

**Sociological Theory**  
Soc 335, Spring 2011  
Fridays 10:20-12:55; PPHAC 223

*Professor Daniel Jasper*

*PPHAC 316*

*Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:00 – 1:00, Fridays 1:00 – 2:00; other times by appointment*

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**Course Overview:** This course is designed to introduce students to the dynamic field of social theory. On one hand, theory is a distinct subfield of sociology. On the other hand, theory is a mode of inquiry, analysis, thinking and debate that spans all sociological subfields. Through this course, students will engage both of these traditions of sociological 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.

**Course Goals:** By the end of the course students will:

- Develop a familiarity with theoretical logic and argumentation in sociology
- Read and become 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.
- Improve their ability to construct and analyze academic arguments
- Further develop their writing and oral presentation skills
- Further develop their ability to read closely
- Further develop their ability to debate intellectual and contemporary issues

**Course Requirements and Expectations (and Repressive Policies):** It is expected that all students will participate in this course as theorists. This means that the focus will be on *reading* texts closely, *analyzing* these texts and the arguments made in them, and *constructing* theoretic arguments. It is expected that students regularly consult outside resources to assist them in these tasks. I will be happy to suggest additional texts on particular topics or theorists of interest to any student. **NB:** Not all websites are of equal value. If you are consulting a website, make sure that it is a reputable one, such as the site established by Jim Spickard (<http://www.socialtheory.info/index.htm>). If you are unsure how to evaluate the scholarly *bona fides* of a website consult with me or a reference librarian.

As a professional and collective endeavor, there should be no need for repressive policies. That is, we all share the responsibility for the success of this course. Therefore, we should plan on attending all class sessions. We shall arrive on time, having completed the shared readings, and be prepared to collectively explicate, interrogate, and expand the arguments. We should arrive with the texts, our notes on the texts, and the necessary tools of scholarship. We should leave unnecessary distractions, such as cell phones, in our private ‘backstage’ regions.

The most important part of conducting oneself as a professional scholar involves following the conventions of scholarly citation. All members of this course should read, re-read,

and familiarize themselves with the college policy on Academic Honesty included in the student handbook. All written work must include full and proper citations. There are **no exceptions**, including ignorance. Cheating and plagiarism will result in failing this course.

There is a blackboard site for this course. Assignment guidelines, supplemental readings, and course announcements will be posted to the site. Students are expected to check the site regularly.

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

**A note on reading:** For many of you, the readings for this course will be more complex and more difficult than you are used to reading. It has been my experience that this proves incredibly frustrating for many students, especially at the beginning of the semester. I am happy to work with all students in order to help you find effective reading strategies. The most important thing, however, is that you must be willing to put in the time, concentration, and seriousness necessary with these texts. Again, this is especially true at the beginning of the term. **Students should expect to spend approximately 10 hours per week on this course.**

**Student Assessment:** This course is a collective exercise in textual explication and theoretical argumentation. Assessment mechanisms are designed to measure (1) how well students are able to read, comprehend, and engage with theoretic arguments; (2) the contributions of each student to the collective work of the class; (3) how well students develop their own theoretic arguments.

Each class session will begin with a quiz on the reading material for the week. These quizzes will account for 50 percent of the final grade. There will be one final essay due no later than the beginning of the scheduled final exam period worth fifteen percent of the final grade. All students will work collaboratively on one group project worth 10 percent of the final grade. Regular, sustained, appropriate, and deep participation in our weekly discussions will account for 25 percent of the final grade.

It is within the instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for an assignment or for the course.

#### Final Grades

	87-89.9 = B+	77-79.9 = C+	67-69.9 = D+
93-100 = A	83-86.9 = B	73-76.9 = C	63-66.9 = D
90-92.9 = A-	80-82.9 = B-	70-72.9 = C-	60-62.9 = D-
Below 60 points = F			

**Required Texts:** The following text is required and available in the bookstore.

Kivisto, Peter. 2011. *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*, 4E. New York: Oxford University Press.

#### Course Schedule

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

*Week 1* (January 21<sup>st</sup>) An Introduction to the Course, and to Social Theory  
**Read:** Kivisto, Introduction (No Quiz)

*Week 2* (January 28<sup>th</sup>) Karl Marx  
**Read:** Kivisto, Ch. I (Quiz 1)

*Week 3* (February 4<sup>th</sup>) Emile Durkheim  
**Read:** Kivisto, Ch. II (Quiz 2)

*Week 4* (February 11<sup>th</sup>) Max Weber  
**Read:** Kivisto, Ch. III (Quiz 3)

*Week 5* (February 18<sup>th</sup>) Other Founding Influences  
**Read:** Kivisto, Chs. IV (17-19), V (21-23), VI (28-29, 31) (Quiz 4)

*Week 6* (February 25<sup>th</sup>) **Group Project Contracts Due**  
No Assigned Reading (No Quiz)

*Week 7* (March 4<sup>th</sup>) Symbolic Interaction and Exchange  
**Read:** Kivisto, Chs. IX (40-41, 43-44) and X (45, 47, 49) (Quiz 5)

*Week 8* (March 11<sup>th</sup>) **No Class – Spring Break**

*Week 9* (March 18<sup>th</sup>) Functionalism and Conflict Theory  
**Read:** Kivisto, Chs. VII-VIII (Quiz 6)

*Week 10* (March 25<sup>th</sup>) Critical Theory  
**Read:** Kivisto, Ch. XIII (Quiz 7)

*Week 11* (April 1<sup>st</sup>) Theorizing Differences: Gender  
**Read:** Kivisto, Ch. XI (Quiz 8)

*Week 12* (April 8<sup>th</sup>) Theorizing Differences: Race, Ethnicity, Nation  
**Read:** Kivisto, Ch. XII (Quiz 9)

*Week 13* (April 15<sup>th</sup>) **Group Projects Due**  
No Assigned Reading, No Quiz

*Week 14* (April 22<sup>nd</sup>) **No Class – Easter/Passover Break**

*Week 15* (April 29<sup>th</sup>) Theorizing Our World Today  
**Read:** Kivisto, Chs. XV (70, 72-73), XVI (75-77), XVI (79-81) (Quiz 10)

Scheduled Final Exam Time: Wednesday, May 4, 2011, 8:30AM: Exams for courses which normally meet MW(F) 3rd period.