

Sociological Thought
Foundations of Social Theory
3300/W01; Fall 2012 - Online Course
(Prerequisite: SOCI 2201 or ANTH 2201)

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Online Consultation/Skype Hours: Friday 10 am – 12 pm; or by appointment (Skype@InstructorC)

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Students will use Skype to connect via voice call for student-instructor appointments – detailed instructions on how to join are posted on GeorgiaVIEW Vista in the “Start Here” section. ***Please use GeorgiaVIEW Vista for all written course communication.***

“No ideas or collections of ideas can capture all aspects of a single human being or a total society.” – Bernard P. Cohen

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to explore a broad range of sociological thought – from the classics to the contemporary. We will examine Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Gilman, Simmel, and Mead along with a number of other influential but often-neglected social thinkers. To better understand these theoreticians and their theories it is essential to take a closer look at the social, cultural, political, and historical factors that situate their writings. These individuals were and are passionate about understanding the complexities of social actors and how they create their social worlds.

This course requires a significant amount of reading, as your objective is to examine numerous perspectives and critically analyze and interpret a variety of social theories. The language and ideas may at times be challenging, but you are invited to accept the challenge, and be open and receptive, as you will sharpen and acquire skills that will be as functional in your everyday life as they are intellectually stimulating and capable of expanding the boundaries of your freedom.

The major part of this course is online at a time that is convenient for you. ***Our course week will run from Saturday to Thursday. Fridays will be reserved for addressing more detailed questions, student consultations, and posting any new information.*** Course requirements include weekly reading assignments, online discussions, writing assignments, self-assessments and graded essay exams. A typical traditional course requires 40 hours of in-class instruction during the semester with a recommended additional two to three hours of study and preparation for every hour spent in class. For an online course, this translates into a recommended 10-15 hours per week of dedicated time to maximize your learning experience and successfully complete this course. This time includes reading the assigned material, participation in weekly online discussions, any assigned writing, study time, and exams.

As a completely online course, it is important that you read and understand this syllabus (all of the requirements). An online “I Understand and Agree” contract is posted on Vista. Please review, include your initial next to each statement, type your name, and type the date, then submit, confirming that you have read and understand all the requirements of this course. Review and complete by or before August 30th at 11:59 pm. Note: your first exam will not be graded until your completed “I Understand and Agree” contract is received.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Obtaining the required texts is solely the responsibility of the student. If you order the assigned books from sources other than the bookstore, you are responsible for ensuring that the books arrive on time or getting another copy in the meantime - you are responsible for remaining current with your assigned readings.

📖 Appelrouth, Scott and Laura Desfor Edles. 2011. *Classical and Contemporary Sociology Theory*, 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: Pine Forge Press.

📖 All other articles listed will be available online via Vista or on reserve at the library (*).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Examine and discuss the development and intellectual heritage of social theory.
- Examine and discuss the importance of studying and understanding social theory.
- Critically examine and interpret the original writings of social theorists.
- Analyze and discuss contemporary social phenomenon and create practical applications using social theory.
- Examine at least eight classical and contemporary leading social theorists and analyze a prominent theory of each.

LEARNER ENGAGEMENT

Student engagement for this course includes the following:

- Reading the assigned books
- Writing
- Online activities
- Composing a Sociological Theory Portfolio

COURSE INFORMATION/EXPECTATIONS

You are responsible for reading all of the assigned material each week. As you read the material, ask yourself:

- What are the issue(s), main conclusion(s), and reason(s) for these conclusions?
- What was the social, political, and cultural climate of the time? What are the historical links/connections?
- What do I know about the author? Are there any fallacies in the author's reasoning?
- How strong is the evidence? Any significant gaps?
- Are there any other reasonable conclusions? What do I think?

As you analyze a broad range of sociological thought there will be several opportunities to demonstrate your understanding of these theories through writing assignments and online discussions. In addition to the required readings, you may be assigned to watch films and/or video clips, and/or critique a number of current events using newly learned or expanded upon social theories.

MINIMUM TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS, COURSE GUIDELINES, DISCUSSION BOARDS

This is an entirely online course and will be conducted entirely through Vista (hereafter referred to as Vista). Students are expected to have the necessary computer background to work in this format, and are advised to seek additional technical assistance from computer services if needed (see resource links in "Start Here" folder). Students will be expected to read each assigned chapter carefully, and then use the provided support materials as review. Assigned chapters are available in learning modules; after each learning module there will be an ungraded self-assessment. Vista "Announcements" and the "Ask the Instructor" discussion board will serve as other forms of communication. Important updates and general comments will be posted regularly – it is suggested that you visit Vista at least three times a week. Weekly attendance questions will be posted as a form of communication, but more importantly to encourage you to stay current in the course throughout the semester. For technology problems, visit Student Technology Services at <http://its.kennesaw.edu/students.htm>.

