Sociology 380
Seminar on “Teaching Sociology”
Spring, 2000

Class Time: Tuesday/Thursday, 9:30-10:45 PM
Class Place: 151 Hamilton Hall

Instructor:
Professor Howard E. Aldrich
Department of Sociology
202 Hamilton Hall

Office Hours: M/W 1:30-2:30 PM, and by appointment (HM 202)

E-mail: If you don’t already have an e-mail account, please get one (they are free). We will conduct some class business via e-mail -- it saves trees and time.

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Objectives of This Course (thanks to Joseph Lowman!)

(1) Promote a high standard for college teaching at its best.
(2) Provide support for new instructors by encouraging them to share experiences, satisfactions, and frustrations with peers.
(3) Increase sensitivity to a variety of sociological phenomena that appear in college classrooms with regularity.
(4) Increase skill at a number of specific teaching activities (e.g., organizing content, lecturing, leading discussions, promoting rapport and motivation, and evaluating).
(5) Encourage instructors to formulate personal values, approaches, and styles of classroom instruction that can grow and be refined over their teaching careers.
(6) Help you prepare a teaching portfolio that you can use when you go on the job market.

Course Orientation

I will urge you to develop your courses around the principles of cooperative learning, which include five (5) basic elements (NTL Forum, 2, 1, 1992):
(1) Positive interdependence: For cooperative learning to succeed, students must feel that they need each other and cannot truly succeed unless everyone in the group succeeds.

(2) Face-to-face promotive interaction: Students must promote one another's learning by explaining, discussing, and sharing what they know. They must confront and teach each other. Teaching is NOT instructor-talking, especially one-way talk.

(3) Individual accountability: Students must remain individually accountable. E.g., any member of a group must be ready to explain the group's answer to a problem. Even though we'll emphasize collective action, each student is still fully responsible for learning assignments.

(4) Interpersonal and small group skills: Learning in and from groups depends on having and using a whole set of social skills, including leadership, decision-making, trust building, communication, and conflict-management skills. Students don't have these skills inherently, but they can be taught the skills at the same time that subject matter is being covered. These skills stand as a constant shadow curriculum within the process itself.

(5) Group processing: This involves a stepping back from group activity to look critically at the group's dynamics. E.g., by listing at least three (3) actions that members took that helped the group succeed, and by listing at least one (1) that could make the group even more successful in the future.

As soon as possible, read/skim the book on Cooperative Learning that is on reserve in the library (Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 1991). Another book that discusses active learning was edited by Steven Schomberg, and is on reserve: Strategies for Active Teaching and Learning in University Classrooms.

**Evaluation**

Criteria for evaluation include:

(1) extent and quality of participation in seminar sessions;
(2) adequacy of written assignments;
(3) quality of planning for the follow-on course you wish to teach; and
(4) a final course paper describing highlights and difficulties in your first teaching experience.

**Course Format**

This is a laboratory course, rather than a typical academic course. For most classes, a reading has been assigned which you should complete before attending class. For almost every class, you will be expected to complete a written assignment that will be discussed in class.

We’re going to do lots of sharing of work in class, based on suggestions from previous cohorts who have taken this seminar. They suggested you would benefit from more work carried out explicitly oriented toward the class you will teach. They also suggested you would benefit from seeing what others are doing.
This year, I also plan to introduce several new practices: daily format changes to give you an experience with various class session formats, sample peer-evaluated “quizzes” on the readings to give you practice in grading, and more use of the Web.

Get into the habit of going into the Sociology/Political Science Library to read an issue of the journal *Teaching Sociology* every few days. It is a wonderful teaching resource.

**Rewards**

When you request it, I will write a "To-Whom-It-May-Concern" letter after you've taught your course and have turned in your final seminar paper. The letter will review the content of 380 and summarize your performance and promise as a sociology instructor. Your term paper will give you a chance to start compiling a teaching portfolio, which will be very useful as you look for your first job.

