Sociology 4966W: Sociology Capstone Seminar
Spring 2018, Tues/Thurs. 9:45-11:00, 120 Blegen

Teaching team
Professor: Dr. Rachel Schurman (schurman@umn.edu)
Thursday 11:05-12:05 and by appointment, 1074 Social Sciences. Please email to arrange an appointment.

Teaching Assistant: Mark Pharris (pharr004@umn.edu)
Wednesday 1:00-3:00 and by appointment, 972 Social Sciences.

Course overview
This capstone course is designed to: a) provide you with an opportunity to reflect on what you have learned as a sociology major; b) use that knowledge to write a portfolio of self-presentation materials and sociological analyses based on community service learning; and c) think about how the knowledge, skills, and insights of the sociological enterprise can be used and applied outside of the University. The main goal of the course is to guide you through the process of writing your capstone portfolio by providing structure, feedback, and support. Successful completion of the analytic portion of your portfolio shows mastery of the skills and perspectives of our field of study. Along the way, we will emphasize the relationship between a sociological perspective and critical thinking, effective communication, and meaningful civil engagement. Course materials encourage you to reflect on the role of sociological knowledge in the contemporary world and to connect your sociological knowledge to a community-engaged learning experience. Class meetings will include active learning exercises, writing exercises, guest speakers, and small group discussions of the required readings. All readings will be on the course Moodle site; you can access it at moodle.umn.edu or through your MyU portal. Be prepared for occasional changes in the syllabus as the need arises!

Course requirements
This is a writing-intensive capstone seminar. Most assignments involve writing and revising based on feedback from peers and your teaching team. Because it is a seminar format, attendance and active engagement in the material is also vital to your good experience and grade.

**Active class participation in activities, discussion, and in-class writing (20% of grade)**

*Showing up* – Like many aspects of your life, this class requires you to show up. This includes both coming to class and being ready to engage in the day’s agenda, with your phones turned off and your focus on the here and now. A high grade for this component requires near-perfect attendance; active engagement in class discussions and small group work with clear evidence that you have read carefully; paying attention to guest speakers; and completing in-class assignments and exercises. You must also attend meetings with one of us during the semester, as noted in the schedule below.

You may miss up to two class periods without an excuse and still get full credit for this part of the course. If there is something getting in the way of you showing up, talk to Professor Schurman right away.

**Capstone Portfolio (60% of grade)**

Writing assignments will build to create a portfolio of materials. For three of the written assignments (the resume, your personal statement and the paper), you will turn in a first draft, provide constructive feedback on two of your peers’ drafts, revise based on peer feedback, submit for review by the teaching team, revise based on our comments, and turn in a final draft. To get an excellent grade on your portfolio, you will need to do each step for each piece of the portfolio.

*Brief resume* (10/60) – As part of the process of thinking about your college career and what a Sociology major means for you, you will develop and revise a 1-2 page version of your resume. Career Services will give guidance on what makes an excellent resume. A revised version is part of your final portfolio.

*Personal statement* (10/60) – In the personal statement, you will write a reflective narrative of your academic life so far (broadly speaking) and where you hope to go from here. The goal is to explain such things as: Why Sociology? How have key experiences shaped my life and decisions? If you knew me well, how would you be able to tell I have a liberal arts education? What are my career aspirations? This one page, single-spaced document will also go through multiple revisions before being included in your final portfolio.

*Sociological analysis of a workplace or organization* (35/60) – This project comprises an 8-10 page paper for which you will gather sociological data and develop a macro- and/or micro- sociological analysis of an organization or workplace. For example, if you want to focus on a micro-sociological analysis, you could look at interactions between the organization’s staff and its clients; or you could do an analysis of one or more master statuses (e.g., race, class, gender, and/or nationality) in relation to the subculture(s) (e.g., values, beliefs, norms, language) evident in a workplace. Alternatively, you could analyze mechanisms of labor control and forms of worker compliance and/or resistance in your organization/workplace. A macro-sociological analysis would focus on the larger context in which
the organization is situated. It would study the social problem the organization seeks to address and its causes, the challenges facing the organization in addressing the problem, and the organization’s role in the larger ecosystem of agencies and organizations working in this area. At the same time, your analysis should reflect on how this larger context (and associated pressures) shapes what happens inside the organization. Data for the paper will be gathered throughout the semester using your fieldnotes journal (described below) and document analysis.

