

# **SOC434: THE SOCIOLOGY OF LAW**

Spring 2026 @ California State University, Northridge

Lectures: T&R 4-515 in Maple 227

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## **CONTENTS**

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>OVERVIEW.....</b>                                 | <b>2</b> |
| Prerequisites .....                                  | 2        |
| Objectives .....                                     | 2        |
| <b>STRUCTURE .....</b>                               | <b>3</b> |
| Required Readings.....                               | 3        |
| other Materials.....                                 | 3        |
| <b>REQUIREMENTS.....</b>                             | <b>4</b> |
| Quizzes (30%)......                                  | 4        |
| Short Papers (30%).....                              | 4        |
| Two Exams (40%).....                                 | 5        |
| Extra Credit.....                                    | 5        |
| Graduate Students.....                               | 5        |
| <b>SCHEDULE .....</b>                                | <b>5</b> |
| Note on Dropped Grades.....                          | 7        |
| <b>General Course Guidelines.....</b>                | <b>7</b> |
| STUDENTS: Things you'll do in any of my classes..... | 7        |
| Prepare.....   | 7        |
| Use Zoom .....                                       | 8        |
| Attend .....   | 9        |
| Behave Politely .....                                | 11       |
| No Recording in Class .....                          | 12       |
| Do the Work .....                                    | 13       |
| Be Honest.....                                       | 14       |
| Meet Deadlines .....                                 | 16       |
| Achieve .....  | 18       |
| INSTRUCTOR: Things I'll do in all of my classes..... | 19       |
| Enroll Students .....                                | 19       |
| Teach the class.....                                 | 20       |
| Assign grades.....                                   | 20       |
| Communicate Progress.....                            | 21       |
| Determine Final Grades .....                         | 22       |
| Special Circumstances .....                          | 23       |
| COVID Issues.....                                    | 23       |
| CFA, CSU, & Contract.....                            | 24       |
| Religious Observances.....                           | 24       |
| Disability Accommodations.....                       | 24       |

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Departmental Advising.....         | 25 |
| University Writing Support .....   | 25 |
| Other Critical Needs .....         | 25 |
| Sexual Misconduct Disclosures..... | 26 |
| Instructor Contact .....           | 26 |

## OVERVIEW

This course will explore parameters of legal institutions, variation in legal behavior, and sociological patterns in that variation. We will review the most important theoretical and empirical developments in this field of study, including how sociologists study law, as well as explanations of the patterns and dynamics of law itself. Those explanations will consider components of law, and alternatives to law, in a variety of social settings, including cross-culturally and historically.

The course will address law as a pervasive social institution in modern social life, including the historical rise of that institution vis-à-vis other ways of handling conflicts, as well as interactions of law with the economy, politics, culture, and social structure, including elements of inequality, legitimacy, and globalization. However, this is a course in the Sociology of Law, not a course about law itself, and so the emphasis will be not on the language of law (“law on the books”, under a jurisprudential understanding) but on legal behavior (“law in action”, understood through sociological models).

As with any conventional Sociology course, attention will be given to functionalist, conflict, and interactionist approaches to the study of law in society. And, as with “law and society” courses, we will look at ways in which both the content and the behavior of law are empowered and constrained by differences among offenders, complainants, and third parties. However, we will also move beyond conventional (and especially classical) explanations of the law, as well as beyond basic divergences from “equal justice under the law,” by looking at the *relative* differences among those actors – i.e. their *social geometry*. As such, we will be exploring some of the most exciting, powerful, and revolutionary theory within the discipline of Sociology, and within social science generally.

## PREREQUISITES

The texts and readings are based not in social science generally, but in Sociology specifically. Understanding of and appreciation for the materials and ideas therefore requires some background knowledge in Sociology, especially in sociological theory. Moreover, much of the discussion in the course will move beyond conventional theoretical approaches, utilizing variation in legal behavior to elucidate variation in the emphases (and relative explanatory power) of those approaches. You are therefore encouraged to take SOC 202, 350, 368, and 468 prior to this course, though should be fine without them, as well.

## OBJECTIVES

The student who successfully completes this course should be:

- aware of the structure, history, and basic parameters of the American legal system; the historical context of law; and the structuring of law – and how each of these differs elsewhere;
- familiar with the concepts, approaches, perspectives, and concerns common in the study of law, and how they vary among disciplines (esp. Sociology vis others);
- able to describe and discuss variation in legal behavior, and in conventional sociological theories of that variation, and to critically evaluate the contributions and utility of those various theories; and
- aware of the opportunities and limitations of sociological knowledge in producing legal change.

## STRUCTURE

This is a lecture course, not a seminar, and the content is not particularly amenable to group activities or other forms of class participation. However, you are invited (even actively encouraged) to interrupt (politely and respectfully) at any time to ask questions, identify ambiguities, raise objections, or anything else. I would rather have a class meeting filled with questions, even if I've already answered them or even if I can't answer them, than 75 minutes of me talking solo. I apologize in advance for days that seem like the latter.

Lectures are meant to supplement readings, and readings are selected to complement lectures; neither is a substitute for the other. It will not be possible to lecture on every issue addressed in the text, and class lectures may not correspond exactly with the assigned readings for a given week.

## REQUIRED READINGS

In addition to some short readings available via Canvas, there are three required texts:

- *Law and Society*, by Steven Vago (2021, 12th ed., Routledge, #9780367904012)
- *The Behavior of Law*, by Donald Black (1976, Academic Press, #0121026523)
- *Sociological Justice*, by Donald Black (1989, Oxford, #0195054474)

These are listed below and in Canvas as L&S, BOL, and SocJust, respectively.

## OTHER MATERIALS

You will also need three things for the quizzes: a free registered account at accounts.turningtechnologies.com; the free Echo360 PointSolutions app (formerly TurningTech's ResponseWare) or a device that can browse to rwpoll.com; and a subscription which you will need to purchase through the app or website (unless you already have one that covers this semester). If you do not have a mobile device, you may acquire the physical "clicker" (RF or XR), but it must be from this company; others are not compatible. You will not need the "LMS integration"; ignore that.

You will also need access to Canvas for a complete schedule, additional readings, assignment instructions, other handouts, announcements, lecture notes (after the given lecture), the Intake Form, grades (in a PDF, not the Campus Gradebook), and much more.

## REQUIREMENTS

Your grade will be based on your performance on three sets of tasks, with given weights which work either as percentages of your grade or points toward 100; the math is the same.

### QUIZZES (30%)

There will be ~25 quizzes, one during nearly every lecture, which will take place via PointSolutions software, noted above and explained later in the syllabus and during the first lecture. These quizzes cannot be “made up” in whole or in part, must be completed during the allotted time, and will collectively count for thirty percent (30%) of your final grade.

Each quiz has five questions, dispersed throughout the lecture. For each wrong answer, your grade for that quiz will drop 6%, generating a grade range of 70 to 100 for each quiz taken. If you have connection, battery, or other troubles during an on-campus quiz, signing the roll will ensure that you earn the minimum grade for that quiz (70).

The quizzes are designed to encourage you to keep up with readings, assess whether you have understood them, ensure that you are grasping core concepts from the lectures, and add incentive for you to attend. Typically, one question on each quiz comes from the reading, one from a previous lecture, and one from something I just said.

