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IMPORTANT!!!
I EXPECT STUDENTS TO READ THE SYLLABUS IN ITS ENTIRETY!

Syllabus
SOC 3300-02, CRN# 81335
Foundations of Social Theory
Kennesaw State University
Fall 2012

This course provides an introduction to social theory by discussing the main ideas of 19th century influential social thinkers in historical context and by explaining how these are relevant to contemporary social realities. The first two parts of the course covers the major ideas of classic social thinkers such as Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx and Max Weber exploring how they viewed society's grand transition from the agricultural stage to the industrial-modern times. The latter part of the course presents the main sociological perspectives of the 20th century and how they relate to the ideas of the founding fathers of Sociology. Fundamental questions in this course include: "How is society possible?" and "What are the consequences of social organization for individuals and groups?" The readings may include language and ideas that you might find challenging at times. However, keep in mind that the critical thinking skills you will develop by accepting this challenge will serve you well not only in college or your future career but also in understanding and successfully managing life itself.

Required Text:

 Randall Collins, Michael Makowski. *The Discovery of Society, 8th edition*. McGraw Hill.

 Other articles/hand-outs listed will be available online, in GeorgiaViewVista.

 **OPTIONAL:** William R. Catton, Jr. *Bottleneck: Humanity's Impending Impasse*

Course Objectives:

- Examine the development of main ideas in social theory.
- Summarize the importance of studying and understanding social theory.
- Critically examine and interpret the original writings of major social theorists.
- Analyze contemporary social phenomena using social theory.
- Identify at least eight classical and contemporary leading social theorists and a

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prominent theory of each.

Course Guidelines

Vista. This course requires use of Georgia View Vista. You will begin by logging in here: <https://web.kennesaw.edu/vista/> Learning how to effectively use this tool will be addressed during the first week of class.

Vista may be used for announcements, assignments, etc. You will also be able to check grades, communicate with fellow classmates, access additional links to articles and communicate with me through e-mail. You should be checking Vista at least twice a week to stay current. Any questions, comments, complaints or concern can be addressed by e-mail in Vista. I do not recommend using my university e-mail as your message may get mixed with those of students in other classes I teach!

I also recommend that you always save all of your work. This includes copies of drafts and final versions of online exams or papers. I will not accept excuses for lost work – even when printers are out of cartridges or computers crash. Always plan for the worst and hope for the best when it comes to technology.

Readings. You are responsible for reading all of the assigned material each week, BEFORE class discussion. I strongly encourage all students to have ALL readings for the week completely covered before Tuesday's class. As you read the material, ask yourself:

- What are the main 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 should I ask the instructor in class?

Taking notes during class.

During class, I expect all students to **take notes** based on lectures and/or class dialogue - as some of the concepts discussed, albeit directly related to the readings, may not be specifically or explicitly mentioned in the book. Therefore you need to pay attention to what is being presented in class, all while jotting down key information.

Course Requirements

1. Exams (Midterm 35% and Final 40%).

There will be two take-home exams in this course which students will take in Vista. Exams will be essentially open book and students will be able to take them wherever they can log on to a high-speed computer. However, study, preparation and prior class

attendance will be absolutely necessary because the exams are *timed* and the clock starts as soon as you begin, so there will not be time to look up answers. You must be prepared in advance to do well on the tests.

The exams will have approximately 40-50 questions (multiple-choice format) with an allotted time of 75 minutes (the usual class time). The questions asked in exams will primarily cover the major issues and concepts covered in the text and in class.

2. “Real World” Group Discussions (20%)

Each student will be assigned to a 3-4 members discussion group. Each week, beginning September the 8th, discussion groups will have the task of choosing a relatively current (five years old at the most) article from a reputable news source related to the theorist/theory/subject of the week and discussing it in class. Good choices can be New York Times, Newsweek, Time Magazine, US News, World Report, etc. As a group you will organize and lead the discussion in class. You will also designate one student in your group who will post the article in Vista via an electronic link or an uploaded document, so that your classmates will have the time to read it in advance, before class. Your article should be posted at least one day prior to the presentation date (Wednesday is a good idea). Then, on your assigned Thursday, you and your group members will lead the discussion in class.

