

Sociology 72: Critical Community Sociology

Spring 2024
Dartmouth College

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Class: 2, MWF 2:20-3:15pm in Reed 103

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-3pm EST and by appointment, Blunt 306B

Description of the Course

This class will focus on interrogating the drivers of inequality in rural and small-town communities. To understand this, we critically examine several interconnected issues: culture, health, racial equity, education, environment, infrastructure, social services, economic justice, and geographic isolation. Students who wish to enroll in this course should have some familiarity with the sociological imagination, perhaps having previously completed either *Introduction to Sociology* or *Social Problems*.

Course Format

This course has an experiential learning component. Dartmouth has community partners throughout the Upper Valley that work to offset different forms of social inequality. With support from the [Dartmouth Center for Social Impact](#), students will apply the concepts learned in class to real issues faced by a community partner, completing a research portfolio that includes field research on a matter of concern for the organization. This community-engaged course is not only an opportunity to meet the needs of a community partner but also to learn from their existing assets and strengths. While traditional service-learning employs a charity-based approach to working *for* communities, in this course we practice critical service-learning by working *with* communities and analyzing the systemic causes of social problems that necessitate service. To build reciprocity and solidarity with community partners, we will engage individually and as a group in sustained reflection about how students' experiences relate to the theoretical material we are learning in class.

This year, students will participate in a group working on one of the following projects:

- Upper Valley Land Trust: understand attitudes toward land use and stewardship among members of the Abenaki community.
- Four Winds Nature Institute: understand who is volunteering, what draws them and keeps them volunteering, and how to think about outreach to ensure volunteers reflect evolving demographics and diverse social statuses.
- “We Are Lebanon”: collect and represent stories of Lebanon residents, in order to increase feelings of belonging and inclusion in the diversifying city.

Course Objectives

Students who successfully complete Socy 72 will be able to:

1. Analyze the social factors shaping individual and group experiences in rural and small-town communities.

2. Perform critical readings of assigned works, consider controversial social issues respectfully from multiple viewpoints, synthesize complex information, and articulate thoughtful and effective arguments.
3. Carry out field research and produce a written report that synthesizes academic perspectives and public knowledge on a topic in community sociology.
4. Increase self-awareness of their own identities, changing attitudes, and perceptions about the “other” (those in marginal social positions) in rural communities.

Required reading

All required readings are posted as PDFs or open-access links on the course Canvas site. I expect you to read all course material before class on the day that we are discussing it.

Expectations and Assignments

1. Participation (20 pts.)

Discussion facilitation (10 pts.) You will sign up for a facilitation slot in the first week of class; there may be some days in which facilitation is shared among two students. Facilitating discussion requires some preparation before class. I would suggest reading the material carefully, considering the implications (academically, personally, politically), and preparing some thought-provoking questions for the class discussion. Please upload your discussion questions to the assignment on Canvas before class. Discussion facilitators should come prepared with the following:

1. Questions that help us come to a common understanding of the readings’ main arguments.
2. Outside information you bring to help us understand the topic. This can take the form of recent news articles, websites, examples of organizations that are taking up these issues in the real world, or other related materials that add depth to our understanding of the reading.
3. Questions that reflect on the greater implications of the findings.

Discussion participation (10 pts.) You must be able to demonstrate verbally that you have read the material critically and are engaged in understanding it more deeply with your peers. I will keep track of your participation in our discussions.

2. Daily reading responses (36 pts.)

Every day in which we have reading for class, you have the opportunity to write a VERY BRIEF reading response before class (due to Canvas by 2pm). There are 14 days (not including the first day of class) for which you are able to write a reading response; I will grade 12 of them. You may choose to skip 2 responses, or do all 14 of them and I will drop your 2 lowest grades.

If your response is “golden,” you will receive 3 points. If your response is “perfectly fine,” you will receive 2 points. If it’s “a dead-end street,” you will receive 1 point.

Your reading response should consist of two discrete parts.

- First, you should work to determine an argument that cuts across all the pieces. This is not a summary of findings. Rather, think about common threads you discover across readings and analyze these to convey your own distinctive proposition. Keep this argument brief – no longer than one concise paragraph.

- Second, reflect on the readings and posit one or two questions (total) to bring to class discussion. What in the reading would you like to think about more deeply with me and your colleagues?

3. Research portfolio (100 pts.)

You will apply the concepts learned in class to real issues faced by your chosen community partner. There are a number of graded components of this project.