FOR INDIVIDUAL MEETING: By March 1st, you must submit on Moodle a 1-2 page proposal that explains your plan for the paper. Tell us what you are going to focus on and your general research question/s; the theoretical ideas/concepts you expect to use, and what you think is going on in your site. If you are doing a more micro-oriented analysis, quote or describe at least two pieces of evidence from your fieldnotes that you can use as evidence. If you are doing a more macro-analysis, include a list of the reports, books and articles you will use to understand the broader context and discuss how you plan to construct your analysis. **You must sign up for and attend an appointment to discuss this proposal with one of us during the week of March 6th.**

The first draft of your paper, **due on April 3** for peer review, must be full length. Feedback will aim at deepening your analysis and use of evidence to support your claims. A revised, polished draft of your sociological analysis of your organization will be due with your final portfolio.

*Career interview (5/60)* – You will conduct an in-depth “life course” interview (about one hour; audio-record if possible) with someone who works in a field or occupation that deeply interests you. Your interview should explore the person’s career trajectory, including their education, decisions and experiences, and the outside forces affecting their path. You will turn a page of reflections on your interview. What did you learn? What surprised you? What seem to be the positive and negative aspects of this career choice?

**Community-Engaged Learning (20% of grade)**

*Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) (10/20):* Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Through CEL, you have the opportunity to use what you learn in the classroom to address community-identified issues. CEL will also help you become someone who is more actively contributing to your community.

At the University of Minnesota, CEL students have a relationship with a community organization and either work individually or in small groups with the organization to address a community need. Students work with one organization over the course of the semester, either in a direct service role or on a specific project tied to the content of their academic course. Your work with the organization will be ongoing throughout the semester, averaging 2-3 hours per week for approximately 30 hours.
You will work through the Center for Community-Engaged Learning to set up your Community-Engaged Learning and keep track of the hours. We will spend time in class getting oriented, but you will need to do some work outside of class to finalize the arrangements.

Fieldnotes journal (10/20): Immediately after each visit to your CEL site (at least once a week), you must write notes for at least 20 minutes. These notes should start with a detailed story of what you observed. These are the details that form the raw data used for your qualitative sociological analysis – include as many details as you can about what happened in those hours (what you saw, heard, felt). At the end of each entry, add your sociological interpretation, as well as your preliminary analysis of what is going on in your site. Do this before talking with anyone or doing anything. You need to use pseudonyms for confidentiality. Your field notes will be submitted electronically three times during the semester and will be used as the basis of class discussions and your analytic writing. They will count for half of the CEL portion of your grade.

Course policies
It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities that may affect ability to participate in course activities or meet course requirements. If you have a documented illness or other emergency that may require an exception, please discuss and confirm it with us as soon as possible, and well in advance of any deadlines.

Incompletes will be allowed only in extremely rare circumstances, when there was a real and sustained emergency and when the student can reasonably complete the course work within one or two weeks of the end of the semester. Incompletes will require prior written documentation and a contract laying out plans for completion.

I take scholastic dishonesty very seriously and will award a “0” for an assignment that I believe has been plagiarized. I will also report the issue to the administration.
See the supplement on the Moodle site for a definition of scholastic dishonesty and more department and CLA policies relevant to this class.

Policies related to Community-Engaged Learning:

Academic integrity also applies to community work done for academic credit. Any of the following actions constitute academic dishonesty within a community-based learning context and will be addressed in the same way as any other act of academic dishonesty:
• Misrepresenting hours completed at a community site or spent working on a community project (students can count time spent off-site doing work that is required to complete a project for a community organization).
• Writing reflections or completing other assignments about events or activities the student was supposed to attend and participate in, but did not actually attend or participate in.
• Signing in at a site or training session and leaving before the hours or training was completed OR signing in for a friend or classmate at a site.

• Writing reflections based on previous community work or documenting hours done at a community organization during a previous semester and misrepresenting it as your current service-learning experience.

Accommodations for Students Registered with Disability Resource Center
If you are registered with Disability Resource Center you are eligible to receive accommodations from the University when doing service-learning in the community. While not all buildings where community groups are located are 100% accessible to students with physical disabilities, service-learning staff can work with you to find a CEL site that meets your needs. If you have a non-apparent disability, we encourage you to talk with your service-learning liaison and/or your Access Consultant to discuss the type of work environment and structure you need to be successful during your experience.

Confidentiality and Privacy Issues within the Service-Learning Context
Community organizations participating in community engaged-learning expect students to work to the best of their abilities and act in a responsible manner. Furthermore, many CEL students will be working with individuals who fall into protected categories, such as children, seniors, or individuals with disabilities. Be aware that through your CEL, you may come to know information about individuals that is covered by rules and ethical guidelines about confidentiality. You should speak to your community supervisor about how confidentiality obligations apply to you.

• You should not take photographs of anyone at your CEL site without following the policy the organization has in place. This often involves getting written permission from the individual and/or written permission or the parent/guardian of children under 18 years of age.

• During class discussions, be careful about revealing any information that could be used to personally identify any individual you work with in your CEL site.

• In written assignments, use pseudonyms for the organization and individuals. Get in the habit by changing names in your field notes.

