

Sociological Theory
Eastern Illinois University
Soc 3050-001 3 Credit Hours Spring 2020

Class: TTh 11:00 - 12:15

Professor: Darren Hendrickson, Ph.D.

Phone: 581.3123

Virtual Office Hours: TTh 3:30 - 4:30, W 10:00 - 12:00, or by appointment

Room: 1103 Blair Hall

Office: 3122 Blair Hall

E-mail: dhendrickson@eiu.edu

“Whatever sociology may be, it is the result of constantly asking the question,
what is the meaning of this?”

- C. Wright Mills

Required Text:

George Ritzer and Jeffrey Stepnisky. 2017. *Contemporary Social Theory & Its Classical Roots* 5th ed. McGraw-Hill: New York, NY.

Course Description and Objectives:

What is sociological theory? Sociological theory is often defined as a body of organized, verifiable ideas that scholars have developed to explain various aspects of society and social behavior. As such, sociological theory is used to help us understand how people interpret, understand, and experience the social world. This course is designed to provide an overview of the major perspectives in sociological theory from the late 19th century through today. Studying and understanding theory is important because sociological theory, along with research methods and social statistics, is a central component of both the sociological curriculum and the social research process. Furthermore, sociological theory provides important frameworks for thinking about and understanding both society and our everyday lives. Finally, sociological theories can often lead us to think about and see the world differently.

The specific objectives for this course are as follows:

- To begin to learn how to think both theoretically and sociologically
- Become versed in the major classical and contemporary theoretical perspectives in sociology
- Provide opportunities to apply classical and contemporary sociological theory to social issues of both past importance and current concern
- Develop a knowledge base of both classical and contemporary sociological theories that you can use in your sociological analyses of a variety of social issues
- To encourage and provide opportunities for critical thinking

These objectives will be met through lectures, class discussions, readings, video presentations, and examinations.

Course Requirements:

(1). *Examinations.* There will be a total of four examinations in this course. Three of the exams are scheduled during the semester and will take place during regular class time (see schedule below). The fourth exam will be administered during finals week on Monday, Dec. 14 from 10:15 - 12:15.

(2). *Theory Application Assignments.* Given that one of the primary objectives of this course is for you to develop the ability to apply classical and contemporary sociological theories to social issues there will be a number of in-class “theory application assignments.” These assignments will require you to explain, in writing, how a theory, or theoretical ideas, applies to a specific scenario or issue presented in class. For example, we may watch a video clip or review a current story in the news and then you will be asked to explain how one or more of the theories addressed in class applies to and explains material presented in the video clip or news story. There will be at least 6 “theory application assignments” over the course of the semester and you are required to complete a minimum of 4 of these assignments. If you choose to complete more than 4 “theory application assignments” I will use your 4 highest scores when calculating your final course grade. Please note, because these assignments will be completed in-class there will not be opportunities to make-up these assignments if you miss class.

(3). *Bureaucracy at EIU Paper.* This writing assignment is an opportunity to apply and better understand Max Weber’s theoretical ideas related to the functioning and pervasiveness of bureaucracy, as a form of social organization, in contemporary society. Specific assignment instructions, included the assignment due date, will be posted on the course D2L page.

(3). *Participation.* Students are expected to both raise and answer questions and remain active participants in this course. In this course I will pose many questions for discussion and everyone is expected to contribute to that discussion – this is learning.

Grading Scale:

100%-90%.....A
89%-80%.....B
79%-70%.....C
69%-70%.....D
59%-0%.....F

Basis for Final Grade:

Exam #1.....	20%
Exam #2.....	20%
Exam #3.....	20%
Exam #4.....	20%
Bureaucracy Paper.....	10%
Theory Applications.....	10%
Total.....	100%

Desire2Learn:

Exam and assignment grades will be available through D2L. Furthermore, a copy of the course syllabus, research articles that you are required to read, other important course documents, and course announcements will also be posted on the D2L course page. More information about accessing D2L is available at the following site: <http://www.eiu.edu/d2l>

Course Schedule:

Aug. 25 - Aug. 27

General Course Introduction
Emile Durkheim
Ch. 1 - Introduction to Sociological Theory
Ch. 2 - Classical Theories I pp. 15 - 20

