Sociology 355
Theory & Intensive Writing
Fall 2020

Tuesday & Thursday 11:00am-12:15pm. Burnett Hall, Room 205 and Outside Burnside Hall, weather permitting

Professor Robin Gauthier
ggauthier3@unl.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 10:00am-11:00am 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 four major sections, each dedicated to exploring a central sociological question or concept:

I: Social Order
II: Critical theories of capitalism
III: Modernity
IV: 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

COVID-19 Measures

This class has been modified from its original form to provide flexibility during the pandemic. There will be no participation grade, and no in-class requirements, although there will be optional opportunities to engage with myself and your peers in person. Instead, this course is designed to be seamlessly transitioned to an online format to prepare for the possibility of significant community spread of the novel coronavirus. Our safety is truly my top priority. Please use your discretion in attending class. I am scared for myself and my family; you are likely scared, and if you are not, I implore you to understand that others are. Please act responsibly and treat others with compassion. If you feel anything less than your best, or if you have been
exposed in any way to someone who has tested positive for the coronavirus, please do not come to class. Examples of exposures include being at a football game, attending a house party, attending a book club, or church meeting. This request is completely at your discretion. I will not ask where you have been, and I don't expect you to tell me because it's not my business. Please note that this differs significantly from the less restrictive university-wide policy that only includes significant contact with an infected person. If I have come into contact with someone who has tested positive for the coronavirus, or who has become ill I will hold class entirely remotely. This includes any students if I become aware of their diagnosis. If you decide to disclose your own diagnosis to me, I will transition the class to online learning and I will keep the information confidential. If I become ill, we will transition to online learning. In either case, you will be informed as quickly as possible via email so please check your email regularly. I hope we will not have to implement an online migration, but if we do we will be ready. When we meet in person, we will do so outside whenever possible to minimize the risk of transmission.

**Online Class Components (Required)**

I will post short videos explaining the historical context of your readings, and lectures to explain the material. You are expected to watch the videos and read the material before each class, and then you will answer a few short questions to ensure you have engaged with the material.

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

You have been assigned to one of four online discussion groups (see group assignments below). Beginning September 7th, your group will work together to complete weekly assignments that summarize, analyze and apply the material from your readings. You will not have these assignments if there is an application paper due in the same week (see assignment schedule below).

**In-Person Meetings (Optional)**

To minimize the risk of contagion, your physical presence will not be included in your grade. For those who choose to attend, we will physically meet outdoors whenever possible. You have been assigned to one of two meeting groups that overlap with your online discussion group (see group assignments below). These in-person sessions will allow you to review the material and ask me (and each other) any questions you may have. If you cannot attend in person, but wish to engage with those who have, a synchronous Zoom session will be online each class.

**Group assignments**

I have assigned you to four groups using your last names. This is how the class was distributed as of the time I wrote this syllabus. For continuity and to reduce confusion, I will not re-assign you if the composition of our class changes.
In-Person Meeting on Tuesday
Group 1: A-D
Group 2: E-K

In-person Meeting on Thursday
Group 3: L-P
Group 4: Q-Z

Assignments and grades

Your grade in this class will be determined by the following: 1) Online discussions 2) 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 8 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 Friday. One point out of five will be deducted for each day the assignment is late. 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, I am unable to assess your progress in a natural setting. Therefore, in order to make sure you have watched the videos and read the material, I will give you a very brief quiz on every reading. These quizzes will be due before class time on the day that the reading is assigned. Each set of questions will contribute 1 point to your grade.

Online Discussion Groups: Your participation in the online discussion groups is required to succeed in this class. We will use the discussion feature in Canvas to generate questions and discussion centered on the readings. Because this class needs to be compatible with online learning, the discussion board will be where much of your interaction and discussion with the material will take place. Therefore, these discussions will be critical to developing a deeper understanding of the material.

Online discussion will serve as a process to familiarize yourself with the readings. In order to facilitate a useful online discussion, the class will be broken into discussion groups. These discussion groups will be assigned at the beginning on the course. For each module each person in the discussion group be designated with a different role. The discussion group roles will change in every module, but the discussion groups will stay the same throughout the course. The
goal of each person having a distinct role for each discussion is to 1) make the readings a bit easier to digest, 2) narrow the scope/task for each student for each reading, and 3) create a more holistic and digestible overview of each reading.

