures—as global standards.

Through assigned readings, you'll encounter key concepts:

- *Beauty Bias*– Discrimination based on appearance; the "what is beautiful is good" effect
- *Pretty Privilege*– The unearned benefits that come with fitting conventional beauty norms
- *Beauty Sick*– The psychological harm resulting from chasing unrealistic beauty standards (e.g., disordered eating and self-esteem issues)

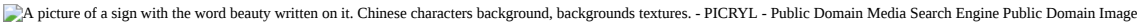
These frameworks, developed by scholars across disciplines, all highlight how society rewards those who align with aesthetic ideals. We'll also examine how traditional gender norms, capitalist economics, and media representation function as systemic gears that reproduce—and often intensify—these inequities .



11.1: Readings
11.2: Classroom activity
11.3: Homework

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11.1: Readings


A picture of a sign with the word beauty written on it. Chinese characters background, backgrounds textures. - PICRYL - Public Domain Media Search Engine Public Domain Image

1) Read the introduction to the book Beauty Bias: The injustice of appearance in life and law (2010) by Deborah L. Rhode. In this book Rhode's discusses how look discrimination is widespread and that women face steeper penalties. She explores how *beauty bias* reinforces other inequalities by illustrating how it intersects with gender, race, class, age, and disability, deepening structural injustice. As a professor at Stanford law school, Rhode highlights how there are not adequate legal protections for discrimination based on beauty and calls for policy and cultural change.

2) Read the introduction and chapter one to the book, Beauty Sick: How the cultural obsession with appearance hurts girls and women. (2017) In this work author Renee Engeln discusses her reserch on women and beauty in the US. She defines *beauty sick*, looks at the age of onset and its 'symptoms'. Engeln further explores the media's role, the psychological, emotional and material impacts and concludes with strategies for recovery and resistance.

3) Read chapter one and two of Beauty and Misogyny: Harmful Cultural Practices in the West by Shelia Jeffereys (2005) in which the author's core argument is that beauty norms are oppressive practices. She discusses beauty regimes and bodily harm; fashion, porn and sexual control, trans feminity and gender dynamics. As a qualifier, Jeffries comes out of the radical feminist movement of the 1990's, many supporters of this perspective adhere to a TERF (trans exclusionary radical feminist) position. This position has been critiqued for its anti-trans and anti-porn stance. Despite these serious critiques there is something to learn from Jeffries position on beauty while taking these critiques into account.

4) Listen to NPR Podcast *It's been a Minute* as Author and NPR hosts, Elise Hu, joins Brittany Luse to talk about her new book: *Flawless: Lessons in Looks and Culture from the K-Beauty Capital*. For Elise, what started as a professional move to Seoul turned into a long-term interest in beauty culture and the societal demand to look flawless. Elise and Brittany talk about the high price of South Korea's *lookism*, how the government props up beauty culture, the technological gaze, and how Korean beauty culture is spreading throughout the United States.

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11.2: Classroom activity

Deconstructing Cultural Ideals of Physical Attractiveness in the U.S.



Step 1: Whole-Class Discussion

Begin by considering: *What physical traits are currently associated with "attractiveness" in the United States?*

Note that cultural ideals (shaped by film, TV, advertising, and social media) often generalize and may not match each individual's personal definition of desirability. Social media adds visible diversity—but it also amplifies mainstream trends that influence broader media.

Step 2: Instructor-Led Example – Height

Let's start with height and discuss together:

- For men, what is the commonly perceived "ideal" height?
  Many people respond: 6 feet. In addition to conclusions from scholarly research [see Courtiol A., et. al. (2010); Stulp, G., et. al. (2013); Yancey, G., & Emerson, M. O. (2016); ; Kirkegaard, E. O. W., & Bjerrekær, J. D. (2016); Pisanski, et. al., (2022)], throughout my teaching career, my students have consistently reached this conclusion, which speaks to some foundational nature.
- *Why is being tall considered more desirable for men?*
  Traditional gender roles frame men as protectors, and height—and often a muscular physique—visually convey strength and capability.
- For women, what height is frequently described as ideal?
  A common answer: about 5'6"or "shorter than the man." Students share this response frequently over many years of classroom dialogue.

  Why might shorter stature be preferred?
  Gender norms historically portray women as needing protection; a taller woman may invert that dynamic and challenge some men's sense of masculinity.

Step 3: Small-Group Reflection and Discussion

After the example, break into small groups and discuss:

1. Do you agree with this deconstruction of height and gender roles?
2. If you're a woman who dates men:
   - How do you feel about being taller than your partner?
   - How do you think he feels?
   - What is your perspective on this dynamic?
3. If you're a man who dates women:
   - How do you feel if your partner is taller than you?
   - How do you think she feels?
   - What is your take on this?

Each group should consider both cultural messaging and personal viewpoints, then share their insights with the class.



Now you will get in small groups and brainstorm other traits that are considered attractive/desirable and deconstruct them by asking why is this considered desirable? What cultural beliefs and values underlie the reason why this is part of an attractiveness

ideal. Think of different 'ism in the society that may be reflecting in attrativeness standards as well as evolutionary biological reasons.

Some ideas to think about, but not limited to are:

health

gender roles

Eurocentrism

age

class

References

Courtiol, A., Raymond, M., Godelle, B., & Ferdy, J.-B. (2010). Mate choice and human stature: homogamy as a unified framework for understanding mating preferences. *Evolution; International Journal of Organic Evolution*, *64*(11), 3110–3123.

Kirkegaard, E. O. W., & Bjerrekær, J. D. (2016). *The OKCupid dataset: A very large public dataset of dating site users. Open Differential Psychology, 46, 1–10.*

Pisanski, K., Fernandez-Alonso, M., Díaz-Simón, N., Oleszkiewicz, A., Sardinas, A., Pellegrino, R., ... & Feinberg, D. R. (2022). Assortative mate preferences for height across short-term and long-term relationship contexts in a cross-cultural sample. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*, 937146.

