

Course: Sociology 4050; section 001 (Basic Sociological Theory)

Classes meet: Tuesdays 3:00pm – 6:40pm in in Main1162

Dr. Zachary W. Brewster

Office: 2272 Faculty / Administration Building (FAB)

Phone: (313) 577-2930 (main office)

E-mail: zbrewster@wayne.edu (Best way to contact me)

Office Hours: Tuesday: 9:00-10:00am and 12:30 – 2:30pm

Thursday: 9:00 – 10:00am

M/W/F: by appointment (not available Monday/Thursday 12:00 – 3:00pm)

Required Text: Farganis, James. 2014. *Readings in Social Theory: The Classic Tradition to Post-Modernism* (7th Edition). New York: McGraw-Hill

Ritzer, George and Jeffrey Stepnisky. 2013. *Contemporary Sociological Theory and Its Classical Roots: The Basics* (4th Edition). New York: McGraw-Hill.

*Additional readings are required and made available on Blackboard.

Course Description

The first and most general goal of any course is for students to enhance their reading, writing, verbal, and critical thinking skills. In this course, these skills will be cultivated through the study of sociological theory. To actively engage with and think effectively about the present (and the future) students must first reflect on how past societal trends were thought about and understood within their respective historical contexts. Towards this end, this course will chronologically examine the origins and progression of sociological theory of the 19th and 20th centuries. By studying the writings of classical social theorists—Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Simmel, Du Bois, and Mead—this course will introduce students to the major traditions of thought—structural functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism—that have and continue to guide sociological inquiry and the production of sociological knowledge. We will also explore more recent theoretical developments, including neo-Marxism, feminism, postmodernism, and theories of globalization. In short, this course is designed to give students a set of theoretical tools that they may draw from to understand further the social worlds in which they exist.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to review, and demonstrate understanding of the role of theory in sociology, such that the student will be able to:

- 1) Define theory and describe its role in building sociological knowledge.
- 2) Compare and contrast basic theoretical orientations.
- 3) Show how theories reflect the historical context of the times and cultures in which they were developed.
- 4) Describe and apply some basic theories or theoretical orientations in at least one area of social reality.
- 5) Draw distinctions between paradigms, theories, and concepts.
- 6) Identify and intellectually discuss the central assumptions of the various schools of thought, including functionalism, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism, neo-Marxism, feminism, and postmodernism.
- 7) Identify and intellectually discuss the contributions of central theoretical figures within the various schools of thought.
- 8) Recognize how social theory contributes to contemporary analysis of social problems, social change, and social organization.
- 9) Recognize how empirical research, more generally, is informed by theoretical ideas and propositions.
- 10) Identify their own theoretical orientation and intellectually defend it utilizing empirical evidence but also acknowledge and appreciate the merits of other perspectives.
- 11) Demonstrate improvement in their reading, writing, verbal, and critical thinking skills.

Expectations

This course will be intellectually difficult and labor intensive. In other words, this course will push you to think beyond what you are comfortable with and will require you to do a considerable amount of reading **and** writing. You will find the assigned readings difficult and for this reason, it is imperative that you attend class. However, attending class alone will not ensure course success. In addition to class attendance, you will need to study each assigned reading carefully. I strongly recommend that you complete the assigned readings prior to class and take summary notes wherein you attempt to capture the author's main ideas. These notes will not only help you as you complete the "mini" and take home examinations but will also facilitate class discussions. Reading derived from the Farganis text, in particular, can be extremely dense and thus to foster learning we, **as a class**, will need to discuss them in detail. In short, careful preparation of the reading assignments is a crucial area in which you will need to exercise self-discipline (reading before the class for when the reading will be discussed), independence (trying to understand the author's argument on your own), initiative (asking questions and contributing to class discussions), and perseverance (continue working hard even when the material seems incomprehensible).

Blackboard

Blackboard is an instrumental part of this course and as such, you are expected to login to Blackboard on a regular basis to access course materials (e.g., readings, study guides, lectures, etc.), check email, and review announcements. If you do not login to Blackboard on a regular basis you will not know what is going on in the course and your chances for success will thus be diminished greatly!

