**SO325 A: Sociological Theory**

**T/Th 8:30 – 9:45am in Alumni Hall 9**

**Spring 2023**

Professor: Kevin Doran, Ph.D.

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Office: 5 Bradley House

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 10:00-11:00 am

**Course Description**

This course is designed to challenge you to explore and understand some of the major social theorists and their contributions to the development of the discipline of sociology. In class, we will aim to understand the historical social and political contexts/events that shaped these authors’ perspectives and how these theories continue to help us understand the contemporary social world. The course will introduce you to foundational theorists like Marx, Weber, and Durkheim as well as more modern theorists like Parsons, Mead, and Goffman. The course also gives attention to thinkers who made important contributions to social theory but - because of their race, gender, or perspective –were/are often neglected.

**Required Texts**

Kivisto, Peter. 2013. *Social Theory: Roots and Branches, 5th Edition.* New York: Oxford University Press.

**Other Selected Readings**

Available as PDFs on our course Canvas site under the Resources tab (indicated with a \* in the schedule).

**Required Video**

3 films/stand-up comedy specials TBD (will be available on major streaming services)

**Optional Text**

Yellin, Linda L. 2009. *A Sociology Writer’s Guide.* Boston: Pearson.

Or

Johnson, William A., Richard Rettig, Gregory Scott, and Stephen Garrison. 2009. T*he Sociology Student Writer’s Manual,6th Edition*. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall Publishing. (Out of print, but used copies available online)

**Assignments**

*Exams:* We will have a midterm and a final exam. The midterm is worth **90 points (or 18% of your final grade)** and the final exam is worth **110 points (or 22% of your final grade)**. Both exams will be essay format. We will discuss the exams in more detail as they approach.

*Short papers:* In addition to the readings for each class, you’ll watch three films. For each film, you will write a short 4-5 page paper (double spaced, with 11 point Calibri or Times New Roman font, and 1” margins). Specifically, you will select a theory that interests you and for which you think some aspect of the work serves as a real world example of that theory playing out. In the paper, you will reference the theorist’s ideas and concepts and then connect those ideas and concepts to a topic in the work. To do this, you will first want to provide an explanation of the theoretical concept you’ve chosen, and then apply that theory to some aspect(s) from the work (be sure to cite properly using ASA format). These papers will be submitted through the assignments tab on Canvas.

The following theorists are eligible for each paper:

Paper 1: Durkheim, Weber, Marx, Qadir/Khaldun

Paper 2: Adams, Martineau, Perkins-Gilman, Parsons, Coser, Dahrendorf, Randal Collins, Mills

Paper 3: Du Bois, Patricia Hill Collins, Smith, Mead, Blumer, Goffman, West and Zimmerman, Connell, Berger and Luckman, Ray

***Every student is required to meet with me in advance of turning in their first paper. We will discuss this and set up appointments as the paper due date approaches.***

The first paper will be worth **45 points (or 9% of your final grade)**, and the second and third paper will be worth **60 points each (or 12% of your final grade)**.

*Theory in Art Project:* In addition to your exams and short papers, you will complete a project in which you find examples of art that exemplify, are explained by, or are examples of the theories covered in class in the real world. Here, I am using art in as broad a term as possible. You can use a song/music video, an episode of a TV show, a scene from a movie, a poem, sculpture, etc.