Stulp, G., Buunk, A. P., & Pollet, T. V. (2013). Women want taller men more than men want shorter women. *Personality and Individual differences*, *54*(8), 877-883.

Yancey, G., & Emerson, M. O. (2016). Does height matter? An examination of height preferences in romantic coupling. *Journal of Family Issues*, *37*(1), 53-73.

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11.3: Homework

Module Homework: Reflection Essay



Overview
Write a two-page reflection essay engaging with the concept of attractiveness privilege. You have two options:

Option 1: Personal Reflection

- Explore your feelings and experiences with attractiveness privilege—either personally or observed (e.g., in media, at work, among friends, family, or partners).
- Reflect on how attractiveness privilege operates across **all genders**, not just women or "pretty privilege."

Option 2: Theoretical Analysis

- Apply **three sociological theories** to explain attractiveness/pretty privilege:
  1. Structural Functionalism
  2. Conflict Theory
  3. Symbolic Interactionism
- For each theory, explain why someone from that perspective would argue this privilege exists and what its consequences are.

RUBRIC (total: 30 pts)

Criterion	Excellent (10-8)	Good (7-5)	Needs Improvement (4-2)	Insufficient (1)
1. Reflection & Content *Depth, insight, engagement with prompt*	Thoughtful, in-depth reflection; strong examples or personal/theoretical insight; clearly connects to attractiveness privilege (and theories if Option 2)	Solid reflection with adequate detail or examples; mostly engages with prompt	Limited reflection; superficial treatment of topic	Minimal or off-topic reflection; fails to meaningfully address assignment
2. Organization & Argument *Structure, flow, clarity of logic*	Clear structure (intro, body, conclusion); smooth flow and transitions; points well-developed and cohesive	Adequate structure and logical flow; may lack polish in transitions or development	Organization is weak or repetitive; transitions missing or unclear	Disorganized, hard to follow; lacks clear structure
3. Mechanics & APA *Grammar, style, citations, formatting*	Virtually error-free; excellent academic style; full APA compliance (title page, headings, in-text refs, reference list)	Minor grammar/format issues; mostly correct APA formatting with small citation errors	Noticeable language errors; APA compliance is inconsistent or incomplete	Frequent grammar/mechanics problems; APA largely missing or incorrect

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

12: Global Stratification



Global Stratification refers to the unequal distribution of resources, wealth, power and opportunities across countries around the world. Some nations, largely situated in what is known as the Global North, are wealthier, hold more political and economic power, and are more technologically and industrially developed than nations typically located in the Global South.

In terms of global economic inequality, some countries have far more advanced economies (such as the United States, China, German and Japan). These wealthier nations generally enjoy better access to education, healthcare, technology, clean water and global employment opportunities. Certain nations also wield more political, military and cultural power on a global scale. One key consideration is how Western (Global North) dominance, especially through U.S. cultural influence, shapes global media, language and artistic expression. U.S. culture is often spread worldwide though the internationalization of English and through films, literature music and art. This raises important sociological questions:

- How do cultures survive and maintain their identities amid this dominance?
- Do these cultures get absorbed by the West in ways that further disadvantage poorer nations?
- Are these cultures understood on their own terms, or are they muted and appropriated as they become part of Wester consumer culture?

In this module we will explore global economic stratification and the sociological theories that explain it. We will also assess visual data depicting global inequality and examine cultural practices that reflect either privilege and over consumption or scarcity and marginalization.

12.1: Readings
12.2: Classroom Activity
12.3: Homework

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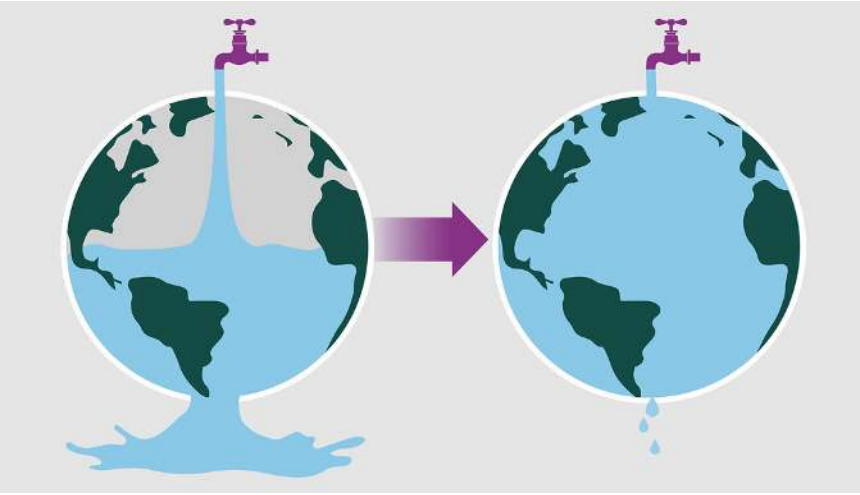
12.1: Readings

1) Read Chapter 10 on Global Stratification in Open Sax Introduction to Sociology, which explores:

- Global stratification and its classifications, which include how industrialized the nation is, whether the country serves as a means of production or as an owner, and the income produced by the nation.
- Global wealth and poverty, which includes the definitions of degrees of poverty as well as the negative consequences of poverty.
- Theoretical perspectives on global stratification

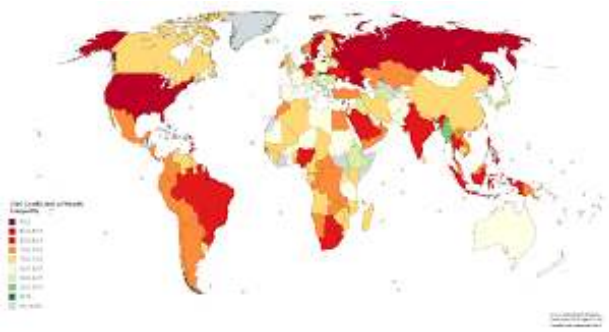
2) Watch this Crash Course video that provides more details on global stratification. In this video Nicole Sweeney discusses First and Third World countries and the reasons why these terms are no longer used. She introduces the four types of country categories that are currently in use: high income, upper middle income, lower middle income, and low income countries. She also explores some consequences of and explanations for global poverty. A note about the maps in this episode: the maps don't reflect the most current data. Here are a few websites to explore (https://wid.world/; https://ourworldindata.org/; https://pip.worldbank.org/home).

