Instructor: Ericka Cooley

Class Times/Places: Fully online course.

Contact Info: The best way to reach me is via email. My email address is cooleye@cwu.edu. I check my email every day and you can normally expect a response within 24 hours, although maybe not over the weekend all of the time.

My cell phone number is 360-320-9399. I have no office phone. You may call if it is urgent, but please respect that this is my personal phone and call at an appropriate times. I tend not to answer when I don't recognize a number, so leave a message if I don't answer and I will call back.

Required Text:

Required Films:
We will also have films to watch most weeks, and you may sometimes have to pay a little bit for them. All videos will be available to stream online, you won’t have to track them down. But, in some cases I am unable to provide them for free, so you may need to rent them online. This generally costs $4 to rent for 48 hours. Sometimes, more tech savvy students find links to the films online for free that I didn't. If you find one for free online, email me and I’ll share that info with the class.

If you have access to Netflix or Amazon Prime, you can get more of them for free as well. The total cost of renting films will not exceed $25. Given how reasonably priced the text is, text plus films rented is still less money than most courses’ books.

Course Description:

What kind of country do we live in? What does it even mean to talk about a “kind” of country? We all know what it means to ask of a strange creature “what kind of animal is this?” But it is less clear how to ask the same question of a society. The question is muddied further by the fact that societies can change. A leopard can’t change its spots. But a society can become more or less productive in the organization of its economy, more or less equal in its distribution of opportunity, more or less democratic.

This course provides an extended discussion and answers to the question of what kind of a country the United States is. It also explores the implications of that answer for understanding, and making progress in solving, some of the social problems that confront America today.

Our discussion revolves around five key values that most Americans believe our society should realize:

1. Freedom: the idea, commonly thought to be the most essential to the “American creed,” that people should be able to live their lives, to the greatest degree possible, as they wish. This means people should be free from coercive restrictions imposed by others and, as much as possible, have the capacity to put their life plans into effect.

2. Prosperity: the idea that an economy should generate a high standard of living for most people, not just a small privileged elite.
3. **Economic efficiency**: the idea that the economy should generate rational outcomes, effectively balancing costs and benefits in the way resources are used.

4. **Fairness**: the idea that people should be treated justly and that they should have equal opportunity to make something of their lives without unfair privileges and unfair disadvantages.

5. **Democracy**: the idea that our public decisions should reflect the collective will of equal citizens, not of powerful and privileged elites.

A central theme throughout the course will be: *To what degree does contemporary American society realize these values, and how might it do a better job?* There will be an emphasis on not only learning about the realities of our system/institutions and society, but also discussing our cultural values and whether our system really matches or reflects those values we feel are an integral part of American culture and society. So, even though this is a Sociology class, we will be learning about and considering our society from the some of the standpoints and philosophies of Political Science, Philosophy, and Economics.

**An Overview of How the Class is Set Up:**

I have provided a very detailed schedule with this syllabus, and I suggest you print it out or put it somewhere where you can access it easily. There are assignments with due dates every week you will need to keep track of.

You will find a module for each week/unit on Canvas, with links to the weekly notes, film review assignments and Current Events Discussion Boards. You will have a film to review each week, and discussion board to attend to each week. In general, you should do your text readings, then read my notes, watch the film and do your review, and then attend to the discussions. Once in the quarter you will lead an online discussion, and the other weeks you will respond to others’ posts.

**Canvas & Deadlines:**

So generally, when I create an assignment, Canvas tells you the due date and you are able to set it up to remind yourself. But, **this fails on the Current Event Posts**, as they are due to be posted on the discussion boards by Thursdays at noon, but the rest of the class’ responses are not due until Sunday. I can’t program 2 due dates. So, there will be a list of which student has which topic and due date for the CE Posts in the first week’s module. Make sure you mark your own reminder for that!

It is up to you to use the course schedule to make sure you turn things in on time. I will not accept as an excuse for late work that Canvas didn’t let you know you had something due. I have made weekly predictable due dates (most things are due the same day of the week each week) to help you keep things straight. Make sure to write down which week you need to do your Current Events Posts right at the start of the term, it’s probably the one you’d be most likely to miss.

