

San José State University
Department of Sociology and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences
Sociology 181B: Senior Capstone (02), Spring 2025

Course and Contact Information

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| Instructor: | Chris J. Cox, <i>ABD</i> |
| Office Location: | Dudley Moorhead Hall (DMH) 210 |
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| Email: | Christopher.cox@sjsu.edu Cj373@hotmail.com |
| Office Hours: | W 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm and by appointment |
| Class Days/Time: | MW 3:00 pm – 4:15 pm |
| Classroom: | Dudley Moorhead Hall (DMH) 162 |
| 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.*

Associated with these foci, the course is organized around four themes of transformation that many students go through as they complete their degree and move into a new life. These transformations include finding a career, becoming an engaged participant in our democracy, pursuing more education, and balancing family and work life. By thinking about and reflecting upon these transformations, you will expand your opportunities and options for your career and life.

This capstone course is designed to help you integrate the knowledge from your sociology coursework (theory, methods, research, writing, quantitative and informational literacy) and to prepare you for your work after you are awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree. Thus, it will help you reflect on your career as a sociology student, to develop knowledge about possible careers for which your sociology prepares you, and to prepare for future

careers by learning what sociology can tell us about work, careers and being successful with your college degree.

Course Format

All of our class sessions will be in person and in our regular classroom unless otherwise indicated. Given that the Covid-19 pandemic is not over, we will adjust as necessary to any changes in campus policy, county-level public health policy, and state-level public health policies as needed. As of the start of this semester, the campus-wide mask mandate is still in place; the expectation is that students will fully comply with such policies.

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](http://sjsu.instructure.com) 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) <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.

- 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

Sallaz, Jeffrey J. (2013) *Labor, Economy and Society* Malden, MA: Polity Press. (A link to the electronic version is posted on Canvas)

Toor, Rachel. (2024) *Why You, Why Me, Why Now* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Benjamin, Ruha. (2025) *Imagination: A Manifesto* New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.

Other Readings

—Selected readings from *Contexts: understanding people in their social worlds*, a publication of the American Sociological Association; available at the King Library through e-journals.

Library Liaison

Jane Dodge (408) 808-2321

Course Requirements and Assignments

This class includes a variety of assignments and activities:

1. **Writing Assignments** (50% of course grade): There will be several short assignments, which will include:
 - A. A **Self-Assessment & Occupational/Career Investigation Report** based on the Lambert self-assessment chapter and Career Center assessments (10%)
 - B. A **Resume/Cover Letter**: A one-page resumé you will use for a job (and/or other **master** resumé that includes all possible information about your skills and qualifications). A sample cover letter will be included as well. (12%)
 - C. A sample **Personal Statement/Statement of Purpose** that can be used for graduate school applications and/or internships, special programs, etc. (12%)
 - D. An **Occupational Interview** (career informational interview); conducting an interview, including a written report on what you discovered (15%)
 - E. A **Term Paper Topic** submission in which you describe your intended topic for your research paper (1%)

**Specific assignment instructions will be provided on Canvas

2. **Quizzes** (10%): There will be quizzes for each chapter of the Sallaz book

3. **Community Research Projects** (20% of course grade): Students will engage in research centered on a particular problem affecting the community/region. Each student will select their own topic of interest which will be submitted to me for approval. Students who have had an internship may be able to select a topic based on the work done by the organization for which they intern(ed).

4. **Research Presentation** (5% of course grade): You will present the research from your community research project in class.

5. **Portfolio** (15% of course grade): The portfolio is a showcase of materials showing a coherent story of your knowledge and skills. This will include summaries and/or examples of your coursework selected to highlight the accomplishments of your educational career. Your scholastic history, knowledge, skills, values, professional motivation, and sociological imagination will be centered in this assignment. The completed portfolio, hard copy or electronic, will be a high-quality product that promotes you to employers and graduate programs (the Career Center has examples and handouts).

Evaluation of all written work will be based on the following principles:

- a. Clear formatting of all papers that is consistent with the assignment (e.g., paper, letter, resume) with respect to name, title, margins, spacing, numbering of pages, as you were taught in SOC 100W;
- b. Written work is free of grammatical errors and shows a senior level and professional standard of written English;
- c. Well-organized and interesting account indicating respect for a reader's time and attention. An interesting story is easier to read and remember;
- d. As seniors you should have begun to develop a "sociological imagination" and your written work should provide evidence of this skill;
- e. Not only is the author able to describe events, situations, people and conversations with enough detail for the reader to see what is being written about, but the author tells his/her readers how the information was collected (by interview, where and when, printed sources);
- f. The writer is suspicious of anecdotal evidence and strives to seek out systematic evidence from prior courses, from published sources, or from additional sources

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

This course is graded. Grading is on a percentage basis, and then the assignments are weighted according to the percentage of the total grade indicated. For assignments that are not graded on points, they must be turned in to pass the course (credit/no credit). The classroom participation grade is measured by means of your vocal participation in classroom discussion, asking questions in class, and your contribution to moving the course discussion forward. The instructor reserves the right to readjust points, remove assignments after discussion with the enrolled students, but will not add additional work beyond what is specified in the syllabus. As a rule, the course does not include extra credit.