Your lowest 3 quiz grades will be dropped, and the rest (including any zeroes for missing more than 3 quizzes) are averaged for this portion of your grade. (As with other drops, this occurs live throughout the term: As soon as there are four, the lowest 3 are dropped.) If you are excused from a quiz, you will be given a grade for that quiz which is the average of all of your subsequent quiz grades in the class (or, if it is the final quiz, all previous ones).

### SHORT PAPERS (30%)

You will write three short papers, each of which counts for ten percent of your grade (30% total). Each will examine whether an episode of a fictional television series (from a provided list) represents the sociological reality of law, by relating that episode to a required reading of your choice. Additional parameters are provided in a separate handout.

Each paper is due at the class meeting immediately *following* the meeting for which the chosen reading is assigned. Each paper must be connected with a different lecture topic and reading. If there are two lecture topics on a day (such as in a compressed summer schedule), you could choose those as two of the 3, though I recommend allowing some time between your selected dates so that you have feedback on an earlier paper before submitting the next.

To ensure that you are making progress, to help get you feedback on one paper before you write the next, and to encourage you to explore each section of the course, you are encouraged (though not required) to have one paper submitted by February 19, two by March 13, and three by April 15. That pattern will also help ensure that you have feedback on all three before possibly writing a fourth, extra-credit paper explained on the handout.

Papers will be graded as a check (85), check plus (95), or check minus (75). Each will be submitted through a TurnItIn link on Canvas and evaluated for its originality, and the similarity score that TurnItIn provides will be used as an adjustment to the grade. (Single digits may be errant, but double-digits will lower your grade notably.)

## **TWO EXAMS (40%)**

A midterm (due March 25 at 11am) and a final exam (due May 15 at 12:15pm) each count twenty percent of your grade (40% total). Each will be multiple-choice, open-note/open-book, online via Canvas. For each exam, each student will get a random set of questions from a question bank, presented in a random order, with answer choices in a random order.

You will have one week to complete each exam, with no additional time constraint other than the deadline, so are encouraged to *start early*, because each deadline is firm. (And note, those are *due* dates, *not* when they open.) Neither exam can be "made up" if missed. Each is online for an entire week, so plan ahead and *do each early* in the respective week!

The grade for each exam is determined by a formula which first calculates how much each question is "worth", based on missed points. This formula is explained briefly below, illustrated in the first ("Orientation") lecture, and detailed in a separate PowerPoint, for those interested in the math.

## **EXTRA CREDIT**

There will be a variety of optional opportunities for extra credit to be added to your semester grade. Several of these options will be mentioned during the first lecture, and each is detailed via a link in the Canvas module for the first class meeting. They include a fourth short paper, a book review, an essay on song lyrics, and proposing recommended readings.

## **GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Graduate students must complete supplementary readings in addition to all of the readings specified for undergraduates, and must write a final term paper in addition to the quizzes, exams, & short papers. If you are taking this course as a graduate student, contact me ASAP.

## **SCHEDULE**

There will be no class meetings March 17<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> (Spring Break), March 31<sup>st</sup> (Caesar

Chavez), April 30<sup>th</sup> (Work Session), or May 14<sup>th</sup> (the Final Exam due date). Other events, including a potential strike, COVID and other outbreaks, earthquake, wildfires, instructor illness, or other factors beyond our control may effect additional changes in the schedule, and will typically involve pushing earlier parts of the course forward.

*Table 1*

| #  | Date     | Topic                 | Reading                                  | Due     |
|----|----------|-----------------------|--|---------|
| 1  | Tue 1/20 | Welcome & Orientation | -  | -       |
| 2  | Thu 1/22 | The Meaning of Law    | L&S 1.0-1.4 (pp.3-12), 1.6-1.10 (16-23)  | -       |
| 3  | Tue 1/27 | The Making of Law     | L&S ch4 (95-118), 5.7-5.8 (143-146)      | -       |
| 4  | Thu 1/29 | Legal Processes       | L&S ch3 (61-88)                          | -       |
| 5  | Tue 2/3  | Legal Agents          | L&S 8.4-8.5 (225-233)                    | -       |
| 6  | Thu 2/5  | Legal Systems         | L&S 1.5 (12-16), 2.1-2.2 (29-36)         | -       |
| 7  | Tue 2/10 | Legal Change          | L&S 5.6 (142-143), ch7 (185-208)         | Paper1  |
| 8  | Thu 2/12 | History of the Field  | L&S 2.3 (34-41)                          | -       |
| 9  | Tue 2/17 | Law and Society       | L&S 2.3 (41-46)                          | -       |
| 10 | Thu 2/19 | Contemporary Study    | L&S 2.4 (46-54)                          | -       |
| 11 | Tue 2/24 | Researching Law       | L&S ch9 (251-268)                        | -       |
| 12 | Thu 2/26 | Structuralism         | Black, Crime Rates                       | -       |
| 13 | Tue 3/3  | End of Legalism       | Black, Lawyerization                     | -       |
| 14 | Thu 3/5  | Social Geometry       | SocJust ch1                              | Paper2  |
| 15 | Tue 3/10 | The Behavior of Law   | BOL ch1                                  | -       |
| 16 | Thu 3/12 | Stratification        | BOL ch2                                  | Midterm |
| -  | Tue 3/17 | Spring Break          | -  | -       |
| -  | Thu 3/19 | Spring Break          | -  | -       |
| 17 | Tue 3/24 | Morphology            | BOL ch3                                  | -       |
| 18 | Thu 3/26 | Organization          | BOL ch5, L&S 6.6-6.7 (167-179)           | -       |
| -  | Tue 3/31 | Caesar Chavez         | -  | -       |
| 19 | Thu 4/2  | Culture               | BOL ch4                                  | -       |
| 20 | Tue 4/7  | Normative Status      | BOL ch6                                  | -       |
| -  | Tue 4/7  | Beyond Black          | TBA                                      | Paper 3 |
| 22 | Thu 4/9  | Legal Evolution       | BOL ch7; L&S 5.4-5.5 (133-142)           | -       |
| 23 | Tue 4/14 | Improving Laws        | L&S 8.6-8.11 (233-245)                   | -       |
| 24 | Thu 4/16 | Improving Law         | L&S ch10 (273-283); SocJust ch4          | -       |
| 25 | Tue 4/21 | Improving Lawyers     | L&S 8.1-8.4 (215-225); SocJust ch2       | -       |
| 26 | Thu 4/23 | Alternatives to Law   | L&S 5.1-5.3 (123-133), 6.1-6.5 (153-167) | -       |
| 27 | Tue 4/28 | Beyond Law            | SocJust ch5                              | -       |
| -  | Thu 4/30 | Work Session          | -  | -       |
| 28 | Tue 5/5  | Beyond Right & Wrong  | C&M, Purity & Tolerance                  | -       |
| 29 | Thu 5/7  | Beyond Jurisprudence  | SocJust ch3 & ch6                        | ECPaper |

The schedule above is tentative. The schedule as currently constituted is detailed more completely in Canvas, including the lecture topics, readings, and assignments as above but also the lecture notes (which are available only after each lecture), handouts, help files, and more. While exam deadlines will not change, other aspects of the schedule are subject to update at the instructor's discretion, and will be reflected in updates on the Canvas schedule first, which always supersedes others, including this snapshot. It is your responsibility always to be aware of the current schedule; do not rely on a printed copy!

## NOTE ON DROPPED GRADES

In some classes, elements of the syllabus above will indicate that I'll drop, for example, the lowest three quizzes. However, I discourage you from skipping any assignment. They are designed as a series, to prepare you for what comes next. Every one that you miss will impede your ability to learn material and therefore affect your grades indirectly. Moreover, you will need and want feedback on one assignment to help complete a later one. Finally, skipping an assignment may mean that an earlier grade which *had* been dropped, will now count – and so will lower your grade, even though the zero from the skipped assignment itself gets dropped.

