Course Description
Social life changed dramatically in 2020 and in different ways for different groups of people. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed deep inequalities within society, preys on how society is structured, and will have a massive impact on how societies will be structured. Questions we will consider in the class include:

- How is scientific knowledge of the pandemic evolving and what are the social implications of that evolution?
- How does a virus reveal structural racism?
- Why do pandemics make conditions ripe for social movements, like the Black Lives Matter protests?
- Why won’t people wear masks and believe in misinformation?
- How does social inequality shape COVID-19 risk and how will COVID-19 impact inequality?
- What does COVID-19 reveal about globalization?
- What does work and family life look like during and after COVID-19?
- How will social factors shape our way out?
- What can we do during pandemics to help one another and ourselves?

Required Course Materials

Course Components

Reaction responses. Students will choose five out of 10 possible prompts to write a reaction to over the course of the semester. There are no requirements for when you have to complete these responses (e.g., you may front load, back load, or answer sporadically). These responses are 750-1,000 word reactions and should reflect a careful sociological analysis, rigour, depth, clarity, and concision. Reaction assignments will be turned in via Learning Suite. Reactions will, generally, be due one week after we have concluded our discussion on the given topic area. Full information on due dates are available at the end of the course schedule. You cannot do extra responses to replace low marks.

Midterm project. Students will produce a public-facing artifact, such as an infographic as their midterm evaluation. Your submission will include a written justification of your artifact, a sociological analysis to accompany it, works cited, and evidence that the artifact was shared in some manner (i.e., social media, op-eds, etc.).

Final paper. Research papers should be structured like the academic journal articles we read in this class, including: 1) a short introduction; 2) a literature review where you summarize prior research, identify the gap in the literature you intend to fill, and your study hypotheses; 3) a methods section that states how you would go about testing your study hypotheses; 4) a concluding section that summarizes the implications and importance of your study. Please note that you do not have to analyze data or do fieldwork in this paper (although those that are interested in this option should contact me). Alternatively, you could write a theoretical “think piece” that applies prior sociological literature on another area of study and makes connections to the current pandemic. Additional details will be provided during the semester.

Class participation. Although I will lecture during this course, much of this class will involve seminar-style class discussion of the readings and topics at hand. Thus, class participation is imperative to the success of this
**class. What does class participation entail?** It means you must, when attending class, be an active participant in the class. This includes: 1) contributing to class discussion; 2) actively contributing to small group exercises. If you attend class, sit quietly every day, and do not contribute to class discussion you will receive a 0 for class participation. Class participation scores will be judged holistically for the entirety of the semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points/each</th>
<th>Total #</th>
<th>Total points (%)/total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reaction responses</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Grading Scale**

- A ³ 475 points
- A– 474-450 points
- B+ 449-435 points
- B 434-415 points
- C+ 399-385 points
- C 384-365 points
- D+ 349-335 points
- D 334-315 points
- C– 364-350 points
- D– 314 points
- E <300 points

**Attending Class via Zoom**

In order to provide a secure environment, Zoom links will be provided in Learning Suite. Please check it frequently for class access. Some helpful information about Zoom live remote classes:

- Please do your best to be in a location where there is little background noise so that you can actively participate. I recognize that personal circumstances may make this difficult in some cases.
- It may prove beneficial to use headphones, with a microphone, in order to participate in class. Even affordable options can make a world of difference.
- Please use your chosen first name and last name on-screen so that we can account for who has attended and participated each class period. This can be easily changed in the Zoom settings.
- Because the class relies on student participation, I’d ask that you do your best to have a camera on during class. At the same time, I understand that privacy and other issues may make this difficult. If you feel uncomfortable with your environment being seen, you may want to use a virtual background in Zoom. If you don’t feel comfortable having your camera on during class, it could prove helpful to use a bitmoji, selfie, or other favorite photo as your profile picture to help provide a more normal classroom experience. If camera access is a potential problem, please contact me directly.
- As class starts, I’ll ask you all to mute yourselves. If there are important points or questions you’d like to make, I ask that you use the chat function (which I will monitor during class) or use the raise hand function so that we can make class work efficiently and productively.
- If you are in a public space on campus or elsewhere during class, you should wear a mask and maintain proper social distance.
- Do your best to treat this as you would an in-person class: take notes, participate, try to eliminate distractions. It can be difficult learning through a screen but integrating these behaviors can be helpful. If there are things that you think might be beneficial for me to do, please let me know—I want this to be a collaborative process.

