

Sociology: an Introduction to the Sociological Imagination with *The Simpsons*

Summer 2nd Session 2024

CRN: 40025

Credits: 4

Days & Times: Saturdays 9 am – 1:50 pm, Aug. 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31

First day of class: Aug. 3, 2020 9 am

Location: Zoom

Faculty: Wenhong Wang, Ph.D.

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Office: Sem II E2110

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Office hour: by appointment

Course description:

Dubbed the 20th century's best television series in the U.S. and even predicting the election of the current president, *The Simpsons* has been an iconic fixture in the American cultural landscape for three decades. In this class, we will learn to practice sociological imagination through critical analysis of Springfield, the town of the Simpsons, as a microcosm of American society. We will study sociological concepts and theories related to family, gender roles, education, environmental issues, race and ethnicity, and class. Our overall goal is to build critical thinking skills in applying sociological theories to specific cases such as the Simpsons and examine the intricate relationship between media and our understanding of the society. Based on their critique of the Simpsons, students will have the opportunity to create a script of a new episode of *The Simpsons* or revise an existing episode.

Note: you need to make sure to have access to episodes of *The Simpsons*. They are available on Hulu which currently offers a subscription for varying membership fees with the first month free. Click the link [here](#).

Our work will be conducted remotely, using Canvas and Zoom. The faculty will offer alternative assignments if conditions or illness prevent students from accessing our synchronous meetings, which will allow students to earn comparable credit.

Learning objectives:

Upon successful completion of the course requirements, you will:

- become familiar with the basic concepts of sociology
- learn how to apply “sociological imagination” through analysis of *The Simpsons*
- understand the power of media in shaping our sense of reality
- strengthen critical thinking skills, oral and written communication skills

Text:

Newman, David. (2020). *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life*, 13th Edition. Sage. ISBN: 978-1506388205.

Overview of 5 weeks:

Week 1 Introduction to “sociological imagination”; Week 2 Gender in *The Simpsons*; Week 3 Class in *The Simpsons*; Week 4 Race in *The Simpsons*; Week 5 Wrap-up