cap: the community
SOC 376-1001 | FALL 2016
TBD

Instructor Information
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Brief Course Overview:
This course has two basic goals. First, it explores the various dimensions of community sociology by looking at its historical, theoretical, and methodological foundations. To this end, we will read several classic community studies and survey the various theories of community which sociologists have developed in the course of their research. And secondly, several of the works will give us a “hands-on” feel for doing sociology as we explore the ins-and-outs of participant observation as a means for studying the community.

Course Prerequisites:
Prerequisites for Capstone courses are junior or senior standing and completion of all General Education courses that build Core Objectives 1-3 and satisfy Core Objectives 4-8. In addition, students are required to have completed SOC 101.

Course Objectives:
This course satisfies Core Objectives 10 and 13.

Silver Core Objective 10: Diversity and Equity calls for students to be able to develop a set of cognitive, affective and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate attentiveness to and analysis of diversity and equity. Specifically, we will address diversity by examining various communities and investigate how they impact members differently by looking specifically at how class, race, and gender impact their everyday experiences and how there are different outcomes based on their group membership.

How will this be accomplished: Students will learn to identify, apply and evaluate major sociological paradigms (functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism), in addition to the seminal theories in community studies (Chicago School, Harvard School, and Sociocultural Evolution) used to analyze the development and evolution of a community addressing issues of diversity and equity (who gets what) and the social barriers to these goals through the reading, analysis, and critique of original research in the area of community studies.
Silver Core Objective 13: Students will be able to integrate and synthesize Core knowledge, enabling them to analyze open-ended problems or complex issues.

How will this be accomplished: Students will be able to integrate and synthesize Core knowledge enabling them to analyze complex problems. Students will survey the history of community studies and be able to make comparisons locally and globally. Students will become critical consumers of media in order to evaluate the evidence and arguments used in various issues, such as immigration and race and class inequality, confronting communities today. Students will be able to critically evaluate the methodological and theoretical assumptions underlying the literature in the area of community and will be able to express, both in written assignments and classroom discussions, their understanding of the intersections of class, race, and gender as they reflect culture and institutional structures and shape individual experiences in the community.

This course further develops (but does not satisfy) CO1 (Effective composition and communication), CO3 (Critical analysis and Use of information), CO5 (History and Culture), CO6 (Cultures, Societies, and Individuals), and CO11 (Global Contexts). It will do so via the following Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

**SLO 1:** Describe the life experiences of minority groups immigrating to the U.S. in creating communities and becoming a part of the larger society (satisfies CO10, integrates CO3, CO5, CO6)

**SLO 2:** Analyze the ways in which cultural groups differ and how such differences have influenced the development of their communities (satisfies CO10; integrates CO3, CO5, CO6)

**SLO 3:** Articulate the ways in which social identities such as race, class, and gender intersect and influence individual and group life experiences and/or perspectives within the community (satisfies CO10; integrates CO3, CO6)

**SLO 4:** Apply theoretical perspectives from previous courses in history, women’s studies, ethnic studies, psychology, and sociology in order to observe and analyze the community and issues of equity we face locally, nationally, and globally (satisfies CO13; integrates CO5, CO6, CO11).

**SLO 5:** Critically examine how their location within intersecting social forces impacts one’s worldview and relationships in personal and institutional settings (satisfies CO13; integrates CO3, CO6, CO10).

**SLO 6:** Effectively communicate verbally and in writing their mastery of the theoretical and methodological debates by identifying and summarizing current scholarly conversations that exist in the area of community studies both here and abroad (satisfies CO13; integrates CO6, CO11).

**SLO 7:** Students will be able to apply their knowledge of community to everyday experiences and problems related to class, race, and gender in relation to matters of social problems and equity through verbal and written assignments in the area of community (satisfies CO13; integrates CO1, CO3, CO6, CO10).
**Required Texts:**


**Additional Required Readings**

There will be additional required readings each week pertaining to the section’s topic. You will find them on WebCampus by clicking the “Readings” link. A bibliography for the readings can also be found there.

**Course Mechanics:**

This course will be oriented toward a lecture-discussion format which attempts to maximize your informed participation (integrates CO3). Lectures will both clarify difficult readings and provide supplementary materials not included in the readings. I will follow the sequence of topics discussed in the Course Objectives and Content above as closely as possible. If you don’t understand either the readings or the lectures, please, ask questions either in-class, during office hours or by email.

I believe very strongly in education being an active interchange of ideas. Lectures should not only impart knowledge, but help generate new ideas and knowledge. This requires you to keep up with the readings in order to participate. Practice reading actively: take notes, make a list of questions the reading brings up, and read far enough ahead that you have a chance to think about what you have read. I expect that you will have read each day’s readings prior to our class discussions. The more you participate, the more interesting class will be.