## GENERAL COURSE GUIDELINES

Standard guidelines for all of my courses are detailed in supplemental text below, which details my expectations regarding both your responsibilities and mine, and which apply to all courses I teach. They exist to ensure fairness through clarity, and are direct and firm in order to deter abuse. You are expected to review these and to promptly alert me to any questions or concerns about them, just as you would about any other part of the syllabus, as well as about any special circumstances that may apply to you (including but not limited to disabilities, schedule conflicts, and religious holidays, many of which are addressed in the Intake Form.) You will need to acknowledge that you have reviewed and accepted them via an Intake Form which you are expected to have completed before the second lecture meeting.

## STUDENTS: THINGS YOU'LL DO IN ANY OF MY CLASSES

### PREPARE

#### *Meet Prerequisites*

Per CSUN policy, "the University may withdraw a student, within the first three weeks, from a course if he or she fails to meet the prerequisite(s) or other requirements as indicated in the catalog." This instructor will recommend to the Associate Dean of the College that such administrative withdrawals be made, typically during the second week.

#### *Check Email*

CSUN provides all students with an email account, which is the official communication method at the University. It is your responsibility to monitor that account, either directly or by forwarding it elsewhere. (Call the University Help Desk at 805-677-1400 for assistance.) Not checking email is not an acceptable reason for missing deadlines or updates.

#### *Get the Text(s)*

You will not succeed fully without the assigned, required textbook(s). There will be readings that you are expected to do before the respective lecture. In any course with quizzes or exams, questions will directly assess whether you've done the reading. And in stats and methods courses, there will be problems assigned from them.

Note that you do *not* want the “world” version(s) of texts, as these often include different examples or problems. (In SOC424, in particular, it will mean that you’re looking at the wrong numbers for most homework problems and so risk getting all of your answers wrong.) That’s not the same as an “international” version, which may be printed and sold outside of the US at a lower rate – though selling one may be illegal, buying one may be at least unethical, and downloading one for free is probably both.

### *Do the Readings*

Do the assigned reading for each lecture in advance. (Readings are *due* on the date listed, not *assigned* on that date. They are all assigned *now*.) Part of the college experience is learning to become self-directed by completing all assignments (including readings) as given. Course material may be difficult to grasp without having done so, because the lectures are intended to identify highlights and then move beyond the text, including reactions to it.

### *Plan Ahead*

Always come to class with your text and a digital storage strategy (thumb drive, email attachment, etc.) You will increasingly want to work on the same file at multiple times and/or locations. CSUN offers myCSUNbox and “student drive” space, but I recommend an alternative (or at least secondary) solution for your own comfort and flexibility. You will also need to do work beyond the lab periods, and may not have access to the same servers.

### *Be Punctual*

Schedule your other activities as needed in order to attend class, arrive on time, and stay until dismissed. Course announcements typically take place at the beginning of class. Late entries and early departures distract students who are trying to get the most from their experience here. Please be respectful of their efforts, and mine.

## **USE ZOOM**

For courses that are online, or when circumstances force us there, classes, labs, and office hours will take place in synchronous Zoom meetings at the prescribed times and dates. These meetings will not be recorded and thus will not be available later.

A meeting ID will be provided in Canvas for each lecture course (one ID for the entire semester). In courses with a lab (424 and 497), online labs will take place in breakout rooms that continue from the lecture meeting ID. The first breakout labs will be randomized by Zoom. Subsequent groupings will be informed by your input, through the Intake Form and otherwise. Breakout assignments are not permanent, and there are typically changes throughout the semester, in order to match students who want to work together and to separate students where there is tension, particularly regarding variation in participation.

You may also find me in Zoom (via my personal ID, 308-700-9152) during office hours or by appointment. All of these IDs will require registration, will be limited to authenticated

users (you'll need to login), and will all use the same passcode: 51773 (which is "ELLIS" upside down.)

#### *React, Please!*

You are strongly encouraged to make liberal use of the Chat function, and of any or all of the Reaction options, including Raise Hand. I will call on you as I would in a regular class. Remember to click "Unmute" before speaking. (Afterwards, you'll want to Lower Hand, and Mute, again.)

Don't hesitate to ask a question; it doesn't do either of us any good for you to be confused about something. Note, however, that I won't typically back up to a previous slide; notes will be posted in PDF format immediately following the lecture, and you can copy them then.

Student conduct policies apply to Zoom meetings just as if they took place in a classroom. (In fact, these online meetings effectively *are* classrooms.) The Office of Student Conduct will enforce those policies, and you are encouraged to report any problems to me or, if need be, directly to that office.

#### *Turn on Cameras!*

You are also, and even more strongly, encouraged to be on camera whenever possible. I understand and respect that there are conditions under which you cannot or should not be on camera. But this isn't a television show; it's an educational experience. Each person on camera adds value to the class, in several ways; the more of you there are on camera, the more valuable that experience is.

Think about it: None of you will benefit from a wall of black boxes with names. Besides, many of you have been more or less sequestered from society off and on for 22 months; you'll all be happier and healthier the more faces you can see in the class, and less happy (and potentially less healthy) for each additional person *not* on camera. Plus, I can do a better job delivering the lectures if I can see faces that are confused, bemused, engaged, etc. However you think about it – pandemic, pedagogy, professionalism, socialization, sociological variation, or something else – you each have an obligation of one sort or another to be on camera, if and when you can, whether it affects your grade directly or not.

#### *Update the Software*

Please ensure that you have a current and updated version of the software. Each version improves security, privacy, reliability, and other matters. The most recent version includes significant improvements.

### **ATTEND**

Whether or not attendance counts directly as a component of your grade, it matters *indirectly*, reflected in your performance on class assignments. Each class meeting contains information, the lack of which may directly or indirectly affect your grade. And if you fall

behind or miss several class meetings, it will be very difficult to catch up. Ultimately, those who attend regularly tend to perform better than those who do not.

### *Sign in, On Time*

Attendance for on-campus meetings is usually measured with circulation of a class roll and/or through submission of quiz answers. Oral objections hours (much less weeks) later will not result in a change in your record; you must sign the roll or attempt the quiz, or contact me with a valid excuse before the next class or at any delay reasonably commensurate with the nature of the excuse. It is the student's responsibility to start or request a roll, if the instructor does not start one, particularly if there was not a quiz happening.

Above all, I can't simply let a student sign a roll for a class later (such as signing in lab as evidence that you had attended lecture) and can't fairly be expected to remember who was where when, even if I circumstantially happen to remember that you were there. That's not reliable data or fair practice.

### *Avoid (or Document) Absences*

Absence from classes will be excused only with a signed note from a physician certifying illness on the date(s) missed or, under some circumstances, by prior arrangement with the instructor. There will be no make-up exams, quizzes, or labs.

Emergencies must be documented. Crises or emergencies include severe illness requiring a doctor's visit or hospitalization, death in the family, or college-excused events (which must be approved ahead of time). They do not include not feeling well, oversleeping, forgetting, not finding parking, or needing help from or for a friend, roommate, family member, or pet.