3) Watch this Crash Course video that details the theories on global stratification Modernization theory, Dependency theory and Immanuel Wallerstein's World Systems theory (in the video it is referred to as Capitalist World Economy Model).



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12.2: Classroom Activity



In this module's readings you learned about the Gini Index as a measure of Global Inequality. Remember that this indicator only looks at how disparate incomes are in the country. This says nothing about how high or low the incomes are. For example a country may have a very low Gini Index score, which indicates incomes are more equal, yet the country itself is poor and average incomes are low. Alternately, a country may have a high Gini Index score, which indicates incomes are more unequal, yet the country may be a wealthier nation with higher median incomes.

This classroom activity begins with a class assessment and discussion. Go to this webpage that provides information and visual data on global inequality using the Gini Index.

Look at one of the graphs and discuss:

- What countries have the highest Gini Index scores. Why do you think this is? What is the average income and cost of living?
- What countries have the lowest Gini Index scores. Why do you think this is? What is the average income and cost of living?
- Look at and discuss the way the particular graph (visual data) divides the world? Look at other websites that display visual data depicting global inequality using the Gini Index. Do these examples categorize the world the same? What are the implications of this?

Now you will practice your visual data assessment.

Find another graph or other type of visual data depicting global inequality using the Gini Index. Discuss the 3 questions listed above. Share your data and your assessment to the class.

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12.3: Homework

For this module your assignment will be to research global food shortage and abundance and explore how cultural practices surrounding food reveal the realities of global inequality.

Across the world, cultural practices surrounding food reflect deep inequalities in access, security, and privilege. In many poorer nations, traditions and customs have emerged in response to food scarcity, insecurity, and limited resources. In contrast, wealthier nations often develop cultural practices that normalize over consumption, food waste, and abundance.

Your task: Write a 750-1000 word analysis paper following these guidelines:

Structure and Organization

Introduction (1 paragraph)

- Briefly introduce the topic: how food reflects culture and inequality.
- State what you will cover in the paper (e.g., cultural practices from both poorer and wealthier nations).
- Include a clear thesis or central argument.

Body Paragraphs (4–6 paragraphs)

Part 1: Cultural Practices in Poorer Nations

- Identify and describe at least two cultural practices related to food insecurity.
- Explain how these practices help people adapt to scarcity or symbolize survival (e.g., sharing rituals, famine foods, or fasting).
- Discuss what these practices reveal about community values and economic conditions. **Part 2: Cultural Practices in Wealthier Nations**
- Identify and describe at least practices that reflect food privilege or waste (e.g., buffet culture, food challenges, social media trends).
- Analyze how these customs reflect abundance, consumerism, or inequality.
- Discuss the cultural or social meaning behind these practices.

Part 3: Analysis & Globalization

- Compare the values expressed in both sets of practices.
- Reflect on how globalization and Western influence may be changing food customs in both poorer and wealthier nations.

Conclusion (1 paragraph)

- Summarize your main points.
- Reflect on what food culture can teach us about global inequality and social values

Source Requirements

- Use at least one scholarly, visual or statistical source to support your analysis.
  - Examples: A chart on food waste, a cultural study, a news article, or a short documentary clip.
- Include the link or citation for every website or source you use.
- Use APA format if you know it, or just clearly list your sources at the end.

RUBRIC (total: 30 pts)

Criteria	Excellent (Full Points)	Satisfactory (Partial Points)	Needs Improvement (Few or No Points)	Points
1. Introduction & Thesis (4 pts)	Clearly introduces the topic and presents a thoughtful thesis or focus for the paper.	Topic is introduced but thesis is unclear or general.	Weak or missing introduction; no clear thesis.	___ / 4

Criteria	Excellent (Full Points)	Satisfactory (Partial Points)	Needs Improvement (Few or No Points)	Points
2. Cultural Practices in Poorer Nations (6 pts)	At least two cultural practices are clearly described and analyzed with strong connections to food insecurity and social values.	One or two practices are described with limited detail or analysis.	Practices are vague, poorly explained, or missing.	___ / 6
3. Cultural Practices in Wealthier Nations (6 pts)	At least two examples are well-explained, with clear connections to food privilege, waste, or inequality.	One or two examples are described but analysis lacks depth or clarity.	Limited or missing examples; little to no analysis of food privilege.	___ / 6
4. Comparison & Global Influence (5 pts)	Provides thoughtful comparison between practices and reflects on how globalization or Western influence may be changing them.	Some comparison is made, but global influence is only briefly discussed or unclear.	No comparison or analysis of globalization is provided.	___ / 5
5. Use of Source(s) (3 pts)	Uses at least one credible scholarly, visual, or statistical source; clearly integrates and cites it.	A source is used but may not be well integrated or fully relevant.	No source used, or source is unclear/inappropriate.	___ / 3
6. Organization & Clarity (3 pts)	Paper is well-organized, easy to follow, and clearly written with smooth transitions.	Organization is adequate but may be choppy or unclear in places.	Disorganized or difficult to understand.	___ / 3
7. Formatting & Length (3 pts)	Meets length requirement (750–1000 words), properly formatted, and includes word count and sources.	Minor issues with formatting or length.	Major formatting issues; too short or long; word count not included.	___ / 3

Total: ___ / 30

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

13: Gender and Biologial Sex

In this module, we begin by exploring a foundational insight: while *biological sex* refers to the anatomical and physiological traits—such as chromosomes, reproductive organs, and secondary characteristics—that categorize individuals as male, female, or intersex at birth, *gender* encompasses the roles, behaviors, identities, and expressions that societies and cultures assign to those categories. Sociologists distinguish these concepts because while sex is rooted in biology and gender in social processes both are social constructions. By teasing apart these intertwined ideas, we open the door to critically examining how society enforces gender norms, how identities both conform to and resist expectations, and how the sex–gender distinction is central to debates around identity, inequality, and social justice. As you engage with key theories—from Sandra Bem's gender polarization to Judith Lorber's critique of sex categorization—you'll be invited to reflect on your own experiences and recognize the profound power of social structure in shaping "what it means" to be a man, woman, or beyond.