- In Week 2, choose a community partner and form your project teams.
- In Week 3, submit your research plan and supporting materials (e.g., interview protocol, focus group guide). (10 pts.)
- In Week 4, complete a preliminary literature review. This should consist of an annotated bibliography with at least 5 peer-reviewed academic sources. (10 pts.)
- Weeks 5-8, complete field research. Field research will entail “site visits” during which you will take field notes, conduct interviews, and compile and analyze your data. You will submit your field notes (e.g., coded transcripts, analytic memos) each week. (40 pts.)
- In Week 10, your team will give a presentation to your community partner about your findings. (10 pts.)
- In Week 10, you will also submit a formal deliverable to your project partner (e.g., report, website, infographic), which should include a revised synthesis of relevant pieces of your literature review. (20 pts.)
- In Week 10, you will submit a confidential peer evaluation of your group members. Your final portfolio grade will account for your group members’ evaluations of your contributions to the group process. (10 pts.)

Grading

I follow the grading conventions as defined by the Organization, Regulations, and Courses (ORC) at Dartmouth. http://www.dartmouth.edu/~reg/transcript/grade_descriptions.html

- A Excellent** mastery of course material (student performance indicates a very high degree of originality, creativity, and excellent performance in analysis, synthesis, critical expression, and independence)
- B Good** mastery of course material (student performance indicates a high degree of originality, creativity, and good performance in analysis, synthesis, critical expression, and independence)
- C Acceptable** mastery of course material (student performance indicates some degree of originality, creativity, and acceptable performance in analysis, synthesis, critical expression, and independence)
- D Deficient** in mastery of course material (student performance indicates some degree of originality, creativity, and deficient performance in analysis, synthesis, critical expression, and independence)
- E Serious deficiency** in mastery of course material (student performance clearly lacking originality, creativity, and seriously deficient performance in analysis, synthesis, critical expression, and independence)

I will determine your final letter grade according to the following percentage breakdown:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percent</u>
A	95-100%	C+	77-79.9%
A-	92-94.9%	C	73-76.9%
B+	89-91.9%	C-	70-72.9%
B	83-88.9%	D	60-69.9%
B-	80-82.9%	E	< 60%

Important Notes

Attendance

It is my expectation that you will attend each class meeting—and that you will arrive to each class on time and stay for the duration. I will circulate an attendance sign-in sheet at the beginning of each class meeting; it is your responsibility to make sure you sign it each day. There are no opportunities to make up missed in-class participation work. If you miss more than three days of class, your course grade will decrease by one whole letter grade (e.g., A to B), and decrease by one step (e.g., B to B-) for each additional absence. If you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for getting notes from another student. If you anticipate missing class meetings because of athletic team participation, religious observances, or some other reason, please email me at the start of the term to communicate the expected conflicts.

Late policy

Please speak with me at the beginning of the term if you anticipate circumstances that might affect your ability to get your work in on time. Daily reading responses are designed to help you prepare for in-class discussion, so we can make the most of our time together; therefore, they will not be accepted late.

For the project components, the maximum grade you may earn will be reduced by one letter grade for each day late. In other words, if you turn your assignment in 1-24 hours after the deadline, the maximum grade you can receive is a B; if you turn your assignment in 25-48 hours after the deadline, the maximum grade you can receive is a C; if you turn your assignment in 49-72 hours after the deadline, the maximum grade you can receive is a D. I will not accept your assignment after 72 hours. If you believe you are eligible for an extension, it is your responsibility to notify me before missing the deadline to explain why your circumstances warrant an exception.

Communication

My office hours are for you. You are welcome to come in and talk with me about anything during my posted hours. I am also available by appointment if my office hours do not coincide with your schedule. I regularly check e-mail during the day (9am-4pm) and will make every effort to reply to messages as soon as possible. I expect students to regularly check their Dartmouth e-mail and the Canvas course page for class announcements and updates.

Classroom responsibility and courtesy

All students are expected to have a voice in our class dialogue. Class participation involves thinking carefully, listening, and posing questions to others as much as it is about sharing your ideas. This requires us to be present, set aside distractions, and focus our attention on engaging with one another. Please leave your phone and laptop in your bag. You may wish to print out your daily reading response and any notes you take on the readings to bring to class.

The tone with which we engage one another is also extremely important and should come from a place of mutual respect and understanding. You are free to disagree with the views raised in the material or by others in the class but must do so with a reasoned critique based on a complete consideration of their argument and evidence.

Academic honor principle

The faculty, administration, and students of Dartmouth College acknowledge the responsibility to maintain and perpetuate the principle of academic honor, and recognize that any instance of academic dishonesty is considered a violation of the [Academic Honor Principle](#).

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

As scholars, we have an obligation to share with our readers the sources and tools we used in creating our scholarship. To this end, every assignment should have two features indicating our reliance on outside sources. The first should be in-text parenthetical citation paired with a reference list.

