Social Theory
Sociology 3140-070

Instructor:  Bruce Rigby       Spring 2009

Class Meetings:  Tuesdays, 6:00-8:45pm, Sandy 122

Office:  BEHS 311 (Campus) Office Hours: Before class or by appointment

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Course Prerequisite: Sociology 1010. Students who have not completed introduction to sociology should not enroll in this course.

1. Course Description
   This is a core course within the sociology major. Within this course we will examine classical sociological theory as well as modern theories and their impact on the study of sociology. The main goals of the course are:
   1. To explore the contributions of major theorists in sociology;
   2. To understand the strengths and limitations of each of these theories;
   3. To develop a sense of how social theory has developed historically;
   4. To evaluate and discuss theories and theoretical perspectives in a critical fashion.

2. Grading Procedures
   The final course grade will be determined by your performance on 3 equally weighted objective/short answer type examinations. The examinations will cover materials from the text, lecture, and class discussions. These examinations will contribute 75% of your final grade with the remaining 25% being determined by a brief paper explained in detail within this syllabus. The exams will consist of both multiple choice and short answer type questions.

3. Class Participation
   Participation in class discussions is an important part of the learning experience. Attendance is necessary to participate in class discussions. You will not be graded on class participation, but the format of this class is designed to encourage the sharing of ideas. These class discussions will enhance the learning experience for each of us throughout the semester.
4. **Tentative Schedule**
   Week 1 (Jan 13) Introduction to the course and Section 1

   Week 2 (Jan 20) Chap 1, Karl Marx and economics

   Week 3 (Jan 27) Chap 2, Max Weber

   Week 4 (Feb 3) Chap 3, Durkheim and Religion

   Week 5 (Feb 10) Chaps 4 & 5, Mead/Simmel and Challenges of Gender and Race, Review For Exam #1

   Week 6 (Feb 17) ***Exam #1***

   Week 7 (Feb 24) Chaps 6 and 7, Structural Functionalism/Conflict and Critical Theories

   Week 8 (March 3) Chapter 8, Structures of Inequality

   Week 9 (March 10) Chapter 9, Interactionist Theories

   Week 10 ***Spring Break, No class March 17***

   Week 11 (March 24) Chapter 10, Exchange Theory and Review

   Week 12 (March 31) ***Exam #2***

   Week 13 (April 7) Chapters 11 and 12, Constructing Society and World Systems Theory

   ***Papers Due Tuesday, April 14th***

   Week 14 (April 14) Chapter 13, Identity Politics

   Week 15 (April 21) Chapter 14, Post-Theories, Review for exam #3

   Week 16 (April 28) *** Exam #3 ***

5. **Semester Paper**

   The required paper for this course may be done 1 of 2 ways. Each method is designed to encourage the student to look at theory as a tool to guide research and/or explain societal events or structures.
Options for paper:

A. Each student may choose one theorist discussed in this course and critically analyze that theorist’s contribution to social theory. The student will examine the validity of the theory proposed by that particular theorist, and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the theory.

B. The student may choose a contemporary social topic (e.g., the war in Iraq, globalization, corporate bankruptcies) and apply theory as an explanatory tool regarding their choice of topics. You may choose any theoretical perspective discussed in the text and/or class to analyze the topic you have chosen.

You should identify the particular theorist(s) you feel offer a useful perspective in understanding your topic.

To be included in all papers:

The paper should include the following:

1. The major theoretical perspective of the theorist(s) (e.g., conflict, feminist)
2. The theorists historical setting such as classical, modern, postmodern
3. What is the level of the analysis? (micro/macro)
4. The strengths and weaknesses of the theory

This paper should not exceed 5 pages, typed and double spaced. At least 3 resources in addition to course material should be cited. Internet resources are acceptable if properly cite referenced.

This paper is due no later than Tuesday, April 14th 2009.

Your instructor will be happy to help you choose your topic for this paper as well as recommend resources (articles/books) relevant to each theorist or topic.

6. Notice: University guidelines for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) require the following to be included in all syllabi: “The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.”