

**TOWNS IN MISSOURI AND THE MIDWEST: VOICES AND  
INEQUALITIES  
SUMMER 2017**

INSTRUCTOR	EMAIL	COURSE #
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OFFICE	OFFICE HOURS	TEXTBOOK
ONLINE	BY EMAIL	NONE

**Course Description:**

Focusing on towns and communities and their regional history and cultural traditions, we will examine the issues and concerns of small town America in the context of recent hardships and adverse economic trends. The responsiveness of government and large institutions to the problems of diverse communities will be critically examined, with a multidisciplinary approach that will draw on key theories and works in sociology and rural sociology, geography, and community development.

**Course Objectives**

This is a Sophomore-level class, and cross listed over several departments. As such, your overall expectations for the course are the present the following skills:

- Read and comprehend academic ideas in secondary sources.
- Competently describe major geographical and sociological concepts.
- Evaluate current events using those ideas and concepts.
- Critically reflect on the meaning and context of information presented in the course.

**Methods of Evaluation**

*Participation:*

Every week you will be required to make 2 posts a day, on 3 out of the 7 days, in the forums on topics relating to that week's material. Since this class starts on a Monday, your 7 day stretch will be from Monday-Sunday. The prompt will be noted in each forum. Not posting is considered an absence from class, even if you are completing other assignments. *Any student not posting for a full week may be dropped for non-attendance.*

Each week I will open 2-3 forums at the outset, and then an additional 1-2 as the week progresses if I think they are needed to stir conversation. You are not required to post in every single forum in the week, but you must post in at least 2 different forums per required day.

*Weekly Quizzes:*

Each week there will be a quiz over the lesson at hand. The quizzes will cover material from the textbook readings for the week. Therefore, the only way to do well on them is to do the readings, which will end up helping you in the discussion forums. You have unlimited time, up until 11:59 PM of the due date, to finish and submit each quiz. Your assessments will not be comprehensive.

*Current Event Reflections (For writing intensive students only):*

Each week after the first you will be required to make a post about a current (less than 1 year old) news item related to the topic at hand. There are 3 requirements to this: 1) find a link to a news item (or scan a paper news item and upload it), 2) write a brief summary of what is being reported on, and 3) reflect on how the event supports and/or contradicts points made in the readings for the week. Each post should be a minimum of 500 words.

*Essay Assignment:*

At the end of the semester, you will produce a 1,500-word+ research paper. It is worth quite a bit of points, but will be turned in by stages. The point of writing in stages is so that you receive feedback along the path to creating a comprehensive research paper you can use as an example of high-caliber academic writing in future portfolios or writing examples when applying for a job or to graduate schools. You will be expected to come up with an original idea and review the ideas of some of your classmates as part of this process. *Writing intensive students will be tasked with a 2,700-word+ paper.*

**Distribution of Points and Grading Scale**

Category	Points
Essay	100
Participation	160
Quizzes	80
<i>Total</i>	<i>350</i>

For regular students

Category	Points
Blog Posts	70
Essay	100
Participation	160
Quizzes	80
<i>Total</i>	<i>410</i>

For writing intensive students

**Learning in an Online Environment:**

*Taking Online Classes:*

For some, this will be the first online class in a series of many. For others, it is part of a degree obtained entirely online or in tandem with on-ground classes. Remember to be respectful of others in your dialogue as there is a wide variation of technical skill in navigating online courses. We are all in this course to learn, so do your best to be part of a supportive learning environment for everyone involved.

*Methods of Instruction:*

Instruction in the class will involve readings from provided articles and book chapters, a brief (30-60 minute) lecture on the week's course materials, weekly quizzes, and forum discussions each week relating to the topic covered. Forum participation is the equivalent of being present in an on-ground class, and I count it as attendance. Therefore, the only way to do well in this class is to do the readings assigned and "show up" by being an active reader and participant in the forums.

*Severe Weather*

This class does not "close" when any of the on-ground campuses are closed, so you should look for emails from me instead of the school for how weather will impact the class. Also, everyone in the class is spread over much of the state (and often I get people in other states) where power outages or other hazards can happen without my knowledge. If you lose access to the course

due to a severe weather hazard, let me know and we'll work out a way for you to make up any work you might have missed.

