



SOCIOLOGY 383 001

Ethnomethodology

Fall 2022

Class Time: Thursday 11.30 am – 1.30 pm. Room SJ2 2003

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Kieran Bonner

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Calendar Description

Ethnomethodology is a study of the methods and practices people use to produce and recognize social actions. Topics may include greetings, the sex/gender distinction, science and common sense, breaching experiments, and jury deliberation.

Course Description

Ethnomethodology is the study of the methods and practices people use to produce and recognize "intelligible" social actions and descriptions. To understand these methods, requires thinking outside the box of common sense and the dictates, prejudices, methods, and practices of social science analysis as conventionally conceived. The course focuses on the organization of practical actions and practical reasoning as contingent ongoing accomplishments of everyday life. It will take up the issue of the difference in 'formal analytic' sociology between the practitioner (member) and the analyst (sociologist) and show ethnomethodology's discovery of the practitioner as analyst. It will also address one offspring of ethnomethodology, Blum and McHugh's Reflexive Analysis, which develops the analyst/practitioner figure. Students will engage in the practice of attempting to describe ordinary social activity as if it were happening for the very first time.

We will begin the course by introducing students to an overall theme of the two different epistemological approaches to knowledge creation: Knowledge by Discovery and Knowledge by Interpretation. We will then proceed to elaborate on phenomenological, ethnomethodological, and reflexive analytic concepts to demonstrate the methods that radically interpretive approaches use to understand

social life.

As with my other courses, this course has a 4-stage learning process: 1 Reading; 2. Responding to a Discussion Question on the reading; 3. Reading other discussion responses and replying to one; 4. Attending the class which discusses the reading. Each stage builds on the previous stage and thus enabling students to build on their learning. Again, as with my other courses, the fundamental intellectual interest concerns the issue of how we collectively understand and change ourselves. In particular, we will be concerned with the problem of speaking well and acting well, both with regard to the question of theory and practice of various theoretical positions in sociology, and with our own talk and action in class. Be prepared to have your own assumptions disturbed, to be required to question what you take for granted, and, fundamentally, to think about and take responsibility for your own talk. **Because of this reflexive character, there will be times when the issues seem convoluted and the questions difficult and challenging. Thus, as with all my courses, perplexity (aporia) will be a necessary experience in this class. As a nurtured Socratic perplexity (aporia) is part of the experience of learning, you will need to be able to sustain your spirit despite at times feeling you do not know what is going on nor where the course is headed. In short, perplexity/confusion is a course objective.**

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Understand the debates about knowledge creation
 - Understand the epistemological assumptions underlying the different models of Discovery and Interpretation
 - Understand the practical research implications that follow from these assumptions
- B. Address solutions to capturing the complexity of social life
 - Engage in experiments and analysis of everyday phenomenon
 - Examine the implications of such experiments
- C. Develop the capacity to think 'outside the box'
 - Develop imaginative ways for understanding everyday action as oriented
 - Develop the rigorous discipline to make data-based claims
- D. Understanding reflexivity as a theorist's and member's resource
 - Understand the 'uninteresting essential reflexivities of accounts'
 - Understand the relation between ethics and reflexive analysis

Reading:

Required: John Heritage 1991 *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology* on e-reserves

***Recommended:** Harold Garfinkel 1967. *Studies in Ethnomethodology*

Other Readings Available on Course Reserves

- Wallace and Wolf, Heritage, Garfinkel, McHugh et al, Bonner, Pollner, Lynch, etc.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment	Date of Evaluation (if known)	Weighting
Analysis of Breaching Experiment (3-4 pp. in Word)	Oct. 7	15%
Motive Discourse Analysis Exercise (5-6 pp. in Word)	Nov. 8	25%
Take-Home Exam/Paper (in Word)	Dec 12 (Posted on Dec. 1)	40%
Online Assignments	Ongoing	10%
10 Response to Readings @1% each		5%
10 Replies to Responses @ 0.5% each		5%
Participation (10/12 class attendance and participation@ 0.5% per class)		5%
Total		100%

Online Assignments

The purpose of the online discussion assignments, as part of the 4-stage learning process, is to **generate dialogue among the students** as well as to prepare students for the lecture/class. As the main point is to encourage attempts at responding to questions on difficult readings, they are not graded for accuracy nor are they responded to by the instructor. Rather, any issues and questions they raise are addressed in the class. They are completion assignments; the attempt earns the grade.

Discussion: Response to Question on Readings

Over the course of the term, each student will respond to 10 of approximately 12 questions posed online over the course of 12 weeks. These responses should be **approximately 180 - 200 words in length**. (Note, anything less than this length is in risk of not counting.) The questions are designed to get you thinking on the challenging readings. The questions will be posted by the day after the Thursday class and the **response is due on the following Wednesday @ 1 pm. This is a firm deadline**. The assignment is a completion exercise and students receive 10% for completing all 10 (1% each).

Replies to Student Posts

Students are also required to respond to another students' response once a week. You must do 10 responses and they must be a paragraph in length, 60- 80 words approximately. (Note, anything less than this length is in risk of not counting.) **These are due on the following Wednesday (before the relevant) class by 3pm. Again, this is a firm deadline as the discussion board closes at 3pm**. These are completion assignments and you will get 5% for completing all 10 responses (.5% each).

