



## **Course Syllabus: Sociological Theory**

### **SOCL 4153 Section 101**

**Fall 2024**

Instructor: Dr. Wesley Cohoon

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Course Modality: Face-to-Face

Meeting Times: Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:00 p.m. to 3:20 p.m.

Class Location: Prothro-Yeager, PY100

Office: Prothro-Yeager, 0-134

Office Hours: Mon & Wed 8:20 a.m. to 8:50 a.m. and 11:55 a.m. to 1:55 p.m.

### **Course Introduction**

#### **Course Quote**

"The sociological imagination, I remind you, in considerable part consists of the capacity to shift from one perspective to another, and in this process to build an adequate view of a total society and its components. It is this imagination that sets off the social scientist from the mere technician." – C. Wright Mills

#### **Course Description**

A survey and analysis of the development of sociological theory from the time of Comte to the present. Particular schools and major paradigms are evaluated, and recent confluences in social anthropology, sociology, and social psychology are noted.

#### **Textbook & Instructional Materials**

Book: Welcome to Social Theory

Author: Brock  
ISBN: 9781529732610  
Publisher: Sage Publications

### **Who is the instructor?**

My career has included a wide range of professional experiences, from teaching at universities to working in businesses, nonprofits, hospitals, and governmental agencies. My diverse professional journey has been united by my work with, love of, and curiosity for people. Although I have changed careers many times, sociology has been at the core of all my careers because I have dealt with people.

I am married with five children. My youngest three are 16, 14, and 12. My two oldest kids are adults who are both married and have children. We have three dogs at my house—Cupcake, Oreo, and Waffles. I love spending time with my family and hanging out.

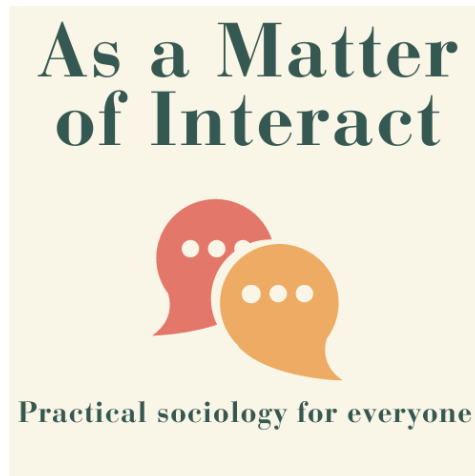
I have earned two doctorates, two master's, and a bachelor's degree. Part of my research focus is on applying sociology in the real world. I have a sociology podcast called "As a Matter of Interact: Practical Sociology for Everyone." I am a Certified Clinical Sociologist through the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology and serve as an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Applied Social Sciences*.

### **Teaching Philosophy**

I want to come alongside students and help them discover themselves and their social world. In addition to providing information, I want to listen and learn from others and their experiences. While I care about students, I also want them to grow and experience some level of discomfort. While people do not like tension and conflict, people experience growth through it. People need to feel some stress and have their existing knowledge challenged to gain new understanding. I encourage students to engage in an action/reflection model where they can learn, do something with their knowledge, come back and reflect on their experience, and repeat the process. Lastly, learning is difficult, but it is also fun. I welcome playfulness, humor, and student interaction throughout class time.

### **Additional Sociological Resource**

To learn more about sociology and its practical applications, check out my bi-weekly podcast, [As a Matter of Interact: Practical Sociology for Everyone](#). The podcast helps people understand and evaluate social interactions, relationships, human behaviors, and systems. Check out the podcast to better navigate your life and make informed decisions as you practically apply sociology.



### **London Study Abroad: Sociology**

I highly encourage students to consider participating in the Study Abroad program that MSU offers through its Global Education Office. In the summer of 2025, I will teach British Culture and Society (SOCL 4883, 4893). Students will earn six credit hours towards their degree in only five weeks. Studying sociology in London is a great learning opportunity, and it provides students with a chance to experience, live, and travel to a foreign country. Historically, the London classes last for five weeks with a one-week minibreak in between. While the dates are not finalized yet, the flight will probably depart on Thursday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, and we will return to the United States on Monday, August 4<sup>th</sup>. I will make an announcement with all the information once it is available.

You can take my London sociology class with any major. Depending on your major and minor, this course could count towards your major, minor, or elective course requirements. My sociology class will compare British society and culture to American society and culture. The class will teach students how to evaluate and assess cultures, societies, and social interactions. The class will be highly interactive, and several assignments will include activities and immersion into British culture.