Student Conduct

This is a college course; therefore, I expect that you are all adults and will act accordingly. The success of this class depends largely on the students, making class participation imperative. All expressions of ideas are welcome assuming that these expressions are not uncivil to your classmates. Harassment of any nature will not be tolerated. Students are also expected to maintain academic integrity and therefore, cheating of any sort may result in failure of this course. For additional information on academic integrity and related issues refer to the Student Conduct Services homepage (<http://www.doso.wayne.edu/student-conduct/index.html>). The student code of conduct is also available on BlackBoard for you to review. Remember, ignorance is not a viable defense against allegations of student conduct violations.

Late Assignments

I expect you to submit written assignments via SafeAssign on the designated due dates. However, all students will have a two-day grace period for submitting assignments without penalty. After 2 days, a late penalty of 5 points per late day may be incurred and this includes weekends.

Attendance

Regular class attendance is expected. While there will be no formal attendance policy in this class excessive absences will inevitably be reflected in your final course grade. Excessive tardiness and leaving class early will be regarded as disrespectful. If there is a problem with getting to class on time or having to leave early, please see me as soon as possible. You are all adults and are capable of making the decision to attend class. In cases in which you cannot attend class you are responsible for obtaining missed information from a classmate (if you are sick, stay home and get better but **I do not need to see doctors' notes** if this is the case). I will not provide students with my lecture notes nor will I reiterate lectures for individual students. In the case of an emergency, where excessive absences result, please contact me as soon as possible.

Class Cancellations

In the event that classes are cancelled for any reason you should check Blackboard for updates regarding what will be expected the next class session.

Students with Disabilities

Wayne State University is working to build a community that is inclusive and welcoming to all people, including those with disabilities. If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services for coordination of your academic accommodations. The Student Disability Services (SDS) office is located at 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department. SDS telephone number is [313-577-1851](tel:313-577-1851) or [313-577-3365](tel:313-577-3365) (TDD only). Once you have your accommodations in place, I will be glad to meet with you privately during my office hours to discuss your special needs. Please **DO NOT** request accommodations directly from me without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

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 Wayne State University. Please refer to the SDS website for further information about students with disabilities and the services we provide for faculty and students: <http://studentdisability.wayne.edu/>

Extra Credit

I do not give extra credit. Focus your time and energy on the learning opportunities, instead of hoping to do additional work toward the end of the course. If you follow the course plan, you will not need extra credit opportunities! This course is intentionally designed with several different types of assignments to give you multiple and varied chances to succeed. However, it is imperative that you keep-up with the readings and projects to avoid falling behind. If you run into any difficulties, please see me immediately so that we can develop a plan for you to meet your goals.

Components of Final Grade

Three Exams (300 points)

There will be two in-class examinations consisting of short answer, multiple choice, and essay questions. Each exam is worth a maximum of 100 points. In addition, there will be a take-home, written final examination that is worth 100 points and is to be submitted no later than Monday, May 4th.

Mini Exams/Quizzes (100 points)

There will be five, announced quizzes that will assess your comprehension of course content. Quizzes will be comprised of both subjective and objective items and you may use **your own** written notes to complete them. Therefore, you are encouraged to take well-organized notes on both readings and lectures. You **will not be permitted to makeup** these quizzes but to be fair, I will drop your lowest score at the end of the semester. Thus, five quizzes will be given and the highest four scores will be taken in determining this component of your final grade. Your chances of success can be optimized by, preparing for class (e.g., reading and taking notes), attending class, and engaging the material while in class.

Theory Application Paper (100 points)

You will complete an 8-10 page term paper, which focuses on the application of theoretical ideas or traditions. This assignment will enhance your proficiency as a scholar in multiple areas. Specifically, in the process of preparing and writing this paper you will enhance your “searching” skills (ability to find theoretically informed answers to empirical observations), writing skills (ability to write in a clear and professional manner), comprehension skills (ability to read and understand professional writings), integration skills (ability to synthesize theoretical ideas from multiple perspectives and research contexts), and critical thinking skills (ability to identify the weaknesses and strengths of sociological approaches to explaining the social world). Since we cannot cover all topics relating to social theory and its application in our course, this assignment will provide you with the opportunity to explore the application of social theory to an area of social life that captures your imagination. Additional details about this assignment will be forthcoming.