**Course Requirements**

**Assessment of SLOs (development and reinforcement of CO1 and CO3):**

Student learning outcomes will be assessed through weekly writing assignments and four written exams that require students to integrate, synthesize, and apply the terms, concepts, and theories they are learning to original monographs in sociology and history texts.

Students will also be required to participate in weekly discussions applying the material to current events happening in our community, the larger society, and around the world.

**Weekly Assignments:**

There will be ten (10) weekly writing assignments asking you to reflect on the current week’s readings, lecture, video, and/or class discussion: this will usually (but not always) include one of your additional readings for the week. Guidelines for the weekly assignments will be posted for you on WebCampus.
What am I looking for? Your thinking, your ability to engage with the readings and take a concept or a theoretical insight and push it in a direction that matters to you (CO1 and CO3), either because it is related to your area of interest (education, criminal justice, psychology, etc.), or because it simply interests you and forces you to apply your readings and class discussions in new and interesting ways (CO10 and CO13).

‘A’ papers will include a discussion of current terms/concepts/theories we are discussing, citations from the readings, integration with the current monograph (if applicable), and connections to your experiences. In other words, you will be asked to integrate, synthesize, and apply your knowledge of the material in regards to the complex issues surrounding community (CO13).

Weekly papers are to be 1-2 pages, single-spaced, and 12-point font. You are required to complete in ten (10) assignments (10 points each/100 points total). You may only turn in one (1) assignment per week. You will not be allowed to turn in more than one per week at the end of the semester; as such, it is in your best interest to keep track of your progress.

Integration Papers:
There will be four integration papers throughout the semester. Each will consist of a set of questions asking you to demonstrate your understanding of the material by integrating terms, concepts, and theories discussed in the lectures and synthesizing them with the monograph and additional readings. The paper is designed to test your knowledge of the material covered in that section.

Your answer will be evaluated on the basis of: (1) your grasp of the empirical materials; (2) your ability to apply and integrate the theories to the section's monograph; and (3) your ability to compose a coherent narrative (CO1, 3, 10, and 13).

Papers 1-3 will be due at 11:59 p.m. via WebCampus on the days designated in the outline. Late papers will be accepted up to three days, but will be marked down one grade per day. After the third day, the paper will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made.

The Final is due in-class on the scheduled date (TBD) – No late Finals will be accepted.

Each paper will be worth 50 points for a total of 200 points.

Class Points:
Total points for the class will be 300 points: 100 for the ten (10) exercises and 200 for the four (4) integration papers:

A = 300-270  B = 269-240  C = 239-210  D = 209-180  F = 179-0

Please note that these are the general parameters: the plus/minus system will be utilized. While you will not lose any points earned, your attendance and participation will be taken into consideration in your final grade.
Course Outline

1. The Historical Groundings of Community Sociology. We will begin by situating the “problem of community” historically as it emerged in response to the social disorder generated by the French Revolution and Great Britain’s Industrial Revolution. In locating the historical origins of community sociology, we will discover that from the beginning, the problem of community has been rooted in a conservative worldview and has often been resistant to progressive social movements. As we shall see, there is an irony here, for despite its conservative mood, community sociology (and sociology in general) has been associated in the popular mind with radical causes and radical ideologies.

2. Idealist and Materialist Theories of Community. Having discovered the socio-historical roots of “community,” we will turn to survey the major theories that have guided the sociology of community for more than a century. Our survey begins with the subjectivist and romantic theories of community developed by Classical German sociologists, such as Max Weber, Ferdinand Tönnies, and Georg Simmel, which were developed at the end of the nineteenth century. This is followed by a discussion of the ecological and naturalist paradigm of community research developed by the Chicago School of Sociology during the 1920’s and the 1930’s. Here, we will discuss the writings of Robert Ezra Park, Ernest W. Burgess, and Louis Wirth, as well as later ecological models inspired by the Chicago School. We will end this section with a piece of writing that could very well have been written by a Chicago sociologist – Upton Sinclair’s The Jungle – a “proletarian novel” that Sinclair claimed was meant to hit America in the heart, but missed, hitting it in its stomach instead.

3. Harvard Sociology and its Critique of Chicago Sociology. It is possible to trace the intellectual history of American sociology by looking at the paradigm shifts community sociology has undergone. Nowhere is this more the case than in the shifts that took place in sociology during the 1940’s and 1950’s. During this period the focal point of sociology moved from Chicago with its naturalistic, conflict orientation to Harvard and its consensus-based culturological perspective.

