Course Syllabus: Sociological Theory

SOCL 4153 Section 101

Fall 2025

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: Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:55 a.m. to 1:55 p.m. and Fridays 11:55 a.m. to 12:55 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 work has united my diverse professional journey with my 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 17, 15, and 13. 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.
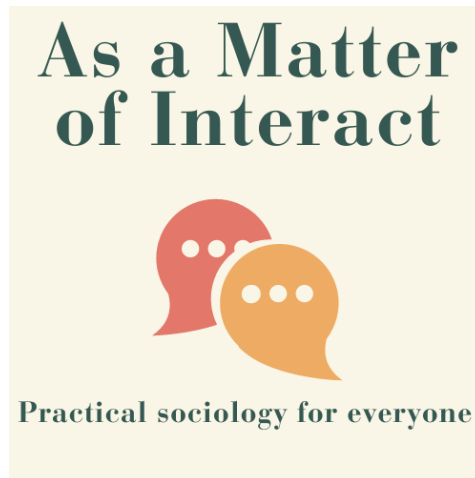
I have earned two doctorates, two master's, and a bachelor's degree. Part of my research focus is on applying sociology in the real world. I have a sociology podcast called "As a Matter of Interact: Practical Sociology for Everyone." I am a Certified Clinical Sociologist through the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology and serve as an Associate Editor of the J*ournal 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 many people do not like tension and conflict, we can experience growth through conflict. 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, apply their knowledge, 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.

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 of the assignments and feedback that I offer. Your grades will be posted in D2L.

Email Communication with the Instructor

Please follow the template below 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 Theories 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 final paper is the exception to this late work policy. The final paper can only be two days late with 10% deducted for each late day. I will submit final grades on the third day.

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 may receive 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

This course prioritizes original student thinking, reflection, and engagement with sociological concepts. Plagiarism is the appropriation, theft, purchase, or obtaining by any means of 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, and it undermines the purpose of the assignment. Students who plagiarize can receive a zero on the assignment and face additional academic consequences. However, students are welcome and encouraged to use proofreading applications like Grammarly to make minor grammatical changes. Do not rely on Grammarly or any other software to rewrite or rephrase your paper.

All written assignments will be evaluated through the Turnitin software program. This program identifies similarities between assignments that could indicate plagiarism. Another feature of Turnitin is that it detects if a student used AI to help write their paper. Turnitin will give me a percentage indicating how much of the paper was written using AI.

My policy on AI usage is to deduct the AI Turnitin percentage from the overall paper. You will receive a zero if Turnitin indicates that your paper was written using 100% AI. You will receive a zero. If Turnitin indicates that your paper was written using 32% AI, I will deduct 32% from your score, which means the best grade you could receive on that assignment is a 68.

Do not use AI to write your paper, and I do not recommend that you consult AI when writing your papers. The purpose of the writing assignments is for you to demonstrate your knowledge of the subject and how you integrate the sociological concepts with the "real world."

Evaluation and Grading

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 21st, *The Protestant Work Ethic* is due October 5th, *Division of Labor* is due October 12th, and *Self* is due November 9th.

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, making it easy to assess each question. – 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 in relation 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 the potential solutions they would offer. The paper is to be 750 to 1,250 words (3-5 pages). The assignment is due on October 26th.

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%
    o Social Problem
    o Structural Functionalism
    o Conflict Theory
    o Symbolic Interactionism
    o 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.

In Class Song Analysis Essay – 4%

A significant component of this course is learning and applying social theories. Part of this includes assessing and evaluating everyday life. A class activity throughout the semester will be sociological song analysis. On the last day of class, Wednesday, December 3rd, you will listen to a song and then write a 1–2-page paper using the concepts, theories, and approaches we have used this semester. Students will be graded on their sociological insights, analytical ability, and strength of their arguments. Students must be present in class to complete this assignment.

Grading Criteria for In-Class Song Analysis Essay

Organization and Clarity – 20%

- The paper is 1-2 pages (approximately 250-500 words). – 10%

- The student writes in a clear, organized way with coherent paragraphs. – 10%

Sociological Insight – 40%

- The student identifies and applies at least one sociological theory to the song. – 20%

- The student identifies and applies two key concepts from the semester to the song. – 20%

Analytical Ability – 40%

- The student connects lyrical, visual, and musical content to sociological ideas with depth. – 20%

- The student avoids a purely descriptive summary and supports arguments with evidence from the song. – 20%

Final Theory Paper: Integrating Sociology with Your Career – 40%

Students will have an opportunity to apply sociological research to their future careers. This assignment will give students a chance to explore how sociology is relevant to their intended career path. They will develop a deeper understanding of how sociology can be integrated into their professional lives. The paper is to be 1,250 to 1,750 words (5-7 pages). The assignment is due on Sunday, December 10th. This assignment will only be accepted up to two days late with the appropriate deductions.