**Grading Policies**

- **Due dates.** Class assignments are due at 11:59p on the proscribed due date—unless otherwise noted. They should be turned in via Learning Suite.

- **Late work.** If you anticipate an issue that will lead you to turn in an assignment late, please make Dr. Shafer aware as soon as you can. Otherwise, work submitted up to one day late will receive a 10% penalty. Work submitted between two and seven days late will receive a 25% penalty. Unless there are extraordinary circumstances, no work will be accepted past one week late.
Early exams, Makeup exams, Makeup work. According to university rules there are no early exams and early exams cannot be made available. There are no make-up exams or assignments, except when dictated by university policy (e.g., an excused absence for a university-sponsored event) or in extraordinary circumstances. Dr. Shafer will make the final determination in these cases. If a make-up exam is granted, you may receive a different exam than your peers.

Grade appeals. We are willing to reconsider any mark you receive in this course. In order to appeal a mark, please do the following: (1) highlight specific reasons why you believe you were marked incorrectly with original assignment attached and (2) you appeal your mark within one week of receiving your marked work. Grade appeals may result in a higher, lower, or unchanged mark. All grade appeal decisions are final.

Extra credit. I do not offer extra credit in this course. The course expectations are outlined from the start.

Academic misconduct. The first injunction of the Honor Code is the call to “be honest.” BYU aims to improve students’ minds, their knowledge, help them develop skills that will assist them in their life’s work, and to build character. As a result, BYU students should aim to be totally honest in their dealings with others. They should avoid academic dishonesty in all its forms, complete their own work, and be evaluated based upon that work. Possible actions for academic misconduct could include any combination of the following: (1) a reduced mark or zero on an assignment/exam; (2) the opportunity to redo the assignment or an equivalent assignment; (3) a failing grade in the course; (4) referral to the Honor Code Office for possible university discipline; and/or (5) other actions deemed necessary by the instructor. Additional information on academic misconduct is included below.

Final grades. Unless there is a grading error, letter grades are not changed and are considered final. Unfortunately, I cannot factor in intangibles like effort, interest, or future plans into final marks. Some students do not work hard and do well, other work very hard and do well, while still others work equally hard or harder and do not perform at the same level. There is no other way to assign grades other than by performance.

Incompletes. Incompletes may be granted under exceptional circumstances. Please contact Dr. Shafer directly regarding any issues that you believe may warrant an incomplete.

Statement on Classroom Dialogue & Civility
I am committed to free and open inquiry on the topics and issues discussed in class. We benefit as individuals and as a university community when we are challenged by viewpoints that do not necessarily align with our own. Debate and deliberation should not be suppressed because ideas are thought to be wrong or unwise. According to BYU’s official policy on academic freedom, “[t]he BYU community embraces traditional freedom of study, inquiry, and debate, together with the special responsibilities implicit in the university’s religious mission.” Because of my, and the university’s, commitment to a free exchange of ideas, it is possible that you may disagree with and/or dislike certain topics and ideas discussed in class. It is important to note that feeling uncomfortable or even offended is not contentious and does not harm your ability to feel spiritually enriched. BYU and its sponsoring church expect us, as faculty and students, to confront difficult issues within the context of a religious university. As a result, the classroom should be a lively, interactive place where information is shared, ideas are tested, and issues are debated. Because topics which you may find sensitive or controversial will be discussed in this class, it is important that we all work together to create a civil environment. As President Cecil O. Samuelson noted “derogatory and defamatory comments about those with different political, ethnic, or other views and experiences is completely out of place at BYU.” It is of importance, then, to respond to comments and ideas with well thought-out and factual statements—not those based on conjecture, innuendo, or stereotypes. Doing so will help foster an environment of free discussion, debate, and civility—ultimately providing us with the opportunity to learn and grow.

