

Basic Social Theory: 3050
Spring/Summer 2020
Online Lecture
May 4th-July 30th 2020

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Online Office Hour: Tuesdays, 1-2pm or by request.

Course Description

The main objectives of this course are to present an overview of sociological theory and help you to develop and foster a critical understanding of society. Adopting these skills will not only help you to better understand sociology as a discipline, but how to use critical thinking skills that can apply to any job you will have in the future. Social theory is the backbone of the sociology discipline and all major substantive questions of sociological interests are directly related to theory. Through studying the writings of classical social theorists, this course will introduce you to the major traditions of thought that continue to guide sociological inquiry We will also examine contemporary theories such as queer theory, gender theory and Black feminist thought.

Learning Outcomes

1. Gain critical thinking skills
2. Identify and intellectually discuss the contributions of central theoretical figures within the various schools of thought.
3. Draw distinctions between paradigms, theories, and concepts.
4. Demonstrate improvement in their reading, writing, verbal, and critical thinking skills.
5. Develop communication skills through interactions with classmates
6. Gain a deeper understanding of sociology as a discipline

Required Readings

Social Theory: A Textbook, by Carsten Bagge Laustsen, Lars Thorup Larsen, Mathias Wullum Nielsen, Tine Ravn and Mads P. Sorensen. *I suggest buying the e-book.

I will also upload articles to canvas that are mandatory readings. If you have any issues downloading the readings, let me know as soon as possible!

Grade Details

Weekly Discussions 5 points each, you must do 10
Paper One
Paper Two
Final Exam
Total

Total

50 points
15 points
15 points
20 points
100 points

Class Updates

If I need to inform you about any additional information pertaining to the class, I will do so via Canvas. Please check Canvas regularly to make sure that you are well informed. This syllabus should be used as a guide, but I may make changes during the semester. Please, please check your email every day. This is a good habit to form because it will allow you to stay on top of classroom expectations.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services (SDS) located at 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department. SDS telephone number is 313-577-1851 or 313-577-3365 (TDD only). Once accommodations are in place, I will be glad to meet with you privately during office hours to discuss your special needs. Student Disability Services' mission is to assist the university in creating an accessible community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in their educational experience at WSU.

Communication

In the past, some students have emailed me using a different email address other than their Wayne State University email. These emails have almost always been sent to my 'junk' folder so you are required to use your Wayne State University email address if you want to communicate with me. Also, please give me up to 48 hours to respond to your email. If I do not respond, *PLEASE* do not hesitate to email me again.

“Office” Hours

I will hold weekly office hours every Tuesday from 1-2pm or by request. These office hours will be held using the conference option on canvas. If you go to our course page on canvas and look on the left hand side under modules, you will see a conference option. There will be a conference set up for every week. You can also email me to set up a separate conference meeting if you would like to speak individually.

Technological Issues

Technological issues are most likely to happen because this course is completely online. I understand that this can be frustrating, but you need to plan for these issues by giving yourself enough time to complete assignments before the due dates. If you do have problems, the C&IT department can help you (more than I can, I'm terrible with technology) Please contact them if you have any technological issues. They are available Monday - Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. for phone calls at 313-577-4357. Or, by email at helpdesk@wayne.edu. Unless you have a support ticket that shows that you contacted support in enough time to submit papers to complete your final exam, extensions will not be given.

Late Assignments

For every day a paper is late, I will take off 5% of your grade. Deadlines are important and I expect that you meet them. If for some reason you are unable to turn in the paper by the deadline and have a valid excuse, you must let me know as soon as possible.

Assignments

Weekly Discussions

Due every Friday by 11:59 pm, worth 50% of your grade.

You are required to participate in 10 out of the 11 discussion boards. Each discussion board is worth 5 points. You will only receive full credit if you put in the effort. Posts must be at least 250 words and well thought out. There is a grading rubric on Canvas under the module titled "Discussion Board Information." The discussion boards will be open from Monday at 9am-Friday at 11:59pm. You must participate by Friday at 11:59pm, otherwise you will lose out on 5 points. Discussion boards will run from May 11th- July 24th.

You will be assigned a group before the class begins, this will be your discussion board group. Every week, you will post in the forum that is labeled with your groups name (For example Group A, Group B, Group C) Within each group, you will be separated into two groups: 1. The Enquirers and 2. The Responders. You will switch roles each week. This means that if you are an enquirer the first week, you will be a responder the second week. You only have to create one post to earn full credit and only your first post from that week will be graded, but if you want to write multiple, that is superb! I will post an initial question to get the discussion started and then you all will be responsible for continuing the conversation!

The Enquirers

This group is expected to pose thoughtful questions about any of the material that is posted for that week. You can use quotes from the reading to help illustrate a point (those will not count towards your word count) or compare readings from another module. Your job is to pose a question that gets your classmates to think deep and create conversation. Your question should not be like a quiz, but a question that encourages thoughtful debate or conversation!

The Responders

The responders will be required to answer a question posed by the enquirers. Make sure it is a well written post that demonstrates that you did the reading and have carefully thought about the information. Remember, you are free to agree or disagree with the theorists! That is what critical thinking is!

Paper One: Compare and Contrast

Due June 10 by 11:59 pm, worth 15% of your overall grade

For this paper, I would like you to write about two of the theorists or concepts that we have read about in this class. You must compare and contrast the two different ideologies, with one of them being your preference. This will help with your ability to critically analyze theoretical topics, as well as give you the opportunity to work on your academic writing. An assignment guideline is posted on canvas with more details.

