

SOC090: Sociology of *The Office*: A First-Year Seminar

Lehigh University, Fall 2020

CRN: 44616 (4 Credits)

Tuesday/Thursday 1:35-2:50 pm

Professor: Danielle Lindemann

Email: [REDACTED]

Office Hours: Via Zoom by Appointment



Note: This is a FULLY ONLINE course. We will meet Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 1:35-2:50 PM Eastern time, via zoom. If you are not able to meet at that time (e.g. because you are in a different time zone) please reach out to me ([REDACTED]) immediately about my expectations for you in this course. The zoom link for our class is:

[https://lehigh.zoom.us/\[REDACTED\]](https://lehigh.zoom.us/[REDACTED])

Course Description:

This class is an introduction to sociology, by way of the television show *The Office*. Michael, Dwight, Pam, and the rest of the gang at Dunder Mifflin may seem like silly characters, but they shed light on core elements of society, including norms and deviance, small group interactions, race, gender, the economy, families, and – of course—the modern workplace. By watching episodes of the show, paired with key sociological texts, we will arrive at a better understanding of the major social forces that govern our own lives.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this class, students should be able to...

...define and explain “sociology.”

...list and explain many of the discipline’s central theories and debates.

...approach a variety of topic areas—e.g. gender, race, class, families, childhood, work—from a sociological perspective.

...apply a critical sociological lens to *The Office* and other cultural artifacts.

...use Lehigh library resources to make well-organized, empirically-based sociological arguments.

...apply sociological insights to contemporary issues and their own daily lives

and, more broadly,

...understand the habits of mind and practices associated with being an effective college student.

Required Materials:

- **You do not need to purchase any books for this class.** PDFs of all required readings are available on Coursesite (<https://coursesite.lehigh.edu/>).
- **However, you will need to purchase the *Office episodes* that are assigned viewing for this class.** As of this writing, all of these episodes are available through Netflix. If you do not have a Netflix subscription, you can purchase a cheap, month-to-month subscription for the duration of the class (<https://www.netflix.com/signup>). Sometimes Netflix changes up its offerings. If episodes become available, you can purchase them individually on iTunes. If you choose to access the episodes in another way, *please ensure that you are watching the correct episode for each class.* (Be wary about videos on YouTube, as they may be mislabeled!)
- **All lecture slides will be posted on Coursesite.**

Course Requirements:

See “Assignments” sheet on Coursesite for further details and grading criteria.

Participation and Attendance – 15% of grade

Weekly short essays (lowest grade dropped) – 50% of grade

Midterm essay exam – 20% of grade

Final group project – 15% of grade

Grading Scale:

93%-100% = A

90%-92% = A-

87%-89% = B+

83%-86% = B

80%-82% = B-

77%-79% = C+

73%-76% = C

70%-72% = C-

67%-69% = D+

63%-66% = D

60%-62% = D-

0%-59% = F

While I am happy to meet with you to discuss our assignments, and to help you understand your grades, I do not “haggle” grades. I will not change a student’s grade on any assignment unless I have made a typo or mathematical error.

Late Assignments:

Barring extreme circumstances (e.g. serious illness, family emergency), I do not accept late assignments. **I understand that this is an unusual semester, and that these circumstances may be more frequent than usual.** Please note that I am also dropping your lowest essay grade.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting accommodations, please contact both myself and the Office of Academic Support Services, Williams Hall, Suite 301 (610-758-4152) as early as possible in the semester. You must have documentation from the Academic Support Services office before accommodations can be granted.

The Principles of Our Equitable Community:

Lehigh University endorses [The Principles of Our Equitable Community](#). We expect each member of this class to acknowledge and practice these Principles. Respect for each other and for differing viewpoints is a vital component of the learning environment inside and outside the classroom.

Student Senate Statement on Academic Integrity:

“We, the Lehigh University Student Senate, as the standing representative body of all undergraduates, reaffirm the duty and obligation of students to meet and uphold the highest principles and values of personal, moral and ethical conduct. As partners in our educational community, both students and faculty share the responsibility for promoting and helping to ensure an environment of academic integrity. As such, each student is expected to complete all academic course work in accordance to the standards set forth by the faculty and in compliance with the University's Code of Conduct.”

Schedule of Assignments:

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTIONS

Tuesday, August 25 – Introduction to this Class/ Introduction to Lehigh –

To read for this class:

- There are no assigned readings for this class.