Sept. 1 - Sept. 3	Emile Durkheim (cont'd) Ch. 2 - Classical Theories I pp. 15 - 21 Karl Marx Ch. 2 - Classical Theories I pp. 21 - 30
Sept. 8 - Sept. 10	Karl Marx (cont'd) Ch. 2 - Classical Theories I pp. 21 - 30
Sept. 15 - Sept. 17	Max Weber Ch. 2 - Classical Theories I pp. 31 - 45
Sept. 22 - Sept. 24	Georg Simmel Ch. 3 - Classical Theories II pp. 47 - 56
<i>Exam #1 – Tuesday, Sept. 22nd</i>	
Sept. 29 - Oct. 1	Thorstein Veblen George Herbert Mead W.E.B. DuBois Ch. 3 - Classical Theories II pp. 56 - 74
Oct. 6 - Oct. 8	Structural Functionalism Ch. 4 - Contemporary Grand Theories I pp. 77 - 98
Oct. 13 - Oct. 15	Structural Functionalism (cont'd) Ch. 4 - Contemporary Grand Theories I pp. 77 - 98
<i>Exam #2 – Thursday, Oct. 15th</i>	
Oct. 20 - Oct. 22	Conflict Theory Ch. 4 - Contemporary Grand Theories I pp. 99 - 105
Oct. 27 - Oct. 29	Conflict Theory (cont'd) Systems Theory Ch. 4 - Contemporary Grand Theories I pp. 106 - 114
Nov. 5	Neo-Marxian Theories Ch. 5 - Contemporary Grand Theories II pp. 117 - 125
Nov. 10 - Nov. 12	Neo-Marxian Theories (cont'd) Ch. 5 - Contemporary Grand Theories II pp. 117 - 125
<i>Exam #3 – Thursday, Nov. 12th</i>	
Nov. 17 - Nov. 19	Symbolic Interactionism Ch. 6 - Contemporary Theories of Everyday Life pp. 151 - 167
Nov. 23 - Nov. 27	☺☺☺ <i>Thanksgiving Break</i> ☺☺☺

Dec. 1 - Dec. 3	Exchange Theory and Rational Choice Theory Ch. 6 - Contemporary Theories of Everyday Life pp. 173 - 189
Dec. 8 - Dec. 10	Feminist Social Theory Ch. 8 - Contemporary Feminist Theories

Exam #4 – Monday, Dec. 14th from 10:15 - 12:15

Policies:

Attendance: Students are expected to attend class on a regular basis. Much of the material presented during class time will be included on the examinations. You are responsible for any course material that you miss if you are not in class, regardless of the reason for your absence. Most certainly your grade will suffer if you miss a number of classes. Finally, for students with “borderline” final grades the Professor may consider a student’s attendance record.

Late/Missed Assignments & Exams: Assignments are to be turned in on time and examinations are to be taken when scheduled. If, for some reason, you are going to miss an examination or an assignment due date, you must notify me in advance. If you fail to notify me in advance that you are going to miss an examination, you will not be able to make-up that exam. Make-up exams will only be given with a legitimate excuse (e.g. medical reason, family emergency) and may be somewhat different than the original exam. Late writing assignments will be penalized the equivalent of one letter grade for every 24 hour period they are late.

COVID-19 Safety Precautions and Behavior Expectations: Consistent with University policy, all students are required to wear a clean cloth or disposable face mask while in class and observe physical distancing guidelines. Students who refuse to comply with the COVID-19 mask policy will be asked to leave the classroom and reported to the Office of Student Standards. Students should also self-monitor for possible COVID-19 symptoms and contact University Health Services, 581.3013, if feeling ill. You should *NOT* come to class if you are feeling sick.

Student Success Center: Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/success) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment call 217.581.6696.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU’s Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards. Furthermore, if you are found cheating or plagiarizing you will receive a zero for that assignment, exam, or quiz.

Students with Disabilities: If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. You can call 217.581.6583 to make an appointment.

Tape/Video Recorders: The use of tape recorders, or other recording devices, during class is not allowed. Exceptions will be made only under special circumstances.

Cell Phones/Text Messaging: I understand that many of you like to stay connected and many important people are constantly trying to get a hold of you, but if you have a cell phone please turn off or disable the ringer before coming to class. Furthermore, text messaging during class is not permitted or tolerated.

Note: All material in this course syllabus, including exam dates, may be subject to change