Planning is critical to a successful study abroad experience. I will share the London Study Abroad finalized dates and information as soon as it is available through the Global Education Office. If you have any questions or concerns, you can always contact me or schedule a meeting with MSU's Global Education Office and Study Abroad. Remember, the application deadline is usually in March, and the Global Education Office is there to discuss financial aid and scholarship opportunities to ensure you are well-prepared for this exciting journey.

[MSU Global Education Office](#)

[MSU London Study Abroad](#)

## **Instructor Policies**

### **Assignment Submission**

Submit all your assignments via D2L, and they need to be in Word or PDF. Students are responsible for ensuring assignments are submitted on time and in an accessible format.

### **Assignment Feedback**

I will provide assignment feedback within seven days of the due date. My feedback will be provided in the form of comments on the assignment in D2L. You are welcome to come and talk to me about any assignment and feedback that I have offered. Your grades will be posted in D2L.

### **Email Communication with the Instructor**

Please follow the below template when sending me an email. Failure to follow this format will result in a response from me stating, "Please read the syllabus and follow the email formatting instructions." Students are welcome to ask questions, but I want them to first check the syllabus for the answer before asking or clarifying a question.

Dr. Cohoon

My name is (Xyz), and I am a student in your SOCL 4153: Sociological Theory class this fall semester. I am emailing to ask you about (blank). I looked in the syllabus, and it states (blank) about my question.

Thanks,

(Your Name)

### **Late Work**

All assignments are due in D2L before 11:59 p.m. on their listed due date in Word or PDF. If the assignment does not upload, I do not have it. The student is responsible for ensuring that their assignments are uploaded. Corrupted documents do not count, and you need to ensure that the assignment is uploaded in the proper format. I will deduct ten percent per day for late assignments. There are no exceptions, and all late work will be deducted 10% for every day it is late. This late policy is generous, and students can still earn a good grade on an assignment when it is late. The only exception to this late work policy is Final Theory Paper: Integrating Sociology with Your Future Career. This

assignment is due on Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, but I will only accept it a maximum of three days late with the appropriate deductions.

## **Attendance**

Presence is important. There is a high correlation between attendance and class grades. In-class attendance is required. If a student is going to miss class, they need to email the instructor. Students who miss more than 20% of the classes can result in a reduction of a full letter grade. Students who miss more than 30% of the classes can either be dropped or receive an F in the course. Students with excessive absences, or those who fail to notify the instructor of class absences, can be dropped at the instructor's discretion.

## **Plagiarism**

The appropriation, theft, purchase, or obtaining by any means another's work, and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of that work as one's own offered for credit. Appropriation includes the quoting or paraphrasing of another's work without giving credit. Using AI technology (like ChatGPT) to write assignments is considered plagiarism. Students who plagiarize will receive a zero on the assignment and can face additional academic consequences. However, students are welcomed and encouraged to use proofreading applications like Grammarly. The difference between technology ChatGPT and Grammarly is that technology like Grammarly uses the student's original ideas and helps proofread.

## **Evaluation and Grading**

### **Class Participation and Attendance – 14%**

This course was developed based on the idea that sociological theory is highly practical and can be used effectively in all areas of life. Therefore, being present in class is important. In addition to essential information in the lectures, I have created several activities that will help students apply and understand sociological theory. Students can earn 14 points for class participation, which equals 0.5 points per class. If students attend class, they get full credit for that day. I currently do not have a way or plan for students to make up class participation points. It does not matter if it is an excused or unexcused absence; students cannot earn class participation for missed classes. While that may appear harsh, students can still miss several classes and earn a good grade in the course. I will have a sign-in sheet that students will sign each class. The attendance points will be calculated at the end of the semester. Students are responsible for keeping track of their own attendance and signing the attendance sheet.

### **Reflections on Original Readings – 28%**

Throughout the semester, students will read excerpts from four original sociological works. These readings will be in a PDF and located in D2L. After reading these works, the student will reflect on the content and answer the four questions below. The answers to each question should be a maximum of one paragraph. The *Communist Manifesto* reflection is due September 22<sup>nd</sup>, *The Protestant Work Ethic* is due October 6<sup>th</sup>, *Division of Labor* is due October 20<sup>th</sup>, and *Self* is due November 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **Reflections on Original Readings Questions:**

1. Briefly summarize the readings in your own words.
2. What did you like about this week's original reading?
3. What did you dislike or what was confusing about this week's original reading?
4. What are your sociological agreements and disagreements with this week's original reading?

