Course Description
A survey of characteristics of social life, processes of social interaction, and tools of sociological investigation.

Overview
Sociology is the systematic examination of society. The fundamental assumption is that social life has sufficient regularity and logic that, like biology, physics, and geology, its operation can be explained by systematic observation and reasoning. Whether the subtleties of a conversation, the banalities and emotions of the family, the tensions of the workplace, the paradoxical inequalities of race, gender and class, the surprises of globalization, or the rise and fall of civilization, sociology offers the conceptual apparatus and methodological tools to explain what happens in society. Introductory Sociology is a survey course that covers much (though not all) of the field. It prepares sociology majors laying a foundation for upper division courses and introduces non-majors to the field as part of a liberal arts education. The analytic concepts and methodological tools educate students to be stronger leaders, better citizens, and more insightful individuals. For both majors and non-majors, sociology is also a way of seeing the world. Just as geology courses make it possible to see not just a scenic mountain but a tectonic shift, or physics to understand the movement of the stars and the falling of an apple as following the same laws, or biology to understand why robins and blue jays have different colors, sociology creates new ways of seeing. Most fundamentally, sociology helps us see that society is more than the sum of the individuals in it. Society is very real, and hopefully students will learn to see it as real and understand what that means. Society is also real in its institutions, the constituent parts that perform basic tasks like education, religion, politics, economy, mass media, and family. Society is more than the sum of individuals in the sense that individuals are treated by others and understand themselves in terms of basic social categories such as age, race, gender, class, sexual orientation, health status, etc. Finally, society is real in the sense that societies differ from each other. Realities that people take for granted in any society can be very different in other societies. For example, most people in rich, urban parts of the world take for granted that people get married primarily because they love each other. But for most of the world, for most of human history, romantic love was secondary or even irrelevant. Sociology is less concerned with
judging whether people should get married for romantic love than understanding why different societies select different criteria for marriage. Thus there is a strong historical and comparative focus to sociology that helps us understand any one society in relationship to others.

The course begins with fundamental concepts that underlie the rest of the course. Analogous to the relationship between anatomy and physiology in medicine or mass and energy in physics, sociological thinking is built on the foundation of structure and culture. **Structure** refers to how the pieces of anything fit together—the engine, chassis, and wheels of a car, the heart, lungs, and skin of an animal, the downtown, roads, and shopping centers of a city. Society is structured into institutions, roles (like professor or student), networks, and categories (like race or gender). **Culture** refers to how people make sense of the world. It is the most important way that social science, including sociology, is different from natural science like biology or physics. Elephants or electrons do not have culture. They do not have intentions or meanings. The fact that people possess culture or will or intention in many ways makes them more challenging and interesting to study than the objects or organisms studied in other sciences (at least sociologists think so). Most particular substantive topics in society involve both structure and culture. This section of the course is completed with an overview of sociological methods, the self-conscious consideration of how we know what we know.

The rest of the course follows an arc from small scale (micro-sociology) to large scale social life (macro-sociology), analogous to following biology from the molecular level to the ecosystem while passing through cells, organs, and organisms. **Everyday Interaction** is how people conduct social life in face-to-face settings (though increasingly mediated by technology). The very act of carrying a conversation is actually a very complicated process that involves a deep sense of who we are. While each of us would like to think of themselves only as an individual, society operates in important ways regarding social categories. Understanding how and why categories are so important is central to sociology and this course. We begin with the assumption that such categories are not natural and thus seek to understand how they arise. Then we examine how they operate in different societies. We will examine the question of whether America is a class-less society (whatever that means). While there is no debate that America has been built on race and ethnicity, there is some question of whether it continues to be. Similarly, there are abiding differences about the role that gender plays in society. While many believe that class, race, and gender are becoming less important in determining people’s opportunities in society, many sociologists have argued that crime and deviance has become more salient.

After the section on inequality, the course moves to examining several important institutions. An **institution** is a set of organizations (structure) and understandings (culture) about how some important social task is performed. **Education** is how children are inculcated with knowledge and values. Science specializes in creating knowledge. **Health and medicine** define how bodies are supposed to operate and intervene to correct those that do not. **Arts and Media** define what is aesthetically important or entertaining and produce cultural objects for that purpose. **Politics** defines the public good, assists in achieving public goods, and attempts to counteract threats on the public good and private goods. **Religion** defines the sacred, the realm of life that transcends the ordinary, and provides opportunities for people to experience sacred events. **Family** is a set of relationships that distribute material goods and emotional commitments understood in terms of kinship. **Economics** defines private goods, assists in achieving private goods (though it leaves
to politics the task of counteracting threats to private goods). Notice that all these definitions may differ from the way that the institutions are usually described. That is because sociologists are interested not only in how the organizations in institutions describe themselves, but also in stepping back and seeing what they actually do.

