

Sociological Theory

Soc 350 Sec. 1

Spring 2021

TR 930-1045

Dr. Helena L. Alden

Student Hours: by appointment

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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

If you mean by sociology a vast and fruitful inquiry into the mysterious phenomena of human action...if such a work deserves, as many think, the name of science, then Sociology is one of the greatest sciences.

- W.E.B. DuBois

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
- 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, 3rd edition

Additional readings **will** be posted on Canvas.

Course Requirements:

Course Format: This course will be offered online through Zoom and Canvas with all materials available asynchronously so that students can access them at any time, and with regular synchronous meetings throughout the semester held during the scheduled course days and times posted on the UWSP Timetable. Lectures will be pre-recorded and posted on Canvas; our virtual (online) synchronous meetings will be a chance for me to share additional information and resources, for additional class discussions and questions, and to make sure you are not falling behind or losing your way in the course.

Assignments

Three Formal Essays: 75% of final grade

- Marx, Durkheim: Week 6
- Weber, Dubois, Functionalism/Conflict: Week 11
- SI, Feminist Theories & Critical Race Theory: Finals week

Additional Assignments designed to deepen your understanding and prepare you for the formal essays; these will be pass/fail (complete/incomplete): 25% of final grade

Late papers will not be accepted except in the case of **documented** emergencies.

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

Disability Statement: Any student who anticipates they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions) should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Students are also encouraged to contact the DATC at 715-346-3365 or at datctr@uwsp.edu to seek further assistance. Students currently registered with the DATC may provide their Notice of Accommodation letter during office hours, electronically via email, after class, or all of the above.

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.

Email Policy

Remember some faculty receive as many as 100 emails per day. Yours should be clear, concise, and professional so that your issues can be responded to effectively. Include the entire thread of an ongoing email conversation so that your instructor can recall the history of your issue without searching for other emails you have sent. Remember to include the class and section number in your email. Sign off with your first and last name. I will not open attachments without messages or messages that are illegible. I will endeavour to answer emails within one **business** day.

Childcare and other caregiving responsibilities.

This is an entirely online class in odd circumstances. I recognize that schools are changing from face-to-face to virtual learning swiftly, and that the nature of the pandemic is such that our caregiving responsibilities may also change. I do not expect your children etc. to be completely invisible if you are present on Zoom!

Resources

Tutoring	Advising	Safety and General Support	Health
Tutoring and Learning Center helps with Study Skills, Writing, Technology, Math, & Science. 018 Albertson Hall, ext 3568	Academic and Career Advising Center, 320 Albertson Hall, ext 3226	Dean of Students Office, 212 Old Main, ext. 2611	Counseling Center, Delzell Hall, ext. 3553. Health Care, Delzell Hall, ext. 4646

UWSP Service Desk

The Office of Information Technology (IT) provides a Service Desk to assist students with connecting to the Campus Network, virus and spyware removal, file recovery, equipment loan, and computer repair. You can contact the Service Desk via email at techhelp@uwsp.edu or at (715) 346-4357 (HELP) or visit this [link for more information](#).

NOTE: Office 365 is available free for all students. Follow this [link](#)

UWSP COVID-19 POLICY

Face Coverings:

- At all UW-Stevens Point campus locations, the wearing of face coverings is mandatory in all buildings, including classrooms, laboratories, studios, and other instructional spaces. Any student with a condition that impacts their use of a face covering should contact the [Disability and Assistive Technology Center](#) to discuss accommodations in classes. Please note that unless everyone is wearing a face covering, in-person classes cannot take place. This is university policy and not up to the discretion of individual instructors. Failure to adhere to this requirement could result in formal withdrawal from the course.

Other Guidance:

- Please monitor your own health each day using [this screening tool](#). If you are not feeling well or believe you have been exposed to COVID-19, do not come to class; email your instructor and contact Student Health Service (715-346-4646).

- As with any type of absence, students are expected to communicate their need to be absent and complete the course requirements as outlined in the syllabus.
- Maintain a minimum of 6 feet of physical distance from others whenever possible.
- Do not congregate in groups before or after class; stagger your arrival and departure from the classroom, lab, or meeting room.
- Wash your hands or use appropriate hand sanitizer regularly and avoid touching your face.
- Please maintain these same healthy practices outside the classroom.

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.

APPROXIMATE Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	Textbook Reading Assignment
2	Introduction	Introduction
3	Marx	Chapter 1
4	Marx	
5	Durkheim	Chapter 2
6	Durkheim	
7	Weber	Chapter 3
8	Weber	
9	DuBois	Chapter 12
10	Functionalism	Chapter 4
11	Conflict	Chapter 6
12	Symbolic interactionism	Chapter 8
12	Feminist theories	Chapter 10
13	Feminist theories	
14	Critical Race Theory	Chapter 12
15	Critical Race Theory	

**** THERE WILL BE ADDITIONAL READINGS ON CANVAS****