

**SOCI 441 – Contemporary Issues in Sociology
Spring 2009**

Mondays 6:00-9:00 p.m. Boyer 335

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Course description:

A capstone course for sociology majors. The specific content may vary from year to year but will include consideration of: contemporary trends in sociological theory, sociological analysis of contemporary issues and reflection on the relevance of study in sociology for various professions and graduate study. The course will also offer students the opportunity to consider how their faith might relate to their studies in sociology. Offered in the spring term.

Prerequisite: instructor permission.

Course objectives:

1. To provide a senior level course in sociology that will allow majors to synthesize elements of their entire sociology major.
2. To introduce one or more of the current theoretical debates in sociology.
3. To survey current debates about the nature and status of the discipline and profession of sociology. Students will consider the role of sociologists in the academy as well as in developing social policy and other areas of the application of sociological knowledge.
4. To provide an opportunity to explicitly think about Christianity and the life of the mind. To explore models and debates about how one might carry on a dialogue between sociology and one's faith commitments.
5. To create a forum where students can reflect on how their experience as students of sociology might connect with their next steps upon completion of a program of study at Messiah College.

Course requirements:

25% Class leadership and participation (due dates will vary as students sign up for discussion leadership)

25% SMART goals (goal statement and three updates)

25% Vocation interview and essay

25% Choice:

Image analysis

Integrative essay

Grades:

The grading scale follows the philosophy that A is outstanding, B is above average, C is average, D is below average, F is unsatisfactory. This usually follows a scale of

A 94-100

A- 90-93

B+ 87-89

...and so forth. I adjust the grading scale based on actual class performance, but only in a way that is in the best interest of students (that is, I won't raise the scale).

Academic Integrity Policy

Personal integrity is a behavioral expectation for all members of the Messiah community: administration, faculty, staff, and students. Violations of academic integrity are not consistent with the community standards of Messiah College. These violations include:

- a. **Plagiarism:** Submitting as one's own work part or all of any assignment (oral or written) which is copied, paraphrased or purchased from another source, including on-line sources without the proper acknowledgment of that source. Examples: failing to cite a reference, failing to use quotation marks where appropriate, misrepresenting another's work as your own, etc..
- b. **Cheating:** Attempting to use or using unauthorized material or study aids for personal assistance in examinations or other academic work. Examples: using a cheat sheet, altering a graded exam, looking at a peer's exam.
- c. **Fabrication:** Submitting altered or contrived information in any academic exercise. Examples: falsifying sources and/or data, etc.
- d. **Misrepresentation of Academic Records:** Tampering with any portion of a student's record. Example: forging a signature on a registration form or change of grade form.
- e. **Facilitating Academic Dishonesty:** Helping another individual violate this policy. Examples: working together on an assignment where collaboration is not allowed, doing work for another student, allowing one's own work to be copied.
- f. **Computer Offenses:** Altering or damaging computer programs without permission. Examples: software piracy, constructing viruses, introducing viruses into a system, copying copyrighted programs, etc.
- g. **Unfair Advantage:** Attempting to gain advantage over fellow students in an academic exercise. Examples: lying about the need for an extension on a paper, destroying or removing library materials, etc.

Procedures for perceived violations of academic integrity will follow Messiah College policy as recorded in the Handbook.

Course Schedule

Week	date	Topic	Reading	Due
1	Feb. 2	Sociology and vocation	Palmer ch. 1	
2	Feb. 9	Sociology and vocation <i>The Painted Veil</i>	Palmer ch. 2- end	
3	Feb. 16	Sociology and the body	Regnerus intro – ch.4	SMART goals
4	Feb. 23	Dr. Paris speaking at “Imagining the Reconciled Community” conference at Bethel University in St. Paul, MN		
5	Mar. 2	Sociology and the body	Regnerus ch. 5-end (skim appendices)	
6	Mar. 9	Anthropology and the body	Griffith intro – ch 2	SMART goal #1
7	Spring Break			
8	Mar. 23	Anthropology and the body	Griffith ch 4- end	
9	Mar. 30	Faith integration	Paris, TBA	
10	April 6	Practicing sociology and anthropology <i>Schrage Lecture</i>		Vocation interview and essay SMART goal #2
11	April 13	No class: Easter break		
12	April 20	Practicing sociology and anthropology		
13	April 27		Crouch intro – ch.8	
14	May 4		Crouch ch. 9- end	Image analysis OR integrative essay SMART goal #3
15	Final exam: Monday, May 11 6-9 pm			

SMART Goals assignment

This assignment is designed to help you clarify where you are at in your vocational journey, and to provide accountability for achieving three goals related to vocation.

SMART goals are specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-limited. For example, a group may choose to focus on timeliness for their meetings.

	SMART goals	Not-so-SMART goals
Specific	Come to meetings on time	Be more aware of time
Measurable	“on time” means within 5 minutes of the start time	In general, try to be on time
Actionable	Be in the room, and stop talking when the facilitator begins	Always be ready to start
Realistic	We may need to make exceptions	No exceptions, ever
Time-limited	For the next 4 meetings	Forever

Due Feb. 16: A 250-word statement of your current sense of vocation, and where you’d like to be by the end of the semester. “Vocation” may be focused on career, or personal development, or even health, spirituality or family. These issues all intertwine, and at different times some come to the foreground while others recede.

Three SMART goals, formatted like this:

Goal #1 is _____

This goal is

Specific: _____

Measurable: _____

Actionable: _____

Realistic: _____

Time-limited: _____

Due: March 9: A 250-word report on goal #1 (goal #1 should be completed by Mar. 9)

Due: April 6: A 250-word report on goal #2 (goal #2 should be completed by April 6)

Due: May 4: A 250-word report on goal #3 (goal #3 should be completed by May 4)

Vocation interview and essay

Purpose: to interview someone with a B.A. in anthropology or sociology, and learn how their degree has shaped their life and career.

Due: April 6

Procedures:

1. Find a person with a B.A. in sociology or anthropology who is willing to be interviewed.
2. Develop a set of interview questions.
3. Conduct the interview. It may be informal or formal, and may be recorded or not. You should take notes during the interview.
4. Write a 5-page essay about sociology/anthropology and vocation. The essay should not be a narrative of the interview experience. It should have a thesis that makes an argument about the vocational value of sociology or anthropology. The interview, as well as *Let Your Life Speak*, should substantiate the thesis.
5. Attach the interview questions and interview details (name, date, time and place) as an Appendix.

Grading criteria:

- a thesis that makes a point about the vocational value of sociology or anthropology
- substantive use of *Let Your Life Speak*
- topic sentences that lead the paper through the argument
- appropriate inclusion of fieldwork narrative and interview quotes
- consistency with style guide rules (any style guide)
- formal formatting and quality of writing