



SYLLABUS: Sociological Theory Fall 2021
SOCL 4153 Section 101
CRN = 11272
Days: T and R; Time: 8:00 a.m. to 9:20 a.m.
Building and room: PY 100

Contact information

Instructor information

Isaac Christiansen, PhD, Assistant Professor of Sociology

Office location

Prothro-Yeager Hall, Room O-134

Office Hours

M and W 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
T 1:00 pm – 2:00p.m.

Phone:

940-397-4179

Email

isaac.christiansen@msutexas.edu

Course Overview:

This course introduces you to some of the most important currents in 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 examined. The bulk of this course will focus on Classical Sociological Theory, paying most attention to the works of Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx and Max Weber. In addition to the base of classical sociological theory, we also examine symbolic interaction theories, anti-colonial and dependency theories, and theories of imperialism. This course requires considerable dedication to engage with the texts, application of critical thinking skills and ample writing.

Instructional Objectives

1. Think critically about sociological theory, understand the central concepts of the different theories, their levels of analysis, and the applications and limitations of each theory.
2. Connect the key ideas of each theory with their respective theorist(s).
3. Understand the relevant social, economic and political context of each theorist examined.
4. Gain an appreciation for the applicability of classical sociological theory to modern social problems and social, political and economic phenomena.

Required Books:

Ritzer, George, and Jeffrey Stepnisky. 2018. *Classical Sociological Theory*. Seventh Edition. Sage. Los Angeles

Tucker Robert C, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Second

Edition. Norton and Company. New York, London.

Required Readings on D2L:

- Cheng, Enfu, and Lu Baolin. 2021. "Five Characteristics of Neoimperialism: Building on Lenin's Theory of Imperialism in the Twenty-First Century" *Monthly Review*. Accessed online 8/16/2021 Vol 73 (1) <https://monthlyreview.org/2021/05/01/five-characteristics-of-neoimperialism/>
- Collins, Randall and Michael Makowsky. 1989. "Erving Goffman and the Theater of Social Encounters" Pp 230-243 in *The Discovery of Society*. Fourth Edition. Random House. New York
- Dennis, Rutledge. 1995. "Social Darwinism and the Metaphysics of Race." *Journal of Negro Education* 64(3) 243-252.
- Durkheim. 1965 [1915]. "Conclusion" Pp. 462-496 in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. The Free Press. New York.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. 1978 [1901]. "The Relations of the Negroes to the Whites in the South". Pp. 253-270 in *On Sociology and the Black Community*. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago and London
- Foster, John Bellamy, and Intan Suwandi. 2020. "COVID-19 and Catastrophe Capitalism: Commodity Chains and Ecological-Epidemiological-Economic Crises" *Monthly Review*. 72 (2) 1-20
- Harvey, David. 2018. "The Visualization of Capital in Motion". Pp 1-23 in *Marx, Capital, and the Madness of Economic Reason*. Oxford University Press. New York.
- Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich. 2018 [1917]. "The Place of Imperialism in History" Pp 96-100 in *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Aziloth Books. London.
- Kushner, Howard L. and Claire E. Sterk. 2005. "The Limits of Social Capital: Durkheim, Suicide and Social Cohesion". *American Journal of Public Health*. 95(7) 1139-1143.
- Navarro, Vicente. 2014. "Neoliberalism as a Class Ideology; Or, the Political Causes of the Growth of Inequalities". Pp. 8-22 in *The Financial and Economic Crises and their Impact on Health and Social Well-Being*. Edited by Vicente Navarro and Carles Muntaner. Baywood Publishing Company. New York.
- Pridemore, William Alex, Mitchell B. Chamlin and John K. Cochran. 2007. "An Interrupted Time-Series Analysis of Durkheim's Social Deregulation Thesis: The Case of the Russian Federation". *Justice Quarterly*. 24(2) 271-290.
- Rodney, Walter. 1972. "Some Questions on Development" Pp 3-29 in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Howard University Press.
- Russell, James W. 1996. "Leninist Theory" Pp99-105 in *Introduction to Macrosociology*. Second Edition. Prentice Hall. Upper Saddle River. NJ.
- Jaffe, David. 1998. "The International System and the World Economy" Pp 151-197 in *Levels of Socio-Economic Development Theory*. Praeger Publishers. Westport.

- Smith, John. 2016. "Global Labor Arbitrage: The Key Driver of the Globalization of Production" Pp. 187-223 in *Imperialism in the Twenty First Century: Globalization, Super-Exploitation, and Capitalism's Final Crisis*. Monthly Review Press. New York. NY.
- Weber, Max. 1998 [1930]. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Penguin Publishing Company. Los Angeles.

