

# Soca 402 – Investigating Professions

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M/W/F – Oglebay 118: 1:30 – 2:20

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<b>Office Hours</b>	<u>Wednesday</u> 10:00 – 12:00 <u>Friday</u> 10:00 – 12:00 Or by appointment

## Course Description and Rationale

Modern societies rely on a class of knowledge workers who bear the responsibility for *finding things out*. These workers are called “investigators” and they are a crucial component of contemporary social institutions. However, if you look closely, you will notice that while there are many different types of investigation, there are relatively few professionals who bear the title, “investigator”. This course takes a “sociology of knowledge” approach to exploring investigation and investigators. Specifically, it locates the meaning of these terms within professions and institutions.

The course is organized into three units. Unit 1 (the shortest) addresses definitional matters and presents a rudimentary introduction to the Sociology of Professions and the Sociology of Knowledge. Unit 2 examines a detailed case study of medical examiners, while unit 3 focuses on undercover police work. We will draw upon concepts introduced in the first unit in the case studies.

Our examination of these case studies will draw upon several areas of substantive sociology, including:

- Organizational Theory
- The Sociology of Knowledge
- Symbolic Interaction & Phenomenology
- Ethnographic Field Methods
- Criminological & Jurisprudence Theory

## Learning Objectives

By the end of the term, I expect students to be able to:

- (1) Define the Sociology of Knowledge and the Sociology of Professions.
  - a. Explain how knowledge (or what we know) is mediated through institutions and social organization.
  - b. Identify ways in which professions, located within a particular organizational ecology, colonize certain activities within their jurisdiction.
  - c. Analyze the consequences (intended and otherwise) of professional domination over particular domains of knowledge.
- (2) Comprehend the consequences of professional investigation in terms of the Criminal Justice system.
  - a. Identify the practical effects of investigating professions on other criminal justice agents
  - b. Identify the practical effects other criminal justice agents have on investigators.

## Required Reading

There are two required texts for this class as well as a packet of readings (available for purchase through the WVU bookstore, as well as for free through ecampus). They are listed below in the order we will read them.

Reading Packet. 5 articles. Available from the WVU bookstore for approximately \$50.00. Available in pdf format on the ecampus page.

Timmermans, Stefan C. 2006. *Postmortem: How Medical Examiners Explain Suspicious Deaths*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [ISBN0-226-80399-6]

Marx, Gary T. 1988. *Undercover: Police Surveillance in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press. [ISBN 0-520-06969-2]

# Assignments & Requirements

## 3 Exams

There will be three exams:

- Early (Week 3)
- Midterm (week 9)
- Final (Finals week)

These exams are **cumulative!** Questions will largely be short answer (requiring a couple of words to a couple of sentences). Rudimentary concepts are introduced in the first two weeks which will elaborate upon in the remainder of the term. **Please bring 10 sheets of lined paper to each exam.**

## Book Review

Each student must select one of the books (Postmortem or Undercover) and prepare a short (3 to 5 page) book review. In this review, you will isolate on one account of an investigation and analyze it using the conceptual tools introduced in the class. Detailed instructions about the book review will be distributed in week 3.

## Breakdown of Grades

Activity	Percent of Grade
Early Exam	20%
Mid Term Exam	30%
Final Exam	30%
Book Review	15%
Attendance, Participation, Misc	5%

## **Statement on Academic Integrity**

Your instructor assumes that he will never have reason to doubt your honesty, but he wishes to be clear about his policies concerning plagiarism and academic misconduct. According to the WVU Student handbook

(<http://www.arc.wvu.edu/rightsa.html#Anchor-1.-44522>) acts of dishonesty include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Plagiarism defined as:
  - Submitting as one's own work the product of someone else's research, writing... that is, submitting as one's own work any report, notebook, speech, outline, theme, thesis, dissertation, or commercially prepared paper.
  - Incorporating in one's submission, without appropriate acknowledgement and attribution, portions of the works of others; that is, failing to use the conventional marks and symbols to acknowledge the use of verbatim and near-verbatim passages of someone else's work or failing to name the source of words, pictures, graphs, etc., other than one's own, that are incorporated into any work submitted as one's own.
- Forgery, misrepresentation, or fraud defined as:
  - Knowingly presenting false data or intentionally misrepresenting one's records for personal gain.

As this course involves substantial writing students will be constantly reminded of their academic integrity responsibilities. Should there be any question about what constitutes plagiarism or dishonestly, please ask the instructor. Clear cases of Plagiarism and/or Academic dishonesty will result in an unforgivable F on the particular assignment and may lead to the initiation of appropriate disciplinary proceedings. If you have any question about when and how to document sources, or any other question that will help assure academic honesty, please talk to me.

## **Social Justice**

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that statement and expect to foster a nurturing learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

## Schedule<sup>1</sup>

Wk	class	Date	Topic
1	1	1/12	Introduction – The Sociology of Knowledge – (Buy your books!)
	2	1/14	Investigating Occupations - Read Hughes, “The Study of Occupations” in the course pack (also available via ecampus).
	3	1/16	The concept of Professions – Read Hughes “Professions” in CP.
2		1/19	No Class – Martin Luther King Day
	4	1/21	Professional Vision – Read Goodwin, “Professional Vision” in C.P.
	5	1/23	Case Study: Finger Print Analysis. Read – Cole “Witnessing Identification” in C.P.
3	6	1/26	Case Study: Brokering Suspicious Deaths. R: Timmermans (1-34).
	7	1/28	--- continued. Review for Exam 1
	8	1/30	Exam I
4	9	2/2	Investigation - Classification. Timmermans (35-73)
	10	2/4	--- Continued
	11	2/6	--- Continued
5	9	2/9	Investigation – Classification pt. 2: Timmermans (74-112)
	10	2/11	--- Continued
	11	2/13	--- Continued
6	12	2/16	Credibility through Professional Authority: Timmerans (113-156)
	13	2/18	--- Continued
	14	2/20	--- Continued
7	15	2/23	Contested Knowledge: Timmerans (157-194)
	16	2/25	--- Continued
	17	2/27	--- Continued
8	18	3/2	A Baby Died: Timmermans (195-224)
	19	3/4	--- Continued
	20	3/6	--- Continued

Wk	class	Date	Topic
	21	3/9	The Hope of Forensic Authority: Timmermans (195-224)
9	22	3/11	--- continued. Review for Exam 2
	23	3/13	Exam 2 -
		3/16	
10		3/18	<b>S P R I N G – B R E A K</b>
		3/20	
	24	3/23	Introduction to Undercover Operations: Marx (1-16)
11	25	3/25	History of Undercover Policing (Marx (17-35)
	26	3/27	Current Contexts, Types, and Dimensions: Marx - 36-88 <b>Timmermans Book Review due</b>
	27	3/30	Current contexts continued...
12	28	4/1	Complexity of Virtue: Marx 89-107
	29	4/3	... continued
	30	4/6	Unintended consequences 1: Marx 108-128
13	31	4/8	Unintended consequences 2: Marx 129-179
	32	4/10	... continued
	33	4/13	Controlling undercover operations Marx 180-205
14	34	4/15	... continued
	35	4/17	No Class
	36	4/20	New Surveillance (Marx 206-233)
15	37	4/22	... continued
	38	4/24	... continued
	39	4/27	Interrogation as a Confidence Game: Leo in Reader.
16	40	4/29	TBD
	41	5/1	TBD

1. Note: The Schedule is subject to change and new materials may be added. Students are responsible for any additions or deletions communicated in class.