As we turn to the “consensus-based” critique of Chicago Sociology mounted by the social scientists at Harvard University, we will begin to appreciate the profound differences between a culturological approach to community studies, which emphasizes the integrative role that values, beliefs and ideas play in shaping a community’s institutions, and a materialist paradigm (such as that practiced by the Chicago School) which underscores the formative role of economic and ecological processes in generating communal structures.

William F. Whyte’s classical study Street Corner Society is a watershed work in which Whyte uses the participant observer method to study Boston’s Italian North End. It explores the various conflicts shaping relations between this ethnic enclave and its host community. For example, Whyte touches on subjects such as the social nature of community-based deviance, the sources of group morale, the role organized crime plays in supporting and structuring local communities, and the impediments to individual social mobility a community erects as it sets about trying to preserve and protect its infrastructure of material and human resources.

In addition, Whyte’s Street Corner Society is also recognized for its contributions to the methodology of community studies. It critically addresses from an ethnographic perspective the tactical difficulties of maintaining rapport with a community while researching it. Its methodological contributions are especially germane in that it underscores the moral predicaments confronting those doing this type of research.
4. The Intersection of Sociology and History. Despite the theoretical diversity of the sociological perspectives encountered thus far, they share many meta-theoretical assumptions. Primary among these assumptions, until recently, is that sociologists can successfully do community research while ignoring the historical development of the community itself. Such an assumption dominated much of American sociology in the post-war era, and though vigorously challenged by radicals such as C. Wright Mills in the late sixties, it formed the common ground for much of American sociology for almost a quarter of a century.

During the period immediately following WWII, a form of sociological analysis known as structural-functionalism came to dominate much of the discipline. Growing out of Harvard's consensual model of society, structural-functionalism assumes that sociology's main task is to understand how social institutions currently operate. As such, knowledge of an institution's origins or its evolutionary path of development is not necessary for grasping society's current state and functions.

Fortunately, that wisdom is no longer honored and this section of the course will explore the relationship between social history with its comparative method and community sociology proper. To this end, we will discuss some excerpts from David Hackett Fischer's Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America. Fischer employs a comparative method that allows him to document the existing cultural differences between four English subcultures that immigrated to America in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The four subcultures are: the Puritan tradition of Massachusetts; the Aristocratic or “Cavalier” culture of Virginia; the Society of Friends that settled the Delaware River Valley; and finally, the world of the Celtic and Northern English highlanders who settled the Piedmont Area and the Appalachian Highlands – the so-called “Scotch-Irish.” Fischer's purpose is to demonstrate the cultural continuity between the pre-migration and post-migration cultural practices and beliefs of these Englishmen. For our purposes, we will concentrate on the New England Puritan and the Appalachian Highland cultures.

We will use Albion's Seed to “horizontally differentiate” the many ways in which the back-country highlander and his community originally differed from the Puritan ways of New England. Working from this baseline, we will read John Mack Faragher's Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie, the history of an open rural community that was located just south of Springfield, Illinois. Faragher’s work gives our enquiry a vertical or historical dimension by allowing us to trace the early nineteenth century migration and clash of New England and Southern Highland culture as it evolved in the Illinois Midlands. Faragher shows how the Illinois frontier evolved into a social system which had at its core a nascent form of capitalist agriculture. In its mature form, this rural system is replete with agrarian classes and a set of potential class antagonisms that are often expressed in terms of cultural struggles.

Thus, Faragher’s work shows us how to go about historically reconstructing a community’s evolution and demonstrates the relevance of such reconstructions for the sociological understanding of community. In short, he has not only written a highly readable history of a rural community, but has produced a fair piece of sociology to boot. By using Fischer’s and Faragher’s writings in tandem, we can assemble 250 years of Highlander culture and history. We can watch it persist and preserve itself, even as it leaves the mountains, enters the farmlands and cities of the American Midwest, and fends off the foreign incursions of its new environment.
5. **Global Capitalism and the Destruction of Communities.** It is fitting that we end the course with Sudhir Venkatesh’s, *Off the Books*, because it takes us back to Chicago where we began our journey and examines the fate of a community that, like many communities these days, can no longer take-for-granted the fact it has a secure material base upon which to build and on which to make long-term plans. Venkatesh offers us another firsthand account in which we will meet the major players of a community abandoned by capital and government. We will witness how they go about trying to make ends meet and keep their lives and community together in the underground economy that has developed. Similar to all of our texts we will assess the underlying factors that help to both ravage and sustain a community through the lives of its members. We began our journey by examining how capital devastates traditional structures within a community as it expands, and we will end by observing how communities respond when capital contracts.

