



Rural Sociology

SOC F301 F01 Spring 2008 T & R 9:45-11:15
January 24-May 10 342 Duckering Bldg.

Photo credit: Rural Alaska, by M. Kayt Sunwood 2006

Course description

This course will examine sociological concepts and theories, using examples from rurality—rural people, rural life, rural institutions, rural communities, rural processes. We will primarily focus on the U.S., and spend considerable time talking about Alaska and the Circumpolar North using sociological concepts. In particular, we will study structural inequality in the rural context and examine intersectionality—how race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexuality, spatiality and other markers of difference intersect to affect rural people and their communities. This is a reading-intensive, discussion-based course, and students should expect to be active learners through vigorous class participation and individual reflection.

Course objectives

There are several primary objectives of the course:

- to understand a variety of theories and concepts important to the sociology of rurality
- to analyze the structural components of rurality
- to understand rural inequalities based on race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, spatiality, and other markers of difference that affect rural people and their communities
- to develop our sociological imagination by applying it to the study of rural communities and rural life
- to decrease the invisibility and marginalization of rural people, their communities, and their issues, especially in Alaska and the Circumpolar North
- to enjoy learning and to create a feeling of community among ourselves

Prerequisites

One lower division social science course or permission of instructor.

Readings

The readings are on E-Res: <http://eres.uaf.edu/courseindex.asp> Password: rural

Professor contact info

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Visit my homepage for more information about me, my research interests, and to meet my dogs and cats: <http://www.uaf.edu/sociology/Anahita.html>



Grading and assignments

You can earn up to 100 points in this class. This class is reading intensive and discussion-oriented.

Assignment	Points	Due date
Reading reflections 20 @ 5 points each	100	throughout

Grading scale				
A+ = 97>	B + = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69	F <60
A = 93-96	B = 83-86	C = 73-76	D = 63-66	
A- = 90-92	B- = 80-82	C- = 70-72	D- = 60-62	

Reading Reflections (20 @ 5 points each = 100 points, or 100% of your final course grade)

For 20 of the assigned readings, write a Reading Reflection. We will utilize your Reading Reflections in our class discussions. Each Reading Reflection should contain at least these elements:

- brief but comprehensive summary of the main points. Do NOT cite verbatim from the reading; instead, paraphrase and summarize. This is a learned skill, and once you master it, you will excel in your classes, increase your enjoyment of academic reading, and use it in your future career after graduation 😊
- how can the reading be analyzed sociologically? For example, how would one of the sociological paradigms analyze the issue(s) discussed in the reading? How would the sociological imagination be fruitfully used to discuss concepts in the reading?
- list one or two sociologically oriented questions that we can use to stimulate class discussion. Successful questions will ask “how” and “why” and will engage others in vigorous discussion. Unsuccessful questions ask yes/no questions, or a repetition of simple facts, and will not be engaging. Students will be asked to share their discussion questions with the class, so make them interesting for your peers.

Your Reading Reflections will be evaluated using these criteria: 1) overall sociological value; 2) accurate and comprehensive summary of the reading; 3) sociological quality of the discussion questions; 4) quality of the class discussion that resulted from you asking your questions in class; 5) thoughtfulness and obvious investment of intellectual energy. If your initial discussion question falls flat and is unsuccessful, you are expected to ask follow-up and probe questions to stimulate discussion. You must write a Reading Reflection on 20 of the 24 assigned readings, and they must be turned in at the end of each class. The Reading Reflections must be typed, and free from errors. Points will be deducted for egregious errors, so proofread carefully. Make sure your name and the name of the reading is listed at the top of your pages.

Course policies

I may modify this syllabus during the semester if it becomes necessary. If you have questions about my policies, please contact me.

Contacting me

The best way to contact me is through email or by visiting my office hours. I try to answer emails within 24 hours, but I do not check my email on weekends or at night. It is difficult to reach me by phone.

