Sociology 355
Theory & Intensive Writing
Spring 2021
Tuesday & Thursday 2:00pm-3:15pm.
208 Oldfather Hall
Zoom link: https://unl.zoom.us/j/5827691603
Password: simmel

Professor Robin Gauthier
ggauthier3@unl.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday/Wednesday 10:45am-11:45am and by appointment
Office Location: https://unl.zoom.us/j/5827691603
Password: simmel
Course Overview

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to sociological theory. This course is organized around three major sections, each dedicated to exploring a central sociological question or concept:

I: Social Order
II: Critical theories of capitalism and modernity
III: Self and Society

Each section includes reading selections and lecture material from both classical and contemporary theorists as it addresses the theme. We will begin each section by placing the theme into its social-historical context. We will then familiarize ourselves with the key concepts each theorist uses to approach the theme. The arrangement of this course is designed to facilitate comparisons of each theorist’s concepts and to demonstrate how contemporary theorists have extended and applied classical approaches. This class is also structured to teach you to apply the theories assigned in class to the world around you. After taking this course, you should be able to:

1) Identify key concepts and contributions made by sociological theorists
2) Compare, contrast and critically evaluate sociological theories
3) Describe the relationship between classical and contemporary theories
4) Apply sociological theories to the world around you

Required Textbook


The textbook has an accompanying website: http://routledgesoc.com/. This website is a great source of additional information on the theories/theorists that we discuss in class.

Class Structure and Assignments

There will be five short papers that ask you to summarize and apply material from your readings to a particular case, outside the classroom (see reading and assignment schedule below).

Assignments and grades

Your grade in this class will be determined by the following: 1) Reading guide quizzes 3) Theory application papers

Theory Application Papers: Seeing Sociology in the World around You
The theory assignments will require you to explain, in writing, how a theory applies to a specific scenario or issue presented in an assigned news article or blog post. Theory application assignments generally require you to look at phenomena through the lens of theory and the eyes of a particular theorist. Ask yourself, how would the theory understand or "have to say" about a particular situation or phenomenon. How would that theory “divide up” what you see and hear, in order to reveal hidden structures or relationships? To practice this skill, you will be required to write five essays that apply the readings to a new scenario. Each of these essays is worth 10 points. Essays should be between 500 and 750 words long and they will be assigned one week before the date they are due. Assignments must be handed in via Canvas before midnight on the day they are due. I will accept late essays with a late penalty. Specifically, late work will be graded up to 90% of the original score. For example, if your grade would have been 10 if the essay had been on time, I will assign your essay 9/10. Essays are open book, and will be graded on insight, thoroughness, clarity, and overall quality of writing. A rubric is available at the end of the syllabus.

**Reading Guide Quizzes:** The required texts are the essential material for this class and it is imperative for your success that you engage with them. Due to the unusual circumstances of this semester, you and/or I may be forced to quarantine or be absent due to sickness. Therefore, I may be unable to assess your progress in a natural setting. In order to make sure you have read the material, I will give you a very brief quiz on every reading. These quizzes will be due before class time (2:00pm) on the day that the reading is assigned. Each set of questions will contribute 1 point to your grade. If your answer is not correct, or if you are unsure of the correct multiple choice answer, you may enter the correct answer in a text box with a few sentences describing your answer. Late discussion posts will still be graded. Half credit (50%) will be taken off for any late discussion posts.

**Mid semester class evaluation:** I will ask you to anonymously write your thoughts about the class, what you think is going well, and where you would like to see improvement about half way through the semester.

**Course Requirements and Grades (100 points total):**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theory application papers (5 @ 10 pts. each)</td>
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<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading guide quizzes (24 @ 2 pt. each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid semester class evaluation (1 @ 2 pts.)</td>
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<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
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**Grade Scale for the Course**

- A+ 97-100
- A  93-96
- A- 90-92
- B+ 87-89
- B  83-86
- B- 80-82
- C+ 77-79
- C  73-76
- C- 70-72
- D+ 67-69
- D  63-66
- D- 60-62
- F  <=59
Office Hours

You are welcome to stop by my office hours if you have any concerns about the course, or if you just want to chat. I will be in my office, or online in my Zoom room between 10:45 and 11:45 on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. If these times will not work for you, please let me know so we can make alternative arrangements.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is essential to the existence and integrity of an academic institution. The responsibility for maintaining that integrity is shared by all members of the academic community. The University's Student Code of Conduct, addresses academic dishonesty. Students who commit acts of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action and are granted due process and the right to appeal any decision.

