Sociology: Human Behavior
“Sherlock Holmes, Expert Sociologist”
UConn Pre-College Summer Program

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“My name is Sherlock Holmes. It is my business to know what other people don't know.”
-Sherlock Holmes, The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle

“The world is full of obvious things which nobody by any chance ever observes.”
-Sherlock Holmes, The Hound of the Baskervilles

“There is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact.”
-Sherlock Holmes, The Bascombe Valley Mystery

This course investigates the social world as the famous detective, Sherlock Holmes, would do. Through what Homes called “the science of deduction,” we will investigate why people act and interact, searching for the root causes of human behavior by detecting clues that allow us to solve various mysteries, such as the Case of the Nacirema; the Case of the Slain Baroness, and; the Case of the Gift. We will set out to answer these questions through brief readings, engaging in discussion, watching video-clips, participating in exercises, analyzing data, and forming and testing conclusions. Together, we will combine our clues to uncover hidden patterns in society and why those patterns exist. By the end of the course, students will have a basic sociological understanding of the world.
Course Schedule (subject to change):

Monday, (9:00-12:00): Action and Order: What is the Causal Variable?

Readings to Do Before Class
- None

Class Activities
- Syllabus and Course Overview
- Introductions
- What is Sociology?
- Why Sherlock Holmes?
- Critical Thinking Exercises
- Mysteries to Solve
  - The Case of Bae
  - The Case of the Nacirema
  - The Case of the Puck
  - The Case of Suicide
Tuesday, (9:00-12:00): Structure and Agency

Readings to do Before Class
• Schwalbe, “Thinking Sociologically About Inequality”

Class Activities
• Mysteries to Solve:
  o The Case of the Slain Baroness
  o The Case of Pink and Blue
  o The Case of Missing Identity

Tuesday, (2:00-4:00): The Wild Child

Readings to do Before Class
• None

Class Activities
• Mystery to Solve:
  o The Case of the “Wild Child”
Wednesday, (9:00-12:00): Racial Socialization

Readings to do Before Class
- Ferber, “Planting the Seed: The Invention of Race”
- Cobb, “Black Like Her”
- Freeman, et al, “Looking the Part”

Class Activities
- Mystery to Solve:
  - The Case of the Shifting Racial Categories
Thursday, (9:00-12:00): Culture, Norms, and Values

Readings to do Before Class
- Mills, “The Promise”
- Williams, “Culture”

Class Activities
- Mysteries to Solve:
  - The Case of the Delicious Cricket
  - The Case of the Gift
  - The Case of Conformity

Thursday, (2:00-4:00): “Breaking” Norms

Readings to do Before Class
- None

Class Activities
- Mysteries to Solve:
  - The Case of the Awkward Elevator
Friday, (9:00-12:00): Inequality

Readings to do Before Class
- Blow, “How Hard it is to be Poor”

Class Activities
- Mysteries to Solve:
  - The Case of the Vanishing Dollar
  - The Case of the Correlation