

San José State University
Department of Sociology and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences
Sociology 181B: Senior Capstone (02), Spring 2024

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	William T. Armaline, Ph.D.
Office Location:	Dudley Moorhead Hall (DMH) 216
Telephone:	(408) 924-2935
Email:	william.armaline@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.
Class Days/Time:	Mondays and Wednesdays 3:00 – 4:15 p.m.
Classroom:	DMH 226A
Prerequisites:	Must be registered for graduation and have completed Soci 01, Soci 100W, Soci 101, Soci 104 or 105 (student must have taken at least ONE of the required research methods courses before enrolling in the capstone course).

Course Description

From the SJSU Catalog: Capstone course to expand undergraduate senior opportunities and options. Analyzes trends in sociology; explores employment and careers, reflection and assessment of learning in the major.

General Course Information and Background: Sociology 181B is the department’s capstone course designed to “expand undergraduate senior opportunities and options” and to explore employment and careers, as well as to reflect and assess learning in the major. This course focuses primarily on the transition from student to a career. For this course we will organize our reflection and our discussion around four foci: *Self-Knowledge, Sociological Imagination, Community Engagement, and Professional Development*.

From a practical perspective, these four foci translate into four tasks confronting our graduates: (1) reflect on one’s direction and purpose—as an individual and as a member of various communities, (2) choose the next step(s) in one’s professional education and career (land a job or acceptance letter in grad/law school or other professional training program), (3) develop one’s political consciousness and ability to engage in democratic decision making, and (4) develop strategies to maintain health and happiness in one’s professional career.

Course Format

This class is scheduled as a synchronous course that meets twice per week in person. Though we are starting the semester online due to the Omicron variant of Covid-19, we will return to in-person learning when campus leadership permits.

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the [Canvas Learning Management System course login website](#) at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through [MySJSU](#) on [Spartan App Portal](#) <http://one.sjsu.edu> (or other communication system as indicated by the instructor) to learn of any updates.

Course Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

The educational goals of the Sociology Department's B.A. Program are based on a liberal education and the mission statements of San José State University and the College of the Social Sciences.

Sociology BA Program Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to think sociologically about the relationship between social structure, interaction, identities, and inequalities;
2. Students will be able to identify and explain major sociological theories and apply them to everyday life;
3. Students will be proficient in qualitative and quantitative research design, data collection and data analysis;
4. Students will be proficient in oral and written communication skills appropriate to the discipline;
5. Students will be able to practice sociology as educated and civically engaged persons.

The capstone course emphasizes all of the goals listed below:

1. Students will be able to know the discipline and its role in understanding social reality;
2. Students will be able to understand the diversity of American society;
3. Students will be able to understand the role of theory in sociology;
4. Students will be able to understand the role of research methods in sociology;
5. Students will be able to obtain the skills in communication and critical social inquiry;
6. Students will be able to gain an understanding of—and potential solutions to—current social issues and social problems.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the types of jobs/careers that sociologists can be employed in. Students will gain exposure to the professional networks that will further occupational/career goals.
- Understand the linkages between sociology (theoretical) and practice (action or activity).
- Understand your role as an active participant in society and how to engage in learning and activity throughout your life. This includes the development of critical news literacy.
- Assemble a portfolio showcasing their progress and accomplishments in ways that give them professional and academic advantage. The portfolio is a presentation of the student's readiness to assume the responsibilities of a professional career.
- Communicate orally their skills and qualifications (i.e., mock interview, oral presentation of research material).
- Prepare materials (cover letters, resumes) to use in applying to professional occupations.

Required Texts/Readings

We will select a core reading together. All other readings and materials will be provided by the instructor via email and the Canvas “files” link for this course.