Grade Breakdown:

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|------------------------|-----|
| Written Assignments: | 50% |
| Quizzes: | 10% |
| Community Research: | 20% |
| Research Presentation: | 5% |
| Portfolio: | 15% |

| <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>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. Late Assignments: Assignments such as term papers will lose credit for every class meeting that they are late. These assignments must be **turned in on Canvas as specified** (not by email). Assignments over one week late will not be accepted unless a prior arrangement has been made with me. If you foresee a problem with meeting a deadline, you need to speak with me about it **as soon as possible**. Waiting until the last minute is not a good idea. Late exams need to be taken as soon as possible, and I need to be informed of your absence should it occur on an exam date.
2. Academic Honesty: Cheating on exams or written assignments is not allowed and will not be tolerated. Most importantly, this includes plagiarism on the formal written assignments. Basically, plagiarism includes using the words and ideas of others without giving proper credit, as well as the outright copying of others' work. In cases of substantiated violations of the academic integrity policy (i.e., there is sufficient evidence that you have cheated on any assignment), **you will automatically fail the course**.
3. General conduct: Please stay on task during our limited time together. This includes avoiding temptations to multi-task while online. During online sessions, it is **not** required that you use your camera at all times but it is preferred that you use it when speaking. Other norms of etiquette for online class sessions include (but are not limited to):
 - Appropriately muting one's microphone when not speaking
 - Your name listed in your Zoom profile so you can be clearly identified while in class
 - Refraining from sharing links for class sessions (for security purposes)

**(when in person):* Cell phones should not be used during class, and your phone's ringer should be turned off. Please show courtesy to your fellow students and your professor by refraining from cell phone use during class (except as related to class activities). If you are having an emergency for which you need your phone on, come and talk to me before class begins.

Also, there are times when we may discuss sensitive topics during class, or topics of controversy for which people may have extremely divergent views. Open discussion and debate is encouraged, but maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect towards all that are in the class is of the utmost importance.

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 2025

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 | Jan 23 | (Spring semester classes begin) |
| 2 | Jan 27 Jan 29 | Introduction Course Outline, Expectations, plan for semester Who are you? Telling your story What is the <i>sociological imagination</i> ? How to use this imagination Read “Shakespeare in the Bush” article |
| 3 | Feb 3 Feb 5 | Self-Assessment. Read Toor Intro, chapter 1. Register with Sparta Jobs and regularly check the Career Center Calendar of events |
| 4 | Feb 10 Feb 12 | <i>SMART</i> Goals; job searches. Read Toor, chapter 2. Visit the Self-Assessment page of the Career Center and begin to systematically complete the parts of that page. |
| 5 | Feb 17 Feb 19 | DUE: Self-Assessment Interviewing and Job Offer Considerations Read Toor, chapters 3 & 4 |
| 6 | Feb 26 Feb 26 | Presentation from the SJSU Career Center on resumes, cover letters, and Career Center resources* Due: Resume and Cover letter Read Toor, chapters 5, 6, & 7 |
| 7 | Mar 3 Mar 5 | Networking, Social Capital Read Toor, chapters 8, 9, & 10 |
| 8 | Mar 10 Mar 12 | Work, Capitalism, Employment Read Sallaz chapter 1: What Good is Work? Read Sallaz chapter 2: The Great Transformation of Work |
| 9 | Mar 17 Mar 19 | Commodification of paid work; How employers and employees find each other Read Sallaz chapters 3 & 4 |
| 10 | Mar 24 Mar 26 | Control of Labor; Contesting what counts as work; Business/Worker associations |

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| | | Read Sallaz chapters 5 & 6 |
| | | ***Spring Break March 31st – April 4th *** |
| 11 | Apr 7 Apr 9 | Due: Occupational Interview Read Sallaz chapters 7 & 8 |
| 12 | Apr 14 Apr 16 | Imagination book: Read Benjamin Intro and chapter 1 |
| 13 | Apr 21 Apr 23 | Due: Community Research Project Read Benjamin chapters 2 & 3 |
| 14 | Apr 28 Apr 30 | Read Benjamin chapters 4 & 5 |
| 15 | May 5 May 7 | Presentations of research Read Benjamin chapter 6 |
| 16 | May 12 | Wrap up final topics, etc. The last day of instruction for the Fall semester is Monday, May 12th |
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| Final Exam | May 14 | Weds, May 14 th 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm Due: Final Portfolio |