Grading Scale

90-100% A	80-89% B	70-79% C	60-69% D	Below 60% F
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GRADING RUBRIC: Your grade is based on a total of 500 points.

Tentative Schedule (Tentative meaning that this is not sketched in stone and can be altered according to class interest, time constraints, and other unforeseen events. It is **your responsibility** to check Blackboard **regularly** to verify what you need to do in order to be prepared for each class session.)

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Reading #</u>
Introduction to Sociological Theory	Chapter 1, pp. 1-14 (Ritzer)	1
Classical Theorists	Introduction (Farganis pp. 1-11)	2
<i>Durkheim</i>	Chapter 2, pp. 15-21 (Ritzer)	3
	Durkheim: Anomie and Social Integration (pp. Farganis 55-58)	4
	Durkheim: The Rules of Sociological Method (pp. Farganis 58-64)	5
	Egoistic Suicide and Anomic Suicide (Farganis, pp. 64-72)	6
	Teenage Wasteland (online)	7
	Elementary Forms of Religious Life (Farganis, pp. 73-80)	8
<i>Marx</i>	Chapter 2, pp. 21-30 (Ritzer)	9

	Marx: Alienation, Class Struggle, and Class-consciousness (Farganis, pp. 29-31)	10
	Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 (Marx, online)	11
	Manifesto of Communist Party (Farganis, pp. 31-43)	12
	The German Ideology (Farganis, pp. 50-53)	13
	Fetishism of Commodities (Farganis, pp. 43-50)	14
Weber	Chapter 2, pp. 30-44 (Ritzer)	15
	Weber: The Iron Cage (Farganis, pp. 81-85)	16
	Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism (Farganis, pp. 85-89)	17
	Bureaucracy (Farganis, pp. 89-100)	18
	Power, Domination and Types of Authority (Farganis, pp. 100-108)	19
	McDonaldization of Society (Ritzer, online)	20
	Choose one of the following readings (online):	21
	Robinson, Matthew B. 2002. "McDonaldization of America's Police, Courts, and Corrections."	
	Bryman, Alan. 2002. "Theme Parks and McDonaldization."	
	Hausbeck, Kathryn and Barbara G. Brents. 2002. McDonaldization of the Sex Industries? The Business of Sex."	
	Dennis, Jeffery P. 2002. "McDonaldization of the Family."	
	Hayes, Dennis and Robin Wynyard. 2002. "Whimpering Into the Good Night: Resisting McUniversity."	
	Neustadtl, Alan and Meyer Ketnbaum. 2002. "The McDonaldization of the Internet."	
	Drane, John. 2002. "The Church and the Iron Cage."	
	Ritzer, George. 2002. "Some Thoughts on the Future of McDonaldization."	
Simmel	Chapter 3, pp. 45-54 (Ritzer)	22
	Simmel: Dialectic of Individual and Society (Farganis, pp. 109-111)	23
	The Metropolis and Mental Life (Farganis, pp. 111-120)	24
	The Stranger (Farganis, pp. 120-123)	25
	Alcohol-Related Windows on Simmel's Social World (Staudenmeier, online)	26
Mead	Chapter 3, pp. 57-64 (Ritzer)	27
	Mead: The Emergent Self (Farganis, pp. 125-26)	28
	Mead: Mind, Self, and Society (Farganis, pp. 126-35)	29
Du Bois	Chapter 3, pp. 65-70 (Ritzer)	30
	Du Bois: Double-Consciousness (Farganis, pp. 403-406)	31
	Philadelphia Negro (Du Bois, online)	32
	Souls of Black Folk (Farganis, pp. 407-412)	33
	Souls of White Folk (Du Bois, online)	34
	Race-Based Critical Theory and Happy Talk (Hartmann and Bell, online)	35
Contemporary Grand Theories I		
<i>Structural Functionalism</i>	Chapter 4, pp. 72-87 (Ritzer)	36
	Functionalism (Farganis, pp. 141-43)	37
	Davis and Moore: Principles of Stratification (Farganis, pp. 143-51)	38
	Chapter 4, pp. 88-93 (Ritzer)	39
	Merton: Manifest and Latent Functions (Farganis, pp. 161-77)	40
<i>Conflict Theory</i>	Chapter 4, pp. 93-99 (Ritzer)	41
	Conflict Theory (Farganis, pp. 179-81)	42
	Dahrendorf: Structure, Interests, and Conflict (Farganis, pp. 181-89)	43
	Mills: Power in America (Farganis, pp. 189-198)	44
	Zweigenhaft and Domhoff: Ironies of Diversity (Farganis, pp. 198-215)	45
<i>Critical Theory</i>	Chapter 5, pp. 108-124 (Ritzer)	46
	Critical Theory (Farganis, pp. 305-308)	47
	Marcuse: One-Dimensional Man (Farganis, pp. 309-321)	48