1. Over the course of the semester, particular theorists will be noted as a potential theme. You’ll select 4 themes and identify a piece of art that addresses, questions, elaborates on, or highlights the content of that day’s readings/class discussion. These will need to be different than the theoretical content that you use for your 3 papers. (So, for example, if you talk about alienated labor in paper 1, you can’t use that part of Marx for your portfolio. You can however, use any other aspect of Marx’s theory).
2. With your 4 themes selected, you’ll create a virtual “portfolio”. In this portfolio you’ll provide first, the piece of art (in the case of something that can be shown in a photo or is a written art form) or provides the necessary information for me to view the piece of art (a link to a Youtube video, the name of the film [one that is easily accessible] along with a timestamp for the scene in question, etc.]. Then, you’ll write one page that explains how the piece of art is connected to, explains, and addresses social theory. (Do this for all 4 of your themes).
3. In the final weeks of the semester, you will record a short presentation about your portfolio work to the class. In the presentation, you should note what your 4 themes and artistic examples are, but should focus on providing an oral explanation of 1 or 2 themes and the connection between the artistic example and that particular theme. Each person will present for about 5-7 minutes. Your portfolio is worth **95 points (or 18% of your final grade)** and your presentation is worth **20 points (or 4% of your final grade)**.

You will be required to provide a response/question to two of your classmates’ presentations on Canvas. This will count toward your participation grade.

*Attendance -* Given the unique circumstances we still find ourselves in, I do not have an official policy for missing classes. If you are healthy you are expected to attend class in person. If you feel ill, please notify health services, let me know that you will not be attending class, and follow the advice of health services. I will do my best to live stream the class via zoom if you feel under the weather but well enough to attend and participate remotely.

*Participation -* Especially in small classes, it is vital that all students are active participants in the classroom. This includes not only completing the required readings and actively listening, but also raising questions and participating in the discussions. This requires that you **must complete the readings before** class in order to adequately participate. You should bring the readings with you to class, to reference during discussion if necessary.

I will have material prepared for the class, but I find that the class dynamic works much better when we start with questions or issues that you have about the reading. The readings are complicated and theorists are not generally known for their clarity. So, it is a good practice to write down questions that you have prior to the start of class. (This can be as simple as “the section about [fill in word here] makes no sense. What was the author talking about?”)

Active participation in the class is worth **25 points (or 5%** **of your final grade)**. Reading materials not relevant to the day’s content, sleeping, talking, texting, and otherwise violating the electronic devices policy laid out below will result in you being asked to leave class. If this occurs, you will be counted as absent for that day.

*Extra Credit –* Each day, I will try to start class with a song that I think is related to the content from the previous class. We’ll use this as a jumping off point for refreshing where we left off. For extra credit, you can submit a link to a song and a 1-page description of why you think that song is relevant to the content from the previous class. These must be submitted at least 24 hours before the start of the class. So, for example, if you have a song relates to the content from a class on Tuesday, you need to submit the extra credit by 8:30am on Wednesday. You can earn up to **15 points** for completing this optional extra credit.`

**Grading**

Your grade will be based on the above requirements in the following manner:

Requirement Points Each Total Points

Midterm Exam 90 90

Final Exam 110 110

Short Papers 1 45 45

Short Paper 2 & 3 60 120

Theory in Art “Portfolio” 90 90

Theory in Art Presentation 20 20

Participation and attendance 25 25\_

Total 500

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | 100-95% | (500-465) |  | C | 76.9-73% | (384-365) |
| A- | 94.9-90% | (464-450) |  | C- | 72.9-70% | (364-350) |
| B+ | 89.9-87% | (449-435) |  | D+ | 69.9-67% | (349-335) |
| B | 86.9-83% | (433-415) |  | D | 66.9-63% | (334-315) |
| B- | 82.9-80% | (414-400) |  | D- | 62.9-60% | (314-300) |
| C+ | 79.9-77% | (399-385) |  | F | <60% | (<300) |

**Additional Policies**

­Makeup Policy: Our exams will likely be take-home, so you will be able complete them on your own schedule. In most cases, this will mean that there will not be a need for a makeup exam. If you have either a health or family emergency that will require you to miss an extended period of time, please contact me. We will work out a plan to make sure that you remain on track once you are able to return to class.

In the absence of a health or family emergency, take home exams and final papers that are turned in late will be subject to the following procedure. Work that is turned in within 24 hours of the deadline will receive a **ten percentage point reduction** in the score. **An additional ten percentage point reduction** will be applied for each additional day that the work is late.