**Want to Chat?**

I do! I want to talk with you throughout the semester. Although I may be available if you drop by the office, it is best to make an appointment. Email is the best method to make an appointment. Please see me if you are having a problem with some aspect of the course, but remember that office hours are not just for problems. I am eager to address any questions you may have, explore your ideas, brainstorm topics that interest you, or discuss future academic or professional goals.

For the quickest response, please email me at: cmaes@unr.edu

**University Policies:**

**Statement on Academic Dishonesty:** “Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses" constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include canceling a student's enrollment without a grade, giving an F for the course or for the assignment. For more details, see the [UNR General Catalog](https://www.unr.edu/catalog/).  

**Statement of Disability Services:** Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me or the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

**Statement for Academic Success Services:** Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (784-443 or [www.unr.edu/mathcenter/](http://www.unr.edu/mathcenter/)), the Tutoring Center (784-6801 or [www.unr.edu/tutoring/](http://www.unr.edu/tutoring/)), and the University Writing Center (784-6030 or [http://www.unr.edu/writing_center/](http://www.unr.edu/writing_center/)). These centers support your classroom learning, but it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

**Statement on Audio and Video Recording:** Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.
**Course Schedule**

I. The Classical Sociologist Sociological Tradition in Fin de Siècle Germany: The Community as Subjective Reason and Alienation

   *The Jungle*

   *Friday Reading (Week of 08/29):*
   - Tönnies: Community and Society

II. The Community as Ecological Process: The Chicago School of Sociology

   *Friday Readings (Week of 09/05)*
   - Simmel: The Metropolis and Mental Life
   - Wirth: Urbanism as a Way of Life

III. Science Imitating Art: The Case of Chicago School and Proletarian Art

   *Friday Readings (Week of 09/012):*
   - Park: Human Ecology
   - Burgess: The Growth of the City: An Introduction to a Research Project
   - Zorbaugh: The Natural Areas of a City

   **First Integration Paper Due – Monday, September 19th**

IV. The Culturological Critique of the Chicago School’s Urban Ecological Perspective and the Post-War Shift to Consensus Theory

   *Street Corner Society*

   *Friday Readings (Week of 09/19):*
   - Simmel: The Stranger

   *Friday Readings: (Week of 09/26)*
   - Firey: Ecological Considerations
   - Firey: Sentiment and Symbolism

   *Friday Readings: (Week of 10/03):*
   - Vogt and O'Dea: The Cultural Differences
   - Merton: Social Structure and Anomie
   - Aguilar-San Juan: Staying Vietnamese

   **Second Integration Paper Due – Monday, October 10th**
V. The Prairie Frontier and Its Evolution: The Rural Community and Its Industrial Transformation

*Sugar Creek*

*Friday Readings (Week of 10/10):*
A. Harvey: The Urban Process under Capitalism
B. Logan and Molotch: The City as a Growth Machine

*Friday Readings (Week of 10/17):*
A. Markusen: City Spatial Structure, Women’s Household Work, and National Urban Policy
B. Gilbert: ‘Race,’ Space, and Power

*Friday Readings (Week of 10/24):*
A. Smith: The Great Strikes
B. Smith: Farmer’s Revolt

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VI. The Globalization Phase of Late Monopoly Capitalism and the New Crises of Community

*Off the Books*

*Friday Readings (Week of 11/07):*
A. DuBois: The Environment of the Negro
B. Duncan: Men Without Property

*Friday Readings (Week of 11/13)*
A. Wacquant and Wilson: The Cost of Racial and Class Exclusion in the Inner City

*Wednesday Readings (Week of 11/14)*
A. Massey and Denton: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass
B. Caldeira: Fortified Enclaves

*Friday Readings (Week of 11/21)*
A. Elliott and Pais: Race, Class, and Hurricane Katrina

*Wednesday Readings (Week of 11/28)*
B. Low: The Erosion of Public Space and the Public Realm
C. Caldeira: Fortified Enclaves

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Lastly, the course outline is a tentative schedule that I hope to stick by, however, due to length of discussions and other factors beyond my control, this schedule will undoubtedly change. I’m comfortable with that, as you should be – the point in a course like this one (or any course, actually) should be the quality of the learning experience, not the quantity of material consumed. Remember that this is a capstone class which has substantive reading and writing requirements. Therefore, the course load is more than normal, but it is do-able with effort. You should plan on spending approximately one hour a day – outside of class – to keep up with the readings. Should you get behind, it will be incredibly difficult to catch up.

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IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ATTEND CLASS REGULARLY TO KEEP INFORMED OF ANY CHANGES TO THE SYLLABUS.