An excused absence may alter some elements of your grade. For attendance, you are simply not penalized for that absence. Quizzes and labs cannot be "made up" at a later time. For quizzes, you will receive, for that quiz, the average of all of your previous quizzes. For labs, you will be graded on one fewer entry (for each one excused absence) which makes the denominator of your grade calculation smaller and, consequently, other labs count proportionately more.

### *...Especially the First Week!*

Per CSUN attendance policy, "Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Students who are absent from the first two meetings of a class that meets more than once a week, or from the first meeting of a class that meets once a week, lose the right to remain on the class roll and must formally withdraw from the class, following University procedures and deadlines. Failure to formally withdraw from a class will result in the instructor assigning to the student a grade of "WU" (Unauthorized Withdrawal), which, in computing a student's GPA, counts as a grade of "F." In a compressed term or session of fewer than 15 weeks, the rules applies if the first class meeting is missed." (See the *University [Policies on Attendance](#)*.)

Regardless of circumstances or events, you must attend at least 66% of the meetings for each of my classes (of which 497 and 497L, for example, are separate) in order to pass them. Absence from more than 33%, excused or not, will result in a failing grade. For classes meeting via Zoom, these ratios will be calculated *both* as a percentage of meetings attended at all *and* as an average percent of each meeting attended (per Zoom reports); either of those ratios falling below 66% at semester's end will result in a failing grade.

#### *Be Patient*

Text me (919-EGODARD) and/or call the Department (x3591) if I am even 10 minutes late and no one there has heard from me. If I am running late for any reason, I will have called the office to let them know both why and when I'll arrive. Depending on circumstances, I may have also typically updated my status online, and/or texted someone in the room, and/or posted on Facebook.

In the odd event that no one knows anything, be certain of this: The "15 minute rule" is an urban legend, a campus myth, sometimes folklore, but not policy. Class is only cancelled if I or the Department say that it is. If you leave of your own accord, without confirming cancellation, you risk missing a quiz, lab, or worse.

#### **BEHAVE POLITELY**

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining a respectful space to express their knowledge. Professional courtesy and consideration for our classroom community are especially important with respect to topics dealing with differences including race, color, gender and gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, disability, and age.

#### *Follow the Code*

Comply with the Student Conduct Code, specified in the current *Schedule of Classes* (c. p.22), and in the *University Catalog* (c.p.522); learn more at [Student Conduct Code](#). Conduct class contributions in an orderly manner, taking care not to dominate any discussion. Ask lecture-related questions of each other if and as needed, but do not talk over each other or the instructor. Talking out of context, eating or reading, or texting or surfing during class is disrespectful and disrupts the educational process, and therefore may be subject to disciplinary actions specified in the Student Code of Conduct, including, initially, being asked to leave the room.

If you are aware of any instances of bullying, harassment, threats, or other problems among students in class, in Zoom chats, in breakout rooms, in any supplemental spaces (such as Discord, GroupMe, or group chats), I encourage you to let me know immediately so that appropriate action can be taken. If you feel victimized, in any way, I want to know about it and will help you find any and all available resources.

### *Understand the Discipline*

Sociological material includes issues and ideas that may engender strong reactions. Simply mentioning them may even offend, upset, or trigger you. While neither offense nor titillation is *intended*, the course will address a wide range of social and individual behaviors, including all manner of normal conduct, both public and private, as well as many forms of deviance. Topics including sex, sexual misconduct, and sexual violence may emerge either purposefully or inadvertently in readings, datasets, class discussions, or other class materials. Such topics may be particularly upsetting for some survivors, and all students are encouraged to seek the support they need.

### *Be Scientific*

You are invited to comment on any of the matters methodologically, theoretically, and, more generally, scientifically. There may also be times that normative, ideological discussions may be warranted, and I therefore invite you to share your subjective reactions to course material as well - but I am more likely to pocket those discussions for office hours or class breaks, since in most cases (particularly Statistics and Methods courses) they diverge from the course material (and, arguably, from the discipline of Sociology itself.)

### *Dialog Respectfully*

I encourage you to ask questions (raising your hand first, please), including about others' questions. I want you to think of this class as a safe space in which to express yourself fully, but that must also be nurturing and respectful of others' learning experiences. I encourage respectful, constructive dialog, particularly when opinions differ. But I will not tolerate rudeness, mean spiritedness, personal attacks, harassment, or abuse of any kind, which may violate the Standards of Ethical Behavior under the Student Code of Conduct as defined in the *University Catalog* (circa p.522; see also, [Student Code of Conduct](#).)

### *Turn it Off*

Turn off (or set to "vibrate") all cell phones, watch alarms, music devices, and other electronic equipment at the beginning of each class, so as not to disturb other students. I reserve and may exercise the right to answer any cell phone that rings while I'm lecturing, and to excuse immediately anyone whose device is disturbing class.

### *No Guests*

Students are not permitted to bring children or pets to class, and may not bring other guests to class without approval of the instructor at least thirty-six (36) hours in advance.

## **NO RECORDING IN CLASS**

Students may not record (audio or video) in this class except in accordance with ADA accommodations. Students must have the accommodation approved by DRES (Disability Resources and Educational Services). Any recordings made in connection with a disability accommodation are for the student's personal academic use only and may not be distributed in any manner to any other individual.

## **DO THE WORK**

Assignments vary in type, number, length, content, difficulty, time for completion, and in other ways. They are detailed earlier in this (and each) syllabus, with more in-depth instructions on each provided on handouts and other resources available via Canvas at the start of the semester.

### *Submissions*

For courses with online submissions, you will submit work via a link on canvas. Submissions must be in PDF, DOC, or DOCX format. To get to that format, you may type your work, scan it (such as with a scanner or scanning copier), use a scan-to-pdf app on your phone, or take pictures with your phone and paste them into a document. Please *do not* highlight anything; I will print your work to evaluate it, I don't have a color printer, and highlighting will make it nearly impossible for either of us to read your answers.

When required in on-campus courses, paper submissions should be edited, typed, printed, folded, and submitted in person. Please do not ever use staples, paperclips, binder clips, binders, folders, report covers, slip covers, etc. (The first thing I do when I get home is throw these away. If there is a staple, I will rip the corners off.) Just fold your page(s) in half (horizontally or vertically), and put them on the pile at the front of the room.

### *Type It*

I encourage you to type all work that can be typed. I reserve the right to penalize work that is handwritten - either directly when the assignment specifically says to type, or indirectly if I can't read your handwriting and so can't give you credit. But more importantly, typing ensures that I can read it, and facilitates grading and returning it more quickly.

### *Read It*

Review and edit your work before submitting it. (I should not be the first person that reads your work. I should be at *least* the second, after you have read it.) While I do not directly penalize work for spelling or grammar, I often note such errors in work reviewed, to help you become a better writer. Moreover, if the state of your work inhibits my ability to understand what you've intended, or prohibits clarity that you've understood either the material or what you've written, your grade will certainly be affected; I can't give full credit for nonsense, even if accidental.

### *Really Do it*

I reserve the right to give half or even no credit (50 or 0, respectively, on a 100-point scale) if the writing is so poor or so far afield from the assignment that it doesn't, by my estimation, warrant credit under the parameters of the assignment.

### *Show Your Work*

On all assignments involving formulas or calculations, you should show all work. Sometimes, showing the formula itself is all that I'm requesting and crediting. Other times, I

will give partial credit wherever possible, but cannot do so if you only provide an incorrect final answer. I do not typically deduct points for "math errors", although you should typically interpret (use and explain) answers, as well as recognize if they don't make sense for the given problem.