Recommended Readings

- Draper, Hal. 1977. "Marx and the Economic Jew Stereotype" pp. 591-608 in *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution, Vol.1: State and Bureaucracy*. Monthly Review. New York
- Durkheim, Emile. 2006 [1897]. *On Suicide*. Penguin Books. London
- Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Anchor Books. New York
- Marx, Karl. 1976 [1867] *Capital Volume 1*. New Left Review. London
- Marx, Karl. 1978 [1885] *Capital Volume 2*. New Left Review. London
- Marx, Karl. 1981 [1894] *Capital Volume 3*. New Left Review. London
- Foster, John Bellamy and Robert W. McChesney. 2012. *The Endless Crisis: How Monopoly Finance Capitalism Produces Stagnation and Upheaval from the USA to China* Monthly Review Press. New York, NY
- Wolff, Richard. 2012. *Democracy at Work: A Cure for Capitalism* Haymarket Books
- Zeitlin, Irving M. 1981. "Saint Simon (1760-1825)" Pp 61 – 74 in *Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory*. Prentice Hall. New Jersey.

Basic skills necessary for the assimilation of sociological knowledge and success in this course:

1. Self-discipline: You will need to be sufficiently dedicated and take the time necessary to not only read through all of the assigned material, but to truly learn and absorb it. You will need to ask yourself questions as you read to ensure that you can identify and recall the main points. After reading you should be able to answer questions related to the material and see its personal and/or social/economic/political implications.

You are responsible for knowing the material in the text and other readings according to the syllabus schedule as well as the material covered in class lecture. Chapters should be read by the time the material is covered in class. In this way you will gain more from the lecture, be prepared for quizzes, and reduce the need to cram for exams. To test your own knowledge, you should be able to answer the questions at the end of each chapter correctly.

2. Attend every class. Come prepared and pay attention in class, take appropriate notes according to your best learning style and method.

3. A willingness to challenge dominant beliefs and perceptions. The sociologist must not fear information, data, and iconoclastic perspectives, which may clash with their preconceptions. The

sociologist must not shy away from information, data or truths that may be distasteful to powers that be- or to their own preconceptions.

Course Schedule	Topics	Readings	Due dates
Week 1 8/24	Introduction to course. Ibn Al Khaldun and Enlightenment.	Ritzer 1	
8/26	St. Simon and Comte. Overview of Marx, Weber, Durkheim		
Week 2 8/31	Spencer	Ritzer 5; Dennis	Summary I: Dennis
9/2	Women and Classical Sociological Theory	Ritzer 10	
Week 3 9/6	Labor Day		
9/7	Durkheim	Ritzer 7	
9/9	Durkheim and suicide	Kushner and Sterk 2005; Pridemore et al. 2007; Review	Summary II: Kushner and Stirk or Pridemore et al.
Week 4 9/14	Durkheim: Religion	Durkheim "Conclusion" Religion. Review Ritzer Pgs. 212-218	Summary III: Conclusion NOTE the review of Ritzer is to help you understand Durkheim
9/16	Exam 1		Reaction: over Durkheim 9/19
Week 5 9/21	Weber	Ritzer 8	
9/23	Weber: The Protestant Ethic:	Weber Ch. 1, 2	Summary IV: Weber Chapter 1
Week 6 9/28	Weber: The Protestant Ethic:	Chapter 5	Summary V Weber Ch. 5
9/30	Symbolic Interaction: Erving Goffman	Collins and Makowski	Reaction due Weber due 10/3
Week 7 10/5	Symbolic Interaction: Georg Simmel	Ritzer Chapter 9	Reaction I Revision Due- (optional)
10/7	Symbolic Interaction: Mead	Ritzer Chapter 15	

Course Schedule	Topics	Readings	Due dates
Week 8 10/12	Exam II		
10/14	Marx	Ritzer 6	
Week 9 10/19	The Early Marx: Economic Manuscripts of 1844	Marx in Tucker and 70-105	
10/21	Wage Labor and Capital	203-220	Summary VI: 'Wage Labor and Capital' or 'Economic Manuscripts'
Week 10 10/26	Marx and Engels Manifesto	Marx 469-500	
10/28	Critique of Capital	Marx 329-336 Harvey 1-23	Summary VII: Manifesto or Harvey
Week 11 11/2	Marx's Critique of Capital	Marx 336-384	
11/4	General Law of Capital Accumulation; Marx in Soho (film)	Marx 419-438	Reaction Over Marx 11/8
Week 12 11/9	Exam III Marx		
11/11	Du Bois	Ritzer 11,	Summary VIII: Du Bois Final Paper Outline Due 11/14
Week 13 11/16	Theories of Development: Dependency	Jaffe; Rodney	
11/20	Imperialism	Russell; Lenin	
Week 14 11/23	Globalization/modern imperialism	Smith	Summary IX: Smith or Rodney
11/24-26	Thanksgiving Break		
Week 15 11/30	Neoliberalism	Cheng and Lu; Navarro	Final Paper Due: 11/29 Summary X: Navarro or Cheng and Lu
12/2	Review/ Catch Up Day reserve		
Week 16 12/9 @ 8:00 am	Exam IV		

