

COURSE INFORMATION

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

FALL 2024

SOCI 4350-400 COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Credit Hours 3

Internet Class mandatory or optional online meeting times and requirements to be announced and specified (see below)

Professor / Instructor Contact Information

Milan Zafirovski, Professor

SYCAMORE 288G

Office hours Tuesday 3-5PM, online every day during school week

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Teaching Assistant information to be announced

About the Professor / Instructor

Milan Zafirovski is professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of North Texas. He received his doctoral degree in sociology from Florida International University, Miami in 1999. He teaches Social Stratification, Community Organization, Social Problems, and Sociology of Work for undergraduate students, and Sociological Theory and Social Stratification for graduate students.

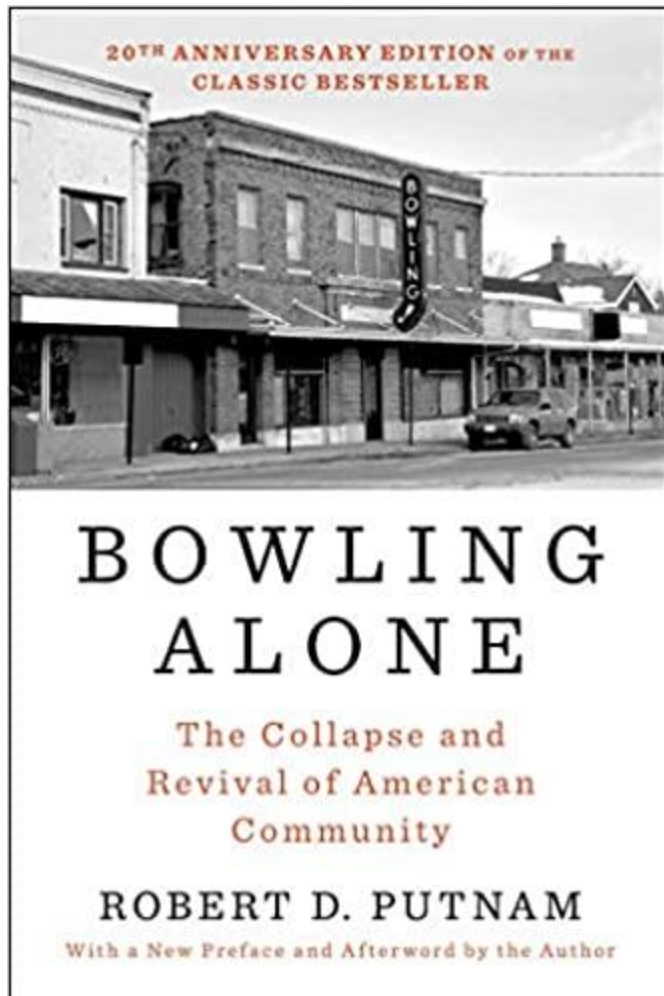


Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

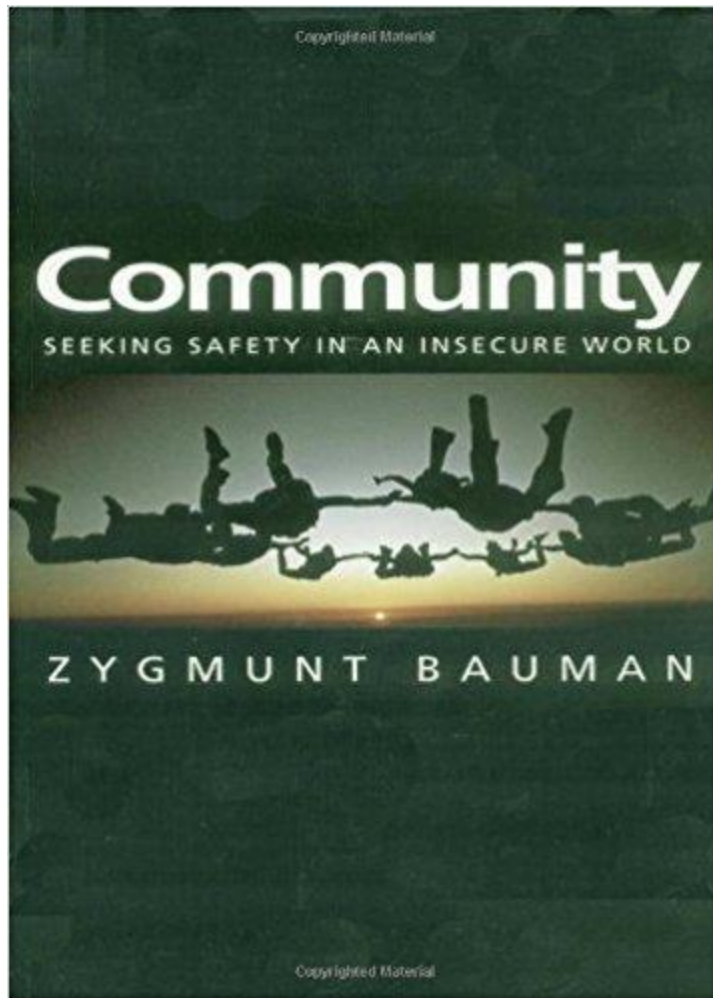
Pre-requisites	None
Instructor permissions	Not required

Materials – Text, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Required materials/ textbook Robert Putnam. Bowling Alone: The Collapse And Revival Of American Community. 2020 edition. New York: Simon & Schuster. ISBN: 9781982130848



Supplementary readings (recommended). Bauman, Zygmunt. Community: Seeking Safety In An Insecure World. Cambridge: Polity Press (Blackwell Publishers). ISBN: 9780745626352.



Course Description

Description of general content of the course. This course provides an historical and sociological overview of community organization. More specifically, it applies a historical and sociological perspective on community organization in the United States. The course uses empirical evidence and theoretical concepts to analyze, and when necessary suggest solutions to, questions of community organization. Emphasis is placed on the real-life implications and applications of the frameworks for approaching community organization. Therefore, the course focuses on the history and sociology of American community since postwar times through the early 21st century, focusing on its observed decline and potential of its renewal during the last part of the 20th century, including the expansion and community impact of the Internet from 2000 to 2020 (see the last chapter of the