### *Put Your Name On It!*

Putting your name in the filename of your submission will facilitate grading and help ensure that you get proper credit. However, since work will be printed for grading, you should *always put your name in the actual document itself*. Not putting your name in the document itself risks not getting credit for its submission. It isn't my responsibility to figure out who deserves credit for a submission; that's the responsibility of the submitter.

### *Exams*

Unless otherwise stated, final exams are not cumulative in the sense that they cover everything covered in the course, before and after the midterm examination(s). However, some material is addressed throughout each course and so is fair game for any exam. And all exams are cumulative in the sense that each of the later units presumes an understanding of the previously covered material.

Each administration may include multiple versions administered to the same class, and exams typically draw from question banks, with randomized response order as well as other measures designed to inhibit cheating.

While Canvas will tell you how many questions you missed, again, I do not grade on a percentage basis. You will receive (via the course website) an aggregate score indicating the number of questions missed. I will review the exams question-by-question, including a summary of how many students missed each question, and your grade will be determined by the same standard formula used for all exams and homeworks.

You are also, of course, free to visit my office hours to review your particular answers. However, I am unable to address exam questions during the taking of in-class exams, as it disrupts my ability to proctor and may tend to convey information (right or wrong) to other students.

### **BE HONEST**

I exercise zero tolerance for academic dishonesty (including cheating and plagiarism), as outlined in the [section on Academic Dishonesty](#) in the *University Catalog*, and take any compromise of that policy very seriously. Ignoring this instruction will result in wasted time and investment, will damage your academic record, and will forego the opportunity to actually learn the material and benefit from the course.

### *Work Alone*

Do not work together when you have been instructed to work alone. Plan ahead as much as possible, and ask frequent questions early, but DO NOT complete assignments (other than group labs) together! Undertake study partners or groups with caution, and terminate them at the appropriate stage of your work. Discuss the contents of any assignment, and plan how to carry it out, with any other member of the class, the instructor, or anyone else. However, once you have actually begun the work on the assignment, only ask the instructor for help, no matter how minor. You may always consult written course materials, your own notes, or SPSS program "help" features, which we will review.

### *Write it yourself*

All submissions for this course must be yours and yours only. Do not use anyone else's words or ideas without clearly acknowledging the source, including a complete citation of the original work. I will utilize TurnItIn to check for plagiarism, and two tools for determining whether AI was used to write text. I also sometimes get a visceral sense that wording submitted was simply not yours; I reserve the right to relay that sense, such as by writing "This smells like AI", and it will be your burden to convince me that you wrote the work yourself, such as meeting with me to discuss and explain your answers orally.

Submitting text written by a generative AI system (such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Copilot, or Grammarly) as one's own work is a form of academic dishonesty. Each student is expected to complete each assignment without substantive assistance from others, including automated tools. You may of course use tools that *check* spelling and grammar if you like. However, moving beyond those, to use tools that write or rewrite portions of your work, such as Grammarly now does, is unethical, detrimental to the learning process, and inhibitive of the purpose of assignments, which is to assess your understanding and critical thinking skills.

### *Careful Being Helpful*

Academic dishonesty, as defined by the CSUN Schedule of Classes and Catalog Supplement, includes cheating, fabrication, plagiarism as well as facilitating academic dishonesty. Facilitating academic dishonesty includes allowing another student to see your work, which they then reproduce in whole or in part and submit as their own, whether you know it or not.

### *Penalties*

Penalties for academic dishonesty *begin* with a failing grade on the assignment. Identical (or even nearly identical) submissions from two or more students will earn instant zeroes. And if any *part* of an assignment is plagiarized, I may at my discretion assign a zero to (that is, give no credit for) that entire assignment. Do not, therefore, steal so much as a sentence fragment without proper attribution. And note that zeroes awarded for academic dishonesty will not be dropped, and *will* lower your semester grade.

Additionally, for any written assignments submitted via TurnItIn, TurnItIn's similarity score is incorporated into your grade. Thus, be very cautious about attribution, since even careless paraphrasing might lower your grade.

However, academic dishonesty on any assignment may result in an F for the course - and, by state law, may result in expulsion. (Cheating or plagiarism in connection with an academic program at a campus is listed in Section 41301, Title 5, California Code of Regulations, as an offense for which a student may be expelled or suspended.) This includes cheating, fabrication, and dishonesty on exams and quizzes, as well as plagiarism on written assignments.

### *Appeals*

I have no hesitation giving zeroes to submissions that appear similar enough that I suspect that students worked together. In such an event, it is the students' joint responsibility to account for any similarity: I will not remove an assigned zero unless and until I have heard from both of you, together, in person, in my office, and have received an emailed follow-up detailing your claims in that meeting. Even then, again, academic dishonesty includes facilitating academic dishonesty! If you let someone else copy your work, you're just as culpable as they are, and will both earn zeroes.

## **MEET DEADLINES**

Work assigned to be completed in class (such as small group discussions or group lab exercises) must be completed during the time allotted. Labs and quizzes cannot be made up at a later date. Also, no make-up exams will be given except in cases of medical emergencies, for which a doctor's signed letter must be provided (see above).

Unless otherwise specified, work must be submitted in person at the beginning of class on the date the assignment is due (with a strict 10-minute grace period). The early bonus (which is on homework only) can only be earned for work submitted by that time, and a late penalty will be assessed for anything submitted beyond that time, including later during or at the end of that class.

### *Late Submission*

Anything not submitted on time can simply be held until the next class meeting, in the sense that there is no difference in your grade - though getting it to me later in the day does help me grade and record it more quickly. Papers and homeworks will be recorded as to the start of class by which they were submitted; late labs will receive feedback but not credit.

Do NOT email your work. I can't print everyone's work, it won't look the same on my printer as it does on your screen, you should see it printed anyway (even read, and edit it!), and I can't risk the virus exposure. Assignments emailed without prior approval (and those come only under exceptional circumstances) will not be accepted, credited, or even read.

On the rare occasions when it will make sense to leave something for me, do NOT submit work by sliding it under my office door, which is so secure that it I won't count it as having submitted it. It should instead be left with someone in the Sociology Department office, to be put in my mailbox. Work submitted through the Department office must include the instructor's and student's names and must be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m. Note that they will not date, time, or initial your submissions. Work submitted in that fashion will be deemed submitted whenever I get it from my box.

#### *Late Penalty*

All assignments have clearly specified due dates. Assignments submitted after the beginning of the class in which they are due will lose five percent (one half letter grade) per class meeting, to a maximum of 20% penalty and a maximum of four meetings late, beyond which they will be evaluated for feedback but not accepted for credit. (That is, you could submit a homework as late as four meetings late and receive only a 20% penalty rather than taking a zero.) Nothing may be submitted beyond the last class meeting except those assignments with later scheduled deadlines (such as a final exam, oral evaluation scores, etc.) Note that labs, quizzes, exams, and oral presentations cannot be submitted late.

#### *Early Bonus*

I design most schedules to encourage early submission. For most at-home assignments (papers, homework, and reports - but not labs, presentations, quizzes, exams, or attendance) assignments submitted at the beginning of a class but on a class meeting earlier than due will gain two percent (one fifth of a letter grade) per class meeting early, to a maximum of 8% bonus. (You can attempt work that would be more than four class meetings early, but I don't want you to even try getting so far ahead that you lose track of where we are as a class.)

