

# FYS 100:

## SOCIOLOGY OF VOCATION

SECTION HH: MWF 9:00-9:50 AM

SECTION KK: MWF 10:00-10:50 AM

018 CARSWELL HALL

Fall 2007

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**Course Web Page:** <http://www.wfu.edu/~yamaned/teaching/vocation/fys100index.htm>

### OVERVIEW

This course is a sociological examination of the concept and practice of vocation. Vocation, understood from a Judeo-Christian perspective, is God's call and plan for our lives and our response to that call. As Quakers say, vocation involves "letting your life speak." Although it can be difficult to understand vocation without a religious dimension, we might provisionally say that from a secular perspective vocation is simply our understanding of and answer to the question: "What must I do with my life?"

We will combine reflection on the concept of vocation and our sense of personal vocation with sociological analyses of the constraints we face in American society as we attempt to discern and realize our vocations in domains such as education, work, and family.

We are fortunate that enrollment in this course is limited so we can treat it as a *discussion-based seminar*. As such, I will not lecture. This format distributes the burden of learning equally on all members of the class. How much we learn will be directly related to how much effort each and every one of us dedicates to the course work, particularly reading the primary course materials and coming to class prepared to discuss those materials.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS IN BRIEF

- (1) Class Participation = 20%
- (2) Two Class Presentations (@ 5% each) = 10%
- (3) Five Papers (@ 10% each) = 50%
- (4) Final Vocation Portfolio = 20%
- (5) Library Instructional Session = -5% for not completing
- (XC) Significant Cultural Artifact Presentation = up to 5% extra credit

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

Over the course of this semester, I hope we will all make some progress in the following areas:

1. In the ability to understand what a “vocation” is in general, how the term may or may not (yet!) apply to our lives, and the challenges we face now and in the future that may hinder our vocational development.
2. More importantly, in the ability to apply a “sociological imagination” to understanding our own vocations in life. We want to be better able to use sociological studies of contemporary society as a window onto our lives, and to use our lives as a springboard to understanding the possibilities of vocation in contemporary society.
3. In general, we want to cultivate and employ the intellectual habits that are central to scholarship: reading critically, discussing thoughtfully, and writing carefully. These analytical habits are portable from this class to others, and from classes to life and work in general.

## COURSE MATERIALS

The following books are available at the bookstore on campus:

Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen, William Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996 [paperback], 1985 [hardback]).

William Damon, *Noble Purpose: The Joy of Living a Meaningful Life* (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2003)

Richard Hersh and John Merrow, editors, *Declining by Degrees: Higher Education at Risk* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) **[recommended]**

Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000).

William Sullivan, *Work and Integrity: The Crisis and Promise of Professionalism in America* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass: 2005)

You will also need a spiral notebook and a three ring binder in order to create your vocation portfolio. The spiral notebook must be brought to *every class meeting*.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There are *100 total points* which can be earned in this class. They are distributed as follows:

**[1] Class Participation (20 points):** As in life, you do not get credit in this class just for showing up. In order to earn *any* of these 20 points, you must participate thoughtfully and actively in our class discussions. “Thoughtfully” here means that your participation is based not only on your own experiences but on your careful consideration of the course materials. Reading and thinking about the course materials is a prerequisite of thoughtful participation. “Actively” here does not mean that you are constantly participating, but that you are regularly involved in the course discussions, can be expected to contribute, and do not go mentally AWOL for periods at a time.

*Grading:* If you do not participate in the class discussions, you will receive 0 points and then the *maximum* number of points you can earn in this class will be 80, which is a “C+”. And that is only if you achieve perfection on all of your other work. That is how important I think class participation is. If you are not comfortable speaking in group settings, then this is your opportunity to get over that (in the same way that people who do not like to write will have a chance to get over that).

**[2] Class Presentations (2 @ 5 points each = 10 points total):** You will be responsible for making presentations to the class on two occasions.

(A) Discussion Leader: Once during the semester, you will be responsible for making a (10-15 minute) presentation on the reading(s) for the day you are assigned. The presentations should cover at least the following topics: (a) the main argument of the reading material and how it relates to the course themes; (b) what is interesting and/or important about the selected reading(s); and (c) the questions the reading(s) raise for discussion.

