Welcome to our class on “Individual and Society”! This semester we’ll explore sociology’s contributions to our understanding of the relations between the personal and the social. The course will shed light on the way we think, interact with others, and construct our identity.

There are four required books for this course: *The Elephant in the Room* by Eviatar Zerubavel (ISBN 978-0-19-533260-5), *Social Mindscapes* by Eviatar Zerubavel (ISBN 0-674-81390-1), *Peacocks, Chameleons, Centaurs* by Wayne Brekhus (ISBN 0-226-07292-4), and *Ancestors and Relatives* by Eviatar Zerubavel (ISBN 978-0-19-933604-3). They have all been ordered through the University’s bookstores (the Douglass one as well as the Barnes & Noble by the train station). All the other required course readings are posted on the course website on sakai.rutgers.edu. Students are expected to read all the required material prior to the class for which it is assigned.

The course’s learning goals are to help you gain (a) an understanding of the way our social environment impacts the way we think as well as experience ourselves, both of which are often wrongly assumed to be strictly psychologically based; (b) an ability to use sociological concepts to think about a wide variety of topics ranging from our modern urban experience to our current obsession with genealogy; and (c) an improved understanding of major intellectual debates over meaning, intimacy, privacy, and identity. By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to articulate sociological theories, review disciplinary literature, synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights, and produce a well-written paper. In addition, they will also be able to demonstrate multicultural sensitivity as well as global awareness.

The course assignments include (a) a midterm exam on February 20, (b) a 7-page term paper (due on April 24), and (c) a final exam. Each of these assignments will count for one third of your final course grade, and no extra credit will be permitted. Late assignments will be penalized, so make sure that your work is submitted on time. No late papers or make-up exams will be permitted without a valid written excuse such as documentation from your doctor or dean.

Class attendance (including arriving on time and staying until the end of the class period) is
required. **Students are expected to attend all classes.** If you expect to miss a class, please use the University absence reporting website [https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/](https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/) to indicate the date and reason for your absence. **Poor class attendance will affect the grade.**

It is acceptable to use other people’s ideas in your written work as long as you give credit to the original author. You act professionally and ethically when you do this, and it is considered dishonest to pass others’ ideas or words as your own. Such behavior constitutes plagiarism and can result in failure in the class and potentially dismissal from Rutgers. Students are required to follow current Rutgers’ Academic Integrity Policy as indicated in the website [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/Al_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/Al_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf). For further information on how to avoid plagiarism in your work, see [http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/lib_instruct/instruct_document.shtml](http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/lib_instruct/instruct_document.shtml). To give credit to the original author of ideas you present and protect yourself from charges of dishonesty, always cite in your text the sources you used and list all of them in a bibliography at the end of your written assignment.

The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Behavior that distracts students and faculty during class is therefore not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, and leaving early without informing your instructor beforehand. If a student engages in disruptive behavior, the instructor, following the University Code of Student Conduct, may direct the student to leave class for the remainder of the class period.

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles.

The best way to reach me is by email. **Please write “Soc 283” in the subject line** so I can recognize your email quickly. Please remember to also **sign your name** in the email.
1. Introduction

January 21

General Introduction

2. Social Interaction

January 23


January 28


January 30


February 4


February 6


February 11

February 13

Zerubavel, *The Elephant in the Room*, pp. 73-87.

February 18


February 20

**Midterm Exam**

3. Sociology and Cognition

February 25


February 27


March 4


March 6


March 11

4. Social Identity

March 13

March 25

March 27

April 1

April 3

April 8

April 10

April 15

April 17


April 22


April 24

**Term Paper Due**


5. Conclusion

April 29

Conclusion I

May 1

Conclusion II