**Required Books (all except HE are in the Bookstore)**

All of these books have been used in the past, and Holland and Eisenhart is being used in other classes on campus. Thus, you should be able to find used copies of every book.

All of these books are referred to in the reading list as ABBREVIATIONS.


(2) **WM**  Wilbert J. McKeachie. 1999. *Teaching Tips: A Guidebook for the Beginning College Teacher* (10th Edition). D.C. Heath. PAPERBACK $30.95 (USED $15.00). 1 copy is on reserve. Also we have copies of the 7th, 8th, and 9th editions.


(6) **CP**  We will make our own coursepak, using copies that I will provide on the first day of class.
**Recommended Reading**

*On reserve in the Sociology/Political Science Library:*


**147 Practical Tips for Teaching Professors.** 1989. Magna Publications. PAPERBACK $12.50

**College Teaching,** a journal published by Heldref Publications. We have issues on reserve from 1993 until the present.

**IDEA PAPERS ON TEACHING, NUMBERS 1 TO 31.** Center for Faculty Evaluation and Development, Kansas State University. A very valuable resource! Check it out!


I have put on reserve two copies of *Innovative Techniques for Teaching Sociological Concepts (2nd Edition),* edited by Edward Kain and Robin Neas, ASA Teaching Resources Center, 1722 N St., NW, Washington, DC 20036, phone 202-833-3410. I believe the price for ASA members is $12.00. You should read this cover to cover before designing your practice exercises.

The journal *Teaching Sociology* is a must for people serious about their teaching. You can subscribe via the American Sociological Association, same address as above. Rate for members, $13.00; for non-members, $25.00. We have this in the Sociology Library, back to Volume 1.

The *Teaching Professor* is a newsletter for college teachers containing insightful tips. It is on reserve in the Sociology/Political Science Reading Room. Browse through it. Issues come out once a month.
The journal of the National Teaching and Learning Forum is on reserve in the Sociology/Political Science Library. Also on reserve is the journal Cooperative Learning.

Many volumes of Sociology 380 Teaching Experiences are on reserve in the Sociology Library. Early in the semester, if you would like a preview of what's in store for you, skim through some of the papers. They were written by your predecessors in this course.

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), Wilson Library, publishes a newsletter entitled "For Your Consideration." You can pick up copies at their office. Copies are available in a notebook in the Sociology/Political Science Reading Room.


Maryellen Weimer, Joan L. Parrett, and Mary-Margaret Kerns. 1988. How Am I Teaching? Forms and Activities for Acquiring Instructional Input. Magna Publications, 2718 Dryden Drive, Madison, WI 53704. We'll use forms from this in our classroom discussions. List Price is $24.95.


**Recommended Web Sites on Teaching**

Start with the links on our Soci 380 Home Page, found by going to my Home Page and then to this page: http://www.unc.edu/~healdric/soci380/weblinks.html


**Other Books/Articles on Teaching**


How It’s Done at the Pre-College Level


Assigned Readings 📘

In the following syllabus, class sessions are preceded by a date. You should do the reading for that class on or before the date given. We will DISCUSS the readings in class on the day they are assigned.

Written Assignments 🎬

I will collect the written assignments at the end of the class period on the day they are assigned. Please word-process them, and print them out on a printer with a fresh ribbon or fresh toner. Please remember: there are NOT enough printers in the Odum computer lab for all of you to do your printouts 30 minutes before class! Please start earlier!

Teaching Tips 😊

Whenever the mood strikes you, share a teaching tip with us -- this can be something you found in reserve readings, in newsletters, heard about from colleagues, etc.

I can’t teach you how to teach; you have to learn how to teach!

Videotaping

You must videotape your practice teaching. We have a video camera and all the equipment you need for the taping. The equipment is in HM230, and you will need to see Jennifer Carpenter to sign it out. Please come in to try out the equipment at least a day before you need it, and perhaps ask a colleague to help you.
CLASS SCHEDULE

I. INTRODUCTION: COLLEGE TEACHING IS WORK

A. Thinking About Teaching in an Organized Way

01/13 Thurs

**Question:** What makes a good teacher -- were they made or born?

Please read over the syllabus, buy your books, do the library work suggested, and come to class on Thursday ready to roll!

