

Email: swarren@ssc.wisc.edu

Office: 7110 Social Sciences
Office phone: 262-3569
Office hours: Mon.10:15-11:45 am
Thurs. 11 am-12 pm

Purpose: Like all discussion sections, this particular section is designed to provide you with the opportunity to delve deeper into the course readings and the content of the lectures. The goal of section is, simply put, to encourage and provide a forum for critical thinking and engaged discussion. *Section is NOT an alternative to reading course materials or attending lecture, but rather an opportunity explore topics in greater detail, clear up misunderstandings and offer our own critiques of the issues at hand.*

Expectations of the Students

For this section to be worthwhile, it is contingent upon you **attending** section regularly, completing the **readings** on time, and actively **participating** in discussions.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. We only meet once a week, and so it is imperative that you not miss this valuable component of the course. You will be granted one unexcused absence, after which you will lose one point on your final grade for each subsequent absence. If you are unable to attend section, please email or talk to me prior to section. When you miss a class, I expect you to find out what was discussed from another member of the section. I will not give you notes or a summary of a discussion that you miss. *Although attendance is mandatory, regular attendance alone will not result in full credit. I expect you truly to participate.*

Readings: This section will use course readings and lectures as the jumping off point for discussion. It is thus crucial that you complete the readings on time. At the beginning of section, we will review primary arguments of the readings. This is not a substitute for reading, but intended to assure that we are all clear about the authors' arguments.

Participation: Class participation for this course is evaluated by your performance in section.

- Taking the time and energy to contribute to class discussion, whether with a comment, question, doubt or criticism, is a crucial component of participation. Active participation does not always mean speaking a lot, but it does mean listening and responding to other people's ideas and comments, and being willing to risk asking a "stupid" question in order to keep the discussion going.
- It is imperative that we maintain a healthy discussion environment. This requires that we discuss ideas and do not attack individuals. If you disagree with a classmate, you are encouraged to offer your own opinion in discussion, but it must be done in a respectful manner. Sections should be seen a forum for reasoned debate, and there is no place for personal attacks or shouting matches.

- If you are simply uncomfortable speaking in public, please see me and we can devise an alternative way for you to offer your thoughts to the class.

Assignments: If you have any special needs and cannot turn your assignments in on time, please let me know well in advance. We will be able to work out an alternative option if you give me plenty of time. However, all assignments that are turned in late without a prior conversation with me will not receive full credit. If you do not bring your written assignments to section, they will be considered late. You can leave them for me in my box in the Sociology office on the 8th floor of Social Sciences.

If you have **questions**, you have two options: Come to my office or email me. During the day, I try to respond to email quickly. However, I do not answer emails after 9 pm. The night before an exam, I will not answer emails after 8 pm. If you have a lengthy question about the exam, please try to see me in my office.

Please talk with me early about any **concerns** you have. I am always willing to help, but I need to know about things in advance in order to do so.

Expectations of the TA

Clarity: From time to time, I might make reference to a concept with which you are not familiar. And while I will strive to be as clear and direct as possible, I may fail from time to time. In this case, PLEASE tell me immediately. If you are having trouble understanding, there is a good chance you are not alone.

Respect: Just as I ask you to help maintain a healthy class environment, it is also my responsibility help foster respect in the section. I will do my best to remedy any problems as they occur. However, if you feel uncomfortable with the tone of discussion, please let me know (either talk to me after class or email me).

Availability: I encourage you to take advantage of my office hours. I will be in my office two hours a week to discuss issues raised in section, lecture or readings. I am also more than happy to talk with you about related topics, help you flesh out research ideas, offer thoughts on career goals or graduate school plans, etc. If office hours do not work for you, you can make an appointment. Leading up to midterm and final exams, I will arrange for extended office hours.