

DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGICAL THOUGHT SYA 4410

University of Florida - Fall 2023

Instructor

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Course Description and Learning Outcomes

This online course is designed to provide a comparative study of the principal contributors to the development of sociology. This course emphasizes the relevance of these ideas in contemporary sociological thought and current social issues.

In this course we will critically examine and compare the major theoretical orientations in Sociology. We will be discussing the historical context and theoretical contributions from the 19th century to the present. This course will focus on exploring what factors contribute to understanding the social world, including discussions on social order, self-control, political and economic systems, the role of science, power, action, behavior, and individual motivation.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Articulate the underlying assumptions of key sociological theorists and their conclusions about the social world.
- Describe and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of sociological theories.
- Illustrate how these theories inform our understanding of contemporary society.
- Effectively write and communicate theoretical ideas through group activities, critiques, and written assignments.

Required Readings & Class Material

There are three required textbooks, see below for details about the reading schedule. I expect that you read the class material prior to the completion of assignments. Copies can be purchased at the campus bookstore or online:

- George Ritzer, *Sociological Theory* (8th or 9th edition). Publisher: McGraw--Hill.
- Best, Steven, & Kellner, Douglas. (1991). *Postmodern Theory: Critical interrogations*. Cambridge University Press.
- Connell, Raewyn. (2007). *Southern Theory: Social Science and The Global Dynamics Of Knowledge*. 1st Edition, Polity Publishing.

Throughout the semester, I also will assign outside material from peer-reviewed academic journals, book chapters, newspapers, op-ed pieces, reports, or relevant videos. I will provide all of these to you on Canvas as either a link or in PDF.

Each week there is a **video lecture** by the course creator, Dr. Heidi Steinour, to complement your weekly readings. These lectures are designed to supplement and clarify key points from your readings. However, they are not meant to replace your readings. Additionally, there may be a secondary video that further explores concepts needed for your assignments.

Course Requirements

Here I cover the general guidelines of the class assignments. More detailed instructions corresponding to each assignment will be posted on Canvas. In addition to these required assignments there will be at least 2 extra credit assignments throughout the semester. **I will not provide individual extra-credit assignments.**

Weekly Quizzes – 20%

There will be a weekly quiz that will consist of a combination of multiple choice and True/False questions. Each quiz will be available for 1 week. So, you will need to take it during that window of time. See the schedule below for details about deadlines. **Late quizzes will be deducted 5% of the grade per day late.**

Exams– 20%

There will be 2 non-cumulative exams. The first exam will cover the material from the modules 1 to 7. The second exam will cover the material from the modules 8 to 14. The exams will be all done through Canvas using the Lockdown browser. This means that while taking the quiz your computer will be locked, and you will only be able to use it to complete the exam. **Late exams will be deducted 5% of the grade per day late.**

Active Learning Assignments – 30%

These assignments will take different forms (for example, questions about the readings, discussion boards, reading notes, etc.), but they will always ask you to reflect on the class material. There will be a total of 7 assignments (see the schedule below), but you will ONLY complete 5 assignments. This means that you get to skip 2 assignments at your convenience. Participation in more than 5 assignments will not count towards your final grade. Each active learning assignment will be open for 1 week. **Late assignments will be deducted 5% of the grade per day late.**

Concept Analysis Papers – 30%

In this analysis, students may be asked to identify key concepts, summarize concept relevance to social theory, analyze strength and weaknesses, or apply concepts to a current event or social issue. There will be a total of 6 papers assigned (see the schedule below), but you will ONLY complete 4 concept analysis papers. This means that you get to skip 2 assignments at your convenience. Participation in more than 4 assignments will not count towards your final grade. Each concept analysis paper will be open for 1 week. More information will be provided on the course website. **Late assignments will be deducted 5% of the grade per day late.**

Given that there is a late submission policy, I won't consider any exceptions for late submissions unless your petition is accompanied by a doctor's note or documentation that proves an extreme hardship to complete your assignments such as being affected by natural disasters (hurricane, fire, etc.) or death of a family member.