Grading Criteria:

Assignment weights

10 Reading Summaries and Participation $10 * 10 = 100$
Reaction Papers $3 * 50 = 150$
Final Paper Outline- 20 pts
Final Paper 100 points
1st Exam 80 points
2nd Exam 80 points
3rd Exam 80 points
4th Exam – 60 points
Attendance 30
TOTAL = 700

Grading Scale

90% to 100% A
80% to 89% B
70%-79% C
60%-69% D
59% or below F

Reading Summaries:

Briefly summarize in two to four paragraphs (roughly one to two pages) the main ideas and central supporting points of one (or two) of the readings for that week. Please include the citation of the reading above the summary. **The summary should reflect that you understand the main ideas in the reading.** I recommend joining all of your summaries in a single document called an 'annotated bibliography'. This will help you when it comes time to study and it can serve to a large degree as a study guide. Thus, it is in your interest to go beyond the minimum required here.

Summaries will be graded according to how well they capture the central arguments and the degree to which they reflect serious thought about said material. As always, your writing quality can affect your grade. The purpose of requiring summaries is three-fold. 1. This assignment encourages you to keep up with the readings. 2. Writing summaries will enhance the classroom experience and promote healthy discussion. 3. Writing the summaries (and keeping them in a document- such as an annotated bibliography) will facilitate writing papers and help you create a document with which you can review.

Reaction papers

Reactions are a central component of this course. The purpose of reactions is for you to reflect and interact with various readings dealing with the theorist (Durkheim, Weber and Marx). In the reaction papers you should:

- Identify what you think are the central ideas of the reading(s) of the theorist. While you

may focus more on a single reading- the reaction paper should be distinct from a summary of the main ideas of the reading. The paper should communicate at least a basic understanding of (some of) the most important ideas and contribution of the theorist.

- Discuss what was most salient about the reading. Also discuss the implications of the theorists' ideas regarding important social or social science issues. Your reaction paper should source the readings and show serious engagement with the theorist's ideas.
- Toward your conclusion, you may include (if you wish) emotional reactions and reflections relating to the reading, this is the place to explain them and any other thoughts or reflections you wish to add.

Write three to four pages, in twelve-point Times New Roman or Arial font, double-spaced. Please submit your work with a Microsoft Word document (not a PDF) so that I can turn on Track Changes and provide you detailed feedback as to how to address issues with content and writing in the paper.

Optional First Reaction Paper Revision

You will have the opportunity to revise *your reaction paper on Durkheim* for an improved grade (provided you are not satisfied with your grade) based on the detailed feedback that I will provide you. You will submit the file in D2L in the same location as your initial submission. I will review the file and your grade will be adjusted according to the quality and depth of the improvements that you have made. The deadline for the optional is in the course calendar.

Final Paper Outline:

To ensure that you begin to think about your paper early and have ample time to develop it, you will hand in an outline well before the final paper (see the course schedule above). The outline should be one to two pages, be in outline format and must include the topic, the direction of the paper, your plan to address the theory or theories that you have selected for analysis, and the plan for the basic organizational structure/formatting of the paper. You should include a brief paragraph in the beginning describing your objectives, but as stated before, the outline is an outline, not a paper, thus you should format it as such. In addition, you must include the references of at least three of the sources that you have identified. The outline is worth 20 points.

Final Paper

Write a 7 to 10-page, double-spaced paper that explores the ideas and persistent relevance of a classical social theorist(s) covered in this course. Your paper may show how a particular theory sheds light on a particular social problem or phenomenon, (for example – Goffman, stigma and crime, Marx- inequality and crises, or Durkheim and religion). Are there aspects of the theory that need some updating, if so, which ones? Was the social context important to the

theory's development? In what way was it relevant? What level of analysis did the theorist generally approach? Are the criticisms of this theory fair, which ones are, which ones are not? How does this theory change how we analyze social, political, economic, or social-psychological situations? You do not have to address each of these questions. These are just to help you think through possible ways to approach your paper's construction. You will have considerable freedom to develop your paper but there are certain rules by which your paper must abide:

1. *Your theory should interact with some of their original work.* The paper should be in depth and go beyond a perfunctory bio (some introduction to the theorist's biography is OK but not required).