**Course Requirements and Assignments:**

**Discussion Boards (DBs): Please read the DB Guide in the First week’s module for details!**

Every week, there will be a discussion board opened up that corresponds to the weekly topic. Once in the term, it will be your responsibility to write an original post where you discuss a current issue/event and open it up for class discussion (called a Current Events post). All other weeks you will need to write responses to such a post from another student.

**Current Events Posts:** You will be assigned, by the end of the first week of class, to a week when you need to come up with a Current Event Topic post for the DB. I will have a detailed handout for this, but basically you will need to find a current issue or newsworthy event that illustrates or corresponds to the weekly topic in the text, and create a post where you summarize the issue and connect it to concepts and terms from the text.
During the week you are a Current Events Poster, you do not have to write DB responses (although you can for extra credit).

**Weekly DB responses:** When it is not your week to post a current event topic, you will be asked to read and respond to those posts. Each of these weeks, you will be asked to contribute to the conversations 2 times, essentially responding to the current events posts by discussing the issue, linking it to other course concepts or adding to the thoughts/considerations. You are allowed to miss one response post in the quarter without penalty. 
**Current Events posts and DB responses will not be accepted late at all. These are meant to function like a conversation, so being late doesn’t work.**

**Films/Film Reactions:**
Nine of the eleven weeks of this term, you will be asked to view films that relate to and inform our thoughts about the topic of the week. I have chosen films that have numerous availability options, are online and many are free. The schedule has instructions or links to where the films are available. Expect to watch about 1 ½ - 2 hours of film each week.
You will be asked to write an original reaction to each of the weekly films, at a length of 350 - 500 words.
**Film reactions will be accepted up to one week late, and subject to a 25% penalty. No film reactions will be accepted after one week past the due date.**

**Exams:**
There will be 2 exams in the class, they will be completed at home and turned in on Canvas. They will be short-answer essay format, with varying answer lengths. Required answer lengths will range from one to 3-4 paragraphs. Each exam will have about 10-12 questions, and will be posted more than a week in advance. The final exam will not be cumulative, although some reference to the first unit is possible.
Exams questions are drawn from the text. Much of our weekly work does not require using the text directly, so the exams are there to make sure you do your reading. **If you do not do the reading and “wing it” through the film reviews and discussion boards, the exams will be very hard for you.** This text does not have lots of headings and bold vocabulary words... it is not easy to find answers if you have not read the sections beforehand.
**Exams will not be accepted late unless you talk to me before it is due and you have a serious emergency or situation arise. If an emergency happens, at least text me briefly and let me know ASAP.**

**Grading:**
I wanted to give you a general idea here of my preferences and what is important in terms of getting a good grade in this course. First of all, effort and participation are really important to me. **You will not receive full credit for anything that is short of whatever length requirement I have set.** That’s true from DBs to films reactions to exams. Do not expect full credit if you don’t fulfill my basic requirements (and don’t worry they are always very specific). Another thing is to pay attention to your writing. Do not send me anything that is not well formatted, spell checked and edited for grammar and sentence structure. It totally offends me to get a paper smattered in red and blue underlines in my Word program.
You will find that this class is more about putting in effort and attempting to think about/analyze the concepts and situations we study, than getting any answers right. In Sociology, there are few topics with right and wrong answers, there are mostly concepts to learn and then apply in some way. What is important to me is that you show investment and thought about the topics. I hope that might help you know how to get your best grade in this class😊.
Extra Credit:
In some weeks, there will be an extra credit opportunity to watch an additional film and write a reaction. Sometimes I know of more than one film that is good/appropriate for the week’s topic, so I’ll offer EC if you watch and write about it. Also, every week you can do up to 3 extra responses on the DB for EC. The guidelines are in the DB guide.

Deadlines/Late Assignments:
If something like an emergency or other crisis happens that will hamper your ability to get things done on time in the class, contact me ASAP. I can be understanding about things and will give exceptions - if I feel it is warranted, and you have spoken to me about as soon as possible. If this is the case, we will work together to figure out how to go forward with assignments and such.