Buy the books, and skim them. Good teaching has both a strategic and a tactical component, and the tactics are easiest to learn. So, check out the tactics award-winning teachers have used.

Tacit knowledge is critical to good teaching and such knowledge is mainly acquired from practice. Doing the written assignments takes you part way toward practice, but actual hands-on classroom experience is also necessary.

📖 JL, Ch. 1.

NB: We have a **written assignment** due on Tuesday, January 18th.

01/18 Tue

**Question:** What do you want to achieve in your own course?

📖 JL, Ch. 2 & 3.

📖 Cooperative Learning – a set of short papers. Read now to get an idea of what cooperative learning is and how you might use it. We will return to this at great length on the 27th

Go to the Sociology/Political Science Reading Room and browse through the notebooks containing The Teaching Professor Newsletter, The IDEA Papers, Cooperative Learning and College Teaching, The National Teaching & Learning Forum, College Teaching, and For Your Consideration. Notice where the journal Teaching Sociology is shelved. Look through a few of the collections of Sociology 380 term papers.
Written assignment:
Write one (1) page on the theme: "What do I want to achieve in my own course?" Describe your goals in general terms, outlining broad themes, rather than specific topic areas. NOTE: Many of our assignments will seem almost impossible to you, at first. Their purpose is to stimulate your thinking about issues we'll repeatedly return to this term. Don't worry if your first efforts seem incomplete to you.

B. Applied Sociology: We Work with Reactive Materials

01/20 Thurs

Question:
How many different kinds of students are there? Why do they differ? In what ways can we take account of students' diversity of learning styles?


WM: Chs. 20-21, pp. 218-247.


Written assignment:
Write one (1) page on the theme: "What kind of undergraduate student was I?" Are you willing to share this description with us?
01/25 Tues

**Question:**
To what extent does student culture affect students’ participation in classes and course work? Why? How?

HE, Part 1 and Part 4, pp. 3-21, 93-160. The book by HE was based on fieldwork done at UNC-CH and another NC college. They claim that romance and attractiveness played a large role in the lives of women students (but not men?). Are their results still valid today?

**Guest Today:** Dorothy Holland, UNC Dept of Anthropology

**Written assignment:**
Read the Daily Tar Heel from January 17th through the 21st, and do an impressionistic content analysis. Write a page on what the DTH conveys about student culture at UNC.

II. ORGANIZING A COURSE

A. **Getting Started: Think No Small Thoughts**

01/27 Thurs

**Question:**
Is cooperative learning better suited to achieving higher-order learning than other techniques? Why or why not?

Thought for the day: course design involves a trade-off between exploiting what we already know & do well versus exploring new territory, where we will make mistakes, experiment, and take big risks.


Written assignment:
Write a one-page explanation of a specific application of cooperative learning to one day of your course. Be specific -- how would students benefit from your cooperative learning plan for a particular day?

B. Teaching Resources on Campus

2/01 Tues

Question:
If you need help with your course, how do you get it?

Guest Speaker: Ed Neal, CTL Representative
"Teaching Resources Available on the UNC-CH Campus" also "Putting Together a Teaching Portfolio"

Written assignment:
Visit the Center for Instructional Technology website (accessible via our 380 page). Explore the 5 UNC-CH projects that CIT participates in (click through at the bottom of the page: Technology Resources Database, Technology in Context Consortium, Carolina Computing Initiative, Instructional Management System, and Scholarly Communication Working Group. Write a one-page explanation of how your might use an idea or technique or tool from one of these projects for your course.

02/03 Thurs

C. The Web


Question:
How do you design and create your own web page and use it for your new course?
Guest: ATN. We will meet in a lab. More details about the assignment will be posted on the course web page.

D. Creating a Syllabus

02/08 Thurs

Question:
What message do I want to convey to students with my syllabus? What should the syllabus contain?