2. *You must include at least 5 bibliographic references.* These must be appropriately cited at the end of the paper. All references must include the authors' or author's last and first name(s), the year published, the title of the article or book, the name of the journal or publisher, and where it was published.

2. *To count towards the bibliographic reference requirement, the references must be scholarly.* This means they must come from either books of scholars or must be articles published in scholarly journals. If you have questions on this please see me.

3. *Your work must include in-text citations.* All references must be cited in the text and all work cited in the text must be fully referenced in your bibliography or works cited section at the end of the paper. All quotations of authors must be in quotation marks and the in text citation for quotations must include the page number. All in text citations must include the author's last name and the year the work was published in parenthesis. For example, (Blum 2004) or (Blum 2004: 328) when quoting.

4. *In no circumstances will plagiarism be tolerated.* A zero will result in this case. This means that you must not copy the works of either your classmates (this is not a group project) or other scholars and pass it off as your own. Honesty and integrity must be upheld in academic work.

Course Policies

Course Policies

Course Policies

Class Participation and attendance:

The attendance and participation of students is vital for a positive and rewarding learning experience for everyone. Your presence is expected and students will be evaluated on their sharing of thoughts and class contribution. You will miss vital information if you are not present and alert in class. In the end it is your grade and your responsibility to know the information in the exams and to incorporate the information from class in your assignments. Individuals that miss class and/or are not engaged during class, tend to hand in poorer work, and do more poorly in exams.

No one who is feeling ill should come to class. If you are sick, please send me an email and do not come to class. Attendance has a value of 30 points. You are allotted two absences (for which no explanation is necessary). Only under illness, extreme circumstances or university activities that conflict with class will this penalty be waved.

Late Assignments: Late assignments will have up to 5 points deducted per day late.

Missed exam policy: No missed exams will allowed to be retaken without instructor approval based on *evidence* (doctor's note, university letter) that indicates the person missed the test due to a legitimate emergency, illness and/or school function. **All missed exams must be made up within one week (extensions in some cases may be granted on a case by case basis for health reasons).** The exam *may* also be different than the exam given to the rest of the class, and no bonus question will appear on the make-up exam. No exam may be made up after the week prior to final exams.

Learning Environment Please keep in mind that everyone has a different learning style and we need to collectively keep distractions to a minimum. ***PLEASE STAY OFF YOUR CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CLASS.*** I will respect you and I also expect you do give your fellow classmates and me that same respect. If you are disruptive in class you will first be given a warning, the second time it occurs, you will be asked to leave.

Show up on time and do not leave early. An early exit will hurt your attendance.

Cell phones and electronic devices: Not permitted during class time. Turn off or silence your cellular telephones before coming to class. Sending text messages is distracting and is strictly prohibited. Laptop use is generally prohibited during class time. No use of iPods or other listening devices will be tolerated. Please focus on the task at hand.

Syllabus modifications: The professor reserves the right to make adjustments or improvements to the syllabus during the semester. You will be notified of all changes.

Cheating, Plagiarism, and Academic Dishonesty:

At no time will any form of cheating or plagiarism of any kind be allowed. Students are attending the university to learn and cannot do so if they do not complete their own work. Academic dishonesty is a serious ethical violation and will not be tolerated. I expect that these standards will be met, and I will hold students to them.

Plagiarism is according to the New Oxford Dictionary is “the practice of taking someone else’s work and passing it off as your own”. This means in academic practice copying someone else’s work and ideas, without quoting and citing as appropriate.

Potential consequences of plagiarism or academic dishonesty include failing the article review, assignment, exam and/or quiz at a minimum. Other consequences include failing the entire course and the filing of the Academic Misconduct Form that will remain on your college records.

Americans with Disabilities Act:

If a student has an established disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADAAA) and would like to request accommodation, that student should please contact me as soon as possible. Any student requesting accommodations should first contact Disability Support Services at 940-397-4140 in room 168 Clark Student Center to document and coordinate reasonable accommodations if they have not already done so.

Midterm Progress Report:

In order to help students keep track of their progress toward course objectives, I will provide a Midterm Progress Report through each student's WebWorld account for students at risk of receiving a D or an F. Midterm grades will not be reported on the students' transcript; nor will they be calculated in the cumulative GPA. They simply give students an idea of where they stand at the midpoint of the semester. Students earning below a C at the midway point should schedule a meeting with the professor and/or seek out tutoring.

Campus Concealed Carry

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at <https://mwsu.edu/campus-carry/rules-policies>.