

Sociological Theory

Soc 350 Sec. 1
Spring 2017
MW 935-1050 CCC 104

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One of the unsolved puzzles surrounding social things is how we who live with them come to understand them when they have changed.

- Charles Lemert

Why do we do that? How does this happen? How do we explain the social world? These questions are fundamental to the sociologist and to the sociological theorist. Despite what you might think, sociological theory is not based purely on a bunch of dead German guys. Instead, as Lemert explains, "social theory is a basic survival skill," so much so that everyone, including you, can be and can benefit from being, a theorist. Social theory is a matter of explaining why people do what they do. When we start to question everyday social practices we start becoming social theorists. By examining how others have attempted explaining elements of social life, we are better equipped to understand and live in our own social worlds.

Course objectives: This course is designed to introduce you to the major traditions of sociological theory, from the classic works of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to contemporary sociological perspectives. We will also discuss the social and political climate that influenced the development of sociological thought. We will examine how sociological thought allows us to make sense of society and the times we live in, and provides opportunities for predicting the future of the social world. By the end of the class, students will be able to:

- Understand the basic concept of "social theory"
- Know the major schools of thought in sociology
- Be able to define the key concepts and recognize the key thinkers in sociological theory
- Critically analyze key sociological ideas
- Be able to relate classical social theorizing to contemporary sociology
- Actively discover, create and analyze sociological knowledge
- Understand and apply the core principles of sociology to everyday life

Required reading:

There is one required textbook for this class available for rent from the campus bookstore:

Michele Dillon:

Introduction to Sociological Theory, 2nd edition

Additional readings will be posted on e-reserve and/or D2L.

Course Requirements:

Attendance: Attendance is required in this class. I do not, however, monitor attendance. Lectures and discussions will complement and expand on the material in the book and additional readings. Students will be expected to read the required material before coming to class. Failure to do so will result in you being unsuccessful in this class. The material is complex and requires interpretation through lecture and discussion in the classroom.

Class Participation: I see my role in the classroom as being discussion leader, as opposed to a lecturer that stands in the front and lectures all class period, every class period. As such, I value class discussion and interactive learning. I am actively involved in teaching and expect you to be actively involved in learning. I will do everything I can to make this class interesting, as I believe this is the best way to learn. Be prepared to participate!

Examinations: Your grade primarily consists of 3 exams administered to you over the course of the semester. Each exam is worth 30%. These will be take-home exams. Details will be given in class. The first exam will be due Friday March 10th, exam 2 Friday April 14th, and the final exam Wednesday May 17th. The exams are typically timed such that you will have 2 full weekends to complete them. Make-up examinations will not be given except in the case of **documented** emergencies. Late examinations will not be accepted except in the case of **documented** emergencies. Completed exams must be turned in online. Please note that once submitted online, the exam will be run through anti-plagiarism software. The final 10% of your grade will be 2 **short** practice questions. These questions will be drawn from old exams.

Grade scale: I do not negotiate final grades.

	A = 92 to 100	A- = 89.5 to 91.5
B+ = 86.5 to 89.4	B = 82.5 to 86.4	B- = 79.5 to 82.4
C+ = 76.5 to 79.4	C = 72.5 to 76.4	C- = 69.5 to 72.4
D+ = 66.5 to 69.4	D = 59.5 to 66.4	F = Less than 59.5

Other policies and procedures

Students with Special Needs: Students with special needs as documented by the Office of Disability Services should identify themselves at the beginning of the term. The Department of Sociology and Social Work is dedicated to providing these students with necessary academic adjustments and auxiliary aids to facilitate their participation and performance in the classroom.

Classroom etiquette: I ask that you arrive on time for class, and turn off your cell phones. I reserve the right to ask anyone texting to leave the classroom. I would prefer that you do not use laptops or tablets in the classroom unless it is a necessary learning tool.

Email: I make an effort to respond to your emails as quickly as possible. Please understand that this does not mean I will necessarily be able to respond within a few minutes or a few hours. Typically, you can reasonably expect a response from me within one business day (note that weekends are not business days). When writing to me, please ensure you do not use text speak!

Academic Misconduct: Academic integrity is central to the mission of this institution. UWSP 14.03 defines academic misconduct as any “action which a student:

1. seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
2. uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
3. forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
4. intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
5. engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student’s academic performance;
6. assists other students in any of these acts.”

UWS 14 allows for disciplinary sanctions that range from an oral reprimand to suspension or expulsion from the University. You can obtain a copy of the full academic misconduct policy through the Student Services office.

If I observe academic misconduct, or if suspicions of cheating are reported to me, I will request that the identified parties come to my office to discuss the situation, and the procedures set out in UWS 14 will be followed.

I recognize that the rules regarding academic misconduct can sometimes be confusing for students with respect to specific assignments or course work. If you have questions, I encourage you to come and see me. I am always prepared to help clarify any aspects of the work for this course that may be confusing. If you have questions or concerns about a particular assignment, you should talk with me before the assignment is submitted. Ignorance or misunderstanding of the UW System policy will not serve as a valid excuse for academic misconduct.

I reserve the right to change the syllabus to suit the pedagogical needs of the class.

Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading Assignment
1	Introduction	Introduction
2	Marx	Chapter 1
3	Marx	<i>Estranged Labour</i>
4	Weber	Chapter 3
5	Weber	<i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i>
6	Durkheim	Chapter 2
7	Durkheim	<i>Rules for the Distinction of the Normal from the Pathological</i>
	<u>Exam 1 Due</u>	<i>The Social Element of Suicide</i>
8	Functionalism	Chapter 4
9	Conflict	Chapter 6
10	Symbolic interactionism	Chapter 8
11	Feminist theories	Chapter 10
	<u>Exam 2 Due</u>	<i>Learning from the Outsider Within</i>
12	Sexualities and body	Chapter 11
13	Sexualities and body	
14	Critical Race Theory	Chapter 12 <i>Race Matters</i> <i>Sociology and the Black Community</i>
15	Inequalities and class	Chapter 13
16	<u>Exam 3 Due</u>	

Readings in italics are available on e-reserve. More will be added over the course of the semester. I will notify you via email and D2L when the readings are posted.

Important Dates:

Wednesday February 8th: Practice question 1 posted

Friday February 17th: Practice question 1 due

Monday February 20th: Exam 1 posted

Friday March 10th: Exam 1 due

Wednesday March 15th: Practice question 2 posted

Wednesday March 29th: Exam 2 posted

Friday March 31st: Practice question 2 due

Friday April 14th: Exam 2 due

Wednesday May 3rd: Exam 3 posted

Wednesday May 17th: Exam 3 due