The second should be a GenAI Disclosure, which should contain one of the following statements:

- I did not use AI in creating this paper, or
- I used AI in creating this paper, namely _____ (ChatGPT, Bard, etc.). I affirm I did not generate text with AI and directly copy it into my paper. I used GenAI in the following ways: (list which of the following *acceptable* uses were utilized)
 - Brainstorming and finding information on the topic
 - Drafting an outline
 - Checking grammar, style, and clarity
 - Formatting references in ASA style

There are multiple reasons not to directly copy words from an AI engine into your own scholarship. First, this would be considered plagiarism (which means presenting others' words as if they were our own); second, AI engines are unreliable on facts—anything they assert must be checked against reliable sources; third, AI engines reproduce biases from their source material; and finally, using AI to generate text may rob us of the chance to develop our own thinking on a subject.

Furthermore, even if a chatbot could produce a perfect A+ assignment for you (it can't), something would be lost in this transaction. At its best, writing for class is designed to develop your skills of careful observation, creative and experimental thinking, nuanced analysis, and authentic self-expression. It is designed as an occasion for learning. If you outsource your homework to a chatbot, you will risk diminishing your own learning experience.

Learning resources

[Academic Skills Center](#) (ASC): Open to the entire Dartmouth community, the ASC assists students in achieving their academic goals through tutoring and learning skills trainings. [Research Center for Writing, and Information Technology](#) (RWIT): RWIT is a free service dedicated to helping members of the Dartmouth community develop more effective strategies for generating and organizing their ideas, finding and evaluating research sources, and presenting and revising compositions in a variety of media.

Religious observances

Dartmouth has a deep commitment to support students' religious observances and diverse faith practices. Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me as soon as possible—before the end of the second week of the term at the latest—to discuss appropriate course adjustments.

Student accessibility and accommodations

Students requesting disability-related accommodations and services for this course are required to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS; [Apply for Services webpage](#); student.accessibility.services@dartmouth.edu; 1-603-646-9900) and to request that an accommodation email be sent to me in advance of the need for an accommodation. Then, students should schedule a follow-up meeting with me to determine relevant details such as what role SAS or its [Testing Center](#) may play in accommodation implementation. This process works best for everyone when completed as early in the quarter as possible. If

students have questions about whether they are eligible for accommodations or have concerns about the implementation of their accommodations, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

Mental health and wellness

The academic environment is challenging, our terms are intensive, and classes are not the only demanding part of your life. There are a number of resources available to you on campus to support your wellness, including: the [Counseling Center](#) which allows you to book triage appointments online, the [Student Wellness Center](#) which offers wellness check-ins, and your [undergraduate dean](#). The student-led [Dartmouth Student Mental Health Union](#) and their peer support program may be helpful if you would like to speak to a trained fellow student support listener. If you need immediate assistance, please contact the counselor on-call at (603) 646-9442 at any time. Please make me aware of anything that will hinder your success in this course.

Title IX

At Dartmouth, we value integrity, responsibility, and respect for the rights and interests of others, all central to our Principles of Community. We are dedicated to establishing and maintaining a safe and inclusive campus where all community members have equal access to Dartmouth's educational and employment opportunities. We strive to promote an environment of sexual respect, safety, and well-being. Through the Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct Policy (SMP), Dartmouth demonstrates that sex and gender-based discrimination, sex and gender-based harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, etc., are not tolerated in our community.

For more information regarding Title IX and to access helpful resources, visit Title IX's website (sexual-respect.dartmouth.edu). As a faculty member, I am required to share disclosures of sexual or gender-based misconduct with the Title IX office. If you have any questions or want to explore support and assistance, please contact the Title IX office at 603-646-0922 or TitleIX@dartmouth.edu. Speaking to Title IX does not automatically initiate a college resolution. Instead, much of their work is around providing supportive measures to ensure you can continue to engage in Dartmouth's programs and activities.

Course Plan and Readings

Week One (Mar 25-29)

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|------------------|--|
| Monday | Introduction: Community engaged learning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Donahue and Plaxton-Moore (2018), Ch. 2 “Benefits”• Mueller and Oppenheimer (2016), “The Pen is Mightier Than the Keyboard” |
| Wednesday | What is Rural America? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Johnson and Lichter (2019), “Rural Depopulation”• Immerwahr (2023), “Beyond the Myth of Rural America” |
| Friday | What is The Upper Valley? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walton (2024), “The Upper Valley in Structural Context”• Carpenter-Song, Ferron and Kobylenski (2016), “Social Exclusion and Survival” |

Week Two (April 1-5)

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|------------------|--|
| Monday | Community partner class visit <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jeanie McIntyre, Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT) |
| Wednesday | Community partner class visit <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lisa Purcell, Four Winds Nature Institute |

- Friday** **Thinking deeper about the projects, class discussion and team meetings**
- Robinson (2023), “Abenaki leaders dispute the legitimacy of VT’s tribes”
 - West and Pateman (2016), “Recruiting and Retaining Participants in Citizen Science”
 - Walton (2023), “Misrecognition and Wellbeing in Northern New England”

