

Course Outline

**FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL THEORY**  
SOCI 3300-01

Kennesaw State University  
Fall 2015

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Course Description: An introduction to social theory and its applications; this course will provide an overview of the major idea systems in the social sciences, especially sociology and anthropology. It will discuss the more influential thinkers in historical context and will seek to apply their perspectives to contemporary issues. The primary questions considered are: "How is society possible?" and "What are the consequences of social organization for individuals and groups?"

Required Texts:

Collins, R. and Makowsky, M. 2005. *The Discovery of Society: Seventh Edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Fein, M. 1999. *The Limits of Idealism: When Good Intentions Go Wrong*. New York: KluwerAcademic.

Course Outline: (Please note that the following schedule is tentative and subject to revision.)

Week I. 8/17 – 8/19 Introduction: An overview of the course. Origins of the social perspective. A brief tour through scholasticism Renaissance humanism and the enlightenment. Early social thinkers.

Readings: Collins, intro.

Week II. 8/24 – 8/26 The Enlightenment Among those discussed will be: Hobbes, Locke, Smith, Voltaire and Rousseau. The dangers of uncritical idealism will be stressed.

Readings: Fein, chaps. 1, 2.

Week III. 8/31 – 9/2 The foundations of sociology. Among the figures considered are Saint Simon and Comte.

Readings: Collins, chapt 1.

Week IV. 9/9 An overview of morality theory. The dangers of covert moralism will be explored.

Readings: Fein, chaps. 3, 4

Week V. 9/14 – 9/16 Conflict theory, communalism, and postmodernism. Social class and history from Marx onward.

Readings: Collins, chaps. 2.

Week VI. 9/21 – 9/23 Conflict theory and race. DuBois, Washington, Frazier, Drake and Cayton, Anderson

Readings: Collins, chapt. 11, 16; Fein, chapt. 6

***First Exam 9/21***

Week VII. 9/28 – 9/30 Conflict theory and feminist theory. Wallerstein.

Readings: Collins chapt. 15; Fein, chapt 5

Week VIII. 10/5 – 10/7 The political perspective: democracy and individualism. De Tocqueville and Nietzsche.

Readings: Collins, chaps. 3, 4.

Week IX. 10/12 – 10/14 Evolution. Lamarck, Cuvier, Malthus, Spencer, Darwin, Morgan, Sumner, Radcliffe-Brown

Readings: Collins, chapt 5.

Week X. 10/19 – 10/21 Functionalism. Durkheim, Malinowski, Parsons and Merton.

Readings: Collins, chaps. 6, 12.

Week XI. 10/26 – 10/28 The cultural perspective; relativism and historical particularism. The relationship between sociology and anthropology. Tylor, Boas and M. Mead.

Readings: Fein, chapt. 2.

***Second Exam 10/26***

Week XII. 11/2 – 11/4 The structural perspective; power, ideas and history. Social organization and the cultural connection. Max Weber.

Readings: Collins, chapt. 7.

Week XIII. 11/9 – 11/11 The structural perspective continued. The Chicago School, Michels, and Mannheim.

Readings: Collins, chapt. 10, 13

Week XIV. 11/16 - 11/18 The psychological perspective: the unconscious, national character and social interventions. Freud, Malinowski, Kardiner, Watson, and cognitive psychology.

Readings: Collins, chapt. 8; Fein, chapt. 7.

Week XV. 11/30 – 12/2 Symbolic Interaction; the micro level. Simmell, Cooley and G.H. Mead.

Readings: Collins, chapt. 9

***Paper Due 12/2***

Week XVI 12/7 . The dramaturgical model, ethnomethodology and social emotions. Goffman. The rejection of science. Value neutrality. Social Domain theory and the problem of taxonomy

Readings: Collins, chapt. 8, 9

***Final Exam 12/9 10:30 AM***

### Term Paper

Students will be responsible for researching and writing an 8 to 10 page paper, the focus of which shall be the explication of a particular social theory. After selecting the writings of a specific theorist, his/her ideas must be presented, explained and evaluated. Strengths and weakness should be analyzed and placed in context. Please make sure to read materials of the selected theorist(s). Evidence of these readings should appear in the paper.

Paper should be double spaced with no more than 1.25 inch margins. Font should be 10 or 12 TimesRoman.

The Course Grade will depend equally on the three (3) examinations, and the student's paper. (Value 25% each). Each examination will be awarded a letter grade based on a normal curve distribution. For purposes of the final grade, letter grades will be translated into a four point system with A = 4.00, A- = 3.67, A-/B+ = 3.5, B+ = 3.33, B = 3.0, etc. Class attendance and participation will be monitored and may be factored into the final grade when the student's performance is on the cusp between grades. Attendance is encouraged because examinations will include materials covered only in class.

(I would appreciate hearing from anyone who has a special need that may be the result of a disability. I am reasonably sure we can work out whatever arrangement is necessary, be it seating, testing, or other accommodation. Please see me after class, as soon as possible, if you have such a need.)

Academic Integrity: Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the undergraduate and graduate Catalogs. Section II of this Code addresses the University's policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to University materials, misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an "informal" resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct's minimum one semester suspension requirement.