Participation: Students should attend at least 10 of 12 or so classes. During class I may call on you to read a slide, or interpret a slide, to further discuss class content, and so on. This is a completion assignment and each attendance is worth 0.5% each. **You will get 5% for attending 10 of 12 classes**

Course Outline / Class Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
Class 1	Thurs. Sept. 8	1. Overview of the Course. 2. Knowledge Creation: Discovery vs. Interpretation	Slides Posted on Learn
Class 2	Thurs. Sept. 15	The Phenomenological Input	*Wallace and Wolf, Ch. 6. 262–292; (Heritage Ch. 3)
Class 3	Thurs. Sept. 22	“The Morality of Cognition”	Heritage Ch. 4. (75- 97)
Class 4	Thurs. Sept 29	“Actions, Rules, Contexts” – Due next week, Oct 7: Breaching Exercise	Heritage Ch. 4. (97-102); Ch 5. (103-115)
Class 5	Oct 6 1st Paper Due Oct 7	“Actions, Rules, Contexts”	Heritage Ch. 5 (115- 134)
	Oct. 8 – 16	READING WEEK	READING WEEK
Class 6	Thurs. Oct. 20	“The Uninteresting Essential Reflexivity of Accounts.”	Garfinkel. Ch 1 (1 -11, 24-34)
Class 7	Thurs. Oct. 27	Understanding motives: Factual versus Grammatical approaches	McHugh et al, <i>Motive</i>
Class 8	Thurs. Nov. 3. 2nd Due Nov 8	Analysis of Motive Discourse – The Case of the Culture of Montreal	Bonner: “ <i>Reason-Giving...</i> ”
Class 9	Thurs. Nov. 10	“Irish Corruption: A Motive Analysis”	Bonner: “ <i>Irish Corruption-Motive Analysis</i> ”
Class 10	Thurs. Nov. 17	Birth News (or Pollner and Lynch) paper	Bonner: “ <i>Birth News</i> ” Garfinkel, Ch. 5
Class 11	Thurs. Nov. 24	Addendum to the Motive paper: Nihilism and Interpretive Sociology	-1. McHugh et al Ch. 2 (pp. 43-46). 2. Bonner – <i>Nihilism</i>
Class 12	Thurs. Dec. 1	Evil and the Ethical Evaluation of Action: Take-Home Exam Discussed.	Bonner: <i>Arendt...</i>

This is a tentative course outline in the sense that student interest and the emerging course conversation may require the introduction of new material, spending more time with existing material or even returning to material covered earlier. The outline, therefore, is not so much a contract as a proposal.

Notes:

Email is not conducive to discussion and not an alternative way to receive class material. Discussion of assignments, class material or sociological questions is welcome at class, during office hours or by appointment. Appointments can be made email. **This course is registered on UW LEARN. Please activate your UW email account.**

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

<i>Event</i>	<i>Date</i>
Classes begin	Wed., Sept. 7
Last day to add a class	Tues., Sept. 20
Last day to drop, no penalty	Tues., Sept. 27
<i>Reading Week</i> (no course activity or assignments can be due)	Sat., Oct. 8 - Sun., Oct. 10
<i>UW Holiday (Thanksgiving Day & "Thank you" day)</i>	Mon., Oct. 10 & Tues., Oct. 11
Last day to drop, receive a WD	Tues., Nov. 22
Lectures end	Tues., Dec. 6
Last day to drop, receive a WF	Thurs., Dec. 8
Pre-final assessment study days	Wed., Dec. 7 & Thurs., Dec. 8
Final exam/assessment period	Fri., Dec. 9 - Fri., Dec. 10
<i>UW Holiday Closure</i>	Dec., 24 - Jan. 2

POLICY ON LATE WORK, MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, AND MAKE-UP TESTS

Late Penalty on graded assessments - 2% (out of 100%) per day including weekends

RULES FOR GROUP WORK IN ASSIGNMENTS

When working on a group assignment, a Group Assignment Checklist must be completed and submitted with the assignment:

https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/sites/ca.arts/files/uploads/files/group_assignment_disclosure.pdf

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students should attend at least 10 of 12 or so classes. During class I may call on you to read a slide, to interpret a slide, to further discuss class content, and so on. This is a completion assignment; each attendance is worth 0.5% each. **You will get a maximum of 5% for attending 10 of 12 or so synchronous classes.**

ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY

Uses of electronic devices should not interfere with student learning.

CORRESPONDENCE

My preference for contact is by email to the email address above. Please include the nature of the issue and your student ID in the email.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of their instructor.

Intellectual property includes items such as:

- Lecture content, spoken and written (and any audio/video recording thereof);
- Lecture handouts, presentations, and other materials prepared for the course (e.g., PowerPoint slides);
- Questions or solution sets from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams); and
- Work protected by copyright (e.g., any work authored by the instructor).

Course materials and the intellectual property contained therein, are used to enhance a student's educational experience. **However, sharing this intellectual property without the intellectual property owner's permission is a violation of intellectual property rights. For this reason, it is necessary to ask the instructor for permission before uploading and sharing the intellectual property of others online (e.g., to an online repository).**

Permission from an instructor is also necessary before sharing the intellectual property of others from completed courses with students taking the same/similar courses in subsequent terms/years. In many cases, instructors might be happy to allow distribution of certain materials. However, doing so without expressed permission is considered a violation of intellectual property rights.

Please alert the instructor if you become aware of intellectual property

belonging to others (past or present) circulating, either through the student body or online. The intellectual property rights owner deserves to know (and may have already given their consent).

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION [REQUIRED LANGUAGE APPROVED BY SJU SENATE COUNCIL]

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo [Policy 71, Student Discipline.](#) For typical penalties, check the [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties.](#)

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome's University policy on [Student Appeals.](#)

Note for students with disabilities: [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

[INCLUDE THE NEXT SECTION IF USING TURNITIN; <https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/integrity-instructors-and-tas/turnitin-and-ithenticate>]

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students' submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin® in this course. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if they, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided, wish to submit the alternate assignment.