📖 WM, Ch. 26, pp. 312-325
📖 Aldrich syllabus for Sociology 31.
📖 Maryellen Weimer, "How Much Content Is Enough?" The Teaching Professor, 12, 3 (March, 1998): 2.

✍️ Written assignment:
Prepare an outline of your own course syllabus. Put in all the elements you can, modeling yours after one of the syllabi in the Coursepak. Be prepared to defend additions or deletions. Don’t forget your goal statement from our second class!

NOTE: Assignment for next class: Began choosing textbooks.

E. Choosing a Text and Readings

02/10 Thurs

Question:
What criteria should we use in choosing a textbook and outside readings? Are textbooks really as "evil" as Westhues implies? Why or why not?
Assignment: Select three (3) possible texts for your proposed course and evaluate them. Be prepared to defend them to the whole class. Will your undergraduates be able to understand the text? Turn in the list of three (3) to me. Only the list has to be in writing, not the defense. Bring the books to class with you, if you like.

III. THE COMPONENTS OF A COURSE

A. Lecturing (Don't!)

02/15 Tues

Question:
If I can talk, can I lecture?

Guest Speaker: Ed Neal, CTL Representative
Presentation of a demonstration lecture.

WM, Ch 5, pp. 53-70

JL, Chs. 4 and 5, pp. 99-157

Kenneth Eble, “Suggestions for Bad Lecturing,” and “The Lecture as Discourse.”

Planning the Lecture (from “Preparing the Lesson Plan”).

“Tips for Teachers: Twenty Ways to Make Lectures More Participatory,” Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning.


**Written assignment:**
What was the most important feature of the best lecture you ever heard? Write one (1) paragraph on the feature.

B. **Explaining Yourself: Critical Thinking as an Objective**

02/17 Thurs

**Question:** How is lecturing like explaining?

- **WM**, Ch. 27, pp. 326-31.
- **JL**, Ch. 7, pp. 193-224


**Written assignment:**
Think of something you *REALLY* know how to do well. Write a one-paragraph description of it. Use pictures, photos, figures, diagrams etc. to make your point clear.

C. **Preparing to Lead Structured Discussions**
02/22 Tues

**Question:**
What are the principles of effective discussion?

**Guest Speaker:** Michael Salemi

- **JL, Ch. 6, pp. 159-191**
- Questioning Strategies, Skills Needed by Discussion Leaders, Seminar Leader Behaviors, Techniques for Expanding Questioning.
- Donald Roy, “Work Satisfaction and Social Reward in Quota Achievement,” American Sociological Review, 18: 507-14 (1953) reading for Salemi discussion: Read this article in preparation for the discussion questions that Salemi will generate.

**Written assignment:**
Prepare an outline of four (4) interpretive questions, based on the Donald Roy reading. *Professor Salemi will critique them.*

D. Cooperative Learning, Again

02/24 Thurs

**Question:**
If cooperative learning is so good, why doesn't everyone use it?

- Ellen Sarkisian, “Working in Groups: A Note to Faculty and a Quick Guide for Students.” And associated one-page handouts, Marianne Cutler et al.
- Karl Smith, "Structured Controversies."


Written assignment:
Outline a classroom exercise for your course that involves a debate or structured controversy. We'll do these in class.

E. In-Class Exercises and Out-of-Class Term Projects

02/29 Tues

Question:
What kinds of issues are best dealt with through classroom exercises? Two of the following exercises were developed by students at UNC who took Sociology 380!

Guest Speaker: Chris Bartley

JL, Ch. 8, pp. 225-250

WM, Ch. 16, pp. 175-182.

Chris Bartley’s Sociology 380 Term paper, archived in the most recent collection of papers, in the Sociology/Political Science Reading Room


Robert Woodberry and Howard Aldrich. “Designing and Using classroom Exercises.” To be distributed in class.