The film reactions are the only things I accept late without your explanation and me making an exception. You have up to one week to turn them in late and they will be subject to a 25% penalty on your grade. It doesn’t matter if you are 12 hours or the full week late, the penalty is still 25%, and I will not accept them after one week. Discussion board assignments, both the Current Events posts and the responses, are not accepted late at all. As I said above, exams won’t be accepted late without an explanation/discussion with me and a major situation.

Grade breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Film Reactions: (9 at 15 each) 3% each</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>America: The Good writing</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current Event Post:</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DB responses: (10 weeks @ 10 each) 2% each</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm:</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final:</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>485</td>
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Final Grade Scale:

- A = 94-100%
- A- = 90-93%
- B+= 88-89%
- B = 84-87%
- B- = 80-83%
- C+= 78-79%
- C = 74-77%
- C- = 70-73%
- D = 60-69%

OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Writing Expectations: First off, plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment, period. If you are unsure of citing etiquette, please refer to the following link to make sure you know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it: [http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml](http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml)

Sources should be cited in APA style. Here is link if you need to learn about this: [http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPAOrientation.html](http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPAOrientation.html)

As well, you need to pay attention to detail before handing in your writing assignments. That means that you have grammar and spell checked the entire paper, as well as proofread it yourself a couple of times. If you have had problems with writing mechanics in your college career I suggest having a friend read over your papers before turning them in. In fact, it is always good to have another person read your papers, as they often detect issues that you don’t see.

Incomplete Grades:
No student will receive an incomplete grade unless he/she has discussed it with me. If you disappear from my class and all of your work is not completed, you will receive the grade from the average of those assignments completed.