textbook, Afterword: Has the Internet Reversed the Decline of Social Capital?). Above all, it provides a useful historical picture of how and why American community has developed during this specific time, specifically as its growth during postwar times of the 1940-60s and its relative decline during the following decades until the late 20th and early 21st century, including the time from 2000 to 2020 (see preface to the 2020 edition of the textbook). It will help students acquire an historical knowledge, appreciation, and sense of the development of American

community in longer terms, combined with sociological and related concepts explaining this process.

Instructional methods. In general, the course combines sociological methods and concepts with empirical observations and facts to objectively examine issues in community organization, with an emphasis on American Community. Sociological methods, concepts, and data are used for the sake of a better understanding and explaining recent trends, i.e., decline and revival, in contemporary American communities. Specific instructional methods include online lectures presenting main sociological concepts and empirical facts of community organization, especially American Community through course outlines, online discussions, and the like. The profile and perspective of this course is mostly sociological. Nonetheless, this sociological perspective on community organization will often be combined with those of other social sciences, especially anthropology, political science and history. In this regard, the course will have a thorough inter-disciplinary orientation, which is necessitated by the (multi-disciplinary) character—economic, political, historical, and cultural--of the subject of community organization. Given this orientation, the course can be interesting and challenging both for students with majors/minors in sociology and for those majoring in such social sciences as anthropology, history, political science, as well as psychology, economics, business, etc. However, the course is not limited to social-science students, but can also be of interest and use for those in the physical and other sciences. Preferably, students should possess some elementary preparation in sociology and related social sciences at the introductory level. Given its intermediate character, the course can serve as a stepping-stone for further studies of community organization on undergraduate as well as graduate levels.