Note that I will not typically return work prior to its deadline and, on occasion, not prior to the following meeting. While I encourage you to submit early when you are prepared for and comfortable with it, the amount of feedback that I typically provide (esp. on statistics homeworks) means that returning graded work might make it too easy and tempting for some students to cheat. Additionally, I necessarily prioritize actual submissions over pre-submissions. I will thus grade work as soon after it is submitted as possible (prioritizing items due earlier over items not even yet due, and work submitted on time over work submitted late) and will post grades to the online grading reports (PDF, email, etc.), but will not return the actual work with my comments until at least the meeting at which the work is assigned.

#### *Computer Excuses*

Since many assignments involve use of a computer, you are advised to leave ample time for inevitable disasters such as a system crash, lack of seating, printer issues, logic issues, software issues, network issues, or lost files or passwords, none of which is an acceptable excuse for late work. (You should always save early and often, make multiple copies, and check for viruses.) I cannot be sympathetic to problems that occur because you waited until the last minute, and simultaneously be fair to students who planned ahead and completed

work on time. Be aware that the labs will get busier as the semester wears on. Remember that you can do all the work in other labs (such as Sierra Hall 180, 303, or 392, or the library collaboratory), but that you should save your work (early and often) in order to make it portable and secure.

## **ACHIEVE**

Course-specific SLOs are included earlier in this syllabus. There are also Department-level SLOs. Completion of the Degree in Sociology will provide the student with these outcomes:

**Goal 1:** Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the field of sociology by showing competence in sociological theory, research methods and statistics.

**SLO1:** Students will show competence in understanding and applying classical and contemporary theories to understand the operation and organization of individuals, groups, institutions and broader society.

**SLO2:** Students will show competence in employing qualitative and quantitative research methods for collecting, analyzing and interpreting data commonly used by sociologists in empirical research.

**SLO3:** Students will be able to understand and perform basic statistical techniques commonly employed in sociological research and use that knowledge to interpret scholarship in the field of sociology.

**Goal 2:** Demonstrate a basic knowledge of general sociology and/or one (or more) of the following concentration areas: social welfare and social justice, inequality and diversity, social movements and political sociology.

**SLO 4:** Students will be able to recall and comprehend concepts, principles, theories and knowledge in the field of sociology and (if applicable) their particular concentration.

**SLO 5:** Students will have an understanding of the chronological and historical development of the field of sociology and (if applicable) their particular concentration.

**Goal 3:** Develop a global perspective for interpreting and understanding social issues and processes.

**SLO 6:** Students will demonstrate the ability to apply relevant sociological theories and perspectives to comprehend and contextualize current social issues and be able to recognize general social patterns in individuals, groups and institutions.

**SLO 7:** Students will show an understanding of how micro and macro level social processes relate to a variety of phenomena, including social stability and change, the

behavior of groups and individuals and institutional dynamics (e.g. family, politics, economy, religion, education, law).

**SLO 8:** Students will demonstrate the ability to comprehend events in terms of their historical relevance and be able to understand connections between individuals' biographies and the broader historical context in which they are embedded.

**Goal 4:** Develop sound critical thinking ability and effective oral and written communication skills.

**SLO 9:** Students will demonstrate the ability to think critically by evaluating the theories, perspectives, methods and analyses of scholars in the field of sociology.

**SLO 10:** Students will demonstrate competence in oral and written communication

## **INSTRUCTOR: THINGS I'LL DO IN ALL OF MY CLASSES**

### **ENROLL STUDENTS**

#### *Adds*

I do not send out permission numbers prior to the start of a class. For most classes, SOLAR maintains a waiting list which fills spaces automatically. I also maintain a waiting list of those who email me in advance, sorted on a first-come/first-served basis. While the department and/or college sometimes dictate which students should be prioritized, I otherwise prioritize according to the order in which I was contacted in advance. Permission numbers will typically be emailed to students who, during the 2nd or 3rd lecture, are notified that they may add. I typically add some students to every class after the 2nd or 3<sup>rd</sup>, depending on drops, no-shows, and administrative withdrawals. No student will be added who missed the first week of class, nor will any be added after the second.

#### *Drops*

Students may drop via SOLAR (without approval from anyone) during the first three weeks, and with a change of schedule form (signed by an instructor and chair and submitted with a late fee) during the fourth week. Beyond that, you must appeal directly to the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies for any program changes, must have documented proof of a real emergency ("support paper"), and will receive a W grade except for documented medical withdrawals.

Beyond week four, you must complete a special form which makes clear that requests will NOT be approved for a list of reasons including a less-than-desired grade, lack of motivation, academic overload, inability to keep up, the need to work, and more. Requests during the final three weeks will be considered only in the case of severe illness, injury, or other extreme circumstances. (Per the CSUN [Policy on Withdrawals](#), "A medical withdrawal typically constitutes complete withdrawal from the University" and "will be granted solely for

established medical purposes before a student takes final exams. ... Medical withdrawals due to illness in the family will be granted only if the attending physician stipulates that the student is needed to care for the family member.") Those instructions also make clear which of three possible forms you should complete.

## **TEACH THE CLASS**

An important part of my role – arguably the most important, if I do it well – is organizing and presenting the material in a manner and sequence conducive to your understanding. That is, it's my job to package and sell it so that you learn it.

I take that role seriously – and I love the subject matter for this course, or I wouldn't be teaching it. I also value your time, within the class and more broadly, and work to ensure that you could both succeed in the class and make comfortable use of the material later in life.

And if you'll stick with me – attending every class, trying every assignment – you'll need see that each course is organized in "baby steps" to get you from the start to the finish in a logical sequence in which readings, lectures, labs, quizzes, and other things are increasingly intertwined and cross-referential, hopefully culminating in a clear sense of having expanded your competence and capabilities in the course learning outcomes noted above.

## **ASSIGN GRADES**

No grades are considered "on the border." All grading is as objective as possible, to generate clear criteria of measurement, with resulting differences strictly respected and reported.

### *Criteria*

Criteria for grading individual assignments will vary, and will be announced as those assignments are distributed. However, all work is evaluated objectively, scored numerically, and adjusted statistically.

Labs, short papers, and presentations graded by the instructor are awarded check minus, check, or check plus - indicating subpar, average, and exceptional work, and calculated as a 70, 80, and 90, respectively.

Presentations graded by other students use a matrix specific to each class. Grades are based on averages of the scores given, after first standardizing each grader's scores to account for variation among graders. A complete explanation is provided on a separate handout in Canvas, and will be discussed during the several lectures preceding those presentations.

For all other assignments (esp. exams and homeworks), grades are a function not of the total points available (which become irrelevant) but on the number of missed points by all

members of the class, both on average (using an arithmetic mean) and in their dispersion (using the standard deviation).

### *Curving*

Grades for homeworks and exams are statistically standardized, but not normalized (i.e. not subjected to an imposed "bell curve"). They are instead adjusted using a formula which takes into account the mean, median, and standard deviation of missed points on each assignment. The resulting distribution of grades will thus reflect the shape and dispersion of variation in the performance of students in the class, rather than, for example, predetermined grade allocations (such as 10% As, 4 Fs, etc.).

This adjustment is for individual homeworks and exams only, not for labs, quizzes, papers, attendance, oral presentations, extra credit, final semester grades, or any other component, unless otherwise indicated.

The standardization factor "freezes" on the last day of class. Any assignments submitted beyond that date, for any reason, whether accepted or not, will not affect the value of missed points for those who have already submitted work.