Additional Classroom Procedures
Classroom technology and deportment. Please pay attention in class. It is disrespectful to instructors and fellow students when someone, who is focused elsewhere, reengages the class and asks questions from which we’ve moved on. Generally speaking, I do not have a problem with technology if devices are used properly. Its best to avoid texting, online messaging, social media, etc. during class.
Caregiving. The COVID-19 global pandemic has created enormous changes in how we live, work, and interact. These changes mean that many of us have taken on or may need to take on caregiving responsibilities that we would not otherwise undertake. Childcare, caring for others (including those that fall ill), etc. may be more common this semester than under “normal circumstances.” As such, you should not feel pressured to abandon caregiving responsibilities in order to attend class. Providing childcare or other forms of care during class hours is absolutely acceptable. If you feel that you need additional accommodations, please make me aware so that they may be arranged in a mutually satisfactory manner.

Mandatory masking. Research clearly and consistently demonstrates the efficacy of masking to limit the spread of COVID-19\(^1\). Wearing a mask demonstrates your concern for the health and wellbeing of BYU students, faculty, staff, and the broader community. According to BYU policy for Fall 2020, students are required to wear a mask which covers the nose and mouth inside public buildings, classrooms, and outdoors when social distancing is not possible or practical. Please do your part to stop the spread of the virus.

Missing class. I do not have a specific attendance policy in this course—although your overall class participation score could suffer from consistent non-attendance. Because COVID-19 is an emerging disease, please keep up to date follow all CDC recommendations, which can be found at the following website: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html.

I want to respect your health privacy. If you feel comfortable, please contact Dr. Shafer directly if you have tested positive for COVID-19 so that proper arrangements regarding your educational needs can be made. Further, if you do test positive, please fill out the BYU COVID-19 reporting form found at: http://www.byu.edu/coronavirus.

University, College, & Departmental Policies

FERPA. I cannot discuss your grades via e-mail, phone, or with an outside party—including parents. I cannot hand back papers to anyone other than the assignment’s author. Course content can only be discussed with students and approved BYU staff. Doing otherwise is a violation of federal law.

Honor code. In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university. Students are asked to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. It is the university’s expectation, and every instructor’s expectation that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Please call the Honor Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

Sexual misconduct. As required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the university prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in its education programs or activities. Title IX also prohibits sexual harassment, including sexual violence, committed by or against students, university employees, and visitors to campus. As outlined in university policy, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking are considered forms of “Sexual Misconduct” prohibited by the university.

**Sexual misconduct reporting.** University policy requires any university employee in a teaching, managerial, or supervisory role to report incidents of sexual misconduct that come to their attention through various forms including face-to-face conversation, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. If you encounter Sexual Misconduct, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at t9coordinator@byu.edu or 801-422-2130 or Ethics Point at titleix.byu.edu/report or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours). Additional information about Title IX and resources available to you can be found at titleix.byu.edu.

**Student disability.** Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (UAC), 2170 WSC or 422-2767. Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified, documented disabilities. The UAC can also assess students for learning, attention, and emotional concerns. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the UAC. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures by contacting the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-285 ASB.

**Inappropriate use of course materials.** All course materials (e.g., outlines, handouts, syllabi, exams, quizzes, PowerPoint presentations, lectures, audio and video recordings, etc.) are proprietary. Students are prohibited from recording, photographing, posting, or selling any course materials without the express written permission of the professor teaching this course. To do so is a violation of the Brigham Young University Honor Code and federal copyright laws.

**Mental Health**
Your health, including your mental health, matters. Mental health concerns and stressful life events can affect students' academic performance and quality of life. BYU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS, 1500 WSC, 801-422-3035, caps.byu.edu) provides individual, couples, and group counseling, as well as stress management services. These services are confidential and are provided by the university at no cost for full-time students. For general information please visit caps.byu.edu; for more immediate concerns please visit help.byu.edu.

**BYU Department of Sociology Action Statement (June 2020)**
We mourn the racist and unconstitutional murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd by police and vigilantes, and the violence faced by Black Americans. We express our profound godly sorrow and proclaim in the spirit of the Gospel and in solidarity that Black lives matter—all Black lives, including Black students, faculty, staff, and alumni of Brigham Young University.

The discipline of sociology leads to the conclusion that to end centuries of abuse of Black people and reduce racial inequality in material wealth requires that we change the structure of our society. Our BYU community, including the Sociology department, is no exception to the need for changes. While we declare humbly that even though the Sociology department at BYU is home to Black undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty, including Black student leaders, we can and will do better. We can and will do more.

