

**GENERAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY
COURSE SYLLABUS
Fall 2023**

Course Number: SOCI 4301 (11613)
Time: T/Th 12:00 - 1:30
Location: Old Main 205

Instructor: Guadalupe Corral
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Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW

This class covers important concepts in sociology that were developed by the founding fathers and contemporary sociologists. The course examines the premises and perspectives of major theories, and their evolution from classical roots to contemporary applications.

Learning Objectives. Students who complete this course will learn to:

- Identify key social theory scholars and the social and political contexts of their eras.
- Understand and describe major theoretical perspectives in sociology in terms of their premises, procedures, knowledge claims, and implications for social structures and social change.
- Apply sociological theory to the analysis of contemporary social issues and sociological topics.
- Compare and contrast different types of sociological theory.
- Discuss and evaluate sociological theories critically.

Required Readings. The following books are required for the course. Refer to your syllabus to confirm the reading assignment for each week.

- Ritzer, George, and Jeffrey Stepnisky. 2017. *Sociological Theory*, 10th ed. Los Angeles: Sage Publishers.
- (2007) 2007. *Fifty Key Sociologists: The Contemporary Theorists*. 1st ed. Taylor and Francis.

Grading. Grades for this course are distributed as follows:

- **Presentation (20%)**. You are each expected to prepare a power point presentation on a select social theory scholar. You will deliver the presentation in class to me and your peers. You will randomly select the social theory scholar that you will cover, including the date that you will be presenting. This assignment will be discussed in detail on the first day of class. You will be provided with the rubric that be used to grade the presentations.
- **3 Exams (20% each)**. Each exam will cover specific sections of your required reading (see course schedule section). Some questions for each exam will also be developed from material covered in the presentations, including from questions and discussion generated from the presentations.
- **Paper (10%)**. Three-page paper (1-inch margins, double-spaced) applying a sociological theory to the analysis of a current event in the news or movie (movie list and grading rubric will be provided).
- **Participation (10%)**. Discussion is important in this course, as we are also here to learn

from each other.

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

COURSE STRUCTURE AND POLICIES

This is a face-to-face course. We will all be presenting information to others (using PowerPoint or other presentation software), discussing social theory scholars and their theories, and learning from each other. All presentations will be shared with the whole class; but please do not use this as an excuse to miss class if you are not presenting. A good presentation only highlights the main points, and it is up to the presenter to fill in the information. If you miss presentations, you will miss important information that will help you do well in the exams. It is your responsibility to:

- Read the sections that will be covered each class period before coming to class.
- Study the material from the presentations and take notes on material presented and discussed each session.
- Follow your syllabus closely. Extensions on assigned presentations/exams will not be granted simply because you were not keeping up in class and did not know about an assignment.

Attendance Policy. Make every effort to be in class, as your grade depends on it. I do not take attendance. But you will not pass this class if you are not present to learn from the information covered and ensuing discussions. If you have an emergency that does not allow you to be in class, please ask your classmates to share their notes with you. I will not be providing you with notes.

Professional Communication. Emails to me and your classmates should be constructed in a professional manner with appropriate salutation, sentence structure, and closing. Be respectful and courteous when verbally communicating in the classroom.

Grading Policy. All assignments should be submitted before their deadlines. Extensions to the presentations or exams will not be granted, except in the case of excused absences for which official documentation is required. If you are not able to conduct your presentation during your assigned slot, you will be responsible for finding someone to switch with – it is not my responsibility to find a willing person for you. You will need to inform me of the switch at least a week ahead of time or risk losing 10 points on your presentation grade.

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 accommodation, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services as soon as possible.

COURSE SCHEDULE

In the course schedule below, I identify the social theory scholars that we will cover. For each social scholar covered, read the related information in the assigned readings, including the social and political context that influenced them, their school of thought, and the effects that their ideas have had on sociology. We will do our best to keep to the schedule since you will be expected to deliver presentations based on the scholars and their respective ideas/theories.

- Week 1: August 29 and 31 (Course Introduction and Auguste Comte)
- Week 2: September 5 and 7 (Karl Marx and Herbert Spencer)
- Week 3: September 12 and 14 (Emile Durkheim and George Herbert Meade)
- Week 4: September 19 and 21 (Robert Park and Max Weber)
- Week 5: September 26 and 28 (**Exam** and Charles H. Cooley)
- Week 6: October 3 and 5 (W.E.B. Du Bois and Talcott Parsons)
- Week 7: October 10 and 12 (Robert K. Merton and C. Wright Mills)
- Week 8: October 17 and 19 (Harold Garfinkel and Louis Althusser)
- Week 9: October 24 and 26 (**Exam** and Mary Douglas)
- Week 10: October 31 and November 2 (Erving Goffman and Zygmunt Bauman)
- Week 11: November 7 and 9 (Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu)
- Week 12: November 14 and 16 (Stuart Hall and Ann Oakley)
- Week 13: November 21 and 23 (Movie and Thanksgiving holiday)
- Week 14: November 28 and 30 (Ulrick Beck and Howard Becker)
- Week 15: December 5 and 7 (Judith Butler and **Exam**)
- Week 16: December Finals Week (**Assigned Paper** Due by the 12th)