

SYLLABUS

Class Hours: T 5:00-7:00

Location: Ketchum 207 (my office)

Office Hours: **by appointment only** Tuesday 3:00-5:00 and Thursday 1:00-2:00

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will revisit the central sociological concepts of deviance, social order, social power, identity construction, and identity management, and learn them in more depth. You will absorb the material well enough to not only familiarize yourself with it, but to teach it to others. This class will also acquaint you with the perspective from “the other side of the desk.” It should be a learning experience to see the range of student performance in a large class such as this. It should also be a learning experience to scrutinize the lectures and readings more carefully with an eye toward writing essay and fill-in exam questions. This should give you analytic skill and experience that can transfer into other courses and realms of life. ATAs are vital to running the Deviance course, one of the largest and most popular courses on campus. Without your help I could not give the kind of creative, interesting, and challenging exams. Students would find themselves taking another mind-numbing scantron exam and I would quickly burn out on teaching this course. So thank you! Finally, this course offers you a leadership opportunity where you can teach, guide, help, evaluate, and interact with others. You may be able to forge your own version of the ATA position within the given parameters creatively by carving out a role for yourself with your TA, teaching course material in the labs, taking intellectual leadership in writing and grading exam questions, and in being a great member of our working group. You also have the opportunity here to interact with elite others and me in a small group that is both intellectually challenging and socially fun. So, like the class, it should be something that we enjoy as we are working and learning!

Your responsibilities will fall into four areas. First, you will submit questions and answer keys for the exams, and you will grade your exams. Second, you will assist your TA in the labs as needed and appropriate. Third, you will help out students as needed and appropriate. Fourth, you will show up at the appointed times and places on time and turn in your work on time. This includes responding to your emails in a prompt fashion.

A word must be said about the now infamous “prostitutes skit.” It appears that I have been cleared through the university to offer this demonstration of the stratification hierarchy in the subculture of prostitutes, one that is primarily (as you well know) based on social class differences. If it becomes totally clear that there are no repercussions to going ahead with this class, you may be offered the opportunity to have first crack at performing roles in this skit. Let me make it perfectly clear, however, that participation in this “skit” this is *optional*, and that it *will in no way influence the grade you receive for this course*. To say it again, no one should feel any pressure, or like he or she

is disappointing me by opting out of participation. I will not record the skit, and but I have no way of keeping any member of the public out of the room or of preventing people from photographing participants. I may not even be able to prevent the University of Colorado from using their secretly-controlled recording devices to record it themselves. If you elect to participate you may be volunteering for a role that involves the depiction of giving or receiving violence, sexual assault, or engaging in degrading acts. You may be invited to dress like a sex worker and to talk like a street person in front of a large audience. Please consider these consequences carefully.

COURSE GRADING

Although this feels more like a job (and we treat it as such), this is an upper-division Sociology course, and for it you will receive a grade. Your grade in the course will be determined by me in conjunction with the TAs based on the four things listed above. You have been selected by last semester's staff and me based on your excellence in Socy 1004, your intelligence, your personal attributes, your responsibility, and your motivation. But just because you are the cream of the crop does not mean that you will get an automatic A for Socy 4991. I do assign the grades, however, as I would in a graduate seminar. The very best of the ATAs, who do stellar work and go above and beyond the call of duty will get an A. Grades of A- go to ATAs who do merely the work that is assigned them in a stellar manner. If your work is somehow less than stellar (question writing, general participation) you may get a B+. People who fall below that will receive a grade of B, since that is considered a failing grade at the graduate level.

LOYALTY AND RESPONSIBILITY

These are two things that are very important to me. We work as a team, and can only operate well as a team if we trust each other and have each other's' backs. That begins by not criticizing any of the staff or speaking ill of staff members outside of the group. I will not complain about the TAs or ATAs to the students, nor should you. We bring out our issues internally, if we have any. That does not mean that we should not communicate about issues that arise among ourselves. If you are concerned about how a TA is doing, talk to me. If any of them are concerned about how you are doing, they should do the same. If you have concerns about how I am doing, talk to me. It is my job to try to help resolve issues peacefully and constructively, and I am not above taking constructive suggestion myself. I have tried, over the years, to learn to take criticism and turn it into constructive suggestion, so please do not be afraid to say things to me. Criticism/constructive suggestion is not one of the four factors on which your grade is determined.

You are in a position of responsibility and power. You will be in a position to influence policy decisions for students in this class. In fact, part of your job involves being aware of your students, so that if issues arise for them and we have to make decisions about how to handle these, you can give input. You are responsible for helping make the communication flow in this class upward to me and downward to students. It is not your job to "handle" things yourself, but to bring issues to our staff meetings so that we can discuss them. If you are having an issue, it is very possible that others are as well (or may in the future), so by bringing it up and discussing it in the group, we are all better able to make judgments about how to handle situations that arise.

Your power also extends to knowing exam questions and answers in advance of the tests. You must guard this information gravely. You cannot reveal this information to students. Violation of this position of trust will result in Honor Code sanctions.

DECORUM DURING LECTURE AND LAB

You are role models for the students and set an example during lecture. I know you have taken this course before and are expert and all that, but please do *not* use this opportunity to talk during lecture. It disturbs the other students and it disturbs me. Believe it or not, I sometimes get emailed complaints from students if ATAs yak during lecture. This is a good opportunity to review your notes from last semester and to augment them with more detail if you want. And I will occasionally hand out work for you to do during lecture, such as reviewing the exam questions others have written in preparation for our staff meeting that evening.

Please also know that it is expected that you attend all lectures, labs, and ATA staff meetings. If you need to miss one of these, especially a lab or staff meeting, please let your TA or me know in advance. I recommend that you take some time before lab starts to chat with your students and get to know them personally. I also recommend that you take some time outside of labs and lectures to get to know your TA, to assess your and her performance, and to keep good relations and the lines of communication open.

READINGS

There are some readings that I will be assigning for this course, and I will hand them out at our first meeting. They include:

Adler, Patricia A. 1993. "Personalizing Mass Education: The Assistant Teaching Assistant (ATA) Program." Teaching Sociology 21(2): 172-76.

Forehand, Mary. "Bloom's Taxonomy: From Emerging Perspectives on Learning, Teaching and Technology."

Goldschmid, Barbara and Marcel Goldschmid. 1976. "Peer Teaching in Higher Education: A Review." Higher Education 5(1): 9-33.