### **Grading Criteria for Reflections on Original Readings**

#### Formatted Correctly – 20%

- The paper had the answers in either bullet points or numbers so each question can be easily assessed. – 10%
- The font was 12-point Times New Roman and double-spaced – 10%

#### Ability to Think Sociologically – 80%

- Critically engaged and answered question one. – 20%
- Critically engaged and answered question two. – 20%
- Critically engaged and answered question three. – 20%
- Critically engaged and answered question four. – 20%

### **Applying Social Theories to Social Problems Paper – 28%**

Students will demonstrate their understanding of sociological theory to a contemporary issue. This assignment consists of students selecting a modern issue that impacts society. Then, students are to explain how each of the three theories would view the problem and potential solutions they would offer. The paper is to be 750 to 1,250 words (3-5 pages). The assignment is due on October 27<sup>th</sup>.

## **Grading Criteria for Applying Social Theories to Social Problems**

### Formatted Correctly – 45%

- The paper is 3-5 pages (750 to 1,250 words). – 10%
- The student has five headings in their paper. – 20%
  - Social Problem
  - Structural Functionalism
  - Conflict Theory
  - Symbolic Interactionism
  - Sociological Intervention
- The font was 12-point, Times New Roman. – 5%
- Paragraphs are double-spaced with 0 points before and 0 points after. – 5%
- Paragraphs are indented and appropriate in length. – 5%

### Select a Social Problem – 5%

- The student identified a social problem to assess. – 5%
- The student demonstrated an ability to think sociologically and identify contributing factors to their social problem. – 5%

### Applying Sociological Theories – 45%

- The student demonstrated a knowledge of structural functionalism by utilizing, underlining, and bolding at least five sociological vocabulary words associated with this theory. – 15%
- The student demonstrated a knowledge of conflict theory by utilizing, underlining, and bolding at least five sociological vocabulary words associated with this theory. – 15%
- The student demonstrated a knowledge of symbolic interactionism by utilizing, underlining, and bolding at least five sociological vocabulary words associated with this theory. – 15%

### Propose a Sociological Intervention – 5%

- The student used one of the above sociological theories to develop a sociological solution to their selected problem.

## **Final Theory Paper: Integrating Sociology with Your Career – 30%**

Students will have an opportunity to apply sociological research with their future career. This assignment will give students a chance to explore how sociology is relevant to their intended career path. They will develop a deeper understanding and relevance to how sociology can integrate with their professional lives. The paper is to be 750 to 1,250 words (3-5 pages). The assignment is due on Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>. This assignment will only be accepted up until three days late with the appropriate deductions.

### **Grading Criteria for Integrating Sociology with Your Career**

#### Formatted Correctly – 25%

- The paper is 5-7 pages (1,250 to 1,750 words). – 10%
- The student has five headings in their paper. – 10%
  - Introduction
  - Career Selection
  - Sociological Analysis
  - Sociological Application
  - Personal Reflection
- The font was 12-point, Times New Roman. – 2%
- Paragraphs are double-spaced with 0 points before and 0 points after. – 2%
- Paragraphs are indented and appropriate in length. – 1%

#### Sociological Engagement – 65%

- Introduction – 5%
  - The student provided an introduction that outlined their paper.
- Career Selection – 15%
  - The student selected a potential future career. – 5%
  - The student used a reputable outside source for career information—like the Bureau of Labor Statistics. – 5%
  - The student cited the source using ASA formatting guidelines. – 5%
- Sociological Analysis – 15%
  - The student discussed how they anticipate sociological aspects will impact their future opportunities. This could include things like societal structures, institutions, social norms, and inequalities intersect with their career goals.



- Sociological Application – 15%
  - The student discussed specific ways to apply sociological theories, concepts, and skills to their future career.
  
- Personal Reflection – 15%
  - The student addressed how this assignment has influenced their perspective on the role of sociology in their future career. The student provided insights gained, challenges identified, and areas for future growth.
  
- Scholarly Work – 10%
  - The student had a minimum of 6-8 scholarly sources.

## Grading

Table 1: Total Points for Assignments

Assignments	Points
Attendance	14
Reflection on Original Reading #1	7
Reflection on Original Reading #2	7
Reflection on Original Reading #3	7
Reflection on Original Reading #4	7
Applying Social Theories to Problems	28
Final Theory Paper	30
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2: Total Points for Final Grade

Grade	Points
A	90% and above
B	80%-89%
C	70%-79%
D	60%-69%
F	Below 60%

## Course Schedule

This calendar represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunities. Any changes will be communicated clearly and as soon as possible.