The first two parts will be the core of your presentation and should lead logically to a set of 3-5 questions you will pose to the class for discussion. *The questions you pose must be emailed to the class at least 24 hours in advance of our meeting.* In preparing your questions, please keep in mind the distinction between different types of questions. Some questions are what we can call *inauthentic* or “test” questions. These questions have a single or a very limited number of “right” answers. For example, “What is Bellah’s definition of vocation?” They are OK as a starting point for discussion, but they do not in themselves generate much discussion because they limit the range of appropriate responses. Better questions are what we can call *authentic* questions. These questions potentially have an unlimited number of good answers. For example, “How does Bellah’s definition of vocation compare to Damon’s? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each?” Because they are more open-ended, authentic questions will be better at generating the kind of discussions we want to have in class.

*Grading:* For this presentation, 3/5 of your score will be based on your presentation and 2/5 will be based on the quality of your questions. If you do not email the questions at least 24 hours in advance, you will receive no credit for that portion of your presentation grade (i.e., the most you can get on the presentation is 3 out of 5 points). In the worst case scenario, you can distribute copies of your questions prior to your presentation the day of class. If you do not provide questions at all in advance of your presentation, you will receive no credit for the entire presentation grade (i.e., 0 out of 5 points).

(B) What Matters to You: Once during the semester, you will make a 15-20 minute presentation on any topic/issue/problem (TIP) that matters to you. Your presentation should provide sufficient background information on the TIP (based on library research), explain why the TIP matters to you, discuss how it relates to your sense of who you are and what your vocation is or could be, and speculate about how you see the TIP and your relationship to it developing in the future.

*Grading*: Using the grading scale on p. 6 below, “Exceptionally High Achievement” will earn 5 points, “Satisfactory” work will earn 4 points, “Passing But Unsatisfactory” work will earn 3 points, and “Failing” work will earn 0 to 2 points, depending on the extent of failure.

*Note*: The parameters for this second presentation are much wider than for the first presentation. If you have any questions about what you should do, please be in touch with me. Also, this presentation is the basis for Paper #5, so as you are preparing your presentation, be thinking about or working on your paper. E.g., when you are doing your library research, be sure to document your sources appropriately.

**[3] Papers (5 @ 10 points each = 50 points total)**: About every two to three weeks you will have a 1,000 word (about 3-4 page) paper due. All papers must be printed and double-spaced with one inch margins on all four sides and pages numbered consecutively. You can determine the number of words in your paper in Word as follows: FILE > PROPERTIES then click the STATISTICS tab.

If it is clear from the text what sources you are referring to, you do not need a bibliography. If you use sources beyond the class readings, you should include a bibliography and parenthetical citation in the text or footnotes to give the references for those sources.

- **Paper 1**: Write your own obituary. Reflect back on your ideal life, including consideration of your education, family, career, citizenship, and anything else you feel will be important to do in your life. The paper should be written in the third-person (e.g., “David Yamane, a professor emeritus at Wake Forest University, went to meet his maker recently. He was best known for his first year seminar called Sociology of Vocation, as well as his tennis game.” Etcetera.)
- **Paper 2**: In this paper, you will reflect on the meaning of “vocation.” What does it mean to have a vocation? How do American culture and institutions inhibit the formation and realization of vocation? What is your current sense of your personal vocation, and how do your educational, familial, occupational, and other aspirations fit into it? In this paper, you must draw on David Brooks’ essay and the other short readings handed out, William Damon’s book, and the assigned selections from *Habits of the Heart* in framing your argument.
- **Paper 3**: In this paper, you will reflect on the place of work in your life. What does it mean for work to constitute a “calling” or vocation? Is it possible today for work to be a vocation? Do you aspire to be a “professional”? What does it mean to belong to a “profession”? In this paper, you will conduct library research (i.e., not just surfing the web for information) on the current state of one or more occupations you are interested in and integrate that research into your paper. You must also incorporate Sullivan’s *Work and Integrity* into your argument.

