Sociology 210 Special Edition: The Future of Social Life

**Professor:** Alice Goffman  
**Lecture Time:** Tues. & Thurs. 11-11:50am  
**Location:** Sewell 5208

**Office:** Sewell 8111  
**Office hours:** Tuesdays 1-2:30pm  
**Email:** agoffman@ssc.wisc.edu

**Teaching Assistants:** Esther HsuBorger, Amy Jones, Jee Jee Kim, Martina Kunovic, Michelle Robinson

**Course Overview**

Sociology was founded by scholars struggling to make sense of the massive social changes playing out before them in the mid to late 1800s: the end of slavery, the industrial revolution, large-scale migration to cities, and the move from a feudal, agrarian society to a democratic, capitalist society.

We begin the course with the premise that we are, at this very moment, in the midst of rapid and significant social change. As a means of introducing the sociology major, we will identify and wrestle with some of the key social changes of the 21st century, both those currently afoot and those to come. We will cover everything from climate change to the future of war. We will ask whether race and gender as we have known them are ceasing to exist and whether we will all soon be having sex mostly on the Internet. Running through the course are three overarching themes: (1) how do people experience major social change in their everyday lives? (2) where does change come from? (3) how can we understand, predict, and shape the future?

Each week features a different social change. On Tuesdays the professor gives a lecture. On Thursdays, a person whose lived experience reflects the week's theme will come to class for an interview by the professor or teaching assistants, who will draw on questions provided in advance by students.

For the writing and research component of the course, students will learn ethnography, the close up study of everyday life. Each section will investigate a different Madison neighborhood, with students going out in pairs across the city to discover how real people are living. These observations will form the basis of weekly field notes, three short writing assignments, one group presentation, and one final paper of 10-15 pages. There is no midterm or exam for this course.

**Assignments and Expectations**

10% Lecture Attendance  
10% Section Attendance and Participation  
20% Fieldwork and Weekly Assignments  
10% Short Paper: Describing the Setting  
10% Short Paper: Talking to People  
10% Short Paper: Macro-Micro Link  
10% Neighborhood Presentation  
10% Rough Draft  
10% Final Paper
Schedule

Sept 3, Sept 5 | Course Overview and Orientation

Sept 10, Sept 12 | Women’s Massive Entry into the Labor Market

Sept 17, Sept 19 | The Future of Sex and Dating
   Polished Field Note: Describing the Setting

Sept 24, Sept 26 | The Gay Revolution
   Polished Field Note: Showing the People

Oct 1, Oct 3 | Living Alone
   Polished Field Note: Eavesdropping

Oct 8, Oct 10 | The Color Line in the Age of Obama
   Polished Field Note: Cool Counting

   Short Paper: Describing the Scene

Oct 22, Oct 24 | The Enduring Ghetto
   Interview Questions

Oct 29, Oct 31 | The Growing Gulf Between the Haves and the Have Nots
   Interviews

Nov 5, Nov 7 | How the Internet is Changing Everything (Or Maybe Nothing)
   Short Paper: Talking to People

Nov 12, Nov 14 | The Future of War
   Short Paper: Macro-Micro Link

Nov 19, Nov 21 | Climate Change

Nov 26 | Visions of the Future
   Rough Draft

Dec 3, Dec 5 | Taking Stock of Modern Life I
   The Neighborhood Presentations

Dec 10, Dec 12 | Taking Stock of Modern Life II
   The Neighborhood Presentations

Final Paper Due December 17