**Discussion Group Roles:**

**Summarizer:** This role is in charge of summarizing the material for each reading. Each summary should be meaningful and at least 4 sentences. Summaries should be provided for each reading assigned.

**Questioner:** This role is in charge of generating questions related to the readings. At least three meaningful questions should be provided for each reading. Questions can be posed for clarification on the reading, critical questions, or thought-provoking questions.

**Concept Identifier:** This role is in charge of identifying and defining key concepts from each reading. At least three concepts and definitions should be provided for each reading assigned.

**Connecter:** This role is in charge of connecting themes and concepts from each reading to other material either from the class or outside of the course (e.g. new article, movie or television show, etc.). At least one external to the reading connection should be made for each reading assigned. At least 3 meaningful sentences should be provided justifying how and why the connection chosen connects to the reading.

For the discussion group response, I am not requiring that you respond to a specific number of posts. Rather, the goal of these roles is to interact with the readings in a distinct way for each person. Each role will provide distinct information about the reading. Taken together, each discussion will provide a holistic and broken-down overview of each reading. My hope is that these discussion groups can be useful not only with understanding of each reading but also to help in preparation of the exams.

These discussions will be due weekly starting on September 7th, unless there is a reading response paper due that week. Each of the 8 discussions will contribute 4 points to your grade. Late discussion posts will still be graded. Half credit (50%) will be taken off for any late discussion posts. I will not accept discussion posts that are completed later than 3 days after the post is due.

**Mid semester class evaluation:** I will ask you to 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. I will ask you to place your responses into an envelope and sign your name on a separate piece of paper to maintain your anonymity.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theory application papers (4 @ 10 pts each)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading guide quizzes (28 @ 1 pt each)</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online discussions (8 @ 4 pts each)</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid semester class evaluation (1 @ 2 pts)</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

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 Links to an external site. 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.

Face Covering Syllabus Statement
As of July 17, 2020 and until further notice, all University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL) faculty, staff, students, and visitors (including contractors, service providers, and others) are required to use a facial covering at all times when indoors except under specific conditions outlined in the COVID 19 face covering policy found at: https://covid19.unl.edu/face-covering-policy. This statement is meant to clarify classroom policies for face coverings:

To protect the health and well-being of the University and wider community, UNL has implemented a policy requiring all people, including students, faculty, and staff, to wear a face covering that covers the mouth and nose while on campus. The classroom is a community, and as a community, we seek to maintain the health and safety of all members by wearing face coverings when in the classroom. Failure to comply with this policy is interpreted as a disruption of the classroom and may be a violation of UNL’s Student Code of Conduct.

Individuals who have health or medical reasons for not wearing face coverings should work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (for students) or the Office of Faculty/Staff Disability Services (for faculty and staff) to establish accommodations to address the health concern. Students who prefer not to wear a face covering should work with their advisor to arrange a fully online course schedule that does not require their presence on campus. Students in the classroom:

If a student is not properly wearing a face covering, the instructor will remind the student of the policy and ask them to comply with it.

If the student will not comply with the face covering policy, the instructor will ask the student to leave the classroom, and the student may only return when they are properly wearing a face covering.

If the student refuses to properly wear a face covering or leave the classroom, the instructor will dismiss the class and will report the student to Student Conduct & Community Standards for misconduct, where the student will be subject to disciplinary action.

**Instructors in the classroom:**

If an instructor is not properly wearing a face covering, students will remind the instructor of the policy and ask them to comply with it.

If an instructor will not properly wear a face covering, students may leave the classroom and should report the misconduct to the department chair or via the TIPS system for disciplinary action through faculty governance processes.

