

## Development of Sociological Thought

SYA 4110, Fall 2022—Online

**Course Creator:** Heidi Steinour, PhD.

**Instructor:** Martina Speranza, M.A.

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**Office Hours:** Mondays from 2 pm to 4 pm or by appointment.

**Course Communications:** Students are welcome to pose course question in one of two ways. Under the discussion section of the course, I will post a thread that is designated for class or assignment questions. If you post to this thread, I will respond within 48 hours excluding weekends and holidays. However, I do respond primarily during business hours so please plan accordingly.

**Required Texts:** Copies can be purchased at the campus bookstore or online.

George Ritzer, *Sociological Theory* (8th or 9th edition is fine.) 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.

**Course Description:** 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.

**Purpose of Course:** In this course we will critically examine and compare major theoretical orientations through which sociologists have understood the nature of society. We will be discussing 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. We will also discuss the importance of the context in which each theory emerged by exploring the social and historic factors that paved the path for the ideas that were present at those times.

As we move through the course, our goal will be to examine how each theoretical perspective provides insight into ongoing social and political issues as well as discover how these theories help you make sense of the world around you. The fabric of this course will combine short video lectures, reading materials, group-based activities, and application assignments. Course assessments include reading and applying information, critiques, exams, and participation in group discussions and questions.

**Course Goals and/or Objectives:** 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.

**Student Learning Outcomes in Sociology:** This course provides students with a variety of opportunities to build on the recommended student learning outcomes set forth by the department of sociology. Throughout the course, students will be given opportunities to identify sociological theory, analyze events in relation to sociological concepts, and compare different theoretical perspectives as they relate to the creation of social structures, processes, and institutions. Furthermore, students will be challenged to consider how social structures influence and shape the individual by engaging in group activities and writing assignments that assess their ability to comprehend, analyze, and apply theoretical concepts to real world situations.

**Teaching Philosophy:** I approach a course with the idea that learning occurs through us struggling together with the text, articles, videos, and each other throughout the semester. The class members come from a wide variety of backgrounds, and all have something different to produce. Classes, then, must be highly collaborative if we are going to create and share new ideas. Thus, my goal as a teacher is to provide you with a method to strategically comprehend, synthesize, and apply information as well as analyze content to formulate educated opinions. I provide teaching methods that focus on discussion, interaction, and integration as well as assignments that not only strengthen your writing skills but also improve how you convey ideas in a written and interactive format.

**Instructional Methods:** This class will consist of several weekly assignments, readings, and lectures that students are required to engage in. 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 supplement your readings. Additionally, there may be a secondary video that further explores concepts needed for your assignments.

Once you have completed the readings and lectures you will be required to complete a weekly quiz, contribute to a weekly discussion board (and respond to another student), and submit a concept analysis paper. Instructions and rubrics for these assignments will be posted on the course website. You may also find the content for each week listed under the appropriate module, along with all due dates. If you have any questions or need clarification, please email me.

Weekly schedule deadlines for submission:

- Quiz → Fridays 11:59 pm
- Discussion board → Thursdays 11:59 pm to post / Sundays 11:59 pm to respond
- Concept analysis paper → Sundays 11: 59 pm

## Course Policies

**Attendance Policy:** In order to succeed in this class, you must log into the course regularly since part of your grade will be assessed by your engagement in the online discussions and the extent to which your posts demonstrate your understanding of the course materials. We will be covering lots of information in a short period of time and materials on the tests will draw from online lectures, readings, videos, and examples.

Therefore, it is in your best interest to log into class as much as possible. Absences will only be excused if instructor is notified before assignments are due and if the request is approved.

**Quiz/Exam Policy:** All students are required without exception to take all quizzes and exams during the scheduled time listed in the syllabus. Make-up quizzes or exams will only be offered in very limited circumstances. Students must discuss these circumstances with the instructor prior to the exam being administered.

**Make-up Policy:** Make-up work will not be offered except under very limited circumstances. Student will need to inform instructor of any extenuating circumstances that will result in missed assignments or classwork. Contact with instructor is required prior to the deadline of the assignment, if possible. Otherwise, student must reach out to instructor with requests and documentation within 48 hours. Extensions or make-up work may be requested via email in the case of personal emergencies or university excused documentation.

**Assignment Policy:** Late assignments will not be accepted. All students are required, without exception, to take the exams during the scheduled times in the syllabus. Make-up work and exams will not be offered except under very limited circumstances. Extensions may be requested by email in the case of personal emergencies.

**Course Technology:** This is an online course, and you will need access to a working computer and internet connection at all times. This course will take place using the University of Florida's Canvas Website. You will also be required to use Proctor U for both your exams. Information on how to access these resources as well as instructional materials can be found in the welcome module for the course. Furthermore, if you want to set up a videoconference to discuss questions or concerns about the course, please do so through the conference tab on the left side of the course homepage.

## University Policies

**University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities:** Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must check requirements on this website <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/accommodations/>.

**University Policy on Academic Misconduct:** Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

**Netiquette: Communication Courtesy:** All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. [Describe what is expected and what will occur as a result of improper behavior] See [Netiquette guidelines](#).