To do for this class:

- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

Thursday, August 27 – Introduction to Sociology/ How to Write a Paper –

To read for this class:

- Our class's syllabus and assignment sheet
- Mills, C. Wright. 1959. "Chapter One: The Promise," In *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford.
- Durkheim, Emile. 1932 [1895] "Chapter One: What Is a Social Fact?," In *The Rules of the Sociological Method*, Macmillan: pp. 50-59.

To do for this class:

- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

WEEK 2: MICRODYNAMICS (The Individual in Society)

Tuesday, September 1 –

To read for this class:

- Simmel, Georg. 1971 [1903]. “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” In *On Individuality and Social Forms*. University of Chicago: pp. 324-339.

To do for this class:

- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

Thursday, September 3 –

To watch for this class:

- *The Office*, “Night Out” (Season 4, episode 11, 2008)

To do for this class:

- **Upload short essay #1 to Coursesite before the start of class (1:35 PM EDT) today.**
- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

WEEK 3: MICRODYNAMICS (Small Groups)

Tuesday, September 8 –

To read for this class:

- Selections from Simmel, Georg. 1964. *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. Kurt H. Wolff, Trans and Ed. Free Press.

To do for this class:

- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

Thursday, September 10 –

To watch for this class:

- *The Office*, “The Alliance” (Season 1, episode 4, 2005)

To do for this class:

- **Upload short essay #2 to Coursesite before the start of class (1:35 PM EDT) today.**
- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

WEEK 4: MICRODYNAMICS/INEQUALITIES (Racial Microaggressions)

Tuesday, September 15 –

To read for this class:

- Sue, Derald Wing, Christina M. Capodilupo, Gina C. Torino, Jennifer M. Bucceri, Aisha Holder, Kevin L. Nadal, and Marta Esquilin. 2007. “Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice.” *American Psychologist* 62(4):271-284.
- Embrick, David G., Silvia Domínguez, and Baran Karsak. 2017. “More Than Just Insults: Rethinking Sociology’s Contribution to Scholarship on Racial Microaggressions.” *Sociological Inquiry* 87(2):193-206.

To do for this class:

- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

Thursday, September 17 –

To watch for this class:

- *The Office*, “Diversity Day” (Season 1, episode 2, 2005)

To do for this class:

- **Upload short essay #3 to Coursesite before the start of class (1:35 PM EDT) today.**
- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

WEEK 5: INEQUALITIES (The Class System)

Tuesday, September 22 –

To read for this class:

- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “History as Class Struggle,” [1848] in Randall Collins (Ed.). *Four Sociological Traditions: Selected Readings*. New York: Oxford University Press: pp. 3-13.
- Karl Marx, “The Class Basis of Politics and Revolution,” [1852] in *Four Sociological Traditions*: pp. 17-35.

To do for this class:

- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

Thursday, September 24 –

To watch for this class:

- *The Office*, “Boys and Girls” (Season 2, episode 15, 2006)

To do for this class:

- **Upload short essay #4 to Coursesite before the start of class (1:35 PM EDT) today.**
- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

WEEK 6: INEQUALITIES (Class and Culture)

Tuesday, September 29 –

To read for this class:

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction*. Routledge & Kegan Paul: pp. 99-114.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1986. “The Forms of Capital,” In JG Richardson (Ed.) *Handbook of Theory*. Greenwood: pp. 241-258.

To do for this class:

- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

Thursday, October 1 –

To watch for this class:

- *The Office*, “Cocktails” (Season 3, episode 18, 2007)

To do for this class:

- **Upload short essay #5 to Coursesite before the start of class (1:35 PM EDT) today.**
- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- We will have a brief review for our midterm in class today.
- In class today, you will indicate your preferences for your final project groups.
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

WEEK 7: MIDTERM EXAM & CAREER RESOURCES

Tuesday, October 6 – **MIDTERM**

- I will post your exam on Coursesite at the beginning of the class period (1:35 PM EDT), as well as sending it out via email.
- **Upload your exam to Coursesite by 2:50 PM EDT today.**
- There is no attendance sheet due today.

Thursday, October 8 – Career Resources

To read for this class:

- There are no assigned readings for this class.

To do for this class:

- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- Patty Reina, Associate Director, Undergraduate Career Development at Lehigh, will give a presentation in class today.
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

WEEK 8 – GROUP MEETINGS/LIBRARY RESOURCES

Tuesday, October 13 –

To read for this class:

- There are no assigned readings for this class.