Content/Rationale of the course. The content of the course will benefit students by helping them better understand and make sense of community organization and processes in the United States and in part other contemporary societies, including real-life, topical, and publicized issues of community decline or civic crisis and the like. The course closely relates to the content, primary concepts and principles of sociology which has a long-standing tradition of studying community organization and related issues. The course will emphasize acquiring and applying a basic scientific and inter-disciplinary type of knowledge by providing the main sociological and related concepts, objective facts (including statistical data), and explanations of community organization in America and in part comparable societies. It will also emphasize a specific type of abilities such as comprehending, learn, applying, and connecting (rather than merely memorizing) concepts and facts. The course is organized in a specific sequence through learning modules because these are seen as the most appropriate ways to reach the goals and learning objectives of the course. Each particular course subject or lesson is presented by a learning module. A learning module includes learning objectives to be reached for that particular lesson, lesson content with sub-contents, summary, and assignments for students.

Learning objectives/outcomes. The learning objectives/outcomes for the overall course (also provided for each learning module) are the following.

- students will learn, comprehend, and connect principles, concepts, and empirical facts of community organization and processes in contemporary American society;
- students will be able to analyze, understand, and explain how and why community has declined or in crisis and its possible revival in contemporary American society;
- students will be able to relate and compare community organization and trends to society as a whole, including economy, politics, and culture;
- students will be able to place and analyze community organization and processes within a larger comparative-historical and global context by comparing the United States with other contemporary societies;
- students will be able to apply sociological concepts, principles, and methods to better understanding and addressing current issues of community organization, in particular its recently crisis in the United States;
- students will be able to increase their capacities and motivations or interests in further studying community organization and related sociological subjects at undergraduate and graduate levels

Teaching Philosophy

I emphasize that teaching and education overall is based on science and research such as sociological and other scientific studies, as complementary in relation to each other. Therefore I emphasize and reiterate that scientific knowledge represents the basis of teaching and education and really 'power' for students and society as a whole. I stress practical applications of concepts and principles to understanding, analyzing and helping resolve contemporary social issues. I use a variety of teaching methods, including both traditional and modern ones. I strive for maximum student-teacher communication, interaction and cooperation. I pursue justice in evaluating students through an equality between performance/merit and grades.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS / ASSISTANCE

The following information has been provided to assist you in preparation for the technological aspect of the course.

UIT Help Desk: <http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>

Hardware and software necessary to use CANVAS:

<https://clear.unt.edu/supported-technologies/canvas>

Browser requirements: <https://clear.unt.edu/supported-technologies/canvas/requirements>

Computer and Internet Literacy:

http://clt.odu.edu/oso/index.php?src=pe_comp_lit

Headset/Microphone (if required for synchronous chats)

Word Processor

Other related hardware or software necessary for the course

Minimum Technical Skills Needed:

Examples include:

Using the learning management system

Using email with attachments

Creating and submitting files in commonly used word processing program formats

Copying and pasting

Downloading and installing software

Using spreadsheet programs

ACCESS & NAVIGATION**Access and Log in Information**

This course was developed and will be facilitated utilizing the University of North Texas' Learning Management System, CANVAS. To get started with the course, please go to: <https://clear.unt.edu/home>

You will need your EUID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your EUID or have forgotten your password, please go to: <http://ams.unt.edu>.

Student Resources

As a student, you will have access to:

- Student Orientation via CANVAS. It is recommended that you become familiar with the tools and tutorials within the Orientation to better equip you in navigating the course.
- CANVAS's On Demand Learning Center for Students. It is recommended that you become familiar with the tools and tutorials to better equip you to navigate the course.
- From within CANVAS, you will have access to the "UNT Helpdesk" tab which provides student resources and Help Desk Information.

How the Course is Organized

The course information is organized by using learning modules consisting of learning objectives to be reached, content and sub-contents, summary, and assignments (see above). It is structured by week or part of it such that for each week or part of it a learning module is used.

What Should Students Do First?

Students should first, once they have accessed the course, read carefully the syllabus. Also, they need to complete an introductory assignment, and discussion post. In addition, they need to send contact information to the instructor via the email tool and introduce themselves to each other.