Finally, the course briefly examines **globalization**, the broadest scale of society. For a couple of centuries, nation-states like the United States, England, or Mexico were able to enforce political borders as social borders, so that within the borders, there was considerable linguistic, ethnic, religious, and social similarity. Social scientists reinforced this effort by talking about American society, English society or Mexican society as coherent entities separate from each other. But in the last several decades, economic, technological, and political changes have made the borders much more porous so that what happens in any one place is affected by forces throughout the world. This trend has been called globalization. So sociologists have increasingly looked at the world as a whole to understand how levels of inequality, cultural difference and similarity, international markets, or the movement of people unfold.

**What is distinctive about taking the course online?**
This is the first time UCLA has offered introductory sociology online. So you are a pioneer of sorts. Rather than just presenting a canned version of our regular course, we have designed the course to take advantage of the learning potential of the medium. Conventional teaching was based on two technologies of learning: oral communication, which is captured in the lecture, and text, which is captured in the seminar, which usually involves discussion of text. Online learning offers new and exciting potentials for a different mode of learning. It is **inter-active**. “Inter” means that it happens back and forth, unlike the unidirectional learning of the lecture. “Active” is about what you do—you actively participate, not just passively absorb. The brain is like a muscle—you have to work it to make it strong. Online learning is asynchronous. “Synchronous” means that things happen at the same time. “Asynchronous” means that things happen around a flexible schedule, allowing students to take their time, think about things, mull them over, and learn more deeply. Online learning is multimedia, not just talk and readings, but video, audio, experiential, and direct observation. Learning can be deeper and more fun. So rather than getting a watered down course like many online courses, we have tried to take advantage of the potential that medium offers to create deeper and richer learning experience. But it’s up to you to do your part. To continue the metaphor of the brain as muscle, you have to work out on a regular basis.

**Lectures**
Lectures complement rather than repeat the reading material and are a required part of the course. In addition to oral presentation by the professor, the lectures involve visual and audio material.

**Power Point presentations**
Power Point material given in the lecture, including visual and audio material, will be available at the class web site. These are only sketchy outlines and do not substitute for viewing the lectures.

**Discussion Board**
Learning is an active process and the course is intended to help students think sociologically. So discussion board questions, and responses are a required part of the course. Your teaching assistant posts two questions on the Discussion Board every Monday: 1) Analytic Question, and 2) Weekly Activity. Analytic Questions ask you to synthesize certain broad themes, concepts, or questions drawing from specific readings and lectures from different lessons. Your response should play close attention to textual and lecture references, and you should cite the sources that you draw from. The Weekly Activity challenges you to exercise your sociological imagination in practice through interviews, observations, and analysis of the survey data for the course.

You must answer both questions on the discussion board and. You are encouraged to respond to and integrate your classmates’ the posts of others. Contribution to the discussion board accounts for 30% of the grade. Contribution is evaluated in terms of the quality of participation and interaction, not the quantity. Quality of participation means how well informed the participation is and how well it moves the discussion forward. Students are expected to read the assigned material before answering the discussion board questions.

**Teaching Assistants**
The teaching assistants are all doctoral students in the Department of Sociology. The UCLA department is one of the top five in the country and its graduate students were selected in a highly competitive recruitment effort. Most will go on to become distinguished scholars and practitioners. Students in the next generation will not only be taught by them but will be reading their scholarship in courses. They are thus to be treated with the same respect you would a professor.

**Problem Sets**
Active learning involves writing as well as speaking. Writing is one of the fundamental skills of higher education, even in an introductory course. Students will be responsible for completing two problem sets, due at the end of weeks 2 and 4. Problem sets are written responses to questions that involve concepts and information from the lectures and reading. Teaching assistants will have the option of adding questions or adapting questions to fit what happened in section. Each assignment will include a number of questions from which the students will select one. For each question selected, he or she will write a two-page essay. An essay means coherent, flowing prose of full sentences and paragraphs. They will be graded on the basis of depth of thinking, originality, quality and clarity of writing, appropriate use of concepts, and how directly they address the question posed.