### Late Policy

Project planning, time management, and contingency planning are essential to success in this and all college courses. Thus, it is expected that all assignments will be submitted by their respective due dates.

To encourage your personal commitment to learning and to maintain focus on your achievement of learning outcomes, I will accept late work on the essay portions and quizzes, with consequences.

The following will be in effect for assignments submitted late:

- One day late results in 20% off the points possible.
- Two days late results in 40% off the points possible.
- Three days late results in 60% off the points possible.
- Four days late results in 80% off the points possible.
- Five or more days late results in zero points earned.
- Assignments are not accepted after the last day of the course.

For example, if an assignment is 2 days late and you scored 8 out of 10, you would be assigned a score of 4 instead – 40% off the maximum possible points

There is no make-up work or extra credit in my course.

*That being said, stuff happens. If there are one or more personal emergencies that happen so that you find yourself in a crunch, email me **before** something is due and we might be able to work out a plan, depending on the circumstances.*

### Other Notes

- I reserve the right to change or update this syllabus as I see fit, with forewarning to you all.
- Let me know if you will be unable to turn in an assignment on time due to technical difficulties or illness and we will arrange a way to make up for content and points. I will be far less indulgent about this if you email me the night before something is due than if you email me several days before, so get started on projects in advance and avoid the last-minute freak-out.
- Likewise, if I have to be absent from my email or the course for more than 48 hours, I will let you all know as far in advance as possible.
- There will be no extra credit in this course.
- Be *connected*. To some, the idea of being tied to a computer is a terrible fate, but the only way to ensure you succeed in this and other online classes is to make sure you frequently check your email and the forum posts. I try to find a balance, too, by taking a walk in the woods, but the nature of online classes requires you to vigilantly sit in front of a screen sometimes.

## **Discussion Guidelines**

Participation in the discussion component of this course is vital to your success in this class. There is great value in reading comments from the other students, as well as sharing your own thoughts. The way in which you respond to discussion forums is very important. Following are the guidelines for replying and the grading scale that will be applied to your responses.

Your comments and responses should be:

- Well thought-out (carefully planned)
- Clear as to whom your response is directed (a particular student or the entire class)
- Concise but complete (approximately two paragraphs for Initial Comments and approximately one paragraph for replies, at a minimum)
- Insightful (perceptive)
- Considerate (don't say anything you wouldn't say to someone in person)
- Professional (composed with good grammar, spelling, and punctuation in mind)
- Respectful (contains no profanity or disrespectful references)
- Timely (submitted on time)
- Pertinent (addresses the subject at hand)

Please note: Comments pertaining to topics other than the one addressed in a particular forum can be placed in the "Water Cooler" forum or the General Course Q & A forum, which will help to keep the discussions on track.

*Tasteful humor in your comments and responses when appropriate is always appreciated and enjoyed along with your more considered responses.*

If they meet the above listed criteria, each post you make will be worth 3.4 points, which over 3 days of posting twice each day should come to a total of 20 points per week. Late posts (those made after the start of a new week) are welcomed if they continue an interesting discussion, but are not eligible for credit.

Please note: Either partial or possibly no credit at all will be given for comments and replies that do not meet the above listed criteria. Comments such as, "I agree," "So true," etc., are allowed (infrequently) but do not count towards the points possible.

### Course Calendar

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Due Sunday at Midnight**</b>
1	Small Towns in the Sociological Context	Flora, et. al. ch.1, Wuthnow ch. 1	
2	Economic State of Small Towns	Carr and Kefalas, Flora et. al. ch. 10	Paper Stage 1 (Proposal)
3	Identity Formation	Wuthnow ch. 2, Pine, Francavigilia	
4	Race in a Small Town	Loewen, Licono and Maldonado	Paper Stage 2 (Annotated Bibliography)
5	Gender in a Small Town	Nelson and Smith, Petrzekla and Mannon	
6	The Politics of "Middle America"	Leitner, Wuthnow ch. 9	Paper Stage 3 (Rough Draft)
7	New Trends in Old Small Towns	Callaghan and Colton, Crabtree	Paper Stage 4 (Peer Reviews)
8	Quirky Communities	Schelly; Smith, Davis, and Pike	Paper Stage 5 (Final Draft)

\*\*Each week has a quiz and participation "due," and the same for blog posts (for writing intensive students).