

Last day Sociology 4344.01: Sociological Theory (3 Credit Hours)
Fall 2017: Online (Blackboard)

Instructor: Dr. Jason Konefal

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 12:30-2:00 and by appointment; Skype meetings can be scheduled

Course Description

This course will examine both classical and contemporary ways of understanding society and its parts. We will study theories that are concerned with societies as a whole, as well as theories focused on institutions (i.e., government, economy, science, religion), social phenomena (race, class, and gender), and questions of power, culture, identity and knowledge. Additionally, we will examine the implications that different social theories have for individuals and social groups.

This course is designed to expose students to an array of different theories and ways of understanding the world in which they live. At times it may confirm your perspective, and at other times it may challenge your understanding of many things that you take for granted. The goal is to both deepen your sociological imagination, as well as broaden your knowledge and understanding of the world in which you live.

Many students may wonder why they have to take this course or the relevance of the classical theories in today's world. Thus, a key objective of this course is to demonstrate (1) the relevance of social theory today, and (2) the ways that both classical and contemporary social theories undergird current political and economic policies, cultural debates, and social conflicts. To accomplish this, we will continually apply the theories that we examine to political, economic, social, and cultural issues.

Students are not expected to come out of this course with an in-depth knowledge of social theory from its inception to present day. Rather, students are expected to develop an understanding of the different theories, their key arguments, positions, main concepts, and how they apply to today's world.

Course Objectives

- To develop an understanding of classical and contemporary social theories.
- To understand the relevancy of social theory today and how it undergirds political, economic, and cultural debates and policies.
- To incorporate ideas and insights from social theory into one's everyday thinking.

Class Structure

This is an online course. For each set of readings, there will be posted (1) a short introduction, (2) a list of key terms, (3) a powerpoint, (4) a short video, and (5) a set of

collective comments on the papers. For each set of readings, there will be a writing assignment. The assignment will consist of an essay question.

The course is organized by weeks (which are on the left hand side of blackboard course sight). All the information that you need for that day's given topic will be under the link on the blackboard menu. Each week is structured the same with the exception of exam weeks.

- Monday and Tuesday: Quiz
- Wednesday: Powerpoint and Video open
- Following Monday: Paper due

There is an open discussion board that students can use to ask each other questions. I will not moderate this. Lastly, I will respond to email inquiries within 24 hours on weekdays and weekend emails on Monday morning.

IMPORTANT: Please note that online courses require individual students' self-discipline to a significant degree. In many ways, taking online courses are more challenging than taking in-class courses!! You need to be organized, motivated, and ready to self-teach and work. Only those who can manage these can be successful in this course.

Using Blackboard

- On the SHSU homepage select blackboard under course links.
- Type your SHSU email address and your password.
- Once in blackboard, click on SOCI 4344 and you will enter the menu environment.
- Once you enter the menu environment, you need to click on the items you wish to see to get the necessary information. The navigation menu for this course is located on the left-hand side of your browser window.

- If you face any technical difficulty while taking this online course, please contact SHSU Online 24 X 7 Helpdesk Support. The help is available 24 hours 7 days a week. Phone: 877-870-9214 Email: Helpdesk@SHSUOnline.net

Class Policies

1. You are responsible for all the materials covered in class.
2. You are expected to complete readings and assignments on time.
3. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Assignments and Grading

Exams (50%)

There will be two exams worth 100 points each during the semester. Each exam will count for 25% of your grade. These exams will be a multiple-choice format and will test you on material from readings, powerpoints, and video clips. Exams are not cumulative. The exams are open-book, but you must complete the exam in 90 minutes. The exam will close after 90 minutes. You can only take each exam once. Students need to make sure to answer all the exam questions before they submit the exam. For exams, I strongly

recommend you to secure a stable internet connection. Dial-up phone line connections are often unstable and thus not recommended.

The two exams are scheduled to take on the following dates:

Exam 1: Week 8: Sunday, October 8 at 12:00 am to Saturday, October 14 at 11:59pm.

Exam 2: Week 16: Saturday, December 2 at 12:00am to Thursday, December 7 at 11:59pm.

All students are required to take the exams during the scheduled time. If students cannot take one of the exams at the scheduled time, it is their responsibility to notify the professor **prior to the scheduled exam time.** Make-up exams will be allowed only in official cases. **Students are required to provide verifiable documentation to justify their absence from the exam.** Note that make-up exams may differ from the original exam and may include essays or other questions that require written answers.

Writing Assignments (35%)

At the end of beginning of each theory (week) an analytical question will be given. The question will require you to analyze and/or apply the readings discussed in class. Answers will require short essays ranging from a one to three double-spaced pages. Assignments will be graded out of 100 points. Each assignment will be due by 11:59 pm on Monday of the following week it is assigned. Papers turned in 1 day late will have 10 points deducted and papers turned in 2 days late will have 20 points deducted. Papers will not be accepted 48 hours after the due date. You will be excused from 1 paper or your lowest paper grade will be dropped.

Quizzes (15%)

Each week you will have a quiz. The quiz will consist of four multiple choice questions based on the readings. You will have 10 minutes to complete the quiz. Quizzes will be graded out of a 100 points. The quizzes will open on Monday of each week and be open for 48 hours.

Extra Credit

For each exam up to 10 extra credit points can be earned. For selected weeks of the course there are films that accompany the readings (not the video clips on blackboard, but the films listed on the syllabus). To earn extra credit, you will need to watch the film and analyze it using the noted social theories. The papers should not be a summary of