Tell me and I forget; teach me and I remember; involve me and I learn—Benjamin Franklin

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SOC 3140
Fall 2010—Sec 001
10:45 to 12:05
T/Th OSH 113

COURSE CONTENT

Sociological theories seek to explain how humans behave, interact and organize themselves in certain ways. Sociologists do not agree on the basic issues concerning such explanations. Arguments are centered on: 1) what kind of knowledge about human interaction and organization can be developed; 2) what procedures can and should be used in creating theory; 3) what ends or goals are served by sociological knowledge; and 4) what phenomena should be the topic of study. Because this discord seems to be increasing rather than decreasing, several schools of thought will need to be examined and learned. An undergraduate course in theory contains an overview of the most prominent and accepted ideas currently within the discipline; it additionally gives students an opportunity to begin to read writings of various theorists for themselves. NOTE: Sociology 1010 is a required prerequisite for this course, and the instructor assumes students have at least a minimal understanding of sociology. Those who do not possess such knowledge should re-evaluate enrollment, since such information is usually necessary to successfully master material presented in SOC 3140.

COURSE GOAL

Each student, upon completion of this core course, should be able to understand the most prominent sociological theories, identify those creators of these ideas, conceptualize the most critical aspects of the discipline, and be able to identify the elements requisite for a sound theory.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Most upper-level, undergraduate courses in the social sciences require students to demonstrate mastery of material through successful completion of written assignments, attendance, and participation. For SOC 3140, weekly Theoretical Inquiry Essays will contribute 80% to the course grade (an overview is included in this syllabus). Attendance and participation will contribute an additional 20% of the final grade. The purpose of this type of system is to assure maximum results through an ongoing effort by students to stay abreast of course materials, particularly the assigned readings. Success will be greatly impacted by familiarity with information before each class period, with students coming prepared to participate in class discussions.

REQUIRED TEXT


AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services (CDS), 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. Please discuss any concerns with the professor as soon as possible (www.hr.utah.edu/oeo/aca/guide/faculty/).
COURSE/UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Attendance Policy: Regular class attendance is expected.

Punctuality: Students’ presence in the room for the full class time-period is expected. If you have a scheduling dilemma that makes punctuality difficult, you should reconsider your registration. Classes begin and end on time.

Class Environment: Enrollment in this course indicates that you agree to conduct all discussions and interactions with thought, maturity, and respect for others’ rights to differ. Discussion of personal beliefs is encouraged, and will be conducted in a manner that maintains a climate conducive to the learning of all class members. Students at the University of Utah are encouraged to exercise personal responsibility and self-discipline, and engage in the rigors of discovery and scholarship. Please read the Student Code in the Student Handbook which covers student rights and responsibilities. The Faculty Rules and Regulations provide faculty with the responsibility of enforcing appropriate classroom behaviors, beginning with verbal warnings and progressing to dismissal from class and a failing grade. Student appeals in such cases are directed toward the Student Behavior Committee. Cell phones, pagers, and email programs will be turned off for the duration of class.

Academic Honesty / Plagiarism: Compliance with strict standards of academic honesty is expected. Academic misconduct / plagiarism (see Student Code) will not be tolerated and may be grounds for course failure, and suspension or dismissal from the University. Note that “plagiarism” is the failure to correctly cite / reference any words or ideas which are not your own. You should always reference the sources of your information. Plagiarism also includes using (or sharing) others’ essays, quizzes, and the use of pre-written, purchased, or down-loaded materials. All students are expected to be familiar with the video Avoiding Plagiarism [Marriott Library Multi-Media Center: PN 167 A86 2004]. If there is ever a question on this issue, please ask me in advance of submitting the work since once it is submitted I will act strongly to enforce academic standards.

Make up Policy: All work is due on the designated day. Work may be penalized one-half of a letter grade for each day late. In the case of emergencies or extreme personal difficulty (e.g., major car accident, sudden acute illness), some work may be made up; see me as soon as possible in these situations. Finally, should you miss a class, it is your responsibility to contact another student regarding missed lecture material, notes, and assignments. After speaking to another student, and making copies of the missed materials, feel free to contact me with questions.

Requests for Reevaluation: The burden of proof in a reevaluation of graded work rests with you. Before meeting with me, a rationale for a different grade should first be submitted in writing. This should identify the specific concerns / changes and provide detailed evidence in support of the argument. Requests for reevaluation must be made within one week of the student’s receipt of assignment.

Grading:

A An excellent work in all or nearly all aspects of the assignment. The student exemplifies originality of ideas, superior depth of thought, and extensive grasp of topics as well as technical superiority.

B A competent work with a lapse here or there. Ideas are clear and properly expressed; the writing is technically solid. The assignment is effective in meeting all criteria but does not rise to sustained distinction.

C An adequate work, but not good. Student ideas tend to be oversimplified, reductionistic, and lack sufficient explanation or exploration. Problems may also exist with grammar, logic, or ability to express thoughts in a manner reflective of a junior level class.

D A minimal effort by the student—the work is marred by problems with almost all aspects of the assignment. This is not considered a competent performance.

E A failing mark, generally reserved for assignments which are not submitted or miss the target on virtually every criteria of the project.

+/- Plus or minus may be given in addition to each of the grade levels when deemed appropriate.