The last week of class you can't turn the assignments after the deadline due to the closure of the grading window.

Grade Breakdown

Assignment	Points	Total Points	%
Weekly Quizzes	25 pts each	300	~20%
5 Active Learning Assignments	40 pts each	200	~30%
4 Concept Analysis Papers	50 pts each	200	~30%
2 Exams	150 points each	300	~20%
Total grade		1000	100%

Grading scale

A = 92.5-100 %	B- = 79.5-82.4 %	D+ = 66.5-69.4 %
A- = 89.5-92.4 %	C+ = 76.5-79.4 %	D = 62.5-66.4 %
B+ = 86.5-89.4 %	C = 72.5-76.4 %	D- = 59.5-62.4 %
B = 82.5-86.4 %	C- = 69.5-72.4 %	E = Below 59.5 %

See UF grading policy at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Grades will not be rounded up beyond the table above. If your final grade is 89.49, for example, your final grade will be a B+. **These are the rules for everyone – please do not ask me to round up your grade.**

Class Policies

Communications: Please make sure that you periodically check the Canvas announcement section as well as your Canvas inbox. I will be using it to communicate important information about the class. If you have any questions, you can send them to me in a message to my UF email address or through Canvas. ***I will normally reply within 1-2 business days.*** If you come to office hours via Zoom, please know that you might need to wait a few minutes until you can talk to me.

Make-up Policy: Assignments should be completed prior to the deadline. I will not accept late assignments for full grade. Make-up (or excused) assignments will only be allowed in the case of **properly documented** absences as defined by UF policy. Documentation to justify absences must cover the date when the assignment was due and must contain the contact information of

the issuing person or center. If possible, inform me about unforeseen circumstances before assignment's deadlines. <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Student Evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Etiquette. Always be respectful to others in your communications with members of this class. Check the UF guidelines for Netiquette for online courses: https://www.cise.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/CISE_Netiquette_Guide.pdf

Office hours. I will hold virtual office hours on Thursdays from 9 am to 11 am. You will first get into the waiting room. If you are waiting for more than 5 minutes, please send me an email to let me know that you are there. Zoom link: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/4679837058>

University Policies and Services

Academic Honesty: On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." For this course, I will be employing online software which scans all work submitted to me by students for unoriginal in order to detect plagiarism. This software scans billions of websites as well as previous assignments to compare content. I will make decisions about plagiarism based on data from the software. FOR YOUR SAKE, TURN IN YOUR OWN WORK.

Accommodation for students with disabilities: Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the UF Disability Resource Center by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. More information is available at <https://disability.ufl.edu/>.

UF Counseling Services: Resources are available on-campus for students having personal problems or lacking a clear career and academic goals which interfere with their academic performance. University Counseling and Wellness Center: 352-392-1575
<https://counseling.ufl.edu/>