### *Grade Changes*

Grades are earned, not negotiated. However, any instructor is fallible. If you disagree with a grade, feel free to say so. However, any such requests for grade changes must be made via email and must include the original graded assignment, identify the grade assigned and the grade you think you deserved, and a valid justification for that grade change.

## **COMMUNICATE PROGRESS**

Graded work will typically be returned as an email attachment in PDF format, from a scan of my feedback on your submitted work. Feedback on one assignment will typically help you complete the next. However, I will always prioritize returning work which will keep you moving forward. At several points, in several classes, this will mean that I am focused on returning labs assignments that build towards subsequent assignments; homework assignments which are not built on in future homeworks may not be returned until weeks later, by design.

### *Grade Report*

I do not use the Canvas gradebook, and instead track all grades in an Excel workbook, sharing a comprehensive and transparent report of grades as a PDF printout from that database. I will add data to that grade report throughout the term, recording and reflecting both the individual progress of each student and the collective movement of each class as a whole.

For some courses, the information is briefer and self-explanatory. Most provide information such as the date(s) submitted, number of missed points, days late (or early), any

bonuses, and adjusted grade for each student for each assignment, organized by assignment type across two to five pages of a PDF document (depending on the class, number of students, and number of assignments). Some of these reports also provide the mean, median, standard deviation, and conversion factor (grade percentage per missed point) for each assignment, particularly where such summary statistics are part of the grade calculation (see above).

### *privacy*

Pursuant to Supreme Court decision, Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) restrictions, and CSUN policy (see [http://www.csun.edu/facultyaffairs/memo/2006-07/FERPA\\_0607.pdf](http://www.csun.edu/facultyaffairs/memo/2006-07/FERPA_0607.pdf)), your grades may not be publicly posted (on my door, or on the web) with any personally identifying information. You will thus be invited to provide a "codename", which must be something that only you and I will know, that will only be used for this class, and that is appropriate for a public report (e.g. it may not include profanity or offensive language, in any language.) If you choose not to provide one, you may get your grades in several other avenues, including an optional narrative email, and direct interaction such as through office hours.

## **DETERMINE FINAL GRADES**

An A indicates exceptional work deserving of distinction. I almost always give As and Fs, but I don't have a set number or percentage that will get any particular grade. And I never subjectively decide that a student has earned an A, F, or any other grade (including plus or minus) in a course, and certainly not to satisfy external criteria (such as graduation, scholarships, visas, or self-esteem) rather than participation and performance in the class.

Instead, grading is made as objective as possible, with detailed grading keys and/or rubrics for each assignment, as well as (for homeworks and exams) statistically standardization (see Curving, above). Ultimately, however numeric grades are calculated, they are transformed to a final letter grade as follows (including rounding to the nearest first decimal): F (0 to 59.49), D minus (59.5 to 62.49), D (62.5 to 66.49), D plus (66.5 to 69.49), C minus (69.5 to 72.49), C (72.5 to 76.49), C plus (76.5 to 79.49), B minus (79.5 to 82.49), B (82.5 to 86.49), B plus (86.5 to 89.49), A minus (89.5 to 92.49), and A (92.5 to 100).

### *Corequisites*

Corequisites courses must be completed jointly, with the same instructor, in the same term, and both successfully passed. By Department policy, if you fail either a lab or a lab-associated lecture, you will receive a failing grade (F) for both of them.

### *Incompletes*

Incompletes will not be granted except in the case of a serious (and documented) medical condition. You must have made substantial progress towards completing the course, demonstrate how far you got before you were incapacitated, have definitive plans for completing remaining assignments (typically within one year), have persuasive reason that

an extension to you would not be unfair to other students, and complete a written agreement to the effect of each of those items before the end of the term.

The university provides a specific form that must be completed, following specific instructions and conditions, and includes specific requirements for its use (see "Student Forms" on the portal's QuickLinks). This process must be initiated by the student, or an incomplete cannot be granted: Per university policy, it is a student's responsibility to "complete the form and submit it in person to the course instructor on or before the day of the Final Exam. ... No retroactive Incomplete grades are permitted." (Learn more about [Administrative Grading Symbols](#) from the *University Catalog*.) Assignments otherwise incomplete by the end of the term will be scored as a zero (for numeric computations) or F (for non-numeric grade components).

## **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

### **COVID ISSUES**

#### *Instructor Positivity*

If the instructor has symptoms, has a positive test, or has been exposed to someone with COVID, the instructor would not be permitted to come to campus. In such a situation, an instructor who feels healthy enough to teach may teach remotely. This course thus might revert to Zoom parameters noted elsewhere until I would be allowed to return. You should therefore be prepared – with Internet access, bandwidth, and device – for such a possibility. I'll avoid it to the extent possible, but the course schedule can't afford several cancellations.

However, this is *not* a "hi-flex" course designed to accommodate students both on campus and online simultaneously. The class is *not* a simultaneous broadcast nor will there be recordings provided. Therefore, students who have absences due to positivity, symptoms, or exposure should get appropriate documentation per the absence policy noted above.

#### *Masks*

Masks are no longer required indoors, but might be warranted when congregating in close quarters, especially if rates increase again. When worn, a mask should fit snugly, covering your mouth and nose. You are strongly encouraged to wear medical-grade masks, as cloth is basically decoration, leaking 75% or more (compared to 50% for surgical, and under 10% for N95 or KN95 – under 5% with proper fit).

#### *Crisis Contingency*

We've had over several years of dumpster fires, and they haven't stopped. COVID numbers fluctuate, but there are new variants frequently, not to mention monkeypox, polio, and who knows what's next. So, while it would be a drag, it shouldn't come as a shock if one thing or another turns south and any on-campus classes are sent back online. We'll make do. We've been there before, and I have bags full of tricks to try and attenuate such a turn.

## **CFA, CSU, & CONTRACT**

The California Faculty Association (CFA) is often in the midst of difficult contract disputes with management. It is possible, though not currently likely, that the faculty union will call a strike or other work stoppage during a semester. As such, there is a possibility of a work interruption and changes in schedule beyond the instructor's control. I will inform the class as soon as possible of any disruption to our class-meeting schedule, and will compensate to the extent that I am legally and ethically permitted to do so.

## **RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES**

University policy requires certain accommodations for those students who have conflicts with respect to scheduled exams, assignments, or attendance due to the observance of religious obligations. If you will need any such accommodations, please communicate it/them that to me as soon as possible - at least two weeks prior to any relevant date, and preferably via the Intake Form online.

## **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**

Students with disabilities who need accommodations must register with Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) office or the National Center on Deafness (NCOD) and complete a services agreement each semester. The DRES office is located in Bayramian Hall, room 110 and can be reached at (818) 677-2684. NCOD is located on Bertrand Street in Jeanne Chisholm Hall and can be reached at (818) 677-2611. Staff within the Center will verify the existence of a disability based on the documentation provided and approve accommodations.

If you qualify for accommodations due to a disability, please communicate your specific issue(s), need(s), and related expectation(s) within the first two weeks of class, preferably via the online intake form required in the first week of each course. If you would like to discuss your need for accommodations with me, please visit my office hours, contact me to set up an appointment on campus or via Zoom, or use any of the many methods offered.

### *Exam Accommodations*

Alternative arrangements are not typically needed (nor recommended by DRES) for my exams. Unless otherwise specified (and they haven't been since perhaps 2006), exams in my courses are online, open-book, open-note, with a week to take them, and no limit within that week other than the deadline. That typically means around 165 hours, during which you can open and close and return to the assignment as often as you need or desire.