Grade Ranges:

A 96% and above; B+ 85—89.99%; B 80—84.99%; B- 75—79.99%;
C+ 70—74.99%; C 65—69.99%; C- 60—64.99%;
D+ 55—59.99%; D 50—54.99%;
D- 45—49.99%; E Below 45%.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

The class will be conducted in a Socratic format with emphasis on professor and student interaction and understanding through questions and comments. No lectures, per se, will be presented, but the professor will use this forum to present key concepts not detailed in the major texts under consideration. The model is employed to encourage analysis, critical thinking, preparation, and long term learning on the part of the student. Each should come prepared to discuss the subject scheduled on the calendar. Note cards will be maintained for every student, and response marks will be given based on the quality of comments offered: + (plus), √ (check), √— (check minus), — (minus), or 0 (zero). Marks represent roughly the grades of A, B, C, D, and E. A daily roll will also be maintained. 20% of the class grade is produced from this area, so diligent effort is recommended. Excused absences such as illness or work conflicts may receive up to ½ points (if not excessive), while absences/participation points not excused will be marked as zero.
Sociological theory is often a very challenging course. Not only is information often unfamiliar to students, the density of thought and use of language and terminology can be daunting. As a core course in the discipline, however, theory is a key component of sociological mastery. In order to aid students in truly learning this subject matter, weekly inquiries (examinations) will track progress and knowledge. Each week students will be required to attend class armed with chapter familiarity and prepared for discussion/clarification of reading material. During the following week, students will address two questions chosen by the professor taken directly from the Building Your Theory Toolbox—After Reading This Chapter You Should Be Able To... section for the chapter that has been discussed. A total of fourteen assignments will be administered (one for each chapter in the Allan text), and students will take the top ten scores to gain their final mark. Each essay/question should receive a 500 word response (one paragraph only, 10 point Arial font, one inch margins). These inquiries will count 80% of the class grade. If a student does not complete an inquiry, no make-up will be accepted, as the missed assignment will simply be dropped from the overall fourteen scores. Students should discern that preparation in advance is essential for success. NOTE! PLEASE PLACE THE TOTAL WORD COUNT FOR EACH ESSAY AT THE CONCLUSION OF EACH PAPER. POINTS WILL BE DEDUCTED FOR PAPERS THAT DO NOT REACH THE MINIMUM WORD COUNT ASSIGNED; THERE IS NO MAXIMUM.

CLASS CALENDAR

24 Aug (T)  Introduction to course material; presentation of syllabus
26 Aug (H)  Introduction;
            Capitalism and engines of social change—Karl Marx (1818-1883)
            Allan—Introduction & Chpt 1
31 Aug (T)  Introduction;
            Capitalism and engines of social change—Karl Marx (1818-1883)
            Allan—Introduction & Chpt 1
2 Sept (H)  Introduction;
            Capitalism and engines of social change—Karl Marx (1818-1883)
            Allan—Introduction & Chpt 1
7 Sept (T)  Rationality and the bureaucratic society—Max Weber (1864-1920)
            Allan—Chpt 2
9 Sept (H)  Rationality and the bureaucratic society—Max Weber (1864-1920)
            Allan—Chpt 2
14 Sept (T) Cultural diversity and social integration—Emile Durheim (1858-1917)
            Allan—Chpt 3
16 Sept (H) Cultural diversity and social integration—Emile Durheim (1858-1917)
            Allan—Chpt 3
21 Sept (T) The individual in modern society—George Mead (1863-1931), Georg Simmel (1858-1918)
            Allan—Chpt 4
23 Sept (H) The individual in modern society—George Mead (1863-1931), Georg Simmel (1858-1918)
            Allan—Chpt 4
            Allan—Chpt 5
            Allan—Chpt 5
            Allan—Chpt 6
            Allan—Chpt 6
11—15 Oct  FALL BREAK HOLIDAYS—NO CLASSES!

19 Oct (T)  Conflict theory—Lewis Coser (1913-2003), Ralf Dahrendorf, Randall Collins, Jurgen Habermas
Allan—Chpt 7

21 Oct (H)  Conflict theory—Lewis Coser (1913-2003), Ralf Dahrendorf, Randall Collins, Jurgen Habermas
Allan—Chpt 7

26 Oct (T)  Structures of inequality—race & gender—William Wilson, Janet Chavetz
Allan—Chpt 8

28 Oct (H)  Structures of inequality—race & gender—William Wilson, Janet Chavetz
Allan—Chpt 8

2 Nov (T)  Interactionist theories—Herbert Blumer (1900-1987), Erving Goffman (1922-1982), Harold Garfinkle
Allan—Chpt 9

4 Nov (H)  Interactionist theories—Herbert Blumer (1900-1987), Erving Goffman (1922-1982), Harold Garfinkle
Allan—Chpt 9

9 Nov (T)  Exchange theory—Peter Blau (1918-2002), Karen Cook, Randall Collins
Allan—Chpt 10

11 Nov (H)  Exchange theory—Peter Blau (1918-2002), Karen Cook, Randall Collins
Allan—Chpt 10

Allan—Chpt 11

Allan—Chpt 11

23 Nov (T)  Research in theoretical perspectives

25 Nov (H)  THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY—NO CLASSES!

Allan—Chpt 12

2 Dec (H)  Identity politics—Dorothy Smith, Cornel West, Patricia Hill Collins
Allan—Chpt 13

7 Dec (T)  Post-theories—Michele Foucault (1926-1984), Jean Baudrillard
Allan—Chpt 14

9 Dec (T)  Post-theories—Michele Foucault (1926-1984), Jean Baudrillard
Allan—Chpt 14

NOTE: Those who wish their grades mailed to them should attach a legal size, peel & stick, self-addressed, stamped envelope with their final paper.