Susan Johnston and Jim Cooper, "Quick-Thinks: Active-Thinking Tasks in Lecture Classes and Televised Instruction." Cooperative Learning and College Teaching Newsletter, 8, 1 (Fall, 1997): 2-6.
NOTE: Almost every issue of Teaching Sociology contains at least one article that describes a classroom exercise. Browse them randomly!

_written assignment:_
Identify a concept or principle from your proposed course that might be illustrated via an exercise.

F. Using the Web Creatively in your Class

03/02 Thurs

Guest Speaker: Daniel Anderson, Dept of English

More instructions are on the course web page for today.

03/07 Tues & 03/09 Thurs

Practice Exercises

Each of you should prepare an in-class exercise, illustrating a salient point from your forthcoming course. You must be able to explain the exercise in 7 minutes of class time. You may use any types of props you wish.

**THIS WEEK:**
If you have any questions about planning your guest teaching sessions, for the weeks after Spring Break, please e-mail me, see me before or after class, or come to my office hours this week.

**LONG-RANGE PLANNING:**
Set up the arrangements necessary so that you can have yourself videotaped as you do your guest lectures in the weeks after the break. Jennifer Carpenter, HM 230, has the equipment; see if you can pair off and videotape each other.

03/10 - 03/20 SPRING BREAK: ENJOY YOURSELF!

03/21 - 03/23 Leading a Class

During this week, you will lead one or two classes for another sociology instructor. So, we won't meet in 380. Also, the PAA meetings are this week.
03/28 Tues

**Question:**
What did we learn in our practice teaching?

📖 RB, Part III, pp. 151-161.

✍️ **Written assignment:**
What three (3) things did you learn that you want to share with your colleagues in this class?

G. Putting Boice’s First Principles to Work

03/30 Tues TENTATIVE

Possible Format today: A panel of former students.

**Question:**
Do emotions sometimes interfere with our teaching? In what ways can we mobilize others to help us in preparing for our teaching?

📖 RB, Chs. 3-11, pp. 41-142.


✍️ **Written assignment:**
Revise your course syllabus. Do this in two (2) pages or so -- prepare a list of weekly topics, how you might treat them, possible teaching aids, etc.

H. Evaluation of Students' Achievements

04/04 Tues

**Question:**
How can we structure our tests so that they are also a learning experience?

📖 OR, Tips for Improving Testing and Grading, Ch. 1-6, pp. 1-107. This is the single best book I have ever found on how to construct fair exams.

📖 WM, Ch. 7-8, pp. 85-116.
Written assignment:
Begin working on your practice test.

04/06 Thurs

PRACTICE TESTS
(Preparing the practice tests will take you two to four hours, at least!)

✓ For one major segment of your course, prepare a sample examination, such as a mid-term. Prepare a minimum of:
   (a) five (5) multiple-choice questions
   (b) two (2) short-answer questions (a word, phrase, or sentence)
   (c) two (2) short essay questions; and
   (d) two (2) long essay questions.

To get ideas, you may use the CUSS file of exam questions and the instructors' manuals that often accompany texts. However, to get the maximum value from this exercise, most of the questions should be your own creations.

Prepare answer sheets/guidelines for grading all your questions. You must have the right answers!


Written assignment:
Bring copies of your exam to class for each member, or put them on transparencies for an overhead projector.

04/11 Tues

Continue with critique of practice tests.

04/13 Thurs

Question:
Do you think students' motivations to learn can be modified by an instructor?

Guest Speaker: Joseph Lowman

JL, Ch. 9, pp. 251-260

LOGO Scale: Student and Faculty version. Fill out the FACULTY scale before coming to class. Joe will work with you to interpret the scores.

Written assignment:
Fill out the LOGO scale and bring it to class.

OPTIONAL

I. Grading: Enforcing a Meritocracy Has Its Costs

04/18 Tues

Question:
What are the arguments for and against grading on a curve? And, should we force students to talk, such as by grading their participation?

OR, Ch. 7, "Assigning Grades," pp. 108-130

JL, Ch. 9, pp. 260-285

WM, Ch. 9, pp. 117-130


“Grading Systems,” CTL.