We pledge the following actions:
(1) Learning our complete racial history is the truth that must set us free, as Jesus taught, to take action. We will continue to provide evidence and push for rigorous anti-racism general education course requirement from a set of options across disciplines that all BYU students must take in order to graduate. In the meantime, we will find new ways to expand our own course on race and antiracism to meet increased student demand.

(2) We will transform our major by further incorporating the theoretical and empirical contributions of Black American founding sociologists W.E.B. Du Bois and Ida B. Wells-Barnett. While Black scholars figure prominently in our introductory, race, gender, urban, methods, and cultural courses, we will not only cover more work by Black scholars in our syllabi, we will transform our teaching by highlighting the neglected role of Black scholars and providing more focused attention to anti-racist
perspectives. We will seek help from Black professors and leaders from the university, local, and national community to inform our efforts and compensate them for their work.

(3) While Sociology is a uniquely diverse and welcoming major at BYU, we will increase our effort to recruit and retain Black students, and contribute to their academic success by increasing funding for Black students as TAs, RAs, scholarship recipients, and graduate students. We will expand how we recognize Black students for the contributions they make, such as mentoring other students of color, leadership on campus, and original scholarship. We commit to better supporting the graduate study, hiring, and success of all our Black graduates, regardless of whether they pursue a career at BYU, in sociology, or outside academia. We will report annually on our progress.

(4) We dedicate substantially more funding as a department and call on our alumni, our college, and BYU to significantly increase financial support for BYU Black Alumni Society scholarships, fully paid leadership opportunities for Black students, the BYU Black Student Union, Africana Studies, the FHSS Winter Civil Rights Seminar on the Black Freedom Struggle, and any other immediate support of Black students and graduates.

**Class Schedule**

Because of the rapidly developing situation, this schedule is subject to change. Readings may be swapped, etc. over the course of the semester. Changes may be announced in class, on Learning Suite, and/or via e-mail. Please visit Learning Suite to get Zoom links for class.

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<tr>
<td>T 9/1</td>
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<td>R 9/3</td>
<td>COVID-19</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Watkins, Holder, Glanz, Cai, Carey, &amp; White, “How the Virus Won.”</td>
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<td>Frontline, “The Virus: What Went Wrong?”</td>
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<td><a href="https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/the-virus/">https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/the-virus/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civil Society &amp; Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 9/15</td>
<td>An Overview of Medical Sociology</td>
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Chapter 1 in Bristow, American Pandemic.

Social Trust in an Era of Distrust

Chapter 3 in Bristow, American Pandemic.

Frontline, “United States of Conspiracy.”
https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/united-states-of-conspiracy/

Guest speaker: Matthew Facciani, PhD, Vanderbilt University


Gender


Chapter 2 in Bristow, American Pandemic.

There is No Vaccine for Racism


**Social Movements & Health Crises**


**An Epidemic of Economic Inequality**


R 10/22 Articles from the *New York Times* series on inequality during COVID-19

Leonhardt, “America will struggle after Coronavirus.”

Scheidel, “Why the wealthy fear pandemics.”

Case & Deaton, “We can afford it, so why don’t we have a world-class health system?”

Ellison, “Stop talking about inequality and do something about it.”

Editorial staff, “The Coronavirus is changing how Americans view one another.”

Kelley, “I am the portrait of downward mobility.”


**Mental Health & COVID-19**


R 11/5 No class—Midterm Project due

**Old Age & Dying in a Pandemic**

R 11/12  Class canceled

**Religious Responses to COVID-19**


R 11/26  Thanksgiving holiday

**The Way Out**


**Wrapping Up**

T 12/8  Chapter 5 & Conclusion in Bristow, *American Pandemic.*

R 12/10  Student comments

T 12/15  Final paper due at 11:59pm—turn in on Learning Suite

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### Reaction Paper Topics, Assignment Dates, & Due Dates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment Date</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil society and community</td>
<td>September 10</td>
<td>September 17 at 11:59p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical sociology</td>
<td>September 17</td>
<td>September 24 at 11:59p</td>
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<td>Social trust and distrust</td>
<td>September 24</td>
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<td>Gender</td>
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<td>Racism and social movements</td>
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