Disabilities:
Please let me know if you need accommodation due to a disability. I will make every effort to accommodate you in notes, etc.
This schedule contains all due dates and links to films for your film reaction assignments. Please do readings in the order in which they are listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 1:</th>
<th>Intro to Course:</th>
<th>DB: 2 Responses due by Sun 9/23 midnight.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed 9/19 - Sun 9/23</td>
<td>What Kind of Society is American Society?</td>
<td>(I will be providing discussion questions for this first week.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read: Chapters 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Film reaction #1 due Sun 9/23 by midnight.</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Rent from Amazon Video $4 (free with Prime)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(you can likely find this on DVD in a library for free)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Unit 2:</th>
<th>The Capitalist Market: How it is Supposed to Work &amp; How it Actually Works, The Environment</th>
<th>DB: Current Event Posts due Thurs 9/27 by noon, 2 responses by Sun 9/30 @ midnight.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon 9/24 - Sun 9/30</td>
<td>Read: Chapters 3 &amp; 4, pages 71-84 (rest of chapter 5 is recommended but not required)</td>
<td>Film reaction #2 due Sat 9/29 by midnight.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film 2: “Normal is Over”, 2016 Renee Scheltema cheapest on YouTube:</td>
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<tr>
<td>$2<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v_eiUY7KESY0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v_eiUY7KESY0</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Also: $6</td>
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<td><a href="https://vimeo.com/ondemand/normalisoverthemovie/168486528">https://vimeo.com/ondemand/normalisoverthemovie/168486528</a></td>
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<tr>
<th>Unit 3:</th>
<th>Economic History, Banking and the Attack on the Affirmative State</th>
<th>DB: Current Event Posts due Thurs 10/4 by noon, 2 responses by Sun 10/7 @ midnight.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon 10/1 - Sun 10/7</td>
<td>Read: Pages 216-228, Pages 179-200 and 459-468 (rest of Ch 9 (200-215) recommended but not required)</td>
<td>Film reaction #3 due Sat 10/6 by midnight.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film 3: “Inequality for All” Robert Reich (2013) 91 minutes</td>
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<td>*Rent from Amazon Video $4</td>
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<td><a href="https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B00HQAHEQA?ie=UTF8&amp;*Version*=1&amp;*entries*=0">https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B00HQAHEQA?ie=UTF8&amp;*Version*=1&amp;*entries*=0</a></td>
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<td>-This can also be found on DVD through Netflix and on DVD in CWU libraries.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Unit 4:</th>
<th>Media and Consumerism</th>
<th>DB: Current Event Posts due Thurs 10/11 by noon, 2 responses by Sun 1/14 @ midnight.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 10/8 - Sun 10/14</td>
<td>Read: Chapter 20 and Chapter 7</td>
<td>Film reaction #4 due Sat 10/13 by midnight.</td>
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<td><a href="https://cwu.kanopy.com/video/advertising-edge-apocalypse">https://cwu.kanopy.com/video/advertising-edge-apocalypse</a></td>
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</table>
| Unit 5: Mon 10/15 - Sun 10/21 | Democracy, Inequality and Taxes  
Read: Chapter 17, Chapter 11 and Pages 446-459  
No required Film this Week  
Extra credit offered for extra film reaction to: “An Inconvenient Tax” Christopher Marshall, 2011  
Link to watch for free: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWagiPORGBk  
*see weekly notes for points and due date | DB: Current Event Posts due Thurs 10/18 by noon, 2 responses by Sun 10/21 @ midnight. |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon 10/22</td>
<td><strong>EXAM 1 (over units 1-5) due Monday 2/5 midnight</strong></td>
<td>Exam 1 Due Mon 10/22 at midnight</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Unit 6: Tues 10/23 - Sun 10/28 | Poverty in the US  
Read: Chapters 13 & 14  
Film 5: “A Place at the Table” (2012) 84 min  
*Available through Netflix DVD or Amazon Video for $4: https://www.amazon.com/Place-at-Table-Jeff-Bridges/dp/B00BN506KU/ref=mm_aiv_sw_mpu_1?encoding=UTF8&marketPlace=US&refRID=CJ5WNZ86111F1Z4K7M66  
Do not confuse with the 2000 film of the same name about Racial Equality. | DB: Current Event Posts due Thurs 10/25 by midnight, 2 responses by Sun 10/28 @ midnight.  
Film reaction #5 due Sat 10/27 by midnight. |
| Unit 7: Mon 10/29 - Sun 11/4 | Racial Inequality  
Read: Chapter 15  
Film 6: “The House I Live In” Eugene Jarecki (2012) 108min  
*Available through Netflix DVD or Amazon Video for $4: http://www.amazon.com/The-House-I-Live-In/dp/B00BI9HFMK | DB: Current Event Posts due Thurs 11/1 by noon, 2 responses by Sun 11/4 @ midnight.  
Film reaction #6 due Sat 11/13 by midnight. |
| Unit 8: Tues 11/5 - Sun 11/11 | Gender Inequality  
Read: Chapter 16  
Film 7: “Tough Guise 2: Violence, Manhood and American Culture” Jackson Katz (2012) 80 min  
- available to stream through CWU library website: Search the title, and click on “View It”  
or  
“Miss Representation” (2011), Jennifer Newsom, 90 min  
- Available through Netflix DVD or rent on Amazon video. http://www.amazon.com/Miss-Representation-Cory-Booker/dp/B00A2KHLXW/ref=sr_1_1s-instant-video&ie=UTF8&sr=8-1&keywords=miss+representation  
DB: Current Event Posts due Thurs 11/7 by noon, 2 responses by Sun 11/11 @ midnight.  
Film reaction #7 due Sat 11/10 by midnight. |
| Unit 9: Tues 11/13 - Sun 11/18 | Health Care  
Read: Chapter 8  
Film 8: “Escape Fire”, 2012 Directed by Froemke & Heineman, 100 min | DB: Current Event Posts due Thurs 11/15 by midnight, 2 responses by Sun 11/18 @ midnight. |
**Rent from Amazon Video $4**
https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B00BLSY592?ie=UTF8&k eywords=Escape%20Fire%3A%20The%20Fight%20To%20Rescue%20American%20Healthcare&qid=13619233969&ref_=sr_1_1&sr=instant-video&sr=1-1

---FINAL EXAM IS DUE ON Thursday December 6th BY MIDNIGHT---

It is not cumulative... over units 6-11.