Grading Criteria for Integrating Sociology with Your Career

Formatted Correctly – 20%

- The paper is 5-7 pages (1,250 to 1,750 words). – 5%

- The student has five headings in their paper. – 10%
    o Introduction
    o Career Selection
    o Sociological Analysis
    o Sociological Application
    o 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 – 50%

- Introduction – 5%
    o The student provided an introduction that outlined their paper.

- Career Selection – 5%
    o The student selected a future career and used a reputable outside source for career information, like the Bureau of Labor Statistics. – 5%

- Sociological Analysis – 15%

- o The student discussed how they anticipate sociological aspects will impact their future opportunities. This could include societal structures, institutions, social norms, and inequalities that intersect with their career goals.

- Sociological Application – 15%
  - o The student discussed specific ways to apply sociological theories, concepts, and skills to their future career.

- Personal Reflection – 10%
  - o 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 – 30%

- The student had a minimum of 6-8 scholarly sources. – 25%

- The student cited the source using ASA formatting guidelines. – 5%

Grading

Table 1: Total Points for Assignments

Assignments	Points
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
In-Class Song Analysis Essay	4
Final Theory Paper	40
Total Points	100

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.

Table 3: Class Assignments and Due Dates

Week	Class Assignment	Due Date
1	Mon Class Participation	Aug 25th
1	Wed Class Participation	Aug 27th
1	Read Welcome Social Theory: Intro	Aug 31st
2	No Class on Monday: Labor Day	Sept 1st
2	Wed Class Participation	Sept 3rd
2	Read Welcome to Social Theory: Marx and Marxism	Sept 7th
3	Mon Class Participation	Sept 8th
3	Wed Class Participation	Sept 10th
3	Read Communist Manifesto, online PDF	Sept 14th
4	Mon Class Participation	Sept 15th
4	Wed Class Participation	Sept 17th
4	Read Welcome Social Theory; Nietzsche, Freud, & Weber	Sept 21st
4	Reflection on Original Readings 1: Communist Manifesto	Sept 21st
5	Mon Class Participation	Sept 22nd
5	Wed Class Participation	Sept 24th
5	Read Protestant Work Ethic, online PDF	Sept 28th
6	Mon Class Participation	Sept 29th
6	Wed Class Participation	Oct 1st
6	Read Welcome Social Theory: Durkheim & Functionalism	Oct 5th
6	Reflection on Original Reading 2: Protestant Work Ethic	Oct 5th
7	Mon Class Participation	Oct 6th
7	Wed Class Participation	Oct 8th
7	Read Durkheim Division of Labor, online PDF	Oct 12th
7	Reflection on Original Reading 3: Division of Labor	Oct 12th
8	Mon Class Participation	Oct 13th
8	Wed Class Participation: Guest Lecturer Dr. Christiansen	Oct 15th
8	Read Welcome Social Theory: Phenomenology/Symbolic	Oct 19th
9	Mon Class Participation	Oct 20th
9	Wed Class Participation	Oct 22nd
9	Read Welcome Social Theory: Language, Discourse, Post	Oct 26th
9	Applying Social Theories to Social Problems Assignment	Oct 26th
10	Mon Class Participation	Oct 27th
10	Wed Class Participation	Oct 29th
10	Read Self excerpt, online PDF	Nov 2nd
11	Mon Class Participation	Nov 3rd
11	Wed Class Participation	Nov 5th
11	Read Welcome Social Theory: Structure, Agency, Reflex	Nov 9th
11	Reflection on Original Reading 4: Self	Nov 9th

12	Mon Class Participation	Nov 10th
12	Wed Class Participation	Nov 12th
12	Read Welcome Social Theory: Feminism/Intersectionality	Nov 16th
13	Mon Class Participation	Nov 17th
13	Wed Class Participation	Nov 19th
13	Read Welcome Social Theory: Postcolonial Theory	Nov 23rd
13	Movie Assignment: Goodfellas (1990)	Nov 23rd
14	Mon Class Participation	Nov 24th
14	Wed Class Participation	Nov 26th
14	Read Welcome Social Theory: New Materialism/ Post	Nov 30th
15	Mon Class Participation	Dec 1st
15	Wed Class Participation	Dec 3rd
15	Wed In-Class Song Analysis Essay	Dec 3rd
15	Final Theory Paper: Integrating Sociology	Dec 10th

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