How Students Should Proceed Each Week for Class Activities

Students will be able to access the materials each week in order to successfully complete the course activities, including exams, participation in discussions, and other assignments. Necessary files such as lecture materials are located in Course Content,

exams in Assignments, and discussion topics in the Discussion Forum. A class activity schedule has been created to track student activities, including participation in discussions and other assignments.

Student Technical Support

The University of North Texas provides student technical support in the use of CANVAS and supported resources. The student help desk may be reached at:

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu

Phone: 940.565-2324

In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130

Regular hours are maintained to provide support to students. Please refer to the website (<http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/hours.htm>) for updated hours.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will access and follow all course instructions found in the weekly content area of the CANVAS course. Students will follow and access all online lectures provided in Course Modules. Students will complete the assigned 'online' exams and quizzes by accessing Modules in the CANVAS course. Quizzes and exams are located in Modules. Students will respond to posted online course discussion questions using the CANVAS discussion tool. Online participation through discussions is required. Each student should post at least 1 discussion per week based on the readings and lectures. Students will complete and submit assignments electronically using the CANVAS assignment tool if such assignments are specifically required. Student will complete an on-going semester project in accordance with the instructions given in this syllabus and the online course if such assignments are specifically required.

Exam Requirements

This course has simple exam requirements, namely objective exams that make the grading process as simply and objective as possible. In this course there will be three exams, including the first, midterm and final examination (see course schedule). The format of the exams will have short, clear multiple-choice questions (usually 50). The exams will be objective such to evaluate students' reading, knowledge, and grasp of the readings. Exam scores will be computer-generated and so will be the final grade. Therefore, there will be no subjective elements in how exam scores and the final grade are determined. The worth of each exam will be 100 points (maximum). Exams will be given and taken only online (UNT CANVAS) during the specified time period and with specific time limits (e.g., 1 hour minimum).

Failure to take an online exam, without proper documented justification, during the specified time period (see below) will result in a zero (0) score for the missed exam. If an online exam is missed with documented justification during the specified period, make-up exams can be taken either online or in person (closed books and notes) in the UNT Department Of Sociology no later than 2 days after the specified exam period. This applies only to the first two exams, but no final make-up exams will be given after the specified time period. Therefore, no incompletes will be given in case of a failure to take an exam during the specified time period without documented justification.

Exams cannot be retaken or continued either online or in person because of 'bad' Internet connection and other computer 'problems'. It is student responsibility to have a proper Internet connection and computer. Online computer-generated exam scores are final and cannot be changed under any circumstances (just as SAT or GRE scores cannot be changed). Each exam may be taken only once (in one attempt), and any attempts to take the exam again will be an act of academic dishonesty and pursued accordingly. Exams must be taken by each student individually and independently of other students, and not in groups and collaboratively; if it is determined that an online exam is taken in groups and collaboratively, this will be treated as academic dishonesty and pursued accordingly. There is no 'curving' of exam scores. The only basis for dispensing credits/grades is objective performance and merit. This ensures maximum fairness in grading. It is students' own responsibility for class notes, outlines, announcements, etc. The professor will be always and maximally available to students online and in office to address their queries and concerns.

Technical instructions (from UNT CLEAR). Avoid using a wireless connection for exams unless one is certain of its reliability. Take exams using a supported web browser on a computer or laptop rather than using an iPad. If using an iPad, the Chrome browser is recommended. Contact the UIT Helpdesk at 940-565-2324 for assistance in the event of technical problems affecting the ability to access or complete a test.

Additional Course Requirements

Additional course requirements include quizzes, participation in discussions, and a semester assignment consisting of an extensive review of supplementary readings.

