

**GENERAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY  
COURSE SYLLABUS  
Fall 2018**

Course Number: SOCI4301 (13604)

Time: T/Th 10:30 - 11:50

Location: Liberal Arts Building #209

Instructor: Angela Frederick

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Office Hours: M 12:00 – 1:30, Th 1:30 – 2:30 and by appointment

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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 promoted 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 ideas 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 (e.g., poverty, racism).

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

- Allen, Kenneth. 2014. The Social Lens (Third Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

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

- **Quizzes (20 percent)**. Quizzes will be given each Monday, 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. Your lowest two quiz grades will be dropped, and the remaining quiz grades will be averaged to comprise 20 percent of your final grade. Some quiz questions will have multiple-choice answers; others will require you to write short answers.
- **Group Theory Application Paper (10 percent)**. See Group TAP handout for a description of this paper.
- **2 Exams (20 percent each)**.
- **Individual Theory Application Project (20 percent)**. See Individual TAP handout for description of this paper assignment.
- **Class Participation (10 percent)**. Students will participate in in-class activities for points and occasionally complete homework relevant to the next class activity.

**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%

**Attendance Policy.** Attendance will be taken during every class session. You are granted two 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. Ten points will be deducted from your class

participation grade for each additional unexcused absence incurred. Excused absences require documentation of medical/family emergencies 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.
- **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.

**Professional Communication.** Higher education serves important functions, not only to introduce you to transformative ideas that rock your world, but also to help you to adopt important codes of conduct expected of professionals. I expect students to follow the guidelines below when communicating with me. These are also important practices to adopt as you become integrated into professional settings:

- **Check your email regularly.** Throughout the semester I will send announcements and course assignments through email. You should check your email regularly.
- **Keep records.** Your two TAP papers for this class will be submitted via email. I ask that you save every email you send to me, as well as every e-mail you receive pertaining to the class. I ALWAYS respond to assignment submissions within one business day. If you do not receive this response, it is your responsibility to follow up with me to confirm I received your assignment. If you do not do so, you will receive the standard penalty for late submissions.
- **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.” I will not respond to emails that fail to meet these 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 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, 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

### PART I: Classical Theory

#### Week 1: Introductions

- T, Aug 28: Course Introductions.
- Th, Aug 30: Chap 1 in *Social Lens*.

#### Week 2: Karl Marx

- T, Sep 4: Chap 3 in *Social Lens*.
- Th, Sep 6: Arlie Russell Hochschild, "The Great Paradox."

#### Week 3: Max Weber

- T, Sep 11: Chap 4 in *Social Lens*.
- Th, Sep 13: George Ritzer, Chap 1 in *The McDonaldization of Society*.

#### Week 4: Antonio Gramsci & Emile Durkheim

- : T, Sep 18: Reading on Gramsci. Hot Coffee will be shown in class.
- Th, Sep 20: Chap 5 in *Social Lens*.

Week 5: W. E. B. Du Bois

- T, Sep 25: Chap 7 in *Social Lens*.
- Th, Sep 27: Chap 7 in *Social Lens*.

Week 6: Harold Garfinkel & Erving Goffman

- T, Oct 2: Chap 13 in *Social Lens* – section on Goffman.
- Th, Oct 4: Frederick, “Visibility, Respectability, and Disengagement.”

Week 7: Group Exercise

- T, Oct 9: No reading assignment. “Food Inc.” will be shown in class.
- Th, Oct 11: Group work on “Food Inc.”

Week 8: Mid-Term Assignments

- T, Oct 16: Exam Review. **GROUP PAPERS DUE.**
- Th, Oct 18: **MID-TERM EXAM.**

PART II: Contemporary Theory

Week 9: Michel Foucault

- T, Oct 23: Chap 16 in *Social Lens* – section on Foucault.
- Th, Oct 25: Chap 16 in *Social Lens* – section on Foucault.

Week 10: Theorizing Class

- T, Oct 30: Chap 10 in *Social Lens* – sections on Daniel Bell & Pierre Bourdieu.
- Th, Nov 1: Annette Lareau, “Invisible Inequality.”

Week 11: Theorizing Race

- T, Nov 6: Lareau, “Invisible Inequality.”
- Th, Nov 8: Michele Alexander, Chap 1 in *The New Jim Crow*.

Week 12: Theorizing Gender, Part I

- T, Nov 13: Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, “Color-Blind Racism.”
- Th, Nov 15: Emily Kane, “No Way My Boys Are Going to be Like That.”

Week 13: Theorizing Gender, Part II

- T, Nov 20: “The Texas Legislature’s Sexist Little Secret.”
- Th, Nov 22: Thanksgiving.

Week 14: Theorizing Intersectionality

- T, Nov 27: Patricia Hill Collins, Preface & Chap 4 in *Black Feminist Thought*
- Th, Nov 29: Gloria Anzaldúa, excerpt from *Borderlands*.

Week 15: Theorizing Disability

- T, Dec 4: Susan Wendell, Chap 2 in *The Rejected Body*.
- Th, Dec 6: **FINAL EXAM.**

Week 16: Finals

- **Final papers due at the close of scheduled final exam.**