

GENERAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY
COURSE SYLLABUS
Spring 2020

Course Number: SOCI4301 (21761)

Time: T/Th 12:00 – 1:20

Location: Liberal Arts Building #101

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.

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

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 (200 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. 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 Project (100 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 surrender your cell phone 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. 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. 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.
- **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 21: Course Introductions.
- Th, Jan 22: Chap 1 in *Social Lens*.

Week 2: Karl Marx

- T, Jan 28: Chap 3 in *Social Lens*.
- Th, Jan 30: Russell Hochschild, "The Great American Paradox."

Week 3: Max Weber

- T, Feb 4: Chap 4 in *Social Lens*.
- Th, Feb 6: George Ritzer, Chap 1 in *The McDonaldization of Society*.

Week 4: Antonio Gramsci & Emile Durkheim

- : T, Feb 11: Reading on Gramsci. Hot Coffee will be shown in class.
- Th, Feb 13: Chap 5 in *Social Lens*.

Week 5: Emile Durkheim & Erving Goffman

- T, Feb 19: Chap 5 in *Social Lens*.
- Th, Feb 21: Chap 13 in *Social Lens*, section on Goffman.

Week 6: W. E. B. du Bois

- T, Feb 26: Chap 7 in *Social Lens*.
- Th, Feb 28: Chap 7 in *Social Lens*.

Week 7: Group Project

- T, Mar 3: Group Work.
- Th, Mar 5: Group Work.

Week 8: Mid-Term Assignments

- T, Mar 10: Exam Review. **GROUP PAPERS DUE.**
- Th, Mar 12: **MID-TERM EXAM.**

PART II: Contemporary Theory

Week 9: Spring Break

- T, Mar 17: No Class
- Th, Mar 19: No Class.

Week 10: Michel Foucault

- T, Mar 24: Chap 16 in *Social Lens* – section on Foucault.
- Th, Mar 26: To be announced.

Week 11: Theorizing Class

- T, Mar 31: Chap 10 in *Social Lens* – sections on Daniel Bell & Pierre Bourdieu.
- Th, Apr 2: Lareau, “Invisible Inequality.”

Week 12: Theorizing Race

- T, Apr 7: Lee & Bean, “The Changing Color Line.”
- Th, Apr 9: Alexander, Chap 1 in *The New Jim Crow*.

Week 13: Theorizing Gender

- T, Apr 14: Roanin, “Grinding on the Dance floor.”
- Th, Apr 16: Kane, “No Way My Boys.”

Week 14: Theorizing Intersectionality

- T, Apr 21: Hill Collins, Preface & Chap 4 in *Black Feminist Thought*.
- Th, Apr 23: Anzaldua, excerpt from *Borderlands*.

Week 15: Theorizing Disability

- T, Apr 28: Wendell, Chap 2 in *The Rejected Body*.

- Th, Apr 30: Frederick and Shifrer, "Race and Disability: From Analogy to Intersectionality."

Week 16: Final Exam

- **T, May 5: Exam Review**
- **Th, May 7: Final Exam**
- **Final papers due at the beginning of scheduled final exam.**