13.1: Readings
13.2: Classroom Activity
13.3: Homework

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13.1: Readings

1) Read the Open Sax Introduction to Sociology Chapter 12 on Gender and Sexuality which explores the difference between sex(biological) and gendr (social and cultural roles), emphasizing that gender identity and expression can vary and are shaped by society. It examines how individuals learn gender roles through socialization and how these roles contribute to gender inequity in areas like work, politics, and education.

The chapter also covers sexuality as a social construct, showing how sexual norms differ across cultures and time. It discusses attitudes toward sex, sexual orientation, and the influence of media, religion, and education. Key sociological theories: structural functionalism, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism and queer theory are used to analyze how gender and sexuality are understood and regulated in society.

You can peruse this document from Indiana University on Queer theory. There are many links to explore queerness in academia, music and literature.

2) Watch this video lecture by Dana Oleskiewicz called “Gender Identity and Biological Sex Are Not Synonymous ...” from the American Sociological Association conference in 2023. Oleskiewicz discusses how that gender identity and biological sex are not the same and should not be treated as interchangeable. She highlights the complexity of sex and gender through examples like intersex and transgender individuals and criticizes the politicization of trans healthcare, and calls for a humble, respectful approach to these issues grounded in science and compassion.

3) Look over this VeryWell Health article Gender vs. Sex: Meaning, Differences, Healthcare. You can find links to articles on different sexualities, definitions of genderqueer and androgyny, the HHS definitions of these categories, gender stereotypes, and issues around medicalization.

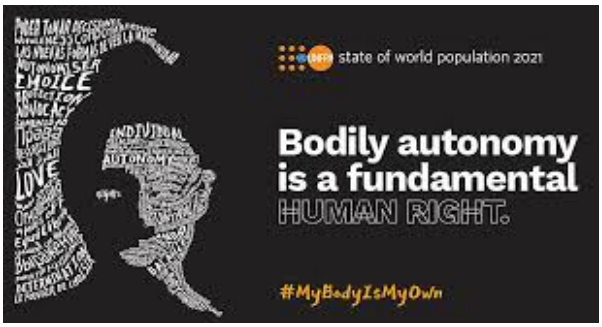
4) Watch this Democracy Now video, highlighting the voices of Intersex Activists.



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13.2: Classroom Activity

Whose Body? Whose Rules?



Objective

To explore how societies assign meaning to bodies, regulate gender norms, and make decisions about people's bodies based on assumptions about sex and gender — with a focus on intersex and trans experiences.

Activity Format: Role-Play Discussion

1) Assign Roles

Divide students into groups of 4–5. Give each student (or let them pick) one of the following roles:

• A parent of an intersex newborn

• A medical doctor recommending surgery on the infant

• An intersex adult advocating for bodily autonomy

• A sociologist studying gender as a social construct

• A conservative lawmaker trying to enforce binary gender categories

2) Scenario Setup

Read the following scenario.

A baby has been born with ambiguous genitalia. The hospital wants to perform surgery to make the child appear typically male or female before the parents leave. The parents are unsure. A doctor, an intersex rights advocate, a sociologist, and a politician have all been asked to weigh in.

3) Group Discussion

In groups, have students discuss:

• What should be done, and why?

• Who should get to decide?

• What are the long-term social and emotional consequences of early medical intervention?

• How do gender norms and cultural expectations influence this decision?

Stay in character the best you can and make sure to engage with each other's viewpoints.

4) Class Debrief

Afterward, return to a full-class discussion:

• What perspectives came up?

• Which roles clashed the most, and why?

• What surprised you about how society makes decisions for people based on biological sex?

• What did this reveal about how gender norms shape institutions like medicine, law, and family?

End with a reflective question:

“Who owns the right to decide how someone’s body should look or function?”

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13.3: Homework

For this assignment, you will observe a public or media environment and reflect on how ideas about biological sex and gender are communicated, enforced, or challenged in that space.



You may choose to:

• Visit a public place (e.g., a park, mall, public transit, or grocery store)

• Watch a TV show, concert, movie, or social media video

• Review a clothing store website, toy catalog, or advertisement

As you observe, think about the following questions:

1. How are people's appearances or roles gendered?

What clothing, activities, jobs, or behaviors are presented as "for men" or "for women"? How are intersex or nonbinary identities represented (if at all)?

2. How is biological sex assumed or enforced in this setting? Is it conflated with gender?

Are there gendered bathrooms? Gender-specific clothing sections? Are assumptions made about bodies or abilities based on gender presentation?

3. Do you notice anyone or anything that challenges traditional gender expectations?

Describe what you saw and how others responded to it (if at all).

4. What does this observation tell you about how gender and sex are socially constructed in your culture?

Reflection Write up

Write a short reflection summarizing your observation and answering the guiding questions. Connect your observations to at least one concept or idea from the module's readings.