- **Paper 4:** In this paper, you will reflect on your domestic aspirations and how those relate to your broader sense of vocation. What do you want from family life? What is a “good family”? How might you negotiate the competing expectations of work and family life? Do you have role models in your life, either positive or negative, for integrating work and family into a common vocation? In this paper, you must draw on the assigned selection from *Habits of the Heart* and Hochschild’s *The Time Bind* in developing your argument.
- **Paper 5:** In this paper you will turn your class presentation on “What Matters to You” into a formal paper. You can draw on course materials if you find them helpful, but you *must* conduct and utilize library research (and document your sources) in developing your paper.

**[4] Final Vocation Portfolio (20 points):** At the end of the semester, you will put everything that you have written for the course – both in and out of class, including your spiral notebook and papers – in a binder and submit it as your final portfolio. You will also include one new element: a CD that you will create called “The Soundtrack of My Life (So Far).” This CD should include 5-8 songs and be accompanied by “liner notes,” that is, a written explanation of why each song is part of the soundtrack of your life (what is significant about it, why it is meaningful to you, etc.). The notes for each song should be no fewer than 200 words.

*Grading:* As these portfolios represent the cumulative work you completed across the semester, I will grade them holistically. They represent your overall level of achievement for the semester, so my grading will reward consistency of engagement and performance. I will evaluate them using the grading categories given below.

**[5] Library Instructional Session (5 point penalty for not completing):** On Friday, August 31<sup>st</sup>, our class will meet in Room 476 of the Wilson Wing of the ZSR Library for an instructional session on using library resources. You are welcome to bring your laptops to this session, but do not forget your spiral notebooks!!! If you do not attend, you will receive a 5 point deduction from your final grade.

**[XC] Significant Cultural Artifact Presentation (up to 5 points):** To earn up to 5 points of extra credit, once during the semester you can make a brief (approximately 5-10 minute) presentation to the class describing a cultural artifact and explaining its significance to you in your life. The artifact can be a song, movie, picture, painting, poem, book, or any other object that is significant to you. You need to provide a hard or electronic copy of the artifact for purposes of display to the class. If you would like to do this extra credit, please see me to schedule a day.

## GRADES

The bulletin of the College specifies letter grades corresponding to levels of achievement:

A = Exceptionally High Achievement  
A-, B+, B = Superior  
B-, C+, C = Satisfactory  
C-, D+, D = Passing But Unsatisfactory  
F = Failure

I place a premium on good writing, especially spelling and grammar. So, proofread your papers carefully before turning them in. I heartily recommend that all students make use of the Writing Center, 117 Reynolda Hall (758-5768). Poorly written and proofread papers will be graded down with increasing severity over the course of the semester.

The scale for grades based on the number of points earned over the course of the semester is:

A:	96-100
A-:	92-95
B+:	89-91
B:	86-88
B-:	82-85
C+:	79-81
C:	76-78
C-:	72-75
D+:	69-71
D:	66-68
F:	Less than 65

## IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT CLASS

1. Mas vale prevenir que lamentar: It is better to *prevent* problems than to *lament* them once they occur. Similarly, it is easier to *prevent* problems than to *undo* them once they are done. So please be in touch with me early and often and as much as necessary. My door is always open to you.
2. Computers in class: Because students have abused this privilege in the past, computers are *not allowed* at all in this class, unless you are required to use one and can provide documentation to that effect from the Learning Assistance Center.
3. Confidentiality: Given our topic, we may have discussions of highly personal matters. Everything that is said in class of a personal nature, therefore, should be considered confidential. Students who violate the confidentiality of their classmates will be failed.
4. Electronic mail communication: I check my e-mail regularly and you are welcome to contact me by e-mail with questions or comments. However, please be aware that *e-mail is not an appropriate medium for highly personal or confidential correspondence. Finally, because I may not immediately receive or reply to your messages, pressing issues should be handled in person whenever possible.*
5. On handing in assignments: Whenever you hand in an assignment, be sure to *make a hard copy* to keep for yourself in case the assignment you turn in disappears (this is known to happen quite often, unfortunately). Simply keeping a “copy” on a computer disk is *not* a recommended backup (although you should do that *too*), since difficulties frequently arise with magnetic media, especially around the time papers are due!
6. On late assignments: Assignments must be handed in by the *beginning* of class time on the due date. Any assignments submitted after that time will be graded down one full grade (e.g., from A to B, B to C) *per day late*. One second late = one day late, 24 hours + one second late = two days late, etcetera. If you know you will not be in class when the assignment is due, you must turn in the assignment *before* your absence. If you have a medical or other emergency causing you to miss class unexpectedly, you must submit along with your late assignment a signed note to that effect from an appropriate authority. If for some reason you cannot turn an assignment in directly to me, take it to the Sociology Department Office (232 Carswell Hall), have the secretary *sign and date* the assignment, and have her put it in my mailbox. If the assignment is not signed and dated by a secretary, I will assume you turned it in the day I pick it up (which will not necessarily be the same day you turn it in). Under no circumstances should you put assignments under my door. *Most of all, just stay in touch with me about your circumstances (see note #1 above). I cannot run 15 different classes, but I am a pretty reasonable guy.*
7. On disabilities: According to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with a physical or mental impairment (“disability”) are entitled to equal access, integration and the provision of reasonable accommodation by federally-supported institutions like Wake Forest. The university is required to make “*academic adjustments*” for qualified disabled persons. These adjustments may include modifications to *academic requirements* as are necessary to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate against a qualified handicapped student. Adjustments may also include modifications to course examinations or other procedures for evaluating students’ academic achievement. If these protections apply to you, or you think that they might apply to you, please contact the Learning Assistance Center (758-5929) within the first two (2) weeks of the semester.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The follow course schedule is good only for now. The main course schedule will be posted on the class website so that it can be updated as necessary to accommodate changes to the class. Although I will try not to add any work beyond what is specified in the syllabus, I reserve the right to modify the course schedule or content as necessary and appropriate to meet course goals.