Contemporary Theories of Everyday Life

<i>Symbolic Interactionism</i>	Chapter 6, pp. 139-43 (Ritzer)	50
	Symbolic Interactionism (Farganis, pp. 271-74)	51
	Blumer: Society as Symbolic Interaction (Farganis, pp. 274-81)	52
<i>Dramaturgy</i>	Chapter 6, pp. 143-51 (Ritzer)	53
	Goffman: Presentation of Self (Farganis, pp. 281-290)	54
	The Public Wife (online)	55
	Hochschild: Emotional Labor (Farganis, pp. 290-300)	56
<i>Ethnomethodology</i>	Chapter 6, pp. 152-57 (Ritzer)	57
	Ethnomethodology (Farganis, pp. 247-48)	58
	Berger: The Sacred Canopy (Farganis, pp. 248-60)	59
	Garfinkel: Everyday Activities (Farganis, pp. 261-69)	60
	West and Zimmerman: Doing Gender (Farganis, pp. 384-393)	61
<i>Exchange Theory</i> & <i>Rational Choice</i>	Chapter 6, pp. 157-63 (Ritzer)	62
	Exchange and Rational Choice (Farganis, pp. 217-18)	63
	Blau: the Structure of Social Associations (Farganis, pp. 219-32)	64
	Chapter 6, pp. 164-72 (Ritzer)	65
	Coleman: Social Capital and Human Capital (Farganis, pp. 232-45)	66

Contemporary Feminist Theories

<i>Feminist Theory</i>	Chapter 8, pp. 195-230(Ritzer)	67
	Smith: Radical Critique of Sociology (Farganis, pp. 363-72)	68
	Collins: Black Feminist Thought? (Farganis, pp. 372-383)	69

Theories of Postmodernism

	Chapter 9, pp. 231-241 (Ritzer)	70
	Post-Modernism (Farganis, pp. 331-332)	71
	Foucault: The Carceral (Farganis, pp. 332-342)	72
	Chapter 9, pp. 239-267 (Ritzer)	73
	Lyotard: The Post-Modern Condition (Farganis, pp. 342-356)	74

List of Important Dates

- Monday, January 12—Welcome Back to Classes**
- Tuesday, January 27— First Quiz**
- Tuesday, February 10— Second Quiz & Phase 1 of your research project is due**
- Tuesday, February 24—First Exam**
- Tuesday, March 10—Third Quiz**
- Tuesday, March 31—Fourth Quiz & Phase 2 of your research project is due**
- Tuesday, April 14—Second Exam**
- Tuesday, April 21—Fifth Quiz & Theory Application Paper due**
- Monday, May 4— Take home final exam due**

Other Important Dates

- Sunday, January 18—Last day to add a class without departmental approval**
- Monday, January 19—MLK Day / University closed**
- Monday, January 26—Last day for tuition cancellation**
- Sunday, February 8—Last day to drop a course with no grade reported (no refund)**
- Friday, February 13—Degree applications are due**
- Monday, March 16 – Saturday, March 21—Spring Break**
- Sunday, March 29—Last day to withdraw from a class**
- Wednesday, April 29 – Tuesday, May 5—Final Exams**

Have a great semester!!