Reading

Study the readings carefully. As you read, think about the core concepts of each reading. You will find it helpful to take notes or write in the margins of your text. I read with a dictionary handy; I suggest you adopt this habit as well, because you will surely encounter new words in your reading. Plan to commit sufficient time to do the reading in a comprehensive manner. I may drop students who cannot demonstrate that they have fully read the assigned material as required.



Assignments and exams

Late assignments will not be accepted. Emailed assignments will not be accepted.

Participation

I welcome and expect lively discussion in class, but you must demonstrate that you studied the assigned materials and stay on topic. I expect you to be respectful of others, including those who disagree with you. You do not have to agree with me, other students, or course material, but you **ARE** required to utilize sociological perspectives when writing or talking about your ideas. You may be dropped from the course if you do not participate in class discussions or fail to demonstrate that you read and studied the course material as required.

Sensitive topics

This course has material that you may find offensive, shocking, contradictory to your religious or political beliefs, or otherwise difficult. Please work to manage your emotional responses to the material. If you are having a great deal of difficulty with the material and cannot work past your reactions, please contact me. I will try to help you deal with the material, but we also may decide that you should withdraw from the course.

Extra credit

There are no possibilities for extra credit assignments.

Instructor-initiated Withdrawal

Expect an instructor-initiated withdrawal if you fail to substantially participate in the class. This includes chronically missing class, not being able to demonstrate that you fully read the readings as required, or consistently not using sociological concepts in class discussions.

Incompletes

I will give an Incomplete grade (I) only in rare circumstances. The student is responsible for providing documents in support of the request for an I. Unresolved Incompletes become permanent Fs after 30 days.

Academic Honesty

Expect an F and/or instructor-initiated withdrawal from the course if you engage in academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, falsification, or having another person do your assignments.

Disability

UAF's Disability Services Office offers assistance, including academic accommodations, to students who have a documented disability. Please contact them for more information: website: www.uaf.edu/chc/disability.html; phone: 907-474-7043; email: fydso@uaf.edu

Attendance and participation

Class attendance and full participation in class discussions are mandatory. You may miss up to four classes without penalty. You will be counted as absent if you leave class early, arrive late, do not participate in class discussion, or fail to read the readings as assigned. After four missed classes, you will lose five (5) points for each additional missed class. You are responsible for obtaining notes, handouts, and other material from another student if you miss class.

Schedule

Topics & activities	Date	Assignments (complete BEFORE class) All readings are in E-Res (password: rural)
Who are these people? Intro to the course and each other	1-24	none
The sociological perspective, rurality, and rural demographics	1-29	none
	1-31	Unpredictable Directions of Rural Population Growth and Migration
Ethnicity, “race”, inequalities, and resistance in rural communities	2-5	African Americans in Rural America
	2-7	American Indians: Their Contemporary Reality and Future Trajectory
	2-12	Economic Development and Cultural Integrity
	2-14	Sold American (excerpt)
	2-19	Etok: A Story of Eskimo Power (excerpt)
	2-21	The Last Light Breaking (excerpt)
	2-26	Latinos in Rural America
Gender, sexuality, and rurality	2-28	Rural Women
	3-4	Rural Women’s Connections to the Land
	3-6	Nestled into Niches
	3-18	The Question of Rural Masculinities
	3-20	The Glass Phallus
Rural restructuring in Alaska and the Midwest	3-25	Decline and Denial
	3-27	Roots of the Farm Crisis
	4-1	Economy and Security
	4-3	The Second Wave
	4-8	Birth of the Pipeline
	4-10	Days of Milk and Barley
	4-15	student work day (no class meeting)
	4-17	Nowadays it is Not the Same
	4-22	A Land Gone Lonesome (excerpt)
	4-24	Ordinary Wolves (excerpt)
	4-29	Wanted: Cheap Waterfront Cabin
5-1	The Firecracker Boys (excerpt)	
Course wrap-up	5-8	10:15-12:15 final exam period