Week Three (April 8-12)

Monday **NO CLASS – enjoy the eclipse!**

- Wednesday** **Field/Group work**
- Arsel (2017), “Asking Questions with a Reflexive Focus”
 - Begin making contact in communities

- Friday** **What is Rural America? pt. 2**
- Doane (2021), “Anglo-American Settler Colonialism in New England”
 - Carolan (2020), “The Rural Problem: Justice in the Countryside”

Week Four (April 15-19)

- Monday** **Immigration and community**
- Mathema, Svajlenka and Hermann (2018), “Revival and Opportunity”
 - Hallett (2015), “Better Than White Trash”
 - Sohoni and Mendez (2014), “Symbolic Boundaries in New Destinations”

- Wednesday** **Field/Group work**
- Annotated bibliography due
 - Data collection ongoing

- Friday** **Rural Racism**
- Escobar (2021), “Liminal Belonging in *El Nuevo South*”
 - Odenbring and Johansson (2019), “If They’re Allowed to Wear a Veil”

Week Five (April 22-26)

- Monday** **Environmental justice**
- Hochschild (2018), *Selections from Strangers in Their Own Land*
 - Jerolmack (2021), “They Couldn’t Drink Their Water”
 - Carrillo and Ipsen (2021), “Worksites as Sacrifice Zones: US Meatpacking”

- Wednesday** **Field/Group work**
- Data collection ongoing

- Friday** **Development and economic expansion**
- Sherman (2018), “Not Allowed to Inherit My Kingdom”
 - Schafft et al. (2018), “Busted amidst the Boom”

Week Six (Apr 29-May 3)

- Monday** **Extractive industries and Indigenous land erasure**
- Shriver and Webb (2009), “A Native American Community Exposed to Carbon Black”
 - Geisler (2014), “Disowned by the Ownership Society”
- Wednesday** **Field/Group work**
- Data collection ongoing
- Friday** **Identity and agrarianism**
- Bell, Hullinger and Brislen (2015), “Manipulated Masculinities”
 - Photo essay: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/23/business/taxes-family-farm.html>
 - King et al. (2018), “Black Agrarianism”

Week Seven (May 6-10)

- Monday** **Schools and inequality**
- Parks (2021), “The Tragedy of America’s Rural Schools”
 - Potts (2023), “How Rural America Steals Girls’ Futures”
 - Sherman and Schafft (2022), “Turning Their Back on Kids”
- Wednesday** **Field/Group work**
- Data collection ongoing
- Friday** **Health equity**
- Alexander (2018), “America’s Rural Hospitals are Dangerously Fragile”
 - Ollove (2020), “Rural America’s Health Crisis”
 - Andrews (2016), “Rural Hospitals are Shutting Down Their Delivery Rooms”
 - Sosin and Carpenter-Song (2020), “Village Versus Virus”

Week Eight (May 13-17)

- Monday** **Opioid crisis**
- Rigg, Monnat and Chavez (2018), “Opioid-Related Mortality in Rural America”
 - Burfoot-Rochford and Schafft (2021), “This Ain’t No Pittsburgh”
- Wednesday** **Field/Group work**
- Data collection ongoing
- Friday** **Political ideology**
- Jadhav (2021), “Was it rural populism?”
 - Schafft (2021), “Rurality and Crises of Democracy”

Week Nine (May 20-24)

- Monday** **Field/Group work**
- Presentation and deliverable prep
- Wednesday** **Field/Group work**

- Presentation and deliverable prep

Friday **NO CLASS – prof out of town**

Week Ten (May 27-29)

Monday **Memorial Day, NO CLASS**

Wednesday **Community partner presentations**

References

- Alexander, Brian. 2018. "America's Rural Hospitals are Dangerously Fragile." in *The Atlantic*.
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- Carolan, Michael. 2020. "The Rural Problem: Justice in the Countryside." *Rural Sociology* 85(1):22-56.
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- Carrillo, Ian R., and Annabel Ipsen. 2021. "Worksites as Sacrifice Zones: Structural Precarity and COVID-19 in U.S. Meatpacking." *Sociological Perspectives* 64(5):726-46.
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- Hallett, Miranda Cady. 2015. "'Better than White trash': Work ethic, Latinidad and Whiteness in rural Arkansas." *Latino Studies* 10(1-2):81-106.
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<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/10/23/beyond-the-myth-of-rural-america>
- Jadhav, Adam. 2021. "Was it rural populism? Returning to the country, 'catching up,' and trying to understand the trump vote." *Journal of Rural Studies* 82:553-69.
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<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/17/opinion/sunday/fracking-pennsylvania-water-contamination.html>.
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