

GENERAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY
COURSE SYLLABUS
Spring 2022

Course Number: SOCI4301 (21428)

Time: T/Th 3:00 – 4:20

Location: Old Main #205

Instructor: Angela Frederick

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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.

As sociology majors and minors, this course is an important part of your program. It will be different than the upper division electives that you have already taken and should complement what you have learned in other classes. The reading might be more difficult than what you are used to reading in other sociology classes. Understanding theory, for most students, requires reading the same paragraph multiple times, looking up unfamiliar words in a dictionary, and pausing to think about what you have read before moving on to another paragraph. I encourage you to ask questions in class about what you read, as it is likely that other students have similar questions.

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 day.

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

Requirements. Course grades are calculated using a point system. A total of 1,000 points are possible in the course. Points for assignments are distributed as follows:

- **Quizzes (150 points).** Quizzes will be given each Tuesday, testing you on the previous week's material. In addition, pop quizzes will be given on the days you are assigned original texts outside of your textbook. Each quiz is worth 10 points. Your lowest two quiz grades will be dropped. Some quiz questions will have multiple-choice answers; others will require you to write short answers. If you miss a quiz with an excused absence, you will be required to complete an alternative assignment to make up the quiz. If you miss a quiz with an unexcused absence, you will not be allowed to make up the missed quiz.
- **Group Theory Application Project (150 points).** See Group TAP handout for a description of this project assignment.
- **2 Exams (200 points each).**
- **Individual Theory Application Project (200 points).** See Individual TAP handout for a description of this assignment.
- **Class Participation (100 points).** Students will participate in in-class activities for points and occasionally complete homework relevant to the next class activity.
- **Ongoing Extra Credit (1 point per class).** During most class periods, you will be given the opportunity to put your cell phone at the front of the room for one extra credit point per class. Exceptions will be made for atypical class periods, such as exams, group projects, etc. Please note that respectful cell phone etiquette is still expected of students who elect to keep their phones with them during class. Please also note that students who are caught violating the honor code of honesty will forfeit their extra credit privileges for the remainder of the semester.

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

A = 900-1000 points

B = 800-899 points

C = 700-799

D = 600-699 points

F = 0-599 points

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. These three unexcused absences should be used for days when you have difficulty making it to class for reasons, such as car trouble or a scheduled doctor's appointment, that do not rise to the level of an excused absence. Your final grade will be deducted by two points for each additional unexcused absence incurred. In-class assignments, including quizzes, missed due to unexcused absences cannot be made up. Excused absences require documentation of medical/family emergencies, school sanctioned events, or religious holidays.

Community Etiquette. Every student registered for this class is an important member of our community and deserves a learning environment in which all members are respectful and engaged. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Arrive on time.** Every member of the class should arrive on time. Quizzes missed due to tardiness cannot be made up. If tardiness becomes a pattern for you (i.e. more than three late arrivals), I will notify you that you will receive an absence for all future days you are late. In addition, if you arrive late, you must speak to me before you sign the daily attendance sheet.
- **Do not leave class.** Students should not leave class while it is in session. During class time, we are engaged in a valuable conversation. Should you leave this conversation for any reason, you should notify me after class of the circumstances causing your interruption. If your interruptions become a pattern, I will inform you that you will begin to receive an absence for all future exits.
- **Communicate in a Professional Manner.** 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 not "Mrs." If you have a question which requires an extended answer, or if you wish to convey a struggle you're having related to the class, it is better to initiate a face-to-face meeting with me.

Grading Policy. All assignments should be submitted before their deadlines. I do not grant extensions on papers or exams, except in the case of extreme emergencies 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. Students with documented excused absences will be allowed to make up missed class activities and quizzes. The same privilege will not be extended for unexcused absences. Excused students are those with legitimate conflicts (i.e., funeral, serious illness, or school sanctioned event) who let me know ahead of time that they will be missing class. I must know beforehand for you to be excused. I reserve the right to refuse to accept any assignment that does not comply with its specified guidelines.

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

Note: This is a tentative schedule. Our schedule might change as the semester progresses.

PART I: Classical Theory

Week 1: Introductions

- T, Jan 18: Course Introductions.
- Th, Jan 20: Chap 1.

Week 2: Karl Marx & Daniel Bell

- T, Jan 25: Chap 2.
- Th, Jan 27: Chap 2.

Week 3: Max Weber & George Ritzer

- T, Feb 1: Chap 4.
- Th, Feb 3: Chap 4.

Week 4: Emile Durkheim

- T, Feb 8: Chap 3.
- Th, Feb 10: Reading uploaded to Blackboard.

Week 5: W. E. B. du Bois

- T, Feb 15: Chap 6.
- Th, Feb 17: Reading uploaded to Blackboard.

Week 6: Antonio Gramsci

- T, Feb 22: Reading uploaded to Blackboard.
- Th, Feb 24: No reading assignment. We will begin watching “American Factory” in class.

Week 7: Group Project

- T, Mar 1: Group Work.
- Th, Mar 3: Group Work.

Week 8: Mid-Term Assignments

- T, Mar 8: Exam Review. **GROUP PAPERS DUE.**
- Th, Mar 10: **MID-TERM EXAM.**

Week 9: Spring Break

- T, Mar 15: No Class
- Th, Mar 17: No Class.

PART II: Contemporary Theory

Week 10: Erving Goffman & Arlie Hochschild

- T, Mar 22: Chap 9 (Goffman).
- Th, Mar 24: Chap 9 (Hochschild).

Week 11: Michele Foucault

- T, Mar 29: Chap 17 (section on Postmodern Theory, Michele Foucault).
- Th, Mar 31: No reading assignment.

Week 12: Theorizing Class

- T, Apr 5: Chap 13 (Bourdieu).
- Th, Apr 7: Lareau, “Invisible Inequality.”

Week 13: Theorizing Race

- T, Apr 12: Chap 15 (Omi & Winant, Bonilla Silva).
- Th, Apr 14: Chap 15 (Omi & Winant, Bonilla Silva).

Week 14: Theorizing Gender

- T, Apr 19: Chap 12, “West & Zimmerman, Acker.”
- Th, Apr 21: No reading assignment.

Week 15: Theorizing Intersectionality

- T, Apr 26: Hill Collins, Preface & Chap 4 in *Black Feminist Thought*.
- Th, Apr 28: Frederick and Shifrer, “Race and Disability: From Analogy to Intersectionality.”

Week 16: Final Exam

- **T, May 3: Exam Review**
- **Th, May 5: Final Exam**
- **Final papers due at the beginning of scheduled final exam.**