Course Schedule & Important Dates*

Week	Module	Readings	Important Dates
Week 1 (Aug 23 rd to 28 th)	1. Introduction to Social Theory	Ritzer: Chapter 1 *Optional: Blumer, H. (1954): "What is Wrong with Social Theory?"	Quiz 1 due on Aug. 28 th
Week 2 (Aug 29 th – Sept 3 rd)	2. Karl Marx	Ritzer: Chapter 2 *Optional: Karl Marx: Preface and "Opposition of the Material and Idealist Outlook". <i>The German Ideology</i>	Quiz 2 & Active Learning Assignment 1 due on Sept. 3 rd
Week 3 (Sept 4 th –10 th)	3. Structural Functionalism	Ritzer: Chapter 3 (all pages) & Chapter 7 (8 th edition: pp. 236-265, 9 th edition: pp. 238-265) *Optional: Emile Durkheim. Preface I and II. <i>The Rules of Sociological Method</i> (pp. 31- 47) *Optional: Talcott Parsons. "The Place of Sociological Theory" in <i>The Social System</i>	Quiz 3 & Concept Analysis Paper 1 due on Sept 10 th
Week 4 (Sept 11 th –17 th)	4. Conflict Theory	Ritzer: Chapter 6-7 (8th edition: pp. 214-217 & 265-276; 9th edition: pp. 214-217 & pp.266-277) C. Wright Mills. "The Promise", <i>The Sociological Imagination</i> (pp. 3-24) *Optional: C. Wright Mills. "On Politics", <i>The Sociological Imagination</i> (pp. 177-194) *Optional: Connell, Chapter 1	Quiz 4 & Active Learning Assignment 2 due on Sept. 17 th
Week 5 (Sept 18 th – 24 th)	5. Max Weber	Ritzer: Chapter 4 *Optional: Max Weber. "Science as a Vocation," From <i>Max Weber: Essays in Sociology</i>	Quiz 5 & Concept Analysis Paper 2 due on Sept 24 th
Week 6 (Sept 25 th – 1 st)	6. Symbolic Interactionism	Ritzer: Chapter 10 *Optional: Blumer, Herbert. (1969). "Society as Symbolic Interaction." (pp. 78-89) *Optional: Goffman, Erving. "Introduction" in <i>Frame Analysis</i> (p.1-20)	Quiz 6 & Active Learning Assignment 3 due on Oct. 1 st

Week 7 (Oct 2 nd – 8 th)	7. Agency-Structure Debate	Ritzer: Chapter 14 in 8th edition, Chapter 13 in 9th edition Connell: Chapter 2 *Optional: Collins, Randal. (1981). On the Microfoundations of Macrosociology. <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> , 86, (pp. 984- 1014.)	Quiz 7 & Concept Analysis Paper 3 due on Oct. 8 th
Week 8 (Oct 9 th – 15 th)	8. Social Constructionism	Berger, Peter and Thomas Luckmann. 1966. <i>The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge</i> . Pp. 63-110.	Exam 2 due on October 15 th Quiz 8 & Active Learning Assignment 4 due on October 15 th
Week 9 (Oct 16 th – 22 nd)	9. Feminism	Ritzer: Chapter 13 in 8th edition, Chapter 12 in 9th edition Dorothy Smith. "Sociological Theory: Methods of Writing Patriarchy" in <i>Feminism and Sociological Theory</i> Hooks, Bell. "Black Women Shaping Feminism" FTR. Pp. 50-56.	Quiz 9 & Concept Analysis Paper 4 due on Oct 22 nd
Week 10 (Oct 22 nd - 29 th)	10. Poststructuralism/Foucault	Best, Steven, & Kellner: Chapter 1 & 2 *Optional: Foucault, Michel. [1975] 1995. <i>Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison</i> . New York: Vintage. Selections: "Panopticism" (pp. 195-228).	Quiz 10 & Active Learning Assignment 5 due on Oct. 29 th
Week 11 (Oct 30 th – Nov 6 th)	11. Postmodern Thought	Best, Steven, & Kellner: Chapter 4, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 (pp. 200-214)	Quiz 11 & Concept Analysis Paper 5 due on Nov 6 th
Week 12 (Nov 12 th - 19 th)	12. Critical Theory	Best, Steven, & Kellner. Chapter 7 & 8	Quiz 12 & Active Learning Assignment 6 due on Nov 19 th
Week 13 (Nov 20 th - Nov 30 th)	13. Queer Theory	Seidman, Steven. (1997). <i>Difference Troubles: Queering social theory and sexual politics</i> . Chapter 7, Deconstructing Queer Theory	Quiz 13 due & Concept Analysis Paper 6 due on Nov 30 th
Week 14 (Dec 1 st – 6 th)	14. Southern Theory Final Remarks	Connell: Chapter 7	Quiz 14 & Active Learning Assignment 7 due on Dec 6 th Exam 2 due on Dec 12 th

*Note: I reserve the right to alter this schedule as I see fit and will give advance notice should I do so.