### *Notetakers*

Note that DRES sometimes needs other students in the class to serve as note takers. Those students typically get priority registration for the subsequent semester if they file paperwork by the university's deadline (typically c.4 weeks into the semester). You would be expected to take actual notes, not recordings. During summer or winter terms, compensation is apparently with a gift card. If the opportunity exists, I will have asked for

volunteer(s) in class and connected you/them to DRES, though you're also welcomed to email and ask if any are needed.

### **DEPARTMENTAL ADVISING**

There are two (new as of 5/16/23) part-time Sociology Advisors in the Department – Dorna Basiratmand and Alex Gavilan, who may be contacted at 818-677-2658.

### **UNIVERSITY WRITING SUPPORT**

I was a news editor for five years, and raised by a high school English teacher, so I'm going to give lots of constructive feedback about spelling, punctuation, word choice, and other issues. However, some students will benefit from more extensive writing support.

The University Writing Center provides a range of resources that will be useful to many of you. Peer Writing Specialists are graduate and undergraduate students ready to empower students in lower-division courses, while Faculty Writing Consultants currently teach at CSUN in various departments and are ready to work with upper-division and graduate students. Both can help students, from brainstorm to revision and all of the important steps in between, from conception to completion. They are also available to help out with personal statements, resumes, and more. You can make in-person or Zoom appointments, or attempt a drop-in session. [Learn more about the University Writing Center here.](#)

### **OTHER CRITICAL NEEDS**

If you are facing challenges related to food insecurity, housing precarity/homelessness, mental health, access to technology, eldercare/childcare, or healthcare, you can find guidance, help, and resources from [CSUN with A HEART at csun.edu/heart](#).

One of the first links in the Canvas site for this course is for [CSUN Wellness Resources](#). In particular, I recommend that you consider one-on-one [Wellness Coaching](#).

If you need technical assistance, such as with accessing SPSS from home beyond the instructions and demonstrations that I will do, contact ITR's Helpdesk (818-677-1400 or online)

If you need particular instructional assistance, the Learning Resource Center (SSB 408) may be of help. You will also find several tutoring options on campus, although I strongly discourage their use for my Statistics (424) and Methods (497) classes; please see that FAQ.

For general matters, including uncertainty about where you should go or for what kind of resources, contact the CSUN CSBS Student Allies program, which you can reach initially by email to [Studentsuccessallies@csun.edu](mailto:Studentsuccessallies@csun.edu) or at this website, which also includes links for resources regarding food insecurity, mental health support, and more. [Learn more about](#)

[Student Success Allies here.](#)

## **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT DISCLOSURES**

While making personal connections with the topics studied in any course can be a meaningful and important endeavor, please be aware of the following policy regarding confidentiality and disclosures of incidents of sexual misconduct/sexual violence.

In this class you will often select your own writing topics. You are encouraged to write on topics that matter to you, and while this can elicit writing and reflection that may be deeply personal, please be prepared that you may be asked to share your work with others.

As your instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help maintain a respectful learning environment on our campus. In the event that you choose to write, speak or otherwise disclose about having experienced sexual misconduct/sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking and specify that this violence occurred while you or the perpetrator were a CSUN student, federal and state laws require that I, as a “responsible employee,” notify our campus Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator will contact you to inform you of your rights and options as a survivor and connect you with support resources, including possibilities for holding accountable the person who harmed you. Know that you will not be forced to share information and your level of involvement will be your choice.

If you do not want the Title IX Coordinator notified, instead of disclosing the experience to me, you can speak confidentially with our Campus Care Advocate.\* CSUN’s Care Advocate can be contacted at (818) 677-7492 For more information regarding your university rights and options as a survivor of sexual misconduct/sexual violence, [please visit the University’s Title IX website.](#)

\*Note: If it is determined that an alleged perpetrator poses an imminent threat to self or others, or if person(s) under 18 years of age are involved, our Care Advocate is required to notify our Department of Police Services.

## **INSTRUCTOR CONTACT**

In addition to scheduled office hours (see top of first page) and meetings by appointment, pending availability, I am also available through several dozen methods, and something new almost every semester.

**Email** is the official form of communication at the University, and my preference because it's easy to archive and reference later as needed. I try to acknowledge each email within 12 hours and to provide a complete answer within 48, though typically sooner. I have many addresses (inc. [egodard@csun.edu](mailto:egodard@csun.edu)) that all go to the devices simultaneously. Please don't use more than one, as I'll just get duplicates – but if you haven't heard back and need to follow-up, you might try a different one, just in case.

**Phones** work, too, and my office extension (818-677-4050) forwards to my cell phone (919-EGODARD) 24/7. You should never hesitate to call, regardless of the day or time. If it isn't convenient, the ringer will be off and/or ignored. In that case, *please* leave a message, as I'll get a voice-to-text translation via email and text message. And please ask an actual question, not just your name and number, as I may be able to text back quicker than I can call. Playing phone tag's no fun if we're not making progress on whatever concerns you.

**Text messaging** to that number (919-EGODARD) also works. I'm happy to reply, and don't be shy; your numbers aren't in my phone, so I won't know who it is unless you tell me. If you aren't comfortable using text messages (SMS, MMS, iMessage, etc.) to communicate with a professor, don't; but if that's how you prefer to communicate, you don't need to use something else instead, for most issues. If it warrants the thoroughness or stability of email, I'll say so in reply.

**Instant Messaging** may be your preference, if email is too slow, the phone seems too personal, and/or chat's too public. I regularly use Facebook's Messenger (user "Ellis Godard"), Instagram ("el\_godardo"), Twitter ("ellis godard"), Discord, SnapChat, Pronto, and Google chat (profile "ellisgodard"), and have accounts on a dozen other services, all of which notify me via apps on my phone. I also use Slack and GroupMe, though we'd need to connect in advance for any of those. And if you're a boomer with no other options, I might still have logins at AOL's AIM, MSN, Windows Live, Yahoo, and MySpace, though you should really ditch all of those and go Tik Tok by now. No cap.

**Video support** is available, if you'd rather see a face. I have Zoom, of course, though also Facebook Video, Instagram Calls, Skype (user "gsillerd"), and Yahoo Messenger (alias "egegegegeg2002"), if that still exists. (I don't have an iOS device, so cannot FaceTime, sorry.)

**Need more?** If you're feeling ambitious, I've explored Second Life (avatar "Aquinas Kuhn") Worlds of Warcraft, Call of Duty Mobile, Fortnite, and Minicap's 8-Ball – and met students in each, at least once. And if applications in addition to email and phone isn't enough, you can stalk me on MySpace, academia.org, Phish.net, chess.com, friendshipbracelet.com, and elsewhere - or suggest something else.

**Something else?** I am always happy to *consider* becoming available via any other service, site, or app you regularly use and would prefer to use for communication with me. (You won't find me on Tinder, Grindr, Whisper, or Secret.) You know you're going to have questions, and you know I'm going to have the answers. You might as well expand your horizons a bit and try some new things. And I hope you'll guide me towards something new, too, whether it's a Web app, a new band, an old tune, an ethnic dish, a scholarly idea, or whatever you enjoy!!

**Chat** is available through the Canvas site. There's one for students, in which I encourage you to connect with each other, and one where you'll find me at various times throughout the semester. However, I stopped trying to have scheduled chats in Canvas, because it was difficult to find times convenient to all - and if I don't know you're there wanting to chat, I

won't be there seeing whatever you're asking. So, if you want to go that route, I need to know that, and need to know when.