Criminal background checks
Please note that Criminal Background Checks are also required for many CEL placements, especially those that involve working with “vulnerable populations” such as children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities. If the agency asks about any convictions and you have a criminal record:

• Be honest. Failure to state convictions that are then uncovered in a background check will likely result in your immediate dismissal from your service organization.

• Ask the agency representative to explain what types of convictions are not acceptable (these often involve convictions such as those involving theft, violence, drug sales, and/or crimes against minors).

• If you believe that your record could disqualify you from the approved service-learning options, please be proactive and talk to your service-learning liaison about alternative placement options.
Religious Service
Faith-based organizations, including religious institutions such as churches, mosques, synagogues, or temples, can be community-engaged learning sites as long as they comply with the U of MN’s non-discrimination policy. However, service done as part of an academic course cannot include any of the following religious activities: providing religious education/instruction, worship activities, or any form of proselytizing.

Summary of due dates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Draft to peers</th>
<th>Your peer review of two others</th>
<th>Revision to RS/MP</th>
<th>Final version</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fieldnotes journal with sociological analysis</td>
<td>20-Feb 6-Mar 5-Apr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper proposal</td>
<td>Submit on 1-Mar; discuss week of 6-Mar</td>
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<td>Resume</td>
<td>1-Feb 8-Feb 15-Feb 8-May</td>
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<td>Personal statement</td>
<td>13-Feb 20-Feb 27-Feb 8-May</td>
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<td>Workplace analysis</td>
<td>3-Apr 10-Apr 17-Apr 8-May</td>
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<td>Interview reflections</td>
<td>26-Apr 8-May</td>
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Other resources

- Center for Community-Engaged Learning, 240 Appleby Hall [www.servicelearning.umn.edu](http://www.servicelearning.umn.edu)
- CLA Career & Internship Services, 441 Bruininks [http://cla.umn.edu/student-services-advising/career-internship-services](http://cla.umn.edu/student-services-advising/career-internship-services)
- Center for Writing, 15 Nicholson Hall or 9 Appleby Hall [http://writing.umn.edu/sws/](http://writing.umn.edu/sws/)

Calendar

Everything is due by 9:45 AM to Moodle. If you write a google doc you will have to save it as a Word file then turn it in to Moodle. Use the commenting tools in Word for feedback. Do not submit a pdf file or you will lose points.

Readings are all on Moodle.

1A: Tues Jan 18 – Introductions and Core Career Competency goals

1B: Thurs Jan 18 – What is sociology?
- **DUE** (bring to class): Talk to a family member or friend (not a sociology major) about what they think sociology is. We will discuss how this fits with our understanding of the field.

● READ: pp. 1-10 of *21st Century Careers*


2A: Tues Jan 23 – Center for Community-Engaged Learning Panel
   ● Panel on Service Learning Opportunities (run by Monica Siems McKay)

2B: Thurs Jan 25 – Center for Community-Engaged Learning
   ● Review options and sign up for Service Learning Opportunities in class (run by Monica Siems McKay)
   ● PREPARE: If you don’t already have a resume, write a draft to bring to class on Tuesday.

>>>>>> SUNDAY JAN. 28 AT MIDNIGHT is the deadline for signing up for a CEL referral request. <<<<<<

3A: Tues Jan 30 – Resume workshop by CLA Career & Internship Services (Katy Hinz)
   ● **DUE (bring to class): Your current resume (paper copy)**

3B: Thurs Feb 1 – Personal statement
   ● **DUE: First draft of resume for peer review** – submit on Moodle
     ○ Use your pseudonym and fake contact info on this draft for your peers
   ● READ: pp. 18-29 of *21st Century Careers*
   ● In class writing using personal statement prompts. You may bring a laptop.
   ● Activity: Interview peers to help identify themes and topics for the personal statement

4A: Tues Feb 6 – More on the personal statement
   ● Activity: Review and answer common interview questions that could be incorporated into the personal statement
   ● In-class writing using interview prompts. You may bring a laptop.
   ● Note: You should have started your CEL experience by now

4B: Thurs Feb 8 – Guest speaker from Career Services: Career Planning & Job Searching (Katy Hinz)
   ● **DUE: Your peer reviews of two resumes** – submit on Moodle
• READ: pp. 11-17 and 30-34 of 21st Century Careers (Moodle)

5A: Tues Feb 13 – What are field notes? How do they become the basis of sociological analysis?
• DUE: Personal statement for peer review – use pseudonym – submit on Moodle
• READ: On Moodle – read at least 3 of the 5 examples of field notes
• READ: On Moodle – Gowan's Guide to Ethnographic Practice