***NOTE: I understand that circumstances arise in students’ lives that will make completing material on the assigned day difficult/impossible. If you find yourself in one of these situations, please reach out to me so that we can set up a plan to ensure that you remain on track to complete the work for the course. In these situations, health services and the ARC are also invaluable resources that you should utilize.***

*Academic Integrity/Plagiarism -* Plagiarism will absolutely not be tolerated in this class. All work in assignments and exams MUST be your own. In your written work, if you are presenting the ideas of someone else or providing a quotation, you must properly cite the author using ASA format. Presenting the work of someone else as your own or cheating on an exam will result in a failing grade (potentially for the course depending on the severity) and potential recourse by the college. (See page 11 of the Student Handbook). For more information on Saint Anselm’s policy on academic integrity see the following link:

http://www.anselm.edu/Library/Research-Help/Research-Tutorials/Academic-Integrity.htm

*Student Disabilities:* Saint Anselm College is committed to meeting the needs of students with documented physical, sensory, psychiatric, and learning disabilities. To disclose a disability and request academic accommodations, please email or call Kenneth Walker, who will assist you in making contact with faculty members and/or arranging support services and accommodations available within the Academic Resource Center (ARC) and elsewhere. To ensure that accommodations are arranged in a timely manner, you are encouraged to make your request at the beginning of each semester.

**For questions concerning support services, documentation guidelines, or disability:**

Office of Disability Services  
Academic Resource Center (ARC)  
Tel. (603) 641-7193  
(Director and Email Forthcoming)

**For additional information on documentation guidelines:**

<https://www.anselm.edu/academics/academic-resources/disability-services>

*Electronic Devices -* “As a member of the learning community, each student has a responsibility to other students who are members of the community. When cell phones or pages ring and students respond in class or leave class to respond, it disrupts the class. Therefore, the Office of the Dean prohibits the use by students of cell phones, pagers, PDA’s, or similar communication devices during scheduled classes. Text messaging or accessing information on these devices is likewise forbidden. All such devices must be put in a silent (vibrate) mode and ordinarily should not be taken out during class. Given the fact that these same communication devices are an integral part of the College’s emergency notification system, an exception to this policy would occur when numerous devices activate simultaneously. When this occurs, students may consult their devices to determine if a college emergency exists. If that is not the case, the devices should be immediately put away. Other exceptions to this policy may be granted at the discretion of the instructor” (Student Handbook, p.13).

*Communication -* The best way to contact me is through email. I will check my email at least twice per day (once in the morning and once in the evening) and will respond to most emails within 24 hours. I will use email as the primary means of communication with you outside of the classroom, and will do so with the assumption that you will check your email at least once per day.

**Tentative Reading Schedule**

Jan 26: Introduction and Syllabus

Jan 31: Reintroducing the Sociological Imagination

Kivisto – Social Theory: Classical Foundations and Contemporary Developments

C. Wright Mills – Sociological Imagination\*

Feb 2: “The Cannon” - Durkheim’s Social Facts and Weber’s Objectivity

Chapter 7- What is a Social Fact

Chapter 11 – “Objectivity” in Social Science and Social Policy

Feb 7: “The Cannon” – Durkheim on Solidarity and Suicide (Theme 1)

Chapter 6 – On Mechanical and Organic Solidarity

Chapter 8 – Anomic Suicide

Feb 9: “The Cannon” – Durkheim on Religion (Theme 1)

Chapter 10 – The Human Meaning of Religion

**Class time devoted to content about writing**

Feb 14– Marx on Alienation and Capitalism in Historical Evolution (Theme 2)

Chapter 1- Alienated Labor

Chapter 3 – Manifesto of the Communist Party

Charlie LeDuff – At the Slaughterhouse\*

Feb 16: “The Cannon” – Marx on Commodities and Capital (Theme 2)