*NOTE: DIAGONAL LINES INDICATE NO CLASS MEETING. ALSO, NO CLASS WILL BE HELD ON SOME DAYS WHEN PAPERS ARE DUE (THOUGH YOU WILL STILL SUBMIT YOUR PAPER AT THE START OF CLASS TIME IN MY OFFICE [203 CARSWELL] ON THE DUE DATE)*

WEEK OF...	MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY
	<b>[1] OVERVIEW/ADMINISTRATION</b>		
<b>August 27</b>		Welcome, Administration, Proust Questionnaire	Library Instructional Session: Room 476 Wilson Wing of ZSR Library. Thinkpads welcome.
	<b>[2] WHAT IS VOCATION?</b>		
<b>September 3</b>	Getting Acquainted	<u>Read:</u> David Brooks, "The Organization Kid" and other short items in handout  <i><u>Paper #1 Due: Write your own obituary</u></i>	<u>Read:</u> William Damon, <i>Noble Purpose</i> (all)
	<b>[3] AMERICA'S CULTURAL ALTERNATIVES</b>		
<b>September 10</b>	<u>Read:</u> Robert Bellah, et al., <i>Habits of the Heart</i> (pp. vii-26)	<u>Read:</u> Robert Bellah, et al., <i>Habits of the Heart</i> (pp. 27-51)	<i>Habits</i> discussion continued
	<b>[4] AMERICA'S CULTURAL ALTERNATIVES (CONT.)</b>		
<b>September 17</b>	<u>Read:</u> Bellah, <i>Habits</i> (pp. 55-84)	<i>Habits</i> discussion continued and work on paper #2	<b>NO CLASS</b> <i><u>Paper #2 Due: Your vocation</u></i>
	<b>[5] EDUCATION FOR VOCATION</b>		
<b>September 24</b>	No class. 2 hour movie to be shown from 8pm to 10pm in Carswell Hall.	Discuss Movie	<u>Read:</u> Articles on "Pro Humanitatae" ideal and excerpts from Wake Forest Undergraduate Bulletin, 2007-2008

