

## Sociological Theory

Soc 335

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:20 – 3:30; Memorial 303

*Professor Daniel Jasper*

*PPHAC 316*

*Office Hrs: Tuesdays 9:30-11:30; Thursdays 9:30-11:00; or by appointment*

[djasper@moravian.edu](mailto:djasper@moravian.edu)

*610.625.7882*

**Course Overview:** This course is designed to introduce students to the dynamic field of social theory. To this end, we will trace the historical development of social theoretic thought and identify some of the current issues and debates that shape the field. Through this course, students will

- Have developed a familiarity with theoretical logic and argumentation in sociology
- Have read and be familiar with key social thinkers from both the classical and contemporary periods.
- Understand and be able to analyze key issues in the field.
- Cultivate their sociological imaginations as they learn to apply the theories.
- Develop their own theoretical contributions.

A common set of issues will guide our inquiry into the work of pivotal social theorists and schools of social thought. What is the relationship between social action and social structure? How is social power produced, exercised, and challenged? How are social identities forged, articulated, and recognized in the modern world?

**Course Requirements and Expectations:** In addition to written work, for students to do well in this course, they will need to read and think systematically about social theory over the course of the semester. It is expected that all students will have thoroughly and thoughtfully completed the weekly readings, and be prepared to discuss these, by our first meeting of each week. Since many of arguments presented are complex and multi-faceted, it is expected that students read and re-read the assigned texts closely and conscientiously. Students are expected to regularly contribute to in-class discussions with reactions and responses that deal directly with the issues and texts being considered. This participation will count for 15 % of the final grade. Students will also have the opportunity to share their insights in writing through weekly reading logs (these will be discussed the first week of class). Reading logs will be collected only on the first course meeting of each week, graded on a scale of 0 – 4, with the ten highest scoring counting for 15 % of the final grade.

Other requirements:

Midterm Exam	— 20 % of final grade
Final Exam	— 20 % of final grade
Reading Reaction Essay	— 15 % of final grade
Applied Theory Essay	— 15 % of final grade

**Repressive Policies and other mechanisms of social control:**

Your attendance at all class sessions is expected. Tardiness and absences will negatively impact the participation portion of your grade. It is each student's responsibility to arrive for each course meeting on time.

Please read, and familiarize yourself, with the policy on Academic Honesty in your student handbook. Cheating and Plagiarism will result in failing this course.

Students who wish to submit their writing assignments through electronic mail may send it to my email address only as an attached Word document. Assignments submitted in this way must be received by 10:00pm the evening **before** the due date. No late reading logs will be accepted, other late assignments will be penalized 10 % per day.

**Required Texts:** The following texts are available in the bookstore.

Hughes, John A., Wes W. Sharrock and Peter J. Martin. (2003). *Understanding Classical Sociology* 2E. Sage Publications. (Referred to in schedule as HSM)

Farganis, James. (2004). *Readings in Social Theory*, 4E. McGraw Hill. (Referred to in schedule as Far)

**Supporting Texts:** The following are on reserve in the library. These resources will prove useful by providing different analyses and perspectives on the theorists we cover. All students are highly encouraged to consult these resources regularly.

Craig Calhoun, et. al. *Contemporary Sociological Theory*.

Lewis Coser. *Masters of Sociological Thought*.

Anthony Giddens. *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*.

Charles Lemert. *Social Theory: the Multicultural and Classic Readings*.

Wolfgang Mommsen. *The Political and Social Theory of Max Weber*.

George Ritzer. *Frontiers of Social Theory*.

Steven Seidman. *Contested Knowledge: Social Theory Today*.

**Course Schedule**

Please note, the outline below is merely a guide. Changes are possible as the semester progresses.

**Week 1 (January 17 &19) Foundations of Social Theory**

HSM: Introduction

Far: Introduction

**Week 2 (January 24 & 26) Karl Marx**

HSM: Ch. 2

Far: Ch. 1

**Week 3 (January 31 & February 2) Emile Durkheim**

Far: Ch. 2

HSM: Ch. 4

**Week 4 (February 7 & 9) Max Weber**

Far: Ch. 3

HSM: Ch. 3

**Week 5 (February 14 & 16) Georg Simmel and George Herbert Mead**

Far: Chs. 4 & 5

**Week 6 (February 21 & 23) From Classical to Contemporary Theory**

**Midterm Exam on February 21**

Readings: TBA

**Week 7 (February 28 & March 2) Functionalism**

Far: Ch. 7

**Spring Break (March 7 & 9)**

**Week 8 (March 14 & 16) Conflict and Critical Theories**

Far: Chs. 8 & 13

**Week 9 (March 21 & 23) Feminist Theory**

Far: Ch. 12

Patricia Hill Collins “Black Feminist Thought in the Matrix of Domination”

<http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~Iridener/courses/BLDFEM.HTML>

**Week 10 (March 28 & 30) Michel Foucault**

Far: Ch. 14

Michel Foucault “Body/Power” <http://www.thefoucauldian.co.uk/bodypower.htm>

**Week 11 (April 4 & 6) Exchange and Rational Choice Theory**

Far: Ch. 9

No class on 4/4 for college day of service.

**Week 12 (April 11 & 13) Symbolic Interactionism**

Far: Ch. 11

**Week 13 (April 18 & 20) Globalization**

Riva Kastoryano, “The Reach of Transnationalism”

<http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/kastoryano.htm>

David Held “Violence, Law, and Justice in a Global Age”

<http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/held.htm>

**Week 14 (April 25 & 27) Course Conclusion**