Chapter 4 - Commodities

Chapter 5 – The General Formula for Capital

Feb 21: “The Cannon” – Weber on Religion and Capitalism; Bureaucracy (Theme 3)

Chapter 12 – The Spirit of Capitalism

Chapter 13 – Bureaucracy

Feb 23: “The Cannon” – Weber on Authority and Class, Party, and Status (Theme 3)

Chapter 14

Chapter 15 – Class Party Status

Feb. 28: Neglected Perspectives – Social Development (Theme 4)

Qadir – Sociological Insights of Asabiyya by Ibn Khaldun\*

**Discussion about paper #1**

Mar. 2: Neglected Perspectives – Early Feminist Thought (Theme 5)

Chapter 26 – The Utilization of Women in City Government

Chapter 21 – On Marriage

***Rough Draft Due/Peer Edits***

Mar. 7: Neglected Perspectives – Early Feminist Thought (Theme 5)

Chapter 24 – The Dependence of Women

Perkins-Gilman – The Yellow Wallpaper\*

***Paper 1 Due 3/8 @ midnight***

Mar. 9: “Modern” Theory – Parsons and Merton on Functionalism (Theme 6)

Powers – Talcot Parsons and Structural Functionalism Made Easy\*

Chapter 34 – The Subsystems of Society (Read Powers first)

Mar. 14: “Modern” Theory – Functionalism Meets Conflict (Theory)

Chapter 35 – The Functions of Social Conflict (Theme 6)

Chapter 38 – Conflict Groups and Group Conflicts (Theme 7)

Mar. 16: Midterm Exam

Mar. 21 & Mar. 23: Mid-Semester Break

Mar. 28: “Modern” Theory – Conflict Theory on Politics/Collective Action (Theme 7)

Chapter 39 – The Basics of Conflict Theory

Chapter 37 – Culture and Politics

Mar. 30: “Modern” Theory – Du Bois on Race (Theme 8)

Chapter 23 – The Conservation of Races

Du Bois – Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others\*

***Rough Draft Due/Peer Edits for Paper 2***

April 4: Neglected Perspectives – Du Bois on Race (Theme 8)

Du Bois – The Souls of White Folks\*

Du Bois – Of our Spiritual Strivings\*

***Paper 2 Due 4/5 @ midnight***

April 6: Easter Break

April 11: Neglected Perspectives – Feminist/Black Feminist Theory - Standpoint (Theme 9)

Chapter 53 – Toward an Afrocentric Feminist Epistemology

Chapter 54 – Sociology from Women’s Experience

April 13: “Modern” Theory – Symbolic Interactionism and Mead’s I and Me (Theme 10)

Chapter 32 – The Fusion of the “I” and the “Me” in Social Activities

Chapter 41 – Society as Symbolic Interaction

April 18: “Modern” Theory – Symbolic Interactionism and Goffman’s Dramaturgy (Theme 10)

Chapter 42 - Performances

Cahill et al. – Meanwhile Backstage: Behavior in Public Bathrooms\*

April 20: Feminist Theory Revisited (Theme 11)

Chapters 51 – Doing Gender

Chapter 55 – Femininity and Masculinity

April 25: Social Constructionism – Expanding Durkheim’s Take on Religion (Theme 12)

Berger and Luckmann – Excerpt from the Social Construction of Reality\* (Theme 10)

April 27: Contemporary Theory – Critical Race Theory and Organizations (Theme 13)

Overview Article on CRT to be added\*

Victor Ray – A Theory of Racialized Institutions\*

May 2: Contemporary Perspectives – Content TBD based on class interest

**Rough Draft/Peer Review of Paper 3**

**Paper 3 Due @ Midnight May 3**

May 4: Catch-Up Day/Review

Theory in Art Presentation Uploaded by midnight 5/5

Respond to 2 classmates’ presentations by midnight 5/8

May 9: Class Discussion of Portfolio Presentations

Portfolios due by 11:59pm (May 9th)

May 12: Final Exam @ 5pm