Quizzes

Quizzes are given every week as feasible (see the weekly schedule in the last part of the syllabus) and cover the reading assignment for that week. Quizzes are required and provide additional points that will be added to and thus increase total exam scores. The format of quizzes will be short, clear multiple-choice questions (usually 4). Quizzes test students' reading, knowledge, and recall of the readings. Quiz scores will be computer-generated and there will be no subjective elements in how they are determined. The worth of each quiz will be 4 points (maximum) with a correct answer being worth 1 point. Quizzes will be given and taken only online (UNT CANVAS) during the specified time and with specific time limits (e.g., 5 minutes minimum).

Discussions

Discussions are also on a weekly basis, required and provide additional points that will be added to and increase total exam and quiz scores. Discussions are worth between 1 and 4 points each per 1 weekly discussion topic according to the following rubric. Discussions under 100 words and without any textbook support such as citations or data are worth 1 point each. Discussions with 100 or more words and without any textbook support such as citations or data are worth 2 points each.

Discussions under 100 and with textbook support such as several citations or data are worth 2 points each.

Discussions with 100 or more words but less than 200 words and with textbook support such as several citations or data are worth 3 points each.

Discussions with 200 or more words and with textbook support such as several citations or data are worth 4 points each.

Discussions can be very useful in preparing for the first, midterm and the final exam.

The discussion forums are primarily related to the textbook readings, as well as other readings and resources and activities as available. Upon completion or near completion of the assigned readings and activities, students are expected to engage in an ongoing discussion/debate with your learning community peers. As specified above, student contributions to discussion forums will be graded for quality, timeliness, linking together readings to real-life activities, and above all being grounded in readings.

Discussions close a week after the last discussion topic. In order for students to receive proper scores higher than zero, their discussions should be original posts so that students initiate and write them first, as different from replies to others, which normally do not receive positive scores. In addition, student discussions should follow additional instructions as specified for discussion forums. In sum, these instructions are that discussions should be (1) original posts, (2) follow the above guidelines for scoring, (3) are preferably based on the textbook overall, and (4) give specific textbook support such as citations or data for receiving better scores.

Optional Activities for Extra-Credits

Semester Assignment

A semester optional (not required) assignment or project consists of an extensive and in-depth review of supplementary reading, Zygmunt. Community: Seeking Safety In An Insecure World. Instructions for the review are writing between 4 and 10 full pages, double-spaced, font 12, margin 1, covering the entire reading, minus tables, numbers, and notes, extensively cite the reading, though the review should not be a full literal copy of the book. The completed review should be submitted by the due date specified below.

The review of supplementary reading is worth between 1 and 10 points depending on its quantity and quality as specified below.

A review that is long less than 4 pages and without any book support such as citations or data is worth between 1 point.

A review that is long less than 4 pages and with book support such as citations or data is worth between 2 points.

A review that is long 4 pages and without any book support such as citations or data is worth 3 points.

A review that is long 4 pages and with book support such as multiple citations or data is worth 4 points.

A review that is long between 5-9 pages and without any book support such as citations or data is worth between 4 and 8 points depending on length.

A review that is long between 5-9 pages and with book support such as multiple citations or data is worth between 5 and 9 points depending on length.

A review that is long 10 pages and without any book support such as multiple citations or data is worth 9 points.

A review that is long 10 pages and with book support such as multiple citations or data is worth 10 points.

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Any use, for written assignments such as discussions and the review of supplementary readings, of sources outside of the syllabus, including materials from other classes, online sources, artificial intelligence (AI) programs and the like, is not permitted and will be sanctioned as academic dishonesty and hence with a failing grade (F) both for a specific assignment and for the entire class. Especially, the use of AI to write discussions, reviews/papers and any other class assignments is prohibited and AI plagiarism punished as academic dishonesty with failing grades and further university sanctions.

COMMUNICATIONS

The communication tools in the course are:

- Announcements at least weekly and more frequently as needed
- Email / Messages
- Discussions by week on a particular topic

Interaction with Instructor Statement. The primary tool to communicate directly with students is Email / Messages. Students should send personal concerns or questions to the email tool. Students can expect to receive a response to course e-mail and discussion board postings the same day (if they sent and posted by 9PM), at the latest following day. The time frame in receiving feedback on assignments will be 2 days. Grades will be posted 1 day after the exam is over. For student behavior online see 'netiquette.'