WEEK OF...	MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY
	<b>[6] THE PROFESSIONS</b>		
<b>October 1</b>	<u>Read:</u> William Sullivan, <i>Work and Integrity</i> (pp. 1-33)	<u>Read:</u> Sullivan, <i>Work and Integrity</i> (pp. 35-65)	Sullivan discussion continued
	<b>[7] THE PROFESSIONS (CONT.)</b>		
<b>October 8</b>	<u>Read:</u> Sullivan, <i>Work and Integrity</i> (pp. 133-60)	Sullivan discussion continued	<u>Read:</u> Sullivan, <i>Work and Integrity</i> (pp. 257-90)
	<b>[8] THE PROFESSIONS (CONT.)</b>		
<b>October 15</b>	Sullivan discussion continued and work on paper #3	<b>NO CLASS</b> <u>Paper #3 Due:</u> <i>Work as a "calling"</i>	
	<b>[9] DOMESTIC LIFE</b>		
<b>October 22</b>		<u>Read:</u> Bellah, <i>Habits of the Heart</i> (pp. 85-112)	<u>Read:</u> Arlie Hochschild, <i>The Time Bind</i> (pp. 3-52)
	<b>[10] DOMESTIC LIFE (CONT.)</b>		
<b>October 29</b>	<u>Read:</u> Hochschild, <i>The Time Bind</i> (pp. 55-84, 115-32)	<u>Read:</u> Hochschild, <i>The Time Bind</i> (pp. 133-44, 163-93)	
	<b>[11] DOMESTIC LIFE (CONT.)</b>		
<b>November 5</b>	<u>Read:</u> Hochschild, <i>The Time Bind</i> (pp. 197-259)	Hochschild discussion continued and work on paper #4	<b>NO CLASS</b> <u>Paper #4 Due:</u> <i>Domestic aspirations and realities</i>
	<b>[12] WHAT MATTERS TO YOU?</b>		
<b>November 12</b>	Student Presentations	Student Presentations	
	<b>[13] THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>		
<b>November 19</b>			
	<b>[14] WHAT MATTERS TO YOU?</b>		
<b>November 26</b>	Student Presentations	Student Presentations	Student Presentations
	<b>[15] OVERFLOW AND FINALE</b>		
<b>December 3</b>	Student Presentations	Student Presentations	Student Presentations

**FINAL VOCATION PORTFOLIO (INCLUDING PAPER #5) DUE DECEMBER 15**

**SYLLABUS ADDENDUM:**  
**CONTINGENCY PLAN IN THE EVENT OF A PANDEMIC FLU**

The following is from an August 2006 memo by Dean Deborah Best to Wake Forest College faculty:

During this past spring, the university has been engaged in developing a contingency plan to deal with a possible outbreak of avian flu. Although we hope that a pandemic event will not occur, Hurricane Katrina has taught us that we must be prepared. Information from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) indicates that institutions of higher education could be severely affected because of international travel by students, faculty, and staff, and because of the accessibility of campuses to the larger community.

Hurricane Katrina resulted in many students losing a semester of academic work and universities suffering severe financial losses that resulted in cutting departments and laying off employees. In the event that a pandemic flu outbreak occurs, we want to minimize the negative impact on our students' educational progress and on the financial stability of Wake Forest through significant loss of tuition revenues and closure of the university.

In a meeting with the Deans in May, Provost Gordon asked that faculty create plans for students to complete their courses in the event that Wake Forest is forced to close during the semester and students are sent home. We recognize that not all courses, such as lab and studio courses, can be completed while students and faculty are away. We also know that whatever arrangements you develop are not the ideal ways to complete courses. However, we ask you find acceptable ways for students to master the material in your courses and to demonstrate their understanding to you, given possible communications restrictions.

The CDC indicates that a pandemic may come and go in waves, each lasting 6 - 8 weeks and causing serious disruption of basic services and usual means of communication. The internet and email may be overburdened or unavailable, and mail deliveries may be slow or unreliable. Hence, we ask you to develop plans that will permit students to complete their work on their own, perhaps similar to the "correspondence course" models used years ago.

Should such an event come to pass, we will continue to "meet" as a class through electronic media such as e-mail and the World Wide Web. If those media are not available to us, we will use the U.S. Postal Service and/or telephones to communicate back and forth. I have already collected the necessary contact information from you (your evacuation address, cell phone #, e-mail address), and will provide my home address and cell phone number to you in the event this plan is put into place.

You will continue to do the course readings as specified for each day on the syllabus, and I will provide you with questions in advance related to that material. You will submit written responses to those questions in lieu of having a class discussion. Those responses will count toward your class participation grade. The other written assignments for the class will not change. The syllabus already provides you with all of the information you need to complete those assignments.

Of course, we will make other adjustments, as necessary, to the course requirements in order to get through what will undoubtedly be a very disruptive event in our individual lives and in the life of the university itself. If you have any questions about this plan, please let me know.