Week	Class Assignment	Due Date
1	Monday Class Participation	Aug 26 <sup>th</sup>
1	Wednesday Class Participation	Aug 28 <sup>th</sup>
1	Read Welcome Social Theory: Intro	Sept 1 <sup>st</sup>

2	Labor Day, No Class	Sept 2 <sup>nd</sup>
2	Wednesday Class Participation	Sept 4 <sup>th</sup>
2	Read Welcome Social Theory: Marx & Marxism	Sept 8 <sup>th</sup>
3	Monday Class Participation	Sept 9 <sup>th</sup>
3	Wednesday Class Participation	Sept 11 <sup>th</sup>
3	Read Communist Manifesto, online PDF	Sept 15 <sup>th</sup>
4	Monday Class Participation	Sept 16 <sup>th</sup>
4	Wednesday Class Participation	Sept 18 <sup>th</sup>
4	Read Welcome Social Theory: Nietzsche, Freud,	Sept 22 <sup>nd</sup>
4	Original Reading Reflection #1: Communist Manifesto	Sept 22 <sup>nd</sup>
5	Monday Class Participation	Sept 23 <sup>rd</sup>
5	Wednesday Class Participation	Sept 25 <sup>th</sup>
5	Read Protestant Work Ethic, online PDF excerpt	Sept 29 <sup>th</sup>
6	Monday Class Participation	Sept 30 <sup>th</sup>
6	Wednesday Class Participation	Oct 2 <sup>nd</sup>
6	Read Welcome Social Theory: Durkheim & Function	Oct 6 <sup>th</sup>
6	Original Reading Reflection #2: Protestant Work Ethic	Oct 6 <sup>th</sup>
7	Monday Class Participation	Oct 7 <sup>th</sup>
7	Wednesday Class Participation	Oct 9 <sup>th</sup>
7	Read Division of Labor, online PDF excerpt	Oct 13 <sup>th</sup>
8	Monday Class Participation	Oct 14 <sup>th</sup>
8	Wednesday Class Participation	Oct 16 <sup>th</sup>
8	Read Welcome Social Theory: Phenomenology	Oct 20 <sup>th</sup>
8	Reflection on Original Reading #3: Division of Labor	Oct 20 <sup>th</sup>
9	Monday Class Participation	Oct 21 <sup>st</sup>
9	Wednesday Class Participation	Oct 23 <sup>rd</sup>
9	Read Welcome Social Theory: Language, Discourse	Oct 27 <sup>th</sup>
9	Applying Social Theories Paper	Oct 27 <sup>th</sup>
10	Monday Class Participation	Oct 28 <sup>th</sup>
10	Wednesday Class Participation	Oct 30 <sup>th</sup>
10	Read Self, online PDF excerpt	Nov 30 <sup>th</sup>
11	Monday Class Participation	Nov 4 <sup>th</sup>
11	Wednesday Class Participation	Nov 6 <sup>th</sup>
11	Read Welcome Social Theory: Structure, Agency,	Nov 10 <sup>th</sup>
11	Reflection on Original Reading #4: Self	Nov 10 <sup>th</sup>
12	Monday Class Participation	Nov 11 <sup>th</sup>
12	Wednesday Class Participation	Nov 13 <sup>th</sup>
12	Read Welcome Social Theory: Feminism & Intersect	Nov 17 <sup>th</sup>
13	Monday Class Participation	Nov 18 <sup>th</sup>
13	Wednesday Class Participation	Nov 20 <sup>th</sup>
13	Read Welcome Social Theory: Postcolonial Theory	Nov 24 <sup>th</sup>
14	Monday Class Participation	Nov 25 <sup>th</sup>
14	Read Welcome Social Theory: New Materialism, etc.	Nov 26 <sup>th</sup>
14	Thanksgiving Break, No Class	Nov 27 <sup>th</sup> -Dec 1 <sup>st</sup>
15	Monday Class Participation	Dec 2 <sup>nd</sup>

15	Wednesday Class Participation	Dec 4 <sup>th</sup>
15	Final Theory Paper: Integrating Sociology	Dec 8 <sup>th</sup>

## **University and Class Policies**

### **Desire-to-Learn (D2L)**

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

### **Student Handbook**

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

### **Change to Schedule**

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

### **Refund and Repayment Policy**

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees, and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. However, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

### **Service for Students with Disabilities**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide

appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

## **College Policies**

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

## **Smoking and Tobacco Policy**

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

## **Alcohol and Drug Policy**

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

## **Campus Carry**

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

## **Active Shooter**

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled "Run. Hide. Fight." which may be electronically accessed via the University police department's webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

## **Grade Appeal Process**

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

## **Notice**

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

## **Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures**

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)