**Class Online Survey**
Sociology is an empirical as well as a conceptual discipline. Learning to do sociology means learning to use its methods to investigate society, not just think about it in new ways. It uses many methods to gather and analysis evidence, including surveys, interviews, direct ethnographic observation, analyzing documents, and conducting experiments. Just as students learn to do dissections in biology or conduct experiments in chemistry, part of learning sociology is trying out some of our methods. While ideally students would be able to try all the methods of sociology, that is not possible in a short summer session. In addition to methods exercises in
weekly activities described by your TAs, the entire course will expose students to the method most often associated with sociology, the survey.

We have constructed an online survey that collects basic information about all students in this class and three substantive topics addressed throughout the course: social class, education, and money. All students are required to fill out an online survey about basic social characteristics such as age, gender, race or ethnicity, etc. and questions on each of the three substantive topics listed above.

The online survey must be completed by the end of the first week [Friday June 29th, 2018 by 5 PM Pacific Time] and will count for 5 % of your grade. Completing the online survey will give you an A for that 5%; failure to complete gives you an F. You will receive an email with a personalized link to the online survey. This link allows us to track which students have completed the survey, but all answers are absolutely confidential. Although we will be able to tell who filled out the survey, no information on responses will be connected with any identifying information.

The survey information will be used by teaching assistants in their blogs, discussion boards, and assigned exercises. So the class’s responses will be part of the learning process. Though you may never meet another class member in person, the survey results will give us a collective portrait of the class. You will also learn some things and hopefully gain some insight about how social class has shaped the lives of class members, their educational experience, and the form of money they use. Those students who feel comfortable analyzing simple quantitative evidence will be able to complete assignments using basic analysis of aggregate data (though in no case any individual information). Others will be asked to interpret results that teaching assistants have gathered through charts and histograms. Altogether we hope that this will be another form of active learning in the class.

Office Hours
Most of the quarter Professor Roy will physically be in Everett, WA, but will be available by email (billroy@soc.ucla.edu) or Skype (by appointment). The TAs will each communicate their availability separately. It is hoped that the physical separation will not deter students from contacting him to talk about anything related to the course.

Final Examination
While the Problem Sets involve extending the concepts and theories from the course to other situations, the final exam tests the depth of understanding about the course material. It will be essay format submitted online, due the last day of the Summer Term, Aug 2, at 5:00, Pacific Time.

Grading
I have a very high opinion of student talent. UCLA undergraduate students are as good as those anywhere. Some students are under the mistaken notion that sociology courses apply lower academic standards than other courses. In fact, the median grade in sociology courses is B-. In this course A grades are given only for exceptionally excellent work. B grades are given for
competent college work. It is inappropriate to ask what is wrong if an assignment is graded with a B. C grades are given to work that has identifiable deficiency that could be relatively easily rectified in future work. D grades are given if there are serious problems, indicating a failure to meet college standards. F means that the work is without redeeming academic value.

I have full faith in the judgment of teaching assistants. It is common that students disagree with grades. If a student disagrees with the grade of a teaching assistant, I will review the grade but will change it only if there has been an injustice (grade based on inappropriate criteria) or misunderstanding (for example, the professor gave the student permission to adapt the question).

**Grading Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online survey completion</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Set 1</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Set 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Academic Dishonesty**

In my years teaching at UCLA, I have found that the vast majority of students are honest and work with faculty on the basis of shared respect. However, the rare cases of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students will submit assignments through Turnitin on the class web site, an effective diagnostic tool for plagiarism.

Plagiarism has been defined as “the presentation of another’s words or ideas as if they were your own without giving credit to the other person, including, but not limited to:

- Purchasing a paper on-line and submitting it as your own
- Copying someone else’s paper (or parts of it) and submitting it as your own
- Paraphrasing ideas, data or writing from someone else’s work without properly acknowledging the original source
- Unauthorized transfer and use of another person’s computer file as your own.

(Source: UCLA Library: Citing Sources [http://guides.library.ucla.edu/citing](http://guides.library.ucla.edu/citing))

Any evidence of academic dishonesty will result in filing a case with the UCLA Dean of Students.

**UCLA Undergraduate Writing Center**

The Undergraduate Writing Center offers UCLA undergraduates one-on-one sessions on their writing.

The Center is staffed by peer learning facilitators (PLFs), undergraduates who are trained to help at any stage in the writing process and with writing assignments from across the curriculum. PLFs tailor appointments to the concerns of each writer.