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Exams: 100 points each

Course Objective/Learning Outcomes: students will demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and explanation of basic concepts and facts of community organization. The exams are closed-book and taken individually. The exams will cover the required textbook reading and the content of the online lectures. Complete the exams online by accessing the CANVAS exam tool in Modules. The exams will be timed and grades made available to students following the submission of the exam. If you lose Internet connectivity during the exam, log back in immediately and continue on with the exam.

Save your answers often (every 5-10 minutes). If you experience any issues while taking the exam, you must contact the CANVAS Helpdesk immediately so that your issue is documented with a helpdesk ticket number. Considerations regarding exam issues will be made by the instructor on an individual basis based on the documentation.

Assignments Method: Multiple Choice

Quizzes: 4 points each

Maximum points for each quiz are 4, with 1 point @ 1 question/correct answer. The number of quizzes for a semester is 13, therefore total possible quiz points are 52. This is an additional required activity whose scores can substantially increase exam scores and thus improve the final grade.

Assignments Method: Multiple Choice and/or Essay Exam.

Discussion Forums: 1-4 points variable each

Maximum points for discussions are equal to the number of weekly discussion forums multiplied by 1-4, namely 13-52 points, with 1-4 point @ discussion forum as specified above. This is an additional required activity points for which will added to and increase exam and quiz scores. The discussion forums are primarily related to the textbook readings, as well as other readings and resources and activities as provided.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcome. Students will be active and engaged participants in discussion forums within their learning community by analyzing, creating, and evaluating information presented in the textbook, other readings and resources, student research or observations, and class and other activities.

Instructions

The following are instructions: Discussions rest primarily on the textbook and optionally on the supplementary reading. This includes providing text support such as citations or data from the textbook and optionally the supplementary reading. Discussions should be factual and informed based on facts or scientific theories as distinct from personal or popular opinions without such a basis. Grammar: basis grammar should be adequate by being consistent with academic or professional writing (as distinct from social-media and personal writing).

Note—The use of artificial intelligence (AI) and any sources outside the syllabus to write discussions is prohibited and AI and other plagiarism punished as academic dishonesty with failing grades and further university sanctions up to expulsion.

Semester Assignment: 1-10 points variable (optional)

Maximum points for the semester assignment such as the review of supplementary reading are 10 points maximum if the review meets the guidelines specified above. This is an optional assignment for gaining extra-credits that will be added to points from exams, quizzes and discussions.

The review of supplementary readings is due on December 05, 2024, the last class day (see below).

Assignments Method: comparison of the review with the reviewed reading and instructions.

Grading

Grades will be determined as follows:

Maximum Points From Exams = 300 (required)

Maximum Points From Quizzes = 52 (required)

Maximum Points From Discussions = 52 (required)

Total Points Possible From Course Requirements = 404

Maximum Extra-Points From Review Of Supplementary Reading = 10 (Optional)

Total Points Possible for Semester From All Class Activities = 414

Grades will be determined according to the grading scale below.

Total Points 400-360 = A
Total Points 359-320 = B
Total Points 319-280 = C
Total Points 279-240 = D
Total Points 239-0 = F

Grading Scale by total points/4 for easier understanding	
Average Points 90-100	A
Average Points 80-89	B
Average Points 70-79	C
Average Points 60-69	D
Average Points Below 60	F

Tentative Assignments by Weeks

(Please note that course schedule is subject to change)