Submission Guidelines

• Length: 500 words

• Include a brief description of your observation site/media choice

RUBRIC (total: 30 pts)

Criterion	**Meets Expectations** (10)	**Approaching** (9-6)	**Needs Impro**
1. Description & Observation	Clear, specific setting/media description with notable gendered behaviors or visuals.	General, somewhat vague or thin details.	Vague or missing des
2. Analysis & Theory Integration	Insightful analysis of gendered patterns and connection to course concepts (e.g. social construction); includes examples.	Some analysis or theory link, but lacks depth or examples.	Little or no analysis or theoretical integration.	10

3. Reflection & Writing Quality	Thoughtful reflection on personal/cultural implications; well-written, ~500 words, organized clearly.	Some reflection; minor writing issues or off-length.	Minimal reflection; poorly written or under-length.	10

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

14: Sexuality

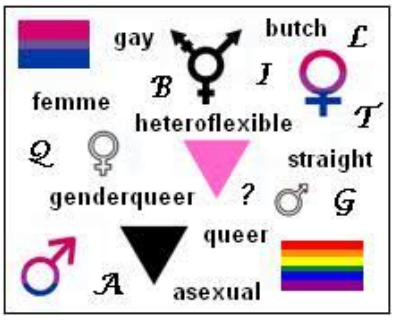
In Module 12 we focused on gender and biological sex. In this module, we will turn our attention to *sexualities* and i*ntersectionality*. It is important to remember that our identities including gender, sexuality, race and class – do not exist in isolation. As the framework of *intersectionality* reminds us, these aspects of our lives are interconnected and relational. While Kimberlie Crenshaw is credited with coining the term *intersectionality*, many others before her expressed similar ideas such as Audre Lorde, bell hooks, Patricia Hill- Collins' – with her concept of *Matrix of Domination*, and Angela Davis have all offered vital insights into the ways different systems of power and identity shape our experiences, we will continue to keep *intersectionality* at the center of the conversation.

For the classroom activity and the homework you will focus on the work and life of Audre Lorde as a way to explore the intersections of sexuality, gender, race and social justice.

14.1: Readings

14.2: Classroom Activity

14.3: Homework



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14.1: Readings

This module has a significant amount of material to explore. Depending on your previous exposure and understanding of sexuality and the academic discourse around it you may want to either skip or just gloss over 1) and 2).

1) Read Unit !! in the OpenSax textbook Introduction to Women and Gender Sexuality Studies. In this unit you will explore Binary systems and alternatives to them including:

1. The Sex/Gender/Sexuality System
2. Gender and Sex - Transgender and Intersex
3. Sexualities
4. Masculinities
5. Race
6. Class
7. Alternatives to Binary Systems

2) Watch this Crash Course video that explores some key concepts: sexual norms, sexuality as a social construct, and variation in sexual practices across cultures are discussed. The video delves into the influence of institutions, power structures, and social expectations on how sexuality is understood an expressed.

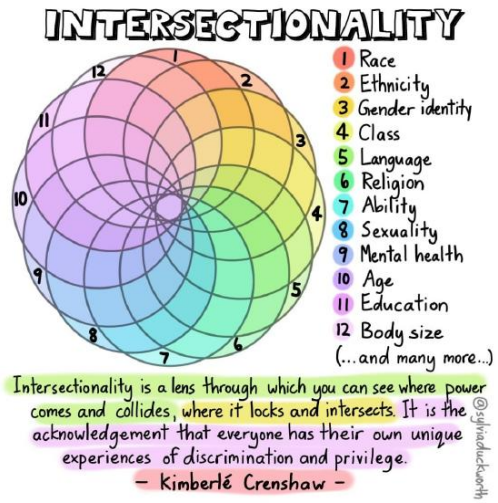


3) Read Audre Lorde on Sexism: The Intersection of Oppression. The article explores the ways in which Lorde centers Black women's identities as complex. The article details the unique brand of sexism affecting black women, in particular black lesbians.

4) Watch this video (126.38 minutes) that details the life and work of Audre Lorde, whose writings -- spanning five decades -- articulated some of the most important social and political visions of the century. The documentary explores Lorde's life from her childhood roots in NYC's Harlem to her battle with breast cancer. It positions her life's work as intersecting the Civil Rights movement, the Women's movement, and the struggle for lesbian and gay rights.

5) Watch this video (3.28 minutes), which is a reading of Audre Lorde's *There Is No Hierarchy Of Oppressions*

6) Watch this TedTalk *The Urgency of Intersectionality* (18.50 minutes) in which Kimberlie Crenshaw discussed intersectionality using a powerful demonstration and a legal case to illustrate the intersection of race and gender.



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14.2: Classroom Activity

For this activity you will work in 3 groups. Each group will be assigned a question from below. Share your thoughts and then you will present your ideas to the class. As you work through these questions, think about how Lorde connects the personal to the political, and how reclaiming things like pleasure, voice, and identity can be acts of empowerment.

A) Group Formation & Focus

- Divide into 3 groups , each assigned one of the questions below.
- Spend 20-25 minutes discussing your group's topic.
- Designate a spokesperson to share key insights with the class.

B) Discussion Questions

Group 1: "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle…"

Explore how Lorde, in *Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference*, intertwines her identities—Black, queer, woman, mother, warrior—to craft her message.

- Why is understanding intersectionality essential to comprehending her work and activism?
- How does the synergy of her multiple identities shape her political analysis and call to collective action?

Group 2: The Erotic as Empowerment

In *Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power*, Lorde elevates the erotic far beyond sexual expression—as a deep source of creativity, insight, and defiance.

- Why does she treat the reclaiming of erotic power as political resistance, particularly within marginalized sexual and gender identities?
- How does this reconceptualization challenge patriarchal suppression and inspire revolutionary agency?

Group 3: Linking Love, Sex, and Identity

Lorde connects erotic self-awareness to political consciousness—how love, sex, and identity interact in her vision.

- In her framework, how do race, sexuality, and gender converge to shape one's deepest self?
- How does embracing one's erotic self act as resistance against broader systems of oppression?
  (Lorde sees this as a route to self-knowledge, and thus self-empowerment and community solidarity.)