Services for Students with Disabilities

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options privately. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). If you are eligible for services and register with their office, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so they can be implemented in a timely manner. SSD contact information: 117 Louise Pound Hall; 402-472-3787.

Counseling and Psychological Services

UNL offers a variety of options to students to aid them in dealing with stress and adversity. Counseling and Psychological & Services (CAPS) is a multidisciplinary team of psychologists and counselors that works collaboratively with Nebraska students to help them explore their feelings and thoughts and learn helpful ways to improve their mental, psychological and emotional well-being when issues arise. CAPS can be reached by calling 402-472-7450. Big Red Resilience & Well-Being (BRRWB) provides one-on-one well-being coaching to any student who wants to enhance their well-being. Trained well-being coaches help students create and be grateful for positive experiences, practice resilience and self-compassion, and find support as they need it. BRRWB can be reached by calling 402-472-8770.

Video or Audiotaping Class Sessions

Due to the sensitive and controversial nature of some of the topics that will be discussed over the duration of the semester, all classes are closed to the Press/Media. No video or audio taping of class sessions is allowed unless you obtain my permission to do so.
Reading Schedule

SECTION I: Theories of social order

Week 1

Tuesday, January 18th
Introduction to the course (no readings)

Thursday January 20th
The Rules of the Sociological method (Emile Durkheim)

Week 2

Tuesday January 25th
The Division of Labor in Society (Emile Durkheim)

Thursday January 27th
The Division of Labor in Society (Emile Durkheim)

Week 3

Tuesday February 1st

Thursday February 3rd
Merton, Robert K. "Manifest and Latent Functions."

Week 4

Tuesday February 8th
The Social Construction of Reality (Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann)

Thursday February 10th
The Social Construction of Reality (Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann)

Monday, February 14th
First reading response due
Week 5

Tuesday February 15th
Studies in Ethnomethodology (Harold Garfinkle)

Thursday February 17th
Mixing Humans and Non-Humans Together (Bruno Latour)

SECTION II: Critical theories of capitalism and modernity

Week 6

Tuesday February 22nd
The German Ideology (Karl Marx)

Thursday, February 24th
Capital (Karl Marx)
Manifesto of the Communist Party (Karl Marx)

Week 7
Tuesday, March 1st
Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1884 (Karl Marx)

Thursday March 3rd
The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System (Immanuel Wallerstein)

Monday, March 7th
Second reading response due

Week 8
Tuesday, March 8th
Basic Sociological Terms (Max Weber)

Thursday, March 10th
The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (Max Weber)

Spring Break
Tuesday, March 15th: No class (week 9)
Thursday, March 17th: No class (week 9)

Week 10
Tuesday, March 22nd
The Types of Legitimate Domination (Max Weber)

Thursday, March 24th
Bureaucracy (Max Weber)

Week 11

Tuesday, March 29th
Class, Status, Party (Max Weber)

Thursday, March 31st
One dimensional man (Herbert Marcuse)

Monday, April 4th
Third reading response due

Week 12

Tuesday, April 5th
Discipline and Punish (Michel Foucault)

Thursday, April 7th
Modernity and the Holocaust (Zygmunt Bauman)

SECTION III: Self and Society

Week 13
Tuesday April 12th
Self (George Herbert Mead)

Thursday, April 14th
Self (George Herbert Mead)
Monday, April 18th
Fourth reading response due

Week 14

Tuesday April 19th (Catch-up and revision day, no class)

Thursday, April 21st
The Metropolis and Mental Life (Georg Simmel)
The Stranger (Georg Simmel)

Week 15

Tuesday, April 26th
The Souls of Black Folk (W.E.B. Du Bois)

Thursday, April 28th
Black Skin, White Masks (Franz Fanon)

Week 16

Tuesday, May 3rd
The second sex (Simone de Beauvoir)

Thursday, May 5th
Black Feminist Thought (Patricia Hill Collins)

Tuesday, May 10th
Fifth reading response due