



Social Theory

Sociology 3140-070, Fall 2013

Instructor: Bruce Rigby

Class Meetings: Mondays, 6:00 – 8:45 PM, Sandy 122

Office: BEHS 311 (Campus) Office Hours: Before or after class and by appointment on main campus.

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Text: The Social Lens: An Invitation to Social and Sociological Theory, Second Edition, 2001. Kenneth Allan. ISBN: 978-1-4129-7834-7

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. Missed exams will only be allowed in the cases of student hospitalization or a death in the immediate family.

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: Introduction to the course, Chapters 1 and 2 Sociology and the Evolution of Society

Week 2: Labor Day Holiday, No Classes

Week 3: Chapter 3, Karl Marx and Capitalism , Chap 4, Max Weber and Rationality

Week 4: Finish Chap 4 and Chap 5, Emile Durkheim, Social Solidarity and Religion

Week 5: Chaps 6 & 7, Mead/Simmel and The Challenges of Gender and Race, Review for Exam #1

Week 6: Exam #1

Week 7: Chapters 8 and 9, Structural Functionalism and Conflict Theory

Week 8: ***Fall Break*** No Classes***

Week 9: Chapters 10 and 11, Racial and Gender Inequality / Exchange Theory

Week 10: Chapters 12 and 13, The Person and the Situation / Critical Theory

Week 11: Giddens and Bourdieu, Review for Exam #2

Week 12: Exam #2

Papers Due Date TBA

Week 13: Chapter 15, Global Capitalism

Week 14: Chapter 16, Upsetting Reality, Foucault and Baudrillard

Thanksgiving Break November 28th and 29th

Week 15: Chapter 17, Politics of Identity, Course Summary, and Review for Exam #3

Week 16: 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:

The major theoretical perspective of the theorist(s) (e.g., conflict, feminist)

The theorist's historical setting such as classical, modern, postmodern

What is the level of the analysis? (micro/macro)

The strengths and weaknesses of the theory

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

This paper is due no later than (Date TBA) Late papers will receive a significant points reduction.

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.”

7. Learning Environment and Testing

Classes meeting at the University of Utah often present challenges with regard to learning and testing. The following expectations will be part of the student’s responsibility during this course.

One: Talking with friends during class lectures will not be tolerated if it disrupts or interferes with other students trying to pay attention and take notes. Excessive talking is disrespectful to others. Students who engage in this type of activity may be asked to leave the classroom.

Two: No cell phones should be in operation during class time. ANY usage of a cell phone or other electronic device during an exam will result in a failing grade for that exam.

Three: To insure a quiet and proper environment for exams, students should not sit with friends on exam days. Talking or any contact between friends may result in your exam being picked up and a referral to the Student Behavioral Committee.

8. Student Code: All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the student code, spelled out in the student handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the code. The code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the code carefully and know they are responsible for the content.

According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the responsibility of the faculty to enforce responsible classroom behaviors. Violations of the student code may result in a written warning, dismissal from the class, a failing grade, or dismissal from the university. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavioral Committee.

Note: This syllabus is not a binding legal contract. It may be modified by the instructor when the student is given reasonable notice of the modification, particularly when the modification is done to rectify an error which would disadvantage the student.

*****This is a preliminary syllabus and may be modified prior to classes beginning on Monday, August 26, 2013*****