## Getting Help

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- [learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:learning-support@ufl.edu)
- (352) 392-HELP -- select option 2
- <https://elearning.ufl.edu/student-help/>

\*\* Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up. Other resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources

Resources are available on-campus for students having personal problems or lacking a clear career and academic goals which interfere with their academic performance at the CWC center:

<https://counseling.ufl.edu/> . These resources include:

1. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling; 2. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling.

2. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling.

3. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please visit <https://distance.ufl.edu/state-authorization-status/#student-complaint> to submit a complaint.

- Library Help Desk support - <https://uflib.ufl.edu/contact-us/>

### 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/>.

### Grading Policies

According to department policy, a “C” grade or better is required for this course to count toward your sociology major. Students who are unable to meet this requirement must take the course again. I will attempt to notify student who are in danger of failing as a courtesy, but it is your responsibility to be aware of your grade and make changes accordingly. Please contact me if you have concerns about your grade.

This is a reading intensive course. On average students are expected to read articles, book chapters, or a short book each week. Students are expected to discuss and identify key concepts from readings in weekly discussion sessions. Your success in this course will be dependent on your ability to comprehend theoretical ideas and be prepared to participate online as we work through each major framework.

**Personal Information Card:** Students are required to create a personal information card detailing information about themselves and their interest in social theory. You may choose to share your background, your interests in social theory, your future plans, or something unique about you. I will provide further information on the discussion board. This assignment allows me to get to know each of you and understand your background and interests in this course as well as introduce you to your classmates. These will be due the first week of class.

**Concept Analysis:** Each week students are responsible for responding to the prompt provided in order to

analyze the themes and concepts from that week's materials. 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. Concept analysis papers should demonstrate student's understanding of key concepts and the importance of these concepts to the broader field of social thought. Additionally, applying theoretical concepts to today's social issues ensures that students are able to use and evaluate concepts they have learned throughout the semester. Concept analysis papers should be typed, double-spaced, and free from grammatical errors. More information is provided on the course website. **Concept papers are due Sunday by 11:59pm ET each and every week.**

**Discussion Board:** Students are required to participate in the Discussion Thread (which can be found under discussion). Instructions will be found at the top of the Discussion Thread, and this will take the place of the typical in-class discussions. Students will be divided into groups to participate in the discussion forum. **Original posts to discussion boards are due Thursday at 11:59pm ET each week and replies are due by Sunday at 11:59 pm ET.**

Students are expected to participate in the discussion threads for each chapter as we proceed through the class. Students are **required** to post one discussion comment per week (**for a total of 15 threads**). Students are also responsible for responding to at least one student post in Modules 2-14 (**for a total of 13 responses**). **It is important to note that you must respond once a week to the discussion prompt and reply to at least one thread from a fellow student throughout the course (in M2-14) in order to get full credit for discussion posts.**

I will post a discussion question(s) for each chapter/topic. Discussion questions may ask students to apply that week's theory to personal experience, a current event, or media content.

Posts should demonstrate your ability to evaluate theories, concepts, and ideas presented in class and integrate these concepts into your analysis of the experience or event you choose. This activity is meant to help advance your ability to analyze the world around you and ensure that you are able to bridge the gap between theory and your everyday life. The discussions will be multi-directional and each post should be typed and double-spaced.

**Weekly Assessment Quiz:** Every week students will be required to complete a ten-question weekly assessment quiz consisting of multiple choice and short answer questions. The purpose of this assessment is to evaluate student's understanding of the key concepts and conclusions of each sociological perspective. Students are encouraged to read the assigned materials and watch the video lectures prior to taking the quiz. Engagement in the discussion board activity and group critique presentations will also enhance student's understanding of overall course materials. Please refer to course policies for information about make-up assignments. **Quizzes are due Friday by 11:59pm ET each week.**

**Exams:** There will be two, timed exams on topics from the lectures, class discussion, group critique presentations, and required readings. Each exam will consist of 15 multiple-choice questions each worth 1 point and 5 short essay questions each worth 3 points for a total of 30 points.

Exam 1 will cover the first half of the course and will take place at the conclusion of module 7 and will be due by October 16<sup>th</sup> before 11:59pm.

Exam 2 will cover the second half of the course. This exam is not cumulative and will be due by December 7<sup>th</sup> before 11:59pm ET. More information will be available online.

*Final grades will be available via [one.ufl.edu](http://one.ufl.edu) after the completion of the semester. You can check the status of your grade anytime on Canvas. The final grade scale may be adjusted at the discretion of the instructors.*

Evaluation criteria for assignments: more information will be available on the rubric posted online.

## 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 %

\*Grades will not be curved, and final grades will not be calculated beyond one decimal point. For example, a 79.48 is a C+, not a B-.