Recommendation: Save all of your work on a flash drive. This includes copies of drafts and final versions of exams and projects. I will not accept excuses for lost work – even when printers are out of cartridges or computers crash. Always plan ahead when it comes to using technology!

On-line Discussion Boards/Participation Requirement

Online participation via the course discussion boards is a key component of this course!

Cyber Café – This discussion board will be used by students to first, introduce themselves at the beginning of the semester and thereafter as a place to chat with fellow classmates about issues, concerns, general questions, etc. related to this course.

- Your first assignment is to introduce yourself on the "Cyber Café" discussion board located on the main page of Vista by or before August 30th.

Online Attendance – Regular online Vista visits (at least three times per week is recommended) is also essential for successful completion of online courses! Each week, a fun or thought-provoking question will be posed. Your answer to these questions by Thursday at 11:59 pm each week will serve as the online course attendance roster.

"Real World Q & A" - To maximize your learning experience, you are expected to read all of the assigned material in the early part of the week and post before Friday, which will allow you and your fellow classmates to ask questions, post answers, and peer review each others' discussion posts. Your preparation each week contributes to lively and thought-provoking online discussions in a meaningful way. In fact, a significant portion of your learning will come from interacting online with your fellow classmates.

- Although rich *unlimited* online discussions related to each learning module is strongly encouraged, students are required to post at least one online discussion each week; you are strongly encouraged to post several responses to fellow classmates' posts, as there will be ample opportunities to explore and analyze content. This is the best way for you to ask questions, make comments, clarify things, and especially to demonstrate that you have read and understood the chapters. The discussions will be multi-directional: primarily student-student and student-content, with some student-instructor and instructor-student. From past experience, students will likely make hundreds of postings during the semester, and the instructor will reply to about 15% of the total postings. Through "Real World Discussions," students will read local, national, and/or international news, and connect with sociological concepts and theories being covered at that time in our textbook. Students need to cite a news story in their discussion posts, explain the story reviewed, summarize how it relates to that week's topic, and include the citation for the news story: name of publication, date, page number or website address link.
- You are also required to read and peer review five (5) of your fellow classmates' discussions in each learning module. Each of you will be expected to use the star rating system to *anonymously* note which posts increased your understanding

of the topic or skill related to the topic. The objective of this system is to encourage quality contributions that support a rich learning experience for you and your fellow classmates. You will remain anonymous to your fellow students; however, the instructor will be able to identify the authors of posts and the reviewers.

- Questions are encouraged, and polite disagreements are fine. However, *respect is a basic necessity in all online interactions*. According to KSU Computer Usage Policy and Guidelines [www.kennesaw.edu/infosec], "You may not employ lewd or threatening language in any electronic communication. This would violate the bounds of good taste as well as laws and regulations." Please see the Netiquette link in the "Start Here" folder for more details.

"Ask the Instructor" - Post any questions for the instructor related to the course. Questions related to your personal situation should be sent via email to the instructor. If an email is sent with a question related to the entire class, it will be copied and posted on this discussion board for the benefit for all students.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism - I conform to the rules listed in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) concerning cheating. Please familiarize yourself with your rights and responsibilities. Any student caught cheating automatically receives a zero for the exam or assignment and will not be given a chance to make it up. The submission of the work of someone else as one's own is plagiarism. Academic honesty requires that ideas or materials taken from another course for use as a course paper or project be fully acknowledged. Plagiarism is a very serious offense in whatever form it may appear, be it submission of an entire article falsely represented as the student's own, the inclusion within a piece of the student's writing of an idea for which the student does not provide sufficient documentation, or the inclusion of a documented idea not sufficiently assimilated into the student's language and style. It is your responsibility to know and understand what constitutes plagiarism. *Blatantly plagiarized assignments will receive a zero.* Check out: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gC2ew6qLa8U>.