*Courses that have been granted an exception to the Face Covering Policy for pedagogical reasons are excluded. Exceptions to the Face Covering Policy are only granted after an approved health safety plan is developed.*
SECTION I: Social Order

Week 1 August 17-23

Tuesday (Online)  
*Introduction to the course*

Thursday (Online)  
*The Rules of the Sociological Method* (Emile Durkheim)

Week 2 August 24-30

Monday

Tuesday  
*The Division of Labor in Society* (Emile Durkheim)  
Reading guide 1

Thursday  
*The Division of Labor in Society* (Emile Durkheim)  
Reading guide 2

Friday

Week 3 August 31-September 5

Monday

Tuesday  
*Suicide* (Emile Durkheim)  
Reading guide 3

Thursday  
*Manifest and Latent Functions* (Robert Merton)  
Reading guide 4

Friday

Week 4 September 7-13

Monday  
Online discussion 1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Reading Material</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td><em>The Social Construction of Reality</em> (Peter Berger &amp; Thomas Luckman)</td>
<td>Reading guide 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td><em>The Social Construction of Reality</em> (Peter Berger &amp; Thomas Luckman)</td>
<td>Reading guide 6</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Week 5 September 14-20</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
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<td>Online discussion 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td><em>Studies in Ethnomethodology</em> (Harold Garfinkel)</td>
<td>Reading guide 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td><em>Mixing Humans and Nonhumans Together: The Sociology of a Door-Closer</em> (Bruno Latour)</td>
<td>Reading guide 8</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>SECTION II: Critical theories of capitalism</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Week 6 September 21-27</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td><em>The German Ideology</em> (Karl Marx) &amp; <em>Manifesto of the Communist Party</em> (Karl Marx)</td>
<td>Reading guide 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td><em>Capital</em> (Karl Marx) and <em>Class counts</em> (Erik Olin Wright)</td>
<td>Reading guide 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Reading response 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Week 7 September 28-October 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td></td>
<td>Online discussion 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tuesday  
*Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1884* (Karl Marx)  
Reading guide 11

Thursday  
*The rise and future demise of the world capitalist system* (Immanuel Wallerstein)  
Reading guide 12

Friday

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Week 8  
October 5-11

**SECTION III: Modernity**

Monday  
Online discussion 4

Tuesday  
*Basic Sociological Terms* (Max Weber) & *The Protestant Ethic* (Max Weber)  
Reading guide 13

Thursday  
*The Protestant Ethic* (Max Weber)  
Reading guide 14

Friday

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Week 9  
October 12-18

Monday

Tuesday  
*The Types of Legitimate Domination* (Max Weber) & *Bureaucracy* (Max Weber)  
Reading guide 15

Thursday  
*Class Status Party* (Max Weber)  
Reading guide 16

Friday  
Reading response 3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 10 October 19-25</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Online discussion 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td><em>One Dimensional Man</em> (Herbert Marcuse)</td>
<td>Reading guide 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td><em>Discipline and Punish</em> (Michel Foucault)</td>
<td>Reading guide 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 11 October 26- November 1</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Online discussion 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td><em>Modernity and the Holocaust</em> (Zygmunt Bauman)</td>
<td>Reading guide 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td><em>Modernity and the Holocaust</em> (Zygmunt Bauman)</td>
<td>Reading guide 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION IV: Self and Society</th>
<th>Week 12 November 2-8</th>
<th>Monday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td><em>Self</em> (George Herbert Mead)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td><em>The Metropolis and Mental Life</em> &amp; <em>The Stranger</em> (Georg Simmel)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading response 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Week 13 November 9-15