Paper Two: Applying Theory to the Real World

Due July 22 by 11:59pm, worth 15% of your overall grade

I want you to take one of the theories or concepts that we have read about and apply it to the real world. Using a contemporary news story (within the last five years) I want you to demonstrate how theory can be applied to better understand a social situation. This paper will help you recognize ways in which social theory can help us uncover the nuances of social behavior. An assignment guideline is posted on canvas with more details.

Final Exam

Exam will be available on July 27th from 8am-11:59pm, worth 20% of your overall grade.

Your final exam will consist of four essay questions, but you only have to answer two. You will have one hour to answer two essays. This will be open-note, but you will not be able to access any lectures or discussion boards. While you will have access to your book, you will need to be prepared for the exam given the time limitations. I highly suggest you rely on notes you have taken throughout the course. This will ensure that you are all doing the weekly readings, so make sure you take notes!

Your final grade will be calculated on your overall point totals, as follows:

A: 94 and above	C: 74-76
A-: 90-93	C-: 70-73
B+: 87-89	D: 64-66
B: 84-86	D-: 60-63
B-: 80-83	F: below 60
C+: 77-79	

Course Schedule

WEEK ONE: Welcome!

May 4th-May 8th

Read: Chapter 1 of text book, Introduction to Sociological Theory

Watch: Welcome video that details syllabus.

Discussion Board: Not mandatory or graded, but you get 2 extra credit points for participating!

WEEK TWO: SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

May 11th-May 15 Sociological Mindfulness and Looking Glass Self

Read: On Canvas, "The Promise" by C Wright Mills

Watch: Sociological Imagination lecture

Discussion Board: Make sure to contribute to discussion by 11:59pm on May 15th!

WEEK THREE: MARXISM/ CONFLICT THEORY

May 18th-May 22nd Capitalism and Alienation

Read: Chapter 2 from textbook, Marx and Weber

Watch: Marxism Lecture

Discussion Board: Make sure to contribute to discussion by 11:59pm on May 22!

WEEK FOUR: STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM

May 25th –May 29th Recognition and Anomie

Read: Chapter 3 from textbook, only read up to page 43 where Durkheim's section ends.

Watch: Durkheim Lecture

Discussion Board: Make sure to contribute to discussion by 11:59pm on May 29th!

WEEK FIVE: THEORISTS NOT GIVEN ENOUGH CREDIT

June 1-June 5 Jane Addams, Du Bois

Read: On Canvas, Jane Addams: The First Humanist Sociologist

On Canvas, W. E. B. Du Bois

Watch: Forgotten Theorists Lecture

Discussion Board: Make sure to contribute to discussion by 11:59pm on July 5th!

WEEK SIX: POST-MODERNISM

June 8th-June 12th Power and Stratification

Read: Chapter 5 from textbook, Foucault and Bourdieu

Watch: Post-Modernism Lecture

Discussion Board: Make sure to contribute to discussion by 11:59pm on June 12th!

**Paper One Due by June 10th at 11:59pm*

WEEK SEVEN: SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

June 15th-June 19 The Reflective Self

Reach: Chapter 9 from textbook, Goffman and Giddens

Watch: Goffman lecture

Discussion Board: Make sure to contribute to discussion by 11:59pm on June 19th!

WEEK 8-10: GENDER/FEMINIST THEORY

June 22th -June 26th Family and Work

Read: Chapter 10 from text book, only read 170-177 where Arlie Hoschild's section begins.

Watch: Work and Family Lecture

Discussion Board: Make sure to contribute to discussion by 11:59pm on June 26th!

June 29th-July 3rd Gender, Body, and Identity

Read: Chapter 11 from text book

Watch: Nature vs. Nurture Lecture

Discussion Board: Make sure to contribute to discussion by 11:59pm on July 3rd!

July 6th- July 10 Black Feminist Thought

Read: On canvas, "Combahee River Collective"

Watch: Black Feminist Thought Lecture and Kimberle Crenshaw TED Talk

Discussion Board: Make sure to contribute to discussion by midnight on July 10th!

WEEK 11: QUEER THEORY

July 13th -July 17th Queer Theory

Read: On Canvas, Queer, by Siobhan B. Somerville

On Canvas, What does Queer Theory Teach Us?

Watch: Queer Theory Lecture

Discussion Board: Make sure to contribute to discussion by midnight on July 17th!

July 20 -July 24 Wrap-up

Read: Chapter 13 from textbook

Watch: Wrap-Up Lecture

Discussion Board: Make sure to contribute to discussion by midnight on July 24th!

**Paper Two is due July 22nd by 11:59 pm.*

July 27th Final Exam

**The exam will be open from 8am until 11:59pm*

Counseling and Psychological Services

“(CAPS) can help you with your mental health needs, while also fully doing our part with social distancing. CAPS offers telemental health services to currently registered WSU students using the Microsoft Teams app. To work remotely with a CAPS counselor, just download the Teams app to a computer and/or smartphone and then call (313) 577-3398. We are available Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm to provide you with an Initial Consultation.”

Student Disability Services (SDS)

If needed, please contact SDS coordinate your accommodations. Then, contact me so we can privately discuss your accommodations. Please do this by the second week of class. Phone: 313-577- 1851 Website: <https://studentdisability.wayne.edu/>

Writing Resources

I highly recommend using WSU’s Writing Center. This can help you learn to write effectively, which is a skill that is necessary to be successful in school and in future careers. Website: <http://www.clas.wayne.edu/writing/>