5B: Thurs Feb 15 – Seeing gender dynamics in your CEL organization
• READ: “Microaggressions” notes on Moodle.
• DUE: Revised resume for review by teaching team – use your real name – submit on Moodle

6A: Tues Feb 20 – Seeing race dynamics in your CEL organization
• DUE: Peer review comments on personal statements – submit on Moodle

6B: Thurs Feb 22 – Ethnographic case study and discussion
• DUE: First set of fieldnotes with sociological interpretation from CEL – submit on Moodle
• Activity: In class film and discussion of Sidewalk

>>>>>> FRIDAY FEB 23 – EXTRA CREDIT: ATTEND THE UM JOB AND INTERNSHIP FAIR <<<<<<
• 10am to 4pm in the Minneapolis Convention Center, http://jobfair.umn.edu/
• $10 preregistration (includes lunch), $25 at door, need-based fee waiver available - apply early!
• A brief write-up is required to get the extra credit.

7A: Tues Feb 27 – Locating your fieldwork in a larger context and finding relevant literature
• DUE: Revised personal statement for review by teaching team – use your real name – submit on Moodle
• READ: Check out a few examples of The Society Pages feature “There’s Research on That” at http://thesocietypages.org/trot/
• Activity: Small groups will find relevant sociological or social science research articles (or books) related to your topic. Please bring a laptop or tablet if possible.

7B: Thurs Mar 1 – Writing workshop: Finding a focus for your sociological analysis
• DUE: -1-2 page paper proposal – submit on Moodle (see below for details)
• SIGN UP for an appointment to discuss this proposal with one of us next week
• ACTIVITY: Gather in small groups for a guided discussion of what is most intriguing in your site and how you might explore that further and develop a thesis related to those themes.

By March 1st, you must submit on Moodle a 1-2 page proposal that explains your plan for the paper. Tell us what you are going to focus on and your general research question/s; the theoretical ideas/concepts you expect to use, and what you think is going on in your site. If you are doing a more micro-oriented analysis, quote or describe at least two pieces of evidence from your fieldnotes that you can use as evidence. If you are doing a more macro-analysis, include a list of the reports, books and articles you will use to understand the broader context and discuss how you plan to construct your analysis. Sign up for and attend an appointment to discuss this proposal with us next week.

8: Tues Mar 6 and Thurs Mar 8 – >>>>>> NO CLASS MEETINGS THIS WEEK <<<<<<
• REQUIRED: Attend a 15-minute individual meeting with Professor Schurman or Mark Pharris.
• DUE: Second set of fieldnotes with sociological interpretation from CEL – submit on Moodle on March 8th.

>>>SPRING BREAK <<<

9A: Tues Mar 20 – Career trends: The big picture
• ACTIVITY: We will spend the class doing some research on the field/career that interests you, helped by a university librarian.

9B: Thurs Mar 22 – Reflections on CEL experiences
• Bring in your fieldnotes

10A: Tues Mar 27 – Writing class (WEC consultant)
• Activity: guided workshop on thesis development, claimsmaking and presenting evidence

10B: Thurs Mar 29 – No class. Just write.
• First draft of workplace/organization paper due next Tuesday.
• It’s time to identify your interviewee and schedule an appointment for the interview.
11A: Tues Apr 3 – Prepare for career interview
  • **DUE:** First draft of organization/workplace paper for peer review – use your pseudonym – submit on Moodle

11B: Thurs Apr 5 – How to Become a Better Writer
  • **DUE:** Third set of fieldnotes with sociological interpretation from CEL – submit on Moodle.
  • **ACTIVITY:** guided workshop on editing

12A: Tues Apr 10 – Careers in Sociology: Government and public service sectors (guest speakers)
  • **DUE:** Peer reviews of organization/workplace papers – submit on Moodle

12B: Thurs Apr 12 – No class. Professor Schurman out of town.
  • Do your career interviews this week.

13A: Tues Apr 17 – Careers in Sociology: The non-profit sector (guest speakers)
  • **DUE Tues Apr 17:** Revised organization/workplace paper – use your real name – submit for professor/TA review on Moodle

13B: Thurs Apr 19 – Careers in Sociology: Business, including law and health care administration (guest speakers)

14A: Tues Apr 24 – Careers in Sociology: Graduate Student Panel (guest speakers)
  • We return your paper drafts to you, with comments.

14B: Thurs Apr 26 – Dr. Schurman’s career path and going to graduate school -- A professor’s point of view
  • **DUE:** reflections on career interview.

15A: Tues May 1 – Reflections on CEL experiences & on this class

15B: Thurs May 3 – Celebration!

>>>>>> All final portfolio materials due by **NOON on Tuesday, May 8.** Submit on Moodle.

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>>> Portfolio includes career interview reflections and a revised and polished copy of your resume, personal statement, and analytic paper <<<