Assignment	Points or Percentage
Concept Analysis	20%
Discussion Board	25%
Exams	30%
Weekly Quizzes	20%
Personal Information	5%

## Course Schedule\*

\*This syllabus represents current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignment
1 8/24-9/4	Introduction to Social Theory	Ritzer: Chapter 1  Blumer, H. (1954): "What is Wrong with Social Theory?"	Quiz 1  Personal Information Card
2 9/5-9/11	Karl Marx	Ritzer: Chapter 2  Karl Marx: Preface and "Opposition of the Material and Idealist Outlook" <i>The German Ideology</i>	Quiz 2  Discussion Board & Concept Analysis

3 9-12/9-18	Structural Functionalism	<p>Ritzer: Chapters 3 &amp; 7 (Section on Structural Functionalism only)</p> <p>Emile Durkheim – Preface I and II – <i>The Rules of Sociological Method</i> (pp. 31-47)</p> <p>Talcott Parsons --- "The Place of Sociological Theory" in <i>The Social System</i></p>	<p>Quiz 3</p> <p>Discussion Board &amp; Concept Analysis</p>
4 9-19/9-25	Conflict Theory	<p>C. Wright Mills --- "The Promise", <i>The Sociological Imagination</i> (pp. 3-24)</p> <p>C. Wright Mills --- "On Politics" <i>The Sociological Imagination</i>(pp. 177-194)</p> <p>Connell, Raewyn. (2007). Southern Theory <b>Chapter 1</b></p>	<p>Quiz 4</p> <p>Discussion Board &amp; Concept Analysis</p>
5 9-26/10-2	Max Weber	<p>Ritzer: Chapter 4</p> <p>Max Weber – "Science as a Vocation," From <i>Max Weber:Essays In Sociology</i></p>	<p>Quiz 5</p> <p>Discussion Board &amp; Concept Analysis</p>
6 10-3/10-9	Symbolic Interactionism	<p>Ritzer: Chapter 9 (in the 8th edition, Chapter 10 in the 6th&amp; 7th edition)</p> <p>Blumer, Herbert. (1969). "Society as Symbolic Interaction." in <i>Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method</i>. Berkeley: University of California Press.<b>Selection:</b> p. 78-89</p> <p>Goffman, Erving. "Introduction" in <i>FrameAnalysis</i> (pp.1-20)</p>	<p>Quiz 6</p> <p>Discussion Board &amp; Concept Analysis</p>

7 10-10/ 10-16	Agency Integration  Structure	Ritzer: Chapter 14 (in the 7th & 8th edition, Chapter 15 in the 6th edition)  Collins, Randal. (1981). On the Microfoundations of Macrosociology. <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> , 86, 984-1014.  Connell, Raewyn. (2007) Southern Theory. <b>Chapter 2</b>	Quiz 7  Discussion Board & Concept Analysis  <b>EXAM 1 DUE BY MIDNIGHT (11:59 PM) October 16</b>
8 10-17 /10-23	Social Constructionism	Berger, Peter and Thomas Luckmann. 1966. <i>The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge</i> . New York: Doubleday. <b>Selection:</b> Pages:47-92.	Quiz 8  Discussion Board & Concept Analysis
9 10-24/ 10-30	Feminism	Ritzer: Chapter 12 (in the 8th edition & in the 6th edition, chapter 13 in the 7th 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  Discussion Board & Concept Analysis
10 10-31/ 11-6	Poststructuralism/Foucault	Best, Steven, & Kellner, Douglas. (1997). <i>Postmodern Theory</i> . Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. <b>Selection:</b> Chapter 1 & 2  Foucault, Michel. [1975] 1995. <i>Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison</i> . New York: Vintage. <b>Selections:</b> "Panopticism" (195-228).	Quiz 10  Discussion Board & Concept Analysis

		*Suggested: Derrida, Jacques. (1997). <i>Deconstruction in a Nutshell</i> . Fordham University Press. <b>Selection:</b> Deconstruction in a Nutshell, The Very Idea!	
11 11-7/11-13	Postmodern Thought	Best, Steven, & Kellner, Douglas. (1997). <i>Postmodern Theory</i> . Cambridge, Cambridge University.  <b>Selection:</b>  Chapter 4 (pgs. 118-136) Chapter 5 (pgs. 162-178) Chapter 6 (pgs. 200- 214)	Quiz 11  Discussion Board & Concept Analysis
12 11-14/11-20	Critical Theory	Best, Steven, & Kellner, Douglas. (1997). <i>Postmodern Theory</i> . Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.  <b>Selection:</b> Chapter 7 & 8	Quiz 12  Discussion Board & Concept Analysis
13 11-21/11-30	Queer Theory	Seidman, Steven. (1997). <i>Difference Troubles: Queering social theory and sexual politics</i> . Cambridge University Press. <b>Selection:</b> Chapter 7, Deconstructing Queer Theory	Quiz 14  Discussion Board & Concept Analysis
14 12-1/12-7	Southern Theory	Connell, Raewyn. <i>Southern Theory</i> (2007).  <b>Required:</b> Chapters 7 (pp. 146-155) and 10.  <b>Choice</b> of Chapter 4, 5, or 6.  <b>Review Chapters 1 &amp; 2</b>	Quiz 15 and Discussion Board  <b>EXAM 2 DUE AT MIDNIGHT (11:59PM) December 7</b>