The Undergraduate Advising Center - The College of Humanities and Social Sciences is pleased to offer academic advising to students in the Undergraduate Advising Center (UAC). The UAC is located in Pilcher 129, on the first floor near the Foreign Language Resource Center. Their hours are **Monday - Thursday** 8 am - 6 pm, and **Friday** 8 am to 5 pm. Students are strongly encouraged to make appointments using the website, <http://www.kennesaw.edu/hssadvising/appointments.php>, or by calling the Center during office hours at **770-794-7728**. For more information, visit the UAC website: <http://www.kennesaw.edu/hssadvising/home.php>.

The KSU Writing Center - is a free service offered to all KSU students. Experienced, friendly writing assistants work with you on thesis development, organization, research documentation, grammar, mechanics, and more. They help you improve your paper AND teach you strategies to become a better writer on your own. For more information or to make an appointment, visit <http://www.kennesaw.edu/english/WritingCenter>, or stop by Room 242 in the English Building. Extra points will be awarded for visits to the writing center (with official documentation).

Special Accommodations Notice - In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to my attention, as I am not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students.

General Course Info - Guidelines for your assignments will be posted on Vista including grading rubrics. Additional information and tips will be available to help you get the most from your reading, writing, and class discussions.

- Review assignment guidelines for formatting specifics. All assignments should be *typed* and should include your name, date, class, etc., 1" margins, double-spaced in the font of your choice. Papers will be evaluated based on content, use of sociological concepts, structure, and mechanics, which includes integrating the [American Sociological Association \(ASA\) documentation style](#), typically used by sociologists.
- *Late assignments will be reduced 10%* of the total grade received for each day late. Late papers without official documentation of illness or other emergency will not be accepted. Official documentation and a hard copy of the late assignment **MUST** be turned in to the instructor. Please do not email me your excuse or papers.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATIONS

I treat assignments as they would be treated in the working world. No supervisor will tolerate an employee turning in an expected report a day late or failing to present an oral presentation on the date anticipated. Meeting deadlines is an important key to success as a student and as a professional in the working world. All assignments are due on the specified due date. Failure to turn in the assignment or turning in only a portion of the assignment will result in a 10% deduction per day. **Grades are typically posted in the Vista Gradebook within two weeks after the assignment/exam is submitted.**

NOTE: All assignments/exams are due by Thursday at 11:59 pm (with the exception of your final exam), which makes it easier for you to plan your online learning strategy each week and successfully manage the course.

Online Reflection Journal (10%)

Every four weeks, you will submit a reflective journal (300+ words) highlighting your thoughts, realizations, learnings, questions, arguments, etc. related to what you've covered over that four-week period. Reflective writing is a powerful learning tool that assists with comprehension and personal application. *Your submissions are due by 11:59 pm on the following dates: September 13th, October 11th, November 8th, and December 6th.* These journal entries are private – between the student and instructor, fellow

classmates will not have access to your online journal.

“Real World Q & A” Discussion Board (10%)

You are tasked with submitting one original post with an accompanying link to a current article from a **reputable online news source** related to the theorist/theory/subject assigned for that learning module (beginning the week of August 25th, which means that your first post(s) are due by Thursday, August 30th). You will discuss your article and why it best aligns or supports the topic for that week. You are also encouraged to post questions and/or responses to fellow classmates’ posts for that learning module. Your summaries will be submitted via the “Real World Q & A” discussion board online discussion board link located in each learning module. A percentage point will be deducted for each week that you choose not to participate. **Final post due by November 29th at 11:59 pm.**

Sociological Theory Portfolio (30%)

This compilation of short essays allows you to demonstrate, discuss, illustrate, apply, and critique sociological concepts and theories. Assignment guidelines and the grading rubric will be posted on Vista. Cite and reference all sources in these assignments using [ASA documentation style](#). You will have the option to turn some or all of these essays in for feedback by **October 4th at 11:59 pm**, if you wish, or you can simply complete and turn in the entire portfolio by the specified due date. Note: You must turn these essays in by the specified due dates to receive feedback – no exceptions! **Due by November 29th by 11:59 pm.**

Essay Exams (50%)

There will be three (3) online essay exams – the final online essay exam is comprehensive. Essay Exams I and II will be posted on Sunday by noon and available through Thursday by 11:59 pm on the scheduled date (see below). Late exams will only be accepted in emergency situations with “official” documentation. No “official” documentation, no late exam, no grade – no exceptions! **The final exam will be available on Sunday at noon and available through Tuesday by 11:59 pm.**

- **Essay Exam I - Thursday, September 27th by 11:59 pm**
- **Essay Exam II - Thursday, November 1st by 11:59 pm**
- **Final Essay Exam III - Tuesday, December 4th by 11:59 pm**

