

**GENERAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY  
COURSE SYLLABUS  
Fall 2021**

**Course Number:** SOCI4301 (12939)

**Time:** T/Th 10:30 – 11:50

**Location:** Liberal Arts 102

**Instructor:** Angela Frederick

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**COVID-19 PRECAUTION STATEMENT**

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to [covidaction@utep.edu](mailto:covidaction@utep.edu), so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID-19 testing.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit [epstrong.org](http://epstrong.org).

**COURSE OVERVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS**

**Course Overview.** This class is a survey course in social theory, covering important thinkers from the classical and contemporary eras. The bulk of the classical approaches we will discuss concern efforts to come to grips with rapid social change in Western Europe and North America. Many of the theories, particularly from European thinkers, have been variously critical of the forms and paths of capitalist modernity as it transformed social practices and social

landscapes across the 'West.' In the portion of the course devoted to contemporary theory, we will take up questions of power, inequality, and identity. In addition to engaging directly with theory, a central component of this course will be to explore how sociologists apply and challenge theory as they analyze empirical evidence.

**Learning Objectives.** Students who complete this course should achieve the following objectives:

- Understand and be able to describe major theoretical perspectives in sociology.
- Know about the social and political contexts in which sociological theories were developed.
- Be able to apply sociological theories to your life, current events, and sociological topics.

**Required Readings.** The following book is required for the course. All additional assigned readings will be available on the course Blackboard page. Please note: you should always refer to your syllabus to confirm the reading assignment for each week.

- Ritzer, George, and Jeffrey Stepnisky. 2017. *Sociological Theory*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. Los Angeles: Sage Publishers.

**Requirements.** Grades for this course are distributed as follows:

- **Weekly Application Projects (WAP) (40%)**. Corresponding with each weekly unit during the semester, you will complete an application exercise. These exercises will be uploaded to the corresponding week's Blackboard folder each Thursday by 5:00 p.m. Each exercise will take one to two hours to complete and will involve assignments such as reflecting on short articles and videos. You must submit your weekly exercise to Blackboard each Monday by 5:00 p.m. Your lowest two grades for these projects will be dropped, and the remainder of your grades will be averaged to comprise 40% of your final grade.
- **3 Exams (20% each). Details about these exams will be provided.**

**Grading Scale.** The grading scale in this course is as follows:

A = 90%-100%  
B = 80%-89%  
C = 70%-79%  
D = 60%-69%  
F = 0%-59%

**Course Structure.** The course structure will be as follows:

- This is a face to face course. PowerPoints will not be provided. Please make sure you connect with several peers in class so you can help each other out when you need to miss a class.

- Weekly Application Projects will be uploaded to the corresponding week's folder on Blackboard by 5:00 p.m. on Thursdays. These assignments are due by 5:00 p.m. on Mondays.
- You are responsible for studying the material from our lectures and keeping up with your readings. Theory can be quite difficult, so manage your time accordingly.
- It is your responsibility to follow your syllabus closely and to go to Blackboard to submit your weekly WAP assignments and to take your exams. Extensions on assignments will not be granted simply because you were not keeping up in class and did not know about an assignment.
- While your TA and I are happy to assist with questions, you should first review your course materials to make sure your question is not already answered.

**Attendance Policy.** Attendance will be taken during every class session. You are granted three unexcused absences during the semester with no penalty. I do not need to know the reason for these absences, unless an extreme emergency has occurred. Car trouble does not constitute an extreme emergency or an excused absence. Your final grade will be deducted by two points for each additional unexcused absence incurred. Excused absences require documentation of medical/family emergencies or religious holidays.

**Professional Communication.** Emails should be constructed in a professional manner with appropriate salutation, sentence structure, and closing. "Hey" is not a professional salutation, and my title is "Professor" or "Dr.," not "Mrs." Please be advised that I will ask students to revise and resend emails that do not meet professional standards.

**Grading Policy.** All assignments should be submitted before their deadlines. I do not grant extensions on papers or exams, except in the case of excused absences for which official documentation is required. Five points will be deducted from your paper grade if you submit the paper later than the deadline on the day the assignment is due, and ten points will be deducted from your paper grade for each additional day your assignment is late. Excused students are those with legitimate crises who notify me in a timely manner.

**Honor Code.** As in all courses at UTEP, students are expected to act honorably in accordance with our mutual educational objectives. If you use someone else's idea, opinion, concept, or fact, you must cite your source. If you use more than three consecutive words from someone else, you must put the phrase in quotation marks and cite your source. This includes notes from class. Failure to do so is plagiarism, and all such cases will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

**Disability & Universal Design.** We will make it our top priority to build a community that is fully inclusive of all body types, identities, and ways of learning. This will require each of us to be attentive, flexible, and vigilant. If we are engaging in any practices throughout the semester that lead you to feel overlooked, unwelcome, or alienated, I welcome you to come talk with me or to bring it to the entire community. You will be heard. If you have a documented disability

and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services as soon as possible.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Notes:

- Your textbook chapters contain an enormous amount of information about many theorists. In the course schedule below, I identify the scholars with whom you are responsible for engaging. For each assigned chapter, read the broader information the authors provide about the particular school of thought. Then focus your attention on the theorists I identify for each week.
- You do not need to try to memorize the material in each chapter. It is better to turn to the course lectures to focus on particular aspects of the theories.
- This is a tentative schedule. Our schedule might change as the semester progresses.

### PART I: Classical Theory

Week 1 (8/23-8/27): Introductions

- Chap 1.

Week 2 (8/30-9/3): Karl Marx & Daniel Bell

- Chap 2.

Week 3 (9/6-9/10): Max Weber & George Ritzer

- Chap 4.

Week 4 (9/13-9/17): Emile Durkheim

- Chap 3.

Week 5 (9/20-9/24): Antonio Gramsci

- *Reading uploaded to Blackboard.*

Week 6 (9/27-10/01): **EXAM 1**

- Tuesday (9/28): Exam Review.
- **EXAM 1 DUE THURSDAY (9/30) AT 11:59 p.m.**

### PART II: Modern Sociological Theory

Week 7 (10/04-10/08): Modern Sociology in the U.S.

- Chap 6 (du Bois).

Week 8 (10/11-10/15): Symbolic Interactionism, Part I

- Chap 9 (Mead & Goffman).

Week 9 (10/18-10/22): Symbolic Interactionism, Part II

- Chap 9 (Scheff & Hochschild).

Week 10 (10/25-10/29): Postmodern Theory

- Chap 17, section on postmodern social theory (Michele Foucault).

Week 11 (11/01-11/05): Theorizing Structure & Agency

- Chap 13, section "Agency-Structure Integration" (Bourdieu).

Week 12 (11/08-11/12): EXAM 2

- Tuesday (11/09): Exam review.
- Thursday (11/11): **EXAM 2 THURSDAY**

### **PART III: Theorizing Power & Identity**

Week 13 (11/15-11/19): Theorizing Gender & Intersectionality

- Chap 12 (West & Zimmerman, Acker).

Week 14 (11/22-11/26): Theorizing Race and Racism

- Chap 15 (Omi & Winant, Bonilla Silva)
- No class on Thursday. Happy Thanksgiving.

Week 15 (11/29-12/03): **EXAM 3**

- Tuesday (11/30): Catch Up Day and Exam Review
- Thursday (12/02): **EXAM 3**

Week 16 (12/06-12/10): **EXTRA CREDIT**

- *No final exam this week. You're Done!*
- *Thursday (12/09): Extra Credit due via email by 5:00 p.m.*