C) Presentation & Connection

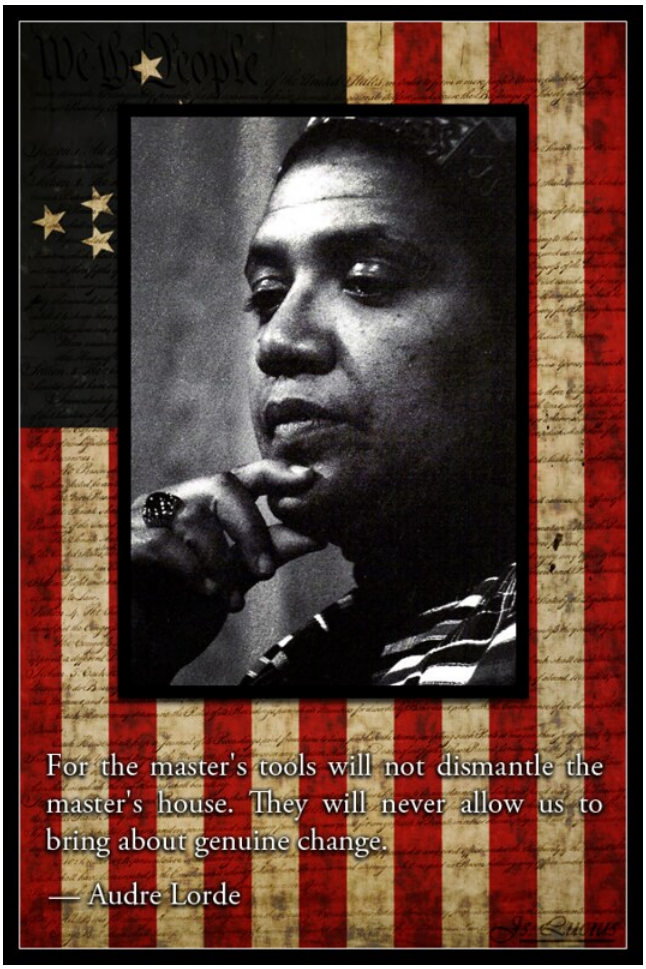
- Each group presents for a few minutes, summarizing:
  - Your collective insights
  - A close reading of one key quote from Lorde
  - A clear link to how the personal (erotic, identity) becomes political (resistance, empowerment)

D) Whole Class Debrief

Following group presentations, there is a whole class reflection discussion on:

- Common themes across groups (intersectionality, erotic power, identity politics)
- How reclaiming identity and pleasure becomes an act of resistance
- How Lorde's approach invites us to center emotional and spiritual intelligence in activism

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14.3: Homework

For this homework assignment you will choose one of the following prompts. #1 can be done as a performance in class or turned in in written form. Both essays are worth 30 points. See rubric below for criteria.



1) Personal Reflection/ Creative Prompt

Reflect on a moment when your intersecting identities (e.g., race, gender, sexuality, ability, class) deeply shaped your experience or sense of self. Write or perform a short journal entry or spoken-word piece that explores. You can submit this as written and/or perform it for the class.

Your task:

1. **Context & Impact**: Describe the situation and how your identities intersected.
2. **Embracing the Erotic**: Drawing on Audre Lorde's idea of the erotic as a source of pleasure, creativity, and intuition, how might tapping into those energies have empowered you in that moment?
3. **Artistic Expression**: Show this empowerment—whether through metaphor, imagery, a piece of fiction, poetry or verse—evoking how embracing pleasure or deep creativity transformed your understanding of yourself.

2) Connecting to Modern Context Prompt

Audre Lorde's legacy resonates strongly in today's queer, Black, and feminist movements. Identify a recent activist, artistic, or political example where multiple identities and sexuality intersect—mirroring Lorde's themes of self-care, resistance, and expression.

Here is an example to help spark thoughts:

Consider **LadyLand 2025**, a queer and trans-rooted music festival in New York City that combined joy, fashion, performance, and political affirmation during a time of anti-LGBTQ backlash. Acts like Cardi B and FKA twigs headlined, but the festival was more than entertainment—it was a defiant act of community and resistance, featuring readings like *"I Want a Dyke for President"* and bold expressions of queer trans joy.

Your Task

1.**Identify**: Find a recent event or project (e.g., an art exhibition, rally, performance piece, campaign).

2. **Analyze**: Explain how it weaves together multiple identities (race, gender, sexuality) and channels Lorde's call for erotic power, self-care, or resistance.

3. **Reflect**: Why does this example matter? How does it continue Lorde's work in your world today

Feel free to use images, clips, or personal anecdotes ---creativity is encouraged. You might explore local events, online initiatives, or creative works, but be sure to reference specific, recent examples (within the past 1–2 years) and explain their relevance.

RUBRIC (Total: 30 points)

Criterion	Meets Expectations (10 pts)	Developing (7 pts)	Needs Improvement (4 pts)
Insight & Analysis	Insightfully explores identities, erotic/self-care/resistance, and/or connection to Lorde's themes; shows depth and nuance.	Addresses prompt but with surface-level or incomplete analysis.	Lacks clear insight or relevance to the prompt/themes.

Criterion	Meets Expectations (10 pts)	Developing (7 pts)	Needs Improvement (4 pts)
Creativity & Expression	Engaging personal voice or creative style; uses metaphoric, poetic, or expressive elements that enhance meaning.	Some creative elements present, but style or voice may feel generic.	Lacks creativity; flat or overly factual tone; minimal artistic engagement.
Clarity & Coherence	Well-organized with clear structure, smooth flow, and minimal mechanical errors.	Structure is present but weak in places; some clarity or grammar issues.	Disorganized or confusing; frequent errors impede readability.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

15: Race and Etnicity

In this module, we examine how *race* and *ethnicity* are not fixed biological categories but deeply rooted social constructions shaped by power, history, and culture. You'll explore definitions and dynamics of racial, ethnic and minoritized groups. alongside key sociological frameworks such as structural functionalism, conflict theory and symbolic interactionsim perspectives on prejudice, discrimination, and intergroup relations in the U.S. context. Then, drawing on Eric Turkheimer's influential analysis, *The Nature–Nurture Question*, you'll challenge simplistic dichotomies by investigating how genetics and environment are inextricably intertwined in shaping individual traits—from major influences to subtle effects—with profound ethical and social implications for understanding identity and inequality.

