

Sociological Theory
Soc 335, Spring 2016
Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:20 – 11:30; PPHAC 102

Professor Daniel Jasper

PPHAC 316

Office Hours: Posted on blackboard and by office door

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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.

Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of the course students will:

As a 300 level sociology course, students will:

- Cultivate their sociological imaginations as they learn to apply social theories.
- Improve their ability to construct and analyze academic arguments.
- Improve their ability to present academic concepts and ideas to others.
- Further develop their ability to debate intellectual and contemporary issues.

In terms of the content of this course, students will:

- Learn how to read a specialized literature
- 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.

Course Structure and Work: This course is organized into three interconnected modules. Each module will focus on one broad social theoretic theme. In each module, students will read a variety of classical and contemporary texts, for which they will need to demonstrate a deep understanding of the arguments. We will work in groups, and as a class, to understand how these texts fit together as part of the larger body of social theoretic thought. Each module will culminate with a project. Two of these will be completed in groups; the final project will be completed individually as your comprehensive final ‘take-home’ exam.

A note on reading: Most professional fields, from Law to Medicine, from Marketing to Policing, have a specialized literature that practitioners must master. Each professional literature has its own conventions, genres, and language. In this course, students are expected to learn how to read such a specialized literature—in this case, Social Theory. Though the majority of students will not confront this literature in their professional lives after Moravian, learning how to function within this literature will allow students to develop the skills necessary to read and comprehend whatever specialized literature that they will work with in their professional lives.

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 some 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 to work with these texts. Again, this is especially true at the beginning of the term.

Please also note that some of the readings might challenge taken for granted assumptions about how the world works. Even if you are inclined to disagree with a particular author, it is important to understand their ideas and arguments on their own terms. It is expected that students will be able to fairly and accurately present the ideas of all theorists whom we read.

A note on participation: This course is a collective endeavor to understand complicated texts and a complicated history of thought and argumentation. Students are expected to demonstrate their willingness to work through challenging ideas in class. All students are expected to participate in course discussions. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that the classroom environment is conducive to participation by all members of the course. Everyone shares the responsibility to arrive on time, with all of the necessary materials—unnecessary distractions should be left behind. Everyone should bring a professional demeanor respectful of differing ideas.

A note on group work: Theoretic work is best understood as part of a dialogue. Therefore, much of the work in this course is designed to be completed through dialogue with others. All students are expected to collaborate fully with their peers in teams. It is each team's and student's responsibility to ensure that group projects are completed before deadlines.

A note on upper division Sociology courses: This course is designed for Junior and Senior Sociology students at Moravian College. It is taken for granted that all students in this course are familiar with basic sociological concepts, perspectives, and methodologies. In addition, it is taken for granted that students are familiar with how to conduct library research and how to evaluate sources. If any student does not feel competent in these areas, they should schedule a meeting with the professor at the beginning of the semester to 'get up to speed'.

A note on Academic Honesty: 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 work produced for this course must include full and proper citations. There are **no exceptions**, including ignorance. Cheating and plagiarism will result in failing this course.

A note on Accommodations: Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact the Academic Support Center, located in the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or by calling 610-861-1401. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

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 and apply theoretic arguments. These areas will be measured by (1) Weekly Reading Responses to our reading—these will be of different types, completed typically through blackboard, and due before our first class meeting each week (though some may be in-class quizzes); (2) Course participation including in-class discussions, activities and writing, and including discussions on blackboard after class meetings; and (3) culminating projects for each module. All student work is evaluated according to the criteria stated in the Course Grading Rubric.

Final Grades will be calculated as follows:

Weekly Reading Responses/Quizzes	25%
Course Participation/In-class Activities/BB discussions	25%
Module 1-2 Projects (15% each)	30%
Module 3 Project	20%

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 Moravian College bookstore.

Longhofer, Wesley and Daniel Winchester, Eds. 2012. *Social Theory Re-wired*. New York: Routledge. (on the course schedule, this is listed as STR)

There is a companion website for this text that provides a number of helpful resources. Students should create an account. (Search for professor DJasper.)

There is also 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 should self enroll in the blackboard site during the first week of the semester.

I will communicate through the announcements feature of blackboard and through Moravian email—it is expected that all students will check these regularly. Please note that I do not open emails without a subject heading. When you send me an email, please include a subject heading that includes a reference to our course (e.g. SocTheory; Soc335; etc).

Course Schedule

Please note, the outline below is merely a guide. Changes are possible (and likely) as the semester progresses. The detailed course schedule linked through Blackboard will contain the most up-to-date course schedule. Unless otherwise noted, all readings for a week should be completed **before** our first class meeting of the week (i.e. Tuesday).

Week 1 (January 19 & 21): An Introduction to the Course, and to Social Theory

Read: STR, Preface & Section 1 Introductory Essay; This Syllabus; Student Handbook on Academic Honesty

Explore: STR Companion Website, Course Blackboard Site.

Module 1: *Foundational Concepts: Social Order and Self*.

Week 2 (January 26 & 28): Durkheimian Functionalism and Social Construction

Read: STR, Chs. 2, 1, and 7

Week 3 (February 2 & 4): Understanding Selves and Interaction (Mead, Goffman, & Garfinkel)

Read: STR, Chs. 32, 35, and 6

Week 4 (February 9 & 11): Thinking about Race (Du Bois, Omi & Winant, Fanon)

Read: STR, Chs. 25, 27, 28

Tuesday, Feb. 9th: Mario Joseph

Week 5 (February 16 & 18): Thinking about Gender (Smith, Collins, Butler)

Read: STR, Chs. 30, 31 and 37

Wednesday, Feb. 17th: Diane Nash at Lafayette

Module 1 Videos due on Monday, February 22nd before 11:59 pm.

Module 2: *Modern Capitalism and the Order of Conflict*

Week 6 (February 23 & 25): Karl Marx and the foundations of Conflict Sociology

Read: STR, Chs. 8, 11, 9

Review: STR, Chs. 2 & 7

Thursday, Feb. 25th: James Peterson
7:30, Foy Hall

Week 7 (March 1 & 3): Understanding political economy (Marx, Wallerstein, Bourdieu)

Read: STR, Chs. 10, 12, and 14

Week 8 (March 8 & 10): No Class Meetings - Spring Recess

Week 9 (March 15 & 17): Critical Theory (Marcuse, and Habermas)

Read: STR, chs. 21, and 22

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Week 10 (March 22 & 24): Bourdieu and Castells

Read: STR, Chs. 15 & 13

March 24: workshop seminar -- Module 2 Papers are due at the beginning of class

Module 3: Rationality and Society

Week 11 (March 29 & 31): An introduction to Max Weber

Read: STR, Ch. 16

Module 2 Revised drafts due on March 31st before class.

Week 12 (April 5 & 7): Max Weber, continued

Read: STR, Chs. 17, 18, 20

Week 13 (April 12 & 14): Thinking again about how Selves are shaped by Society (Simmel, Bauman)

Read: STR, Chs. 33, 34, & 38

Week 14 (April 19 & 21): Foucault
Read: STR, Chs. 23 & 36

Week 15 (April 26 & 28): Putting it all together

Week 16 Scheduled final exam time: Friday, May 6th @ 8:00am
Module 3 Projects are due before this time.