Grading Scheme

Evaluation Type	Percentage
Online Reflection Journal (4 entries)	10%
Real World Q & A Discussions	10%
Sociological Theory Portfolio	30%
Essay Exam I	15%
Essay Exam II	15%
Final Essay Exam III (Comprehensive)	20%
Total Percentage	100%

Grading Scale: 100-90 = A; 89-80 = B; 79-70 = C; 69-60 = D; 59 and below = F

Important Dates

August 17	First Day of Classes
August 17-23	Drop/Add
August 28	Final Payment Deadline
September 1-3	Labor Day Break (Sat. – Mon.)
October 12	Last Day to Withdraw Without Penalty
November 21-25	Fall Break – NO CLASSES
December 5	Last Day of Classes
December 6-12	Final Exams
December 12-13	Graduation (Tentative)
December 15	Final Grades Due: 5 pm

“All theories are not equally valid: the question is which theory works in the largest number of contexts that are coherent with one another.” – Randall Collins

Detailed Course Schedule (The instructor reserves the right to adjust the syllabus and course schedule as needed).

Wk	Date	Reading/Assignment Due Dates/Exam Dates	
PART I – FOUNDATIONS OF CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY			
1	8/18/12	Learning Module 1	Orientation
2	8/25/12	Learning Module 2	Introduction (pp. 1-18)
3	9/1/12	Learning Module 3	Karl Marx (pp. 20-76)
4	9/8/12	Learning Module 4	Emile Durkheim (pp. 77-124)
5	9/15/12	Learning Module 5	Max Weber (pp. 125-184)
6	9/22/12	Exam I (Wks 1-5): Due Thursday, September 27th by 11:59 pm	
PART II – CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY: EXPANDING THE FOUNDATION			
7	9/29/12	Learning Module 6	Charlotte Gilman (pp. 186-217); * <i>The Yellow Wallpaper</i>
8	10/6/12	Learning Module 7	Georg Simmel (pp. 218-255)
9	10/13/12	Learning Module 8	W.E.B. DuBois (pp. 256-288)
10	10/20/12	Learning Module 9	George Herbert Mead (pp. 289-321)
11	10/27/12	Exam II (Wks 7-10): Due Thursday, November 1st by 11:59 pm	
PARTS III & IV – TWENTIETH CENTURY SOCIOLOGICAL TRADITIONS AND BROADENING SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY			
12	11/3/12	Learning Module 10	Structural Functionalism (pp. 324-374); Critical Theory (pp. 375-412)
13	11/10/12	Learning Module 11	Symbolic Interactionism and Dramaturgy (pp. 463-517)
14	11/17/12	Learning Module 12	Feminist and Gender Theories (pp. 556-606); The Global Society (pp. 747-790)
November 21 – 25: Fall Break – NO CLASSES (Wednesday – Sunday)			
15	11/24/12	Learning Module 13	Sociological Portfolio: Due Thursday, November 29th by 11:59 pm
16	12/1/12		Final Exam III: Due Tuesday, December 4th by 11:59 pm

“What standards must an explanation meet before it is preferred to alternatives? This is one of the most crucial questions that an analysis of theory and method in sociology, or in any other science, must address.” - Bernard P. Cohen

Recommended Texts – You may find the following “recommended” texts helpful when interpreting social theory.

- 📖 Collins, Randall. 1994. *Four Sociological Traditions*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. This text presents a “concise intellectual history of sociology organized around the development of four classic schools of thought: the conflict tradition of Marx and Weber, the ritual solidarity of Durkheim, the micro-interactionist tradition of Mead, Blumer, and Garfinkel, and--new to this edition--the utilitarian/rational choice tradition.”
- 📖 Coser, Lewis A. 1977. *Masters of Sociology Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc. This text “examines the ideas of fifteen influential sociological thinkers with a discussion of the social and intellectual circumstances that surrounded them” (each chapter contains four sections – summary of the scholar’s work, short life sketch, social context, and sociological questions and events).
- 📖 Evans, Mary. 2007. *A Short History of Society: The Making of the Modern World*. New York, NY: The McGraw-Hill Companies. This brief text describes “the emergence of modern western society. It looks at how successive generations have understood and explained the world in which they lived, and examines significant events since the Enlightenment that have led to the development of society as we know it today. The book spans the period 1500 to the present day and discusses the social world in terms of both its politics and its culture.”

(The above descriptions are excerpts from Amazon.com product descriptions).