Week 1, August 19-26, 2024
Topics

Reading Assignments And Discussion

Preface, Putnam, pp. 9-19

	Introduction: Social Change in America, Putnam, pp. 21-38 Discussion 1 (required) Quiz 1 (required), 12.00AM-11.59PM
August 23, 2024	
Week 2, August 26-September 02, 2024 Topics	Reading Assignments And Discussion Political Participation, Putnam, pp. 41- 56 Civic Participation, Putnam, pp. 58-73 Discussion 2 (required) Quiz 2 (required), 12.00AM-11.59PM
August 30, 2024	
Week 3, September 02-09, 2024 Topics	Reading Assignments And Discussion Religious Participation, Putnam, pp. 74- 89 Informal Social Connections, Putnam, pp. 105-124 Discussion 3 (required) Review for Exam 1
September 06, 2024	Quiz 3 (required), 12.00AM-11.59PM
Week 4, September 09-16, 2024	Review, study for and take Exam 1
September 13, 2024	Exam 1--covers previous chapters, on CANVAS, 12.00AM-11.59PM (required)
Week 5, September 16-23, 2024 Topics	Reading Assignments And Discussion Altruism, Volunteering and Philanthropy, Putnam, pp. 125-139 Reciprocity, Honesty and Trust, Putnam, pp. 140-152 Discussion 4 (required) Quiz 4 (required), 12.00AM-11.59PM
September 20, 2024	
Week 6, September 23-30, 2024 Topics	Reading Assignments And Discussion Against the Tide?, Small Groups, Social Movements and the Net, Putnam, pp. 154-188. Discussion 5 (required) Quiz 5 (required), 12.00AM-11.59PM
September 27, 2024	

Week 7, September 30-October 07, 2024 Topics	Reading Assignments And Discussion Why? Introduction, Putnam, pp. 191-197 Pressures of Time and Money, Putnam, pp. 199-213 Mobility and Sprawl, Putnam, pp. 214- 225 Discussion 6 (required) Quiz 6 (required), 12.00AM-11.59PM
October 04, 2024	
Week 8, October 07-14, 2024 Topics	Reading Assignments And Discussion Technology and Mass Media, Putnam, pp. 227-252 Discussion 7 (required) Quiz 7 (required), 12.00AM-11.59PM
October 11, 2024	
Week 9, October 14-21, 2024 Exam	Review, study for and take Midterm
October 18, 2024	Midterm Exam--covers chapters after Exam 1, Canvas, 12.00AM-11.59PM
Week 10, October 21-28, 2024 Topics	Reading Assignments And Discussion What Killed Civic Engagement?, Summing Up, Putnam, pp. 283-291 So What? Introduction, Putnam, pp. 293-301 Discussion 8 (required) Quiz 8 (required), 12.00AM-11.59PM
October 25, 2024	
Week, 11 October 28-November 04, 2024 Topics	Reading Assignments And Discussion Education and Children's Welfare, Putnam, pp. 303-313 Safe and Productive Neighborhoods, Putnam, pp. 314-327 Discussion 9 (required) Quiz 9 (required), 12.00AM-11.59PM
November 01, 2024	
Week 12, November 04-11, 2024 Topics	Reading Assignments And Discussion Economic Prosperity, Putnam, pp. 328-

	338-347	Health and Happiness, Putnam, pp. Discussion 10 (required)
November 08, 2024		Quiz 10 (required), 12.00AM-11.59PM
Week 13, November 11-18, 2024 Topics		Reading Assignments And Discussion Democracy, Putnam, pp. 348-364 The Dark Side of Social Capital, Putnam, pp. 365-378.
November 15, 2024		Discussion 11 (required) Quiz 11 (required), 12.00AM-11.59PM
Week 14, November 18-25, 2024 Topics		Reading Assignments And Discussion Lessons of History: The Gilded Age and the Progressive Era, Putnam, pp. 380-418 Discussion 12 (required)
November 22, 2024		Quiz 12 (required), 12.00AM-11.59PM
November 25-December 02, 2024		No classes
Week 15, December 02-09, 2024 Topics		Reading Assignments And Discussion Afterword: Has the Internet Reversed the Decline of Social Capital?, Putnam, pp. 435-468.
December 05, 2024		Review and study for the Final Exam Discussion 13 due (required) Quiz 13 (required), 12.00AM-11.59PM Last class day Review of supplementary reading due— optional activity for extra points.
December 06, 2024		Reading day (no classes)
December 07, 2024		Final Exam--covers chapters after the Midterm Exam, mandatory activity for grade, 12.00AM-11.59PM