15.1: Readings

15.2: Classroom Activity

15.3: Homework



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15.1: Readings



1) Read OpenSax Introduction to Sociology Chapter 11 on Race and Ethnicity. This chapter explores:

- Racial, ethnic and minority groups
- Theoretical perspectives on race and ethnicity
- Prejudice, discrimination and racism
- Intergroup relations
- Race and ethnicity in the US

2) Read this article The Nature-Nurture Question on the discourse around nature and nurture in the social sciences. Author Eric Turkeimer discusses the following:

- There is no simple split - all traits have some genetic basis
- Genetics and environment mix
- Genes can cause major effects, but most cause minor effects
- The difficulty of pinpointing environmental effects
- Genes cam work together
- Ethical implications

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15.2: Classroom Activity

Race & Ethnicity: Nature, Nurture, and the Social Construction of Identity

Part 1: Quick Reflection



Ask students to jot down their personal definitions of race and ethnicity. Then, write their answers on the board under two columns.

Which of these aspects do you see as "biological" (nature) and which as "socially learned" (nurture)? Are there any overlaps?

Ask students to think about the phrase "You're acting _____." This is most often filled in with White. You may hear also black or other racialized groups. Discuss how race is most often discussed as something we believe we can see; that it is based on phenotype. Yet this phrase is speaking to behaviors, which are socially learned. Discuss the different reasons people would use these phrases. Ask student if they have used or been told this.

Part 2: Case Scenarios

Divide students into small groups and give each group a short scenario to discuss. Example scenarios:

• Scenario A: A child born to Black parents in Brazil is adopted and raised in a white, middle-class family in Sweden. How will their racial and ethnic identity likely be perceived by others, and how might the child understand their own identity? What if the child were born in Brazil and then the family moved to Sweden. Discuss when students feel it is appropriate (if at all) for this child and/or the parents to identify ethnically as Swedish.

• Scenario B: Two siblings born to the same Chinese-American parents in the U.S. — one grows up embracing Chinese cultural traditions, the other identifies mostly with American mainstream culture. How might each experience their ethnicity differently? Discuss Asian as a racialize identity and the "model minority" myth and how this often refers to specific ethnic groups in Asia (why is this?).

• Scenario C: In some societies, people with similar skin color might be considered part of different racial or ethnic categories depending on history, language, or social status. What does this tell us about the role of nurture in racial and ethnic identity? Provide examples

Part 3: Bring the groups together and have each share their thoughts about their prompt, highlighting the following:

• Identify which elements seem tied to nature and which to nurture.

• Discuss how both nature and nurture shape the characters' lived experiences of race and ethnicity.

Finally end the discussion with these questions and discuss as a class:

• *Did you find it easy or difficult to separate nature and nurture in these cases? Why?*

• *How do these scenarios show that race and ethnicity are socially constructed categories?*

Part 3: Final reflection:

After this discussion, how would you explain the relationship between nature and nurture in shaping race and ethnicity to someone who thinks these identities are purely biological?

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15.3: Homework

In recent years, debates have emerged around whether artists and writers should represent racial or ethnic groups to which they do not belong.

Figures like painter Dana Schutz, whose painting *Open Casket* (depicting Emmett Till) was widely criticized (see photo below) given that Schutz is racialized as white. Review this Paris Review article titled *Who Speaks Freely: Art, Race and Protest* that highlights the racial controversy over the painter and the painting.



Novelist Bill Cheng, a Chinese-American writer who set his novel *Southern Cross the Dog* in the Jim Crow-era American South with Black protagonists, have faced controversy for their portrayals of racial experiences outside their own. Review this Medium article titled *Critics react to Bill Chet Southern Cross the Dog* that highlights the racial controversy.

Writing Prompt:

In a well-argued essay, take a clear position on this debate.

Should artists and writers be free to represent racial or ethnic groups they are not part of? Or should there be limits or greater accountability when doing so?

Use examples from real-world controversies, literature, art, or cultural criticism to support your argument. Consider the following in your response:

• The role of artistic freedom vs. social responsibility

• Issues of authenticity, appropriation, and harm

• Historical inequalities in who gets to tell which stories

• Whether it's possible (or ethical) to represent experiences one has not lived

You may agree, disagree, or stake out a nuanced middle-ground position — but be sure to clearly justify your viewpoint with evidence, reasoning, and examples. Cite at least 2 scholarly or critical sources

• Use APA format

RUBRIC (total: 30 points)

Criteria	Excellent (10-8)	Good (7-4)	Needs Improvement (3-1)
Argument & Insight	Clear, well-focused thesis with compelling, nuanced argument. Demonstrates deep critical thinking.	Clear position with logical reasoning; some depth.	Vague or unsupported claim; weak or unclear reasoning.
Use of Evidence & Sources	Effectively integrates ≥ **2 scholarly sources** (APA-formatted), plus strong real-world examples.	Uses required sources with decent integration; examples present.	Missing sources or poor APA; few or irrelevant examples.

Criteria	Excellent (10-8)	Good (7-4)	Needs Improvement (3-1)
Ethical & Contextual Understanding	Insightful engagement with freedom vs. responsibility, authenticity, appropriation, harm, power/history—well-justified.	Addresses most issues competently; some nuance.	Oversimplified or superficial treatment of issues; lacks depth and context.

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16: Race and the Indigenous Perspective



In this module, we will deepen our exploration of race and ethnicity by centering the histories and lived experiences of *Indigenous peoples* in what is now the United States. We'll examine the long-standing patterns of exploitation, erasure, and forced displacement that many Native nations endured under settler colonialism. We'll also investigate the politics of naming—how outsiders imposed terms, how Indigenous communities have reclaimed their identities, and why choosing respectful, accurate language matters.

Continuing this discussion of cultural stratification, you'll critically engage with the definition of and the processes involved in cultural appropriation: where it comes from, what power dynamics are at play, and how it intersects with historical injustices and authority over representation .

Together, we'll work to uncover a more complete, truthful, and respectful understanding of Indigenous histories—past, present, and future.

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16.1: Readings

1) This Module focuses on race and ethnicity as we did in Module 15. We will focus on Indigenous history as well as contemporary understandings. Read the Open Sax Introduction to Sociology Chapter 11 on Race and Ethnicity, paying special attention to the section 11.5 on Native Americans in the US.