Monday
Online discussion 7

Tuesday  
*The Souls of Black Folk* (W.E.B. Du Bois)  
Reading guide 23

Thursday  
*The Second Sex* (Simone de Beauvoir)  
Reading guide 24

Friday

Week 14 November 15-18

Monday
Online discussion 8

Tuesday  
*The Conceptual Practices of Power* (Dorothy Smith)  
Reading guide 25

Thursday  
*Black Feminist Thought* (Patricia Hill Collins)  
Reading guide 26

Friday
## Theory Application Paper Response rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Correctly identify the author and source</strong> &lt;br&gt;Be sure to name the original source. Any citation style is acceptable, in-text citations should include the author's last name and the data of the original publication, end-of-text citations should include the author's last name, date of original publication, full title of the work, the place of publication and its place in the reader (see example below)</td>
<td>1 point</td>
<td>0.5 points</td>
<td>0 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The citation includes all the correct information</td>
<td>An in-text citation or a reference has been provided but not both, or there are substantial omissions in either</td>
<td>There is no citation or reference included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Clearly describe the elements and explanations of the theory that are applicable to the understanding the news article (or blog post).</strong></td>
<td>2-3 points</td>
<td>1-2 points</td>
<td>0-1 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The description of the theory is specific, clear and accurate.</td>
<td>The description of the theory is generally correct, but lacks specificity</td>
<td>The description of the theory is inaccurate or so vague that it cannot be evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Apply the elements and explanations of (2.) to understand the material through a sociological lens.</strong></td>
<td>2-3 points</td>
<td>1-2 points</td>
<td>0-1 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The argument connecting theoretical concepts to the application is thorough and accurate.</td>
<td>The argument connecting theoretical concepts to the application is not thoroughly explained.</td>
<td>There is no explanation connecting the concepts to the application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Writing quality</strong></td>
<td>1 points</td>
<td>0.5 points</td>
<td>0 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The overall clarity of your sentences, argument, and the structure of your essay are excellent.</td>
<td>The overall clarity of your sentences is satisfactory, but your organization is difficult to follow</td>
<td>Sentence level writing needs to be edited.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Example citation and reference
In-text:  
(Durkheim, 1895/2012 p.9)
End of text:  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Online Discussion Group Rubric</strong></th>
<th><strong>Good (3-4 pts)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Satisfactory (2-3 pts)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Unsatisfactory (0-2 pts)</strong></th>
<th><strong>N/A</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summarizer</strong></td>
<td>3-4 points</td>
<td>2-3 points</td>
<td>0-2 points</td>
<td>This is not your role for this module so you will not be graded on this criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The summarizer is in charge of providing a summary for each assigned reading. Each summary should be at least 4 (meaningful) sentences per reading assigned.</td>
<td>Meaningful summaries are provided for each reading. Length is appropriate. Content is correct and useful.</td>
<td>Summaries are satisfactory. Length is adequate/a bit short. Content is mostly accurate/relevant.</td>
<td>Summaries are either too short, are not accurate or useful, or no summaries were provided.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Questioner</strong></td>
<td>3-4 points</td>
<td>2-3 points</td>
<td>0-2 points</td>
<td>This is not your role for this module so you will not be graded on this criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The questioner is in charge of generating meaningful questions about each reading. The questioner should provide a minimum of 3 (meaningful) questions for each reading assigned.</td>
<td>Meaningful questions are provided for each reading. Each question either asks for clarification, is critical, or is thought provoking.</td>
<td>Questions for each reading are provided. Some questions are weak/not critical or thought provoking.</td>
<td>Either too few questions were asked, the question quality was low, or not questions were submitted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concept Identifier</strong></td>
<td>3-4 points</td>
<td>2-3 points</td>
<td>0-2 points</td>
<td>This is not your role for this module so you will not be graded on this criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The concept identifier is in charge of identifying and defining key concepts within each reading. The concept identifier should provide a minimum of 3 concepts and definitions for each reading assigned.</td>
<td>Concepts are accurate and well defined for each reading. The minimum number of concepts are provided. The concept definitions provide clear and accurate information.</td>
<td>The minimum number of discussions are provided. Some concepts are not fully or accurately defined.</td>
<td>Too few concepts and definitions were provided, the concepts were not accurately defined or concepts were not appropriate, or no concepts were identified.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Connecter**

The connecter is in charge of connecting the reading (concepts, theoretical ideas, etc.) to either other readings in the course or to external sources (e.g. news article, movie or television show/episode, data, journal article, etc.). The connecter should make at least 1 connection for each reading assigned and justify/explain each connection in at least 3 (meaningful) sentences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-4 points</td>
<td>Connections made for each reading are appropriate and apply to the readings. The justification for each connection makes sense and is compelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 points</td>
<td>Connections made to each reading are a bit loose. The justification is provided but is not compelling/misrepresented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 points</td>
<td>Either connections are made but do not directly connect to the reading, not justification is provided or the justification is weak, or no connections were made to the readings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is not your role for this module so you will not be graded on this criteria.