

**SOCIOLOGY 498.2: SENIOR SEMINAR: THE AMERICAN DREAM
FALL 2009 COURSE OUTLINE**

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Prerequisite: open only to sociology majors who have completed at least 20 upper-division units in sociology, including SOCI 300, 375, and a methods seminar (these with a grade of C- or higher)

General Education: No

****All Information is Subject to Change****

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology 498 is the “capstone” course for sociology majors. It focuses on student completion of independent research projects and Professor Katz’s section will have an emphasis on the American Dream. Each student will design and complete an original research project, including the collection and analysis of primary data. The course will include a critical analysis of the American Dream by exploring the American Dream ideology and how the ‘dream’ and its attainment varies by race/ethnicity, gender, class. Capitalism’s role in the American Dream will also be examined. Additionally, since the course is the “capstone” of the sociology degree, it will review basic sociological concepts and perspectives. Class meetings will be divided between discussion of the course topic (the American Dream) and discussion of student research projects.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

A seminar depends upon the preparation and active participation of students. This course requires a significant amount of reading (typically over 100 pages each week) that must be completed *before* each class. All students are required to engage in classroom discussion of required readings. There will be multiple writing assignments, in response to particular readings. Each student will also lead discussion of a required reading(s) and prepare a discussion handout for members of the class. As a central and major part of this class, students will complete an original, multi-stage research project. Successful completion of the research project will require meeting numerous deadlines on a timely basis; presentation of on-going research activities to other students in class; and group work activities during class.

Tentative Course Requirements & Assignments

Weekly Memos and Discussion Questions	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Individual Original Research Project	50%
Attendance and Participation	10%

Individual Original Research Project: combined total of 50% of final grade. Students will work independently on a original project which will include: 1) Proposal 5%, 2) Preliminary Literature Review 10%, 3) Research Instrument (such as an interview guide, survey questionnaire, or focus group guide) and Consent Documents 5%, 4) Data Analysis Memo 5%, 5) Class Presentation 5%, 3) Final Research Paper 20% of final grade.

COURSE READINGS

Book will be available at North Light books. For more information about the selected course readings, feel free to contact me by email.