The in-class discussion will take place in the form of a panel in which you will be expected to engage in dialogue with your group mates, take questions from the class and provide answers. Groups that show an ability to engage in critical dialogue will be especially likely to receive a high grade on this assessment. By critical dialogue I mean the ability to engage in a conversation in which you might disagree with your conversation partner without attacking the person in question. When critiquing a certain point of view, the arguments must be sound, well-reasoned (or based on evidence) and respectful.

Before class every student in the group will turn in a 1-2 page **typed paper** (Times New Roman, 12 font) to receive credit for participation. The paper will have to be e-mailed to the instructor in VISTA! The paper should include:

- A brief summary of the article.
- An explanation of how the theories we learned that week are relevant to the topic of the article.
- A commentary of how you think the theorist(s) in question would have reacted to the social phenomena described in the article, had they been alive today.

These aspects should also be the focus of the panel.

You will have around **20-30** minutes to conclude the panel.

3. Class Participation (5%) Participation represents a significant portion of your grade. This can only be accomplished by reading the assigned material BEFORE class to become familiar with the topic for discussion. As mentioned before, lectures and class discussions will go beyond what is assigned in the readings so it will be important to stay involved with what is being discussed in class as opposed to texting, Net browsing or daydreaming. During lectures, I will often ask questions in order to draw your attention to key concepts. Keep in mind that I will not be asking those questions to test whether you have the correct answer, but rather to engage the class in dialogue and make you think through the theoretical concepts in the lecture in “real world” terms.

Those who volunteer to answer questions in class or add comments - regardless of whether the answers or comments are “correct” or “incorrect” - will be more likely to receive the maximum participation grade. Likewise, interacting in class with the discussions panels (see above class requirement), will contribute to class discussions in a meaningful way and will go a long way in maximizing your participation grade.

Because instructors often teach many relatively large classes, they may have a hard time associating all names with the correct faces during the semester. Therefore, I would like everyone to upload a picture of themselves (any sort of picture) in Vista, under Student Introductions. More instructions about the actual place to upload will be provided during the first week of class. The picture will help the instructor make the correct decision on the Participation grade at the end of the semester.

OPTIONAL Extra-Credit (maximum of 4 points added to your Final Grade)

I will offer only one extra-credit opportunity for those of you who will want to excel in this class. The assignment will consist of reading a book titled “**Bottleneck: Humanity’s Impending Impasse**” by **William R. Catton, Jr.**, which is highly relevant to our topic on Nov 22nd (The Ecological Perspective). At the end of the semester, before class on Nov 22 you will post on the Discussion board in Vista a 2-3 page response paper for Catton’s book. You will also use the conclusions you drew from reading the book to participate in class on Nov. 22. You will have to demonstrate in your response paper and your class participation that you both read and understood the book and its overall message.

You are strongly advised to start reading this book from the mid part of the semester so you will have enough time to digest it over the next 15 weeks. Realizing that you need extra points to your Final Grade at the last minute and starting to read the book a night before the extra-credit assignment is due will not work in this case. I warn you that this is not an easy, “fluffy”, intuitive read but rather a sociological masterpiece, highly relevant to what is happening to all of us around the globe today!.

Although the entire class will have a small portion of this book as mandatory reading for Nov 22 (PDF file will be uploaded in Vista), this book in its entirety is an optional assignment and it will be the only extra-credit opportunity available in this class.

It will add a maximum of 5 points to your final grade.

Summary of course evaluations

- **Midterm (35%): Th, September 27th – Take-home, in Vista**
- **Final (40%): Tue, Dec 4th – Take-home, in Vista**
- **“Real World” Discussion Group (article posted in Vista one day prior to class; discussion summary due at the end of the class).**
- **Participation (5%)**
- **Extra-Credit Paper (max 4 points): Nov 27th, before class**

Final Grade Formula:

FINAL GRADE = 35% x Midterm + 40% x Final + 20% x “Real World” Discussion Group + 5% x Participation + Optional Extra Credit = FINAL

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

Academic Citizenship and Classroom Behavior

I expect students to take responsibility for their own learning and their own learning environments. I expect students to come to class prepared to take part in and facilitate class discussion and to support assertions and theories with evidence from reading and research. Most of you already know and adhere to the basic rules of civility below, but for those of you who have managed to get by without following these basic rules to date:

- Laptops are welcome for note taking, however, instant messaging and web surfing while in class are not. Please do not be rude to the instructor and your fellow classmates by engaging in these activities while class is in session. Violation will result in the banning of all laptops in class.
- Profanity, degradation of specific individuals or groups, and a hostile tone of voice are not acceptable. DO differentiate between critiquing an idea, which is not only fine but encouraged, and ad-hominem attacks - which means attacking the person who expressed the point of view you disagree with.
- No writing assignment or post in Vista should contain overly colloquial speech, grammar errors or generally sloppy language. For example, I consider language along the lines of “I have this 4 U” to be a perfectly legitimate reason to subtract points from your Final Grade. In general, I expect students to attempt to speak and write clearly, correctly, cohesively and eloquently (no, this does not mean “being pretentious”) and to behave in a respectful and dignified manner.
- **Academic Honesty Policy.** I expect you to conform to the rules listed in the undergraduate catalog related to the Student Code of Conduct, which includes the University’s policy on academic honesty and more specifically plagiarism and cheating. Please familiarize yourself with this section of the Undergraduate Catalog.

Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive an “F” on the assignment – no exceptions! It is your responsibility to know and understand what constitutes plagiarism. Check out: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gC2ew6qLa8U> .

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 papers 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.

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.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE
SOCI 3300
Fall 2011

W #	Date	Topic	Readings
MODULE 1: CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY: The Founding Fathers			
01	Aug 21 Aug 23	Introduction to Course, Syllabus, Vista The Sociological Imagination	Introduction Society and Illusion pag. 1-14
02	Aug 28 - Aug 30 wk	Saint-Simon and Comte - The Prophets of Paris Enlightenment - Class Activity	Chapter 1 PDF in Vista
03	Sep 4-6 wk Sep 6	Emile Durkheim: Solidarity "Real World" Group Discussion: Group 1	Chapter 6
04	Sep 11-13 wk Sep 13	Karl Marx: Class Struggle "Real World" Group Discussion: Group 2 -	Chapter 2
05	Sep 18-20 wk Sep 20	Max Weber: The Disenchantment of the World "Real World" Group Discussion: Group 3	Chapter 7
06	Sep 25 Sep 27	Module Review: Transition to Modernity Take-home MID-TERM (to be taken in Vista)	PDF file - hand-out
MODULE 2: CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY: Expanding the Foundation			
07	Oct 2-4 wk Oct 4	The Evolutionary Perspective Spencer, Darwin and Sociobiology "Real World" Group Discussion: Group 4	Chapter 5
08	Oct 9-11 wk	The Political Perspective: Democracy and	Chapter 3

	Oct 11	Individualism Tocqueville and Nietzsche “Real World” Group Discussion: Group 5	Chapter 4
9	Oct 16-18 wk Oct 18	The Psychological Perspective: Freud “Real World” Group Discussion: Group 6	Chapter 8
MODULE 3: 20th CENTURY SOCIOLOGICAL TRADITIONS			
MACRO SOCIOLOGY			
10	Oct 25-27 wk Oct 27	STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALIST THEORY: Life is With People! From Durkheim to Parsons “Real World” Group Discussion: Group 7	
11	Oct 30 1- Nov 1 wk	CONFLICT THEORY: Life is Against People! History after Marx and the divisions across Class, Race and Gender lines The Emergence of African American Sociology <i>People Like Us</i>	Chapter 11 Film
12	Nov 6-8 wk Nov 8	CONFLICT THEORY (continued) Cultural Capital, World-System and Globalization: Pierre Bourdieu and Immanuel Wallerstein “Real World” Group Discussion: Group 8	
MICRO SOCIOLOGY			
13	Nov 13-15 wk Nov 15	SYMBOLIC-INTERACTIONIST THEORY (MICRO SOCIOLOGY) Simmel, Cooley and Mead “Real World” Group Discussion: Group 9	
14	Nov 20	SUMMARY OF THEROETICAL PARADIGMS CLASS ACTIVITY	Hand-Out
	Nov 21-23	Fall Break	
15	Nov 27	THE ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE	Hand-out

	Nov 29	<p>Extra-Credit Assignment Due in Vista (Optional)</p> <p>“Real World” Group Discussion: Group 10 (topic related to the Ecological Perspective)</p> <p>Preparation for Final</p>	
	Dec. 4	Take home FINAL EXAM (In Vista)	
Under no circumstances will Final Exam “Make-Ups” be allowed after Dec 4th.			

THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO BRING MODIFICATIONS TO THIS SYLLABUS, AS NECESSARY, AT ANY POINT DURING THE SEMESTER.