2) Read the first section (up to the section on African Americans) in the Lumen Chapter 9 Race and Ethnicity, that provides a more detailed discussion of Indigenous peoples in the US.

3) Read the paragraphs that follow that details the politics of naming as it relates to the indigenous experience in the US.

Who Are Indigenous Peoples?

Indigenous peoples are the original inhabitants of the land that would become the United States, with cultures existing long before European settlers arrived. They differ from immigrant groups in that they have enduring connections to territories, languages, and traditions that predate national borders. According to sociologists, Indigenous identity is historically and politically shaped, arising within the context of colonization and the struggle to maintain distinct communities, cultural practices, and self-determination.

Colonial Naming and the Language of Power

European colonizers renamed the land and its people: Columbus labeled them “Indians” after mistakenly believing he’d reached Asia, and the continents became “America” in honor of explorer Amerigo Vespucci. These names imposed a colonial worldview and erased a multiplicity of Indigenous languages and place-based identities.

Thus, even terms like “Native American” or “American Indian” remain embedded within that colonial structure—they center a European naming convention and obscure the many distinct tribal nations that originated the land.

Place-Rooted Identities and Worldviews

Indigenous societies named the land in ways that expressed their worldview and kinship with territory. For instance:

- **Turtle Island**: In several Eastern Woodlands traditions, North America is envisioned as resting on the back of a giant turtle.
- **Lenapehoking**: “Land of the Lenape,” reflecting site-specific ancestral territory.
- **Cemanahuac**: Nahuatl term meaning “land entirely surrounded by water,” central to Mesoamerican cultural geography.

These place names embody deep relational understandings—and contrast sharply with European labels based on explorers’ names.

4) Read this article titled Cultural Appropriation *What it is and Why it Matters by Article on Cultural appropriation* by Rina Arya who argues that cultural appropriation, rooted in historical and ongoing power imbalances, raises critical ethical, political, and legal questions about ownership, justice, and identity, particularly as globalizatio commodification increasingly blur cultural boundaries and amplify the need for responsible cultural exchange.


A woman dressed in a native american costume. Model costume indian.

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16.2: Classroom Exercise

LAND, IDENTITY AND POWER: INDIGENOUS HISTORIES AND APPROPRIATION:



A) Begin the following with the whole class.

Write down the name of the town or neighborhood you live in. Who named it? What might it have been called before colonization? How do names tell us who belongs and whose history is remembered? Ask a few students to share their thoughts.

B) Next Break the class into 4 groups and ask each to research and discuss their assigned question. Assign each group one of the following questions:

1. **How does naming a place influence our understanding of who belongs and who doesn't?**

Use the map with Indigenous place names.

Discuss how erasing Indigenous names shapes belonging.

2. **In what ways did boarding schools represent both cultural destruction and resistance?**

Read a brief boarding school survivor account.

Discuss how both loss and survival happened within those institutions.

3. **How do contemporary Indigenous movements challenge traditional narratives of assimilation and nationalism?**

Look at examples: Standing Rock protests, Land Back movement, Indigenous TikTok creators.

How do they reject (or not reject) the idea of "assimilating" into a colonial nation-state?

4. **Find an example of cultural appropriation of Indigenous culture. Discuss why it's appropriation, and whether it could be done respectfully.**

Show images of festival "Native costumes" or high-fashion misuses.

What makes it harmful? Could any cultural sharing happen in an ethical way.

C) Next bring all groups together and have each group share what they learned.

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16.3: Homework



Choose one of the topics below to research. Write a 1–2 page summary or create a slide presentation (6–8 slides) with your findings. Include at least one Indigenous source (this could be an article, video, social media post, or organization run by Indigenous peoples).

Research Topics (Choose One)

1. **The History and Legacy of Indigenous Boarding Schools**

What were they?

What was their purpose?

How did they affect Indigenous communities and families?

How are Indigenous peoples today remembering and responding to this history?

2. **Contemporary Indigenous Movements**

Choose a recent movement (Standing Rock, Land Back, Indigenous Climate Activism, MMIW — Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, etc.).

What is the issue?

Who is involved?

What are they fighting for?

How does it challenge dominant U.S. narratives?

3. **Cultural Appropriation of Indigenous Culture**

Find a recent example of cultural appropriation involving Indigenous culture.

Explain why it's considered appropriation.

How did Indigenous people respond to it?

What would respectful cultural exchange look like instead?

4. **Indigenous Place Names and Land Acknowledgements**

Research how Indigenous place names have been erased or restored.

What is a land acknowledgment?

Find an example of a land acknowledgment and discuss its purpose and limitations.

5. **Why Indigenous Peoples Face Persistent Discrimination**

What makes Indigenous peoples one of the most marginalized minoritized groups in the U.S.?

Look at areas like health care, policing, environmental racism, political representation, and cultural erasure.

How are Indigenous activists working to change this?

📑 **Requirements:**

• Include the title of your topic.

• Use at least two credible sources, including one Indigenous-run or Indigenous-created source.

• Cite your sources at the end.

• Include images, quotes, or short video links if helpful.

RUBRIC (total: 20 points)

Criterion	Exemplary (5)	Proficient (3)	Developing (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Topic Understanding	Thorough, insightful coverage of topic; strong context and depth	Clear grasp of topic; covers most key points	Basic awareness; missing depth or context	Superficial or inaccurate understanding
Indigenous Source	Includes at least one Indigenous source, deeply integrated into analysis	Indigenous source is included and meaningfully referenced	Source included but with limited connection	No Indigenous source or improper use
Organization & Evidence	Well-structured; clear flow; strong examples/evidence used	Good structure; evidence supports most points	Some structure; minimal or weak evidence	Disorganized; lacking support
Presentation & Mechanics	Polished writing or slides; minimal errors; visually/stylistically strong	Minor errors; slides/text are clear and readable	Noticeable errors; visual clarity needs work	Frequent mistakes; poor formatting or readability

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Index

Glossary

Sample Word 1 | Sample Definition 1

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