Maryellen Weimer, "Participation Problems: A Solution?" The Teaching Professor, 12, 2 (February, 1998): 4-5.


Suzanne Medina, "Term Paper Check List." The Teaching Professor, October, 1997, p. 3.

Provost's memo on exams. This policy is still in effect! Read and follow these rules.

**Written assignment:**
Bring a Graph or Picture of your expected grade distribution to class. That is, what do you expect your class’s final grade distribution to look like?

4/20 Thurs
Practice Grading

We’ll work on grading various forms of questions & tests.

J. Evaluation of Instructors: Revenge of the Jedi, or, the Students Strike Back

04/25 Tues

**Question:**
Why should instructors be evaluated, too?

WM, Ch. 23

Teaching Evaluation (5 pages)


Written assignment:
What three (3) questions will you want to ask your students about your teaching? Write them out in a format suitable for use on an evaluation form.

04/27 Thurs TENTATIVE

K. Using Videos, The First Day, and Other Topics
Questions raised by the term papers & your preparation

Special issue of Teaching Sociology, 16, 2 (July 1988): 245-271. Lots of great tips on choosing and using films and videos, especially feature films. Nonprint has over 6,000 videos! [Don't overdo it!]. See also an interesting article (not in the coursepak) by Baker-Sperry, Behringer, and Grauerholz in the April 1999 Teaching Sociology on teaching about gender through videos.


Written assignment:
Pick out three (3) videos or films that might work in your course. Make a list, give a brief rationale, and bring it to class.

IV. LAST CLASS

05/02 Tues


Question:
Why is the **perfect** the enemy of the **good**?

📝 Written assignment:
After reading two (2) of the papers from Sociology 380 Teaching Experiences, **on reserve** in the library, discuss them in your team. Write a two-page paper, summarizing your reactions to the classroom control problems/opportunities identified in the papers. We will discuss your papers in class.

📝 Note: Revised Syllabus due today.

The syllabus should be shaped by what you've learned this semester, and should include the following:

(a) statement of course objectives;
(b) readings, required and optional, with complete citations (appropriate abbreviations are acceptable);
(c) description of projects, papers, field work, etc.;
(d) information about examinations, quizzes, and grading;
(e) components of the final grade, percent from each section of the course, with criteria for evaluation spelled out;
(g) your office hours; and
(h) a fairly detailed schedule for the term -- dates of assigned readings and the like;

**THIS IS OUR LAST CLASS MEETING!**
V. WHEN YOU BEGIN TEACHING, AND AFTERWARDS

Sociology 380 does not officially end for you until you've accomplished three (3) tasks:

✓ (1) Have one (1) of your classes videotaped within the first few weeks of class.
✓ (2) View your videotape and take corrective action, if necessary.
✓ (3) FINAL ASSIGNMENT: After your course is finished, you must prepare a reflective, self-critical analysis of your experiences. The resulting paper should cover the following points (please be sure to cover them all):

(a) What went wrong, and why?
(b) What went right, and why?
(c) What would/will you do differently next time, and why?
(d) How could Sociology 380 have been more helpful to you, given what you know now and wish you'd known then?

This is a VERY SIMPLE paper to write, so don't put it off. You'll need at least 10 pages to cover the above four (a-d) questions adequately. Remember, this paper will be put on reserve, for future generations of graduate students to read, and so be sure to include enough information so that they can build on your experiences (and perhaps avoid some mistakes!).

Note: Please follow the requested format in your paper!

I will give you feedback within a few days after receiving the paper, but only if you get it to me before classes start in the Fall.

Your term paper should also include:

(e) student evaluations, with a summary of them and any comments you have about them; and
(f) course materials such as the syllabus, handouts, exams, exercises, etc.

If you want any of this stuff back, please attach a note, telling me.

Your term paper can be the beginning of your teaching portfolio -- thus, be sure to include a statement of your teaching philosophy, your concept of course design, a summary of your student evaluations, etc.