To do for this class:

- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**

- We will discuss your final projects in class today. You will meet in your final project groups and select the topics of your presentations.
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM EDT today.

Thursday, October 15 – USING LEHIGH LIBRARY RESOURCES

To read for this class:

- There are no assigned readings for this class. *It is important that you attend, as you will need this information when assembling your final project.*

To do for this class:

- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- Carrie Baldwin-SoRelle, Social Science/Scholarly Communication Librarian at Lehigh, will give a presentation in class today.
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

WEEK 9: INEQUALITIES (“Doing Gender”)

Tuesday, October 20 –

To read for this class:

- West, Candace and Don H. Zimmerman. 1987. “Doing Gender.” *Gender & Society* 1(2): 125-151.

To do for this class:

- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

Thursday, October 22 –

To watch for this class:

- *The Office*, “Women’s Appreciation” (Season 3, episode 22, 2007)

To do for this class:

- **Upload short essay #6 to Coursesite before the start of class (1:35 PM EDT) today.**
- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

WEEK 10: INEQUALITIES/FAMILIES (Gender and Marriage)

Tuesday, October 27 –

To read for this class:

- Lindemann, Danielle J. 2018. “Doing and Undoing Gender in Commuter Marriages.” *Sex Roles* 79(1-2): 36-49.

To do for this class:

- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

Thursday, October 29 –

To watch for this class:

- *The Office*, “Customer Loyalty” (Season 9, episode 12, 2013)

To do for this class:

- Upload short essay #7 to Coursesite before the start of class (1:35 PM EDT) today.
- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- Upload your attendance sheet to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

WEEK 11: FAMILIES (Childhood)

Tuesday, November 3 –

To read for this class:

- Mintz, Steven. 2010. “American Childhood as a Social and Cultural Construct,” In Risman, B.J. and W.E. Rutter (Eds), *Families as They Really Are*. Norton: pp. 56-67.

To do for this class:

- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- Upload your attendance sheet to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

Thursday, November 5 –

To watch for this class:

- *The Office*, “Take Your Daughter to Work Day” (Season 2, episode 18, 2006)

To do for this class:

- Upload short essay #8 to Coursesite before the start of class (1:35 PM EDT) today.
- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- Upload your attendance sheet to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

WEEK 12: DEVIANCE (Stigma)

Tuesday, November 10 –

To read for this class:

- Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Simon & Schuster: pp. 1-19 and 41-51.

To do for this class:

- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- Upload your attendance sheet to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

Thursday, November 12 –

To watch for this class:

- *The Office*, “The Convict” (Season 3, episode 9, 2006)

To do for this class:

- Upload short essay #9 to Coursesite before the start of class (1:35 PM EDT) today.
- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- Upload your attendance sheet to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

WEEK 13: DEVIANCE/WORK (Workplace deviance)

Tuesday, November 17 –

To read for this class:

- Huiras, Jessica, Christopher Uggen, and Barbara McMorris. 2000. "Career Jobs, Survival Jobs, and Employee Deviance: A Social Investment Model of Workplace Misconduct." *The Sociological Quarterly* 41(2): 245-263.

To do for this class:

- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

Thursday, November 19 –

To watch for this class:

- *The Office*, "Office Olympics" (Season 2, episode 3, 2005)

To do for this class:

- **Upload short essay #10 to Coursesite before the start of class (1:35 PM EDT) today.**
- [Zoom in](#) for class discussion from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- **I will set aside some time in class today for you to work on your final projects.**
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM Eastern time today.

WEEK 14: NO CLASS

Tuesday, November 24 & Thursday, November 26 – NO CLASS - Thanksgiving

WEEK 15: PRESENTATIONS / COURSE WRAP-UP

Tuesday, December 1 –

To read for this class:

- There are no assigned readings for this class.

To do for this class:

- **Final presentation slides due to Coursesite before the start of class (1:35 PM EDT) today. (ALL groups' slides are due, regardless of what day you are presenting.)**
- [Zoom in](#) from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- The first set of group presentations will happen in class today.
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM EDT today.

Thurs., December 3 –

To read for this class:

- There are no assigned readings for this class.

To do for this class:

- [Zoom in](#) from **1:35 - 2:50 pm Eastern time**
- The second set of group presentations will happen in class today.
- We will also do a course wrap-up.
- **Upload your attendance sheet** to Coursesite by 2:55 PM EDT today.



Have a great winter break!