Scheduled appointments:
● 50-minute appointments in A61 Humanities, Mon. - Thurs., 10am-5pm (Wks. 2-6)
  work in person with a Peer Learning Facilitator (PLF)
● Phone: 310-206-1320; e-mail: wcenter@g.ucla.edu
● Book an Appointment: http://wp.ucla.edu/wc

Walk-in appointments:
  ● 30-minute appointments available in A61 Humanities
  ● first-come, first-served
  ● walk in to discuss a small issue or an entire assignment or paper

Online Writing Center (Appts. via computer):
  ● 50-minute appointments (during A61 Humanities location hours)
  ● submit your paper online, using Google Docs
  ● discuss your paper with a Peer Learning Facilitator via Google Hangouts

What you should bring to the Writing Center:
  ● A draft if you have one
  ● Preliminary notes or writing if you don’t have a draft
  ● A copy of the assignment
  ● Instructor or peer comments on your paper
  ● Copies of readings or research related to the assignment.

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The Academic Advancement Program, known on the UCLA campus as AAP, is the nation’s largest university-based student diversity program. AAP promotes academic achievement and excellence through academic advising, collaborative learning workshops, mentoring to prepare for graduate studies and professional schools, summer bridge programs for entering freshmen and transfer students, and scholarships for our students. Many students in AAP come from high-need families, are the first in their families to go to college, are recent immigrants, or come from populations that have been historically underrepresented at the university. AAP eligible students will receive information on how to become an AAP Member by attending an AAP Orientation workshop. The orientation focuses on the history, mission and relevance of AAP and its services. It also helps students navigate the UCLA environment to achieve academic success.

AAP eligible students can sign up for the next AAP Orientation on MyUCLA or visit the New Student Programs Office (NSP) in 1230 Campbell Hall, Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. To determine your AAP eligibility status, currently enrolled UCLA students may contact the AAP New Student Programs office at aapnewstudents@college.ucla.edu or visit the NSP office in 1230 Campbell Hall, Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Free Peer Learning is offered to all AAP students who want to strengthen their abilities to think critically and independently, read analytically, write well, reason quantitatively, and study effectively while mastering course materials. Every year, we train over 130 Peer Learning Facilitators (mostly successful upper division AAP students) to work as Peer Learning facilitators and to serve as academic role models. The Center provides Peer Learning Workshops to almost 2,000 AAP students every week. AAP Peer Learning workshops offer students an opportunity to shape their own educational experiences – and to excel. The Peer Learning Unit builds on the premise that critical thinking and intellectual independence are developed through questioning and dialogue. Most of our Peer Learning
sessions take place in small groups of three to twelve students. This setting fosters discussion and allows students to listen to, grapple with, and articulate new perspectives. It enables students to work collaboratively, helping them to see that they can rely on classmates as well as Peer Learning Facilitators; it helps students develop the tools necessary for scholarly inquiry. We treat writing as a process of ongoing revision, teaching students to critically evaluate and edit their own writing.

Readings
All readings are available at the course web site. No purchases are necessary. Readings are to be read before the lecture or discussion board questions that they are related to. The readings are generally not written for teaching purposes or as a textbook. Many are written for academic audiences and thus at a relatively high level of abstraction. Others are written for general audiences and easier to comprehend on the first reading. The more challenging readings should be read especially carefully and actively, making notes for yourself and repeating sections if necessary. One of the skills of reading at a college level is to quickly assess the type of article and the appropriate reading strategy for whatever you are reading. I’ve included nothing that a UCLA student cannot reasonably comprehend, but there are some readings that require work.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Week One

Lesson 1: What is sociology?
Reading: Mills, C. Wright *The Sociological Imagination*, pp. 3-13

Lesson 2: Basic concepts: Structure

Lesson 3: Basic concepts: Culture

Week Two

Lesson 4: Methods in Sociology
Lesson 5: Basic concepts: Interaction and Everyday Life


Lesson 6: Inequality and Identity: Class


Week Three

Lesson 7: Inequality and Identity: Race and Ethnicity


Lesson 8: Inequality and Identity: Gender


Lesson 9: Inequality and Identity: Crime and Law

Week Four

Lesson 10: Institutions: Education

Reading:

Lesson 11: Institutions: Health and Medicine

Reading:

Lesson 12: Institutions: Arts and Media

Reading:

Week Five

Lesson 13: Institutions: Politics

Reading:

Lesson 14: Institutions: Religion

Reading:

Lesson 15: Institutions: Family

Reading:

**Week Six**

**Lesson 16:** **Institutions: Economy and Work**


**Lesson 17:** **Globalization**


**Lesson 18:** **Summary and conclusion**