Other Readings

(NONE)

Library Liaison

Jane Dodge (408) 808-2321

Course Requirements and Assignments

This class includes a variety of assignments and activities:

1) Current Events Discussions

Each day of class will begin with a discussion of the major news stories and studies concerning the most pressing social problems confronting our region, state, and nation. While the instructor will facilitate some of these discussions, each student will be expected to facilitate (approximately 15 minutes) current events discussions on a scheduled date later in the semester (these will be scheduled in class). Students may employ any format(s) or media that proves useful (power point, videos, pics, data, music, artwork, guest presenters/experts, etc.), and should think about doing the following:

- Provide a summary of the social problem and the information now coming to light (through journalism, other research/report, etc.). What are the most important issues? What are the most important questions being asked and what do we know (mutually observable evidence?) so far? What questions remain? What are the most important findings/data points in your view?
- Your sociological analysis of this new information and of the social problem more broadly. What sociological concepts can be applied to make sense of this information? What other analytical techniques or research methods might be useful in shedding further light on the social problem?
- A discussion with your colleagues in class (however you like—be creative!) on your analysis. What are the strengths/weaknesses of your and others’ analysis? What is the dominant story/narrative? What alternative stories, explanations, narratives, might be important to consider?

Students will be evaluated on (1) clarity and organization, (2) depth of research and analysis, and (3) creativity in facilitating discussion/engagement with colleagues. Current events discussions **will be worth 20% of the course grade.**

2) Reading Reflection Paper

We will select a piece of recent sociological work (a book) to read together as a class. Each student will complete a Reflection Paper by the end of the course. This assignment will act as practice for the kinds of writing assignments common in graduate level coursework.

We will discuss the Reflection Paper in more detail in class, though it will be a relatively standard writing assignment (typed, double spaced, 12-point font, quality academic and journalistic sources employing APA or ASA citation format). In broad strokes, students will read the selected research, complete a first draft of the reflection paper, exchange that first draft with a student partner to proofread and provide feedback, then complete a final draft for submission.

Students will be evaluated on (1) clarity and organization, (2) depth of research and analysis, (3) application to “real” life and use of critique, and (4) use of appropriate source work. Reflection Papers **will be worth 40% of the course grade.**

3) Employment Portfolio or Graduate/Law School Applications

Depending on career trajectory, each student will prepare either an *employment portfolio* that can be used to apply for jobs following graduation **or** a *suite of application materials* for graduate/law/professional school. We will discuss these two work products in much more detail in class.

In broad strokes, the *employment portfolio* is a showcase of materials showing a coherent story of your knowledge and skills. This may include summaries and/or examples of your coursework selected to highlight the accomplishments of your educational career, writing and other samples of your work, a formal resume/curriculum vitae, various letters of recommendation, list of possible job contacts/employers, and other supporting materials.

The *suite of application materials* would include a summary spreadsheet (with schools/programs, deadlines, materials needed, and so forth), an updated CV, all necessary transcripts, all necessary test scores (and/or scheduling), cover letters, completed applications, writing samples, and personal statements.

Employment portfolios and application packets will be prepared in pairs (to provide feedback) throughout the course of the semester. We will dedicate several course sessions to discussing and working on these materials (in groups/pairs). The point of these activities are to facilitate students’ success at the next steps of their educational and/or professional career(s).

These materials will be evaluated very simply on their organization/clarity and completion, and **will be worth 40% of the final course grade.**

4) Extra Credit Assignments

There is unlimited extra credit available in this course, though it may only apply to scores on the Current Events Discussions or Reflection Papers. Extra credit assignments will be discussed in the first week of class, and must be approved by the instructor.

The [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), *Course Syllabi* (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>) requires the following language to be included in the syllabus:

“Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

Final Examination or Evaluation

[University Policy S06-4](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S06-4.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S06-4.pdf>) states: “There shall be an appropriate final examination or evaluation at the scheduled time in every course, unless specifically exempted by the college dean who has curricular responsibility for the course.”

[University policy S17-1](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S17-1.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S17-1.pdf>) states: “Faculty members are required to have a culminating activity for their courses, which can include a final examination, a final research paper or project, a final creative work or performance, a final portfolio of work, or other appropriate assignment.”

NOTE that [University policy F69-24](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf> states: “Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to insure maximum benefit for all members of the class. Attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading.”

Grading Information

Grade Breakdown:

Current Events Discussions:	20%
Reflection Papers:	40%
Employment Portfolio or Suite of Application Materials	40%

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A plus</i>	<i>98 to 100%</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>92.1 to 97.9%</i>
<i>A minus</i>	<i>90 to 92%</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>88 to 89.9 %</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>82.1 to 87.9%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>80 to 82%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>78 to 79.9%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>72.1 to 77.9%</i>

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>68 to 69.9%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>62.1 to 67.9%</i>
<i>D minus</i>	<i>60 to 62%</i>

More guidelines on grading information and class attendance can be found from the following university policies:

- [University Syllabus Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>)
- [University Attendance and Participation Policy F15-12](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf>)
- [University Grading System Policy F18-5](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F18-5.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F18-5.pdf>)

Classroom Protocol

1. This course depends on participation and interaction. Students are expected to be on time to class out of respect for your colleagues and instructor.
2. All classroom participants are expected to foster an environment that encourages participation, rather than silencing others (be respectful to one another, do not insult or intimidate others, and so forth).
3. Students are expected to complete all readings and assignments by the dates indicated on the syllabus.
4. Students are responsible for any and all notes and materials missed in their absence.
5. Cell phone, PDA, and Laptop/Internet use will not be tolerated during class time unless they are part of class activities or necessary to field an emergency.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>), which is hosted by the Office of Undergraduate Education. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

[University Policy S12-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf), <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>, requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

- “Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.”
 - In order to get my permission for recording, a request must be submitted both verbally and in writing; it should specify whether the request is for the whole semester or on a class-by-class basis. There is no guarantee that such a request will be granted unless it is deemed necessary as an approved accommodation by the Accessible Education Center (AEC).
 - In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.

- “Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.”

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the [Academic Success Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/> located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

SJSU Peer Connections

Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10th and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit [Peer Connections website](http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu) at <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu> for more information.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook. (Note: You need to have a QR Reader to



scan this code.)

SJSU Counseling Services

The SJSU Counseling Services is located in the Student Health Services building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [Counseling Services website](http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

Sociology 181B (02): Senior Capstone Course Schedule, Spring 2024

This is a tentative schedule of all activities and assignments for the semester. It is subject to change with advance notice.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	1/24	Course Introduction Discuss syllabus/assignments, student introductions, discuss possible class reading
1	1/29	Exploring our professional roles: What do sociologists do for society? What is our “job” and what are the ways we can contribute to ourselves, our communities, and our world?
2	1/31	Career paths in Sociology and Social Science <i>Schedule Current Events Discussions</i>
2	2/5	Unions and the labor movement Pt. 1 <i>Readings/videos will be distributed by instructor via email and Canvas</i>
3	2/7	Unions and the labor movement Pt. 2 <i>Readings/videos will be distributed by instructor via email and Canvas</i>
3	2/12	Applying to graduate/law/professional school <i>Discuss Application Suite assignment</i>
4	2/14	Strategizing and putting together materials for employment <i>Discuss Employment Portfolio assignment</i>
4	2/19	TBA
5	2/21	Class readings discussion #1 <i>Read first assigned section of course reading (will discuss)</i>
5	2/26	Writing in social science Explore and define the processes to complete a Masters Thesis, Ph.D. Dissertation, Article or Book Manuscript, or Applied Report
6	2/28	Writing in social science continued How to think about your writing samples, personal statements, etc.
6	3/4	Hearing from those in the profession: Guest speaker TBA
7	3/6	TBA
7	3/11	Applied work: Social Science and Policy Design/Analysis
8	3/13	In class writing workshop Work on Application Suites and Employment Portfolios in groups/pairs

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
8	3/20	Class readings discussion #2 <i>Read second assigned section of course reading</i>
9	3/25	TBA
9	3/27	Student Current Events Discussions
10	4/1	SPRING RECESS – NO CLASS
10	4/3	SPRING RECESS – NO CLASS
11	4/8	Student Current Events Discussions
11	4/10	Student Current Events Discussions Application Suite or Employment Portfolio Due
12	4/15	Student Current Events Discussions
12	4/17	Class readings discussion #3 <i>Read third assigned section of course reading</i>
13	4/22	Student Current Events Discussions
13	4/24	Student Current Events Discussions
14	4/29	In class writing workshop (in pairs/groups)
14	5/1	Hearing from those in the profession: Guest speaker TBA
15	5/6	In class writing workshop (work on Reflection Paper revisions in pairs/groups)
15	5/8	Class readings discussion #4 <i>Read fourth assigned section of course reading</i>
16	5/13	TBA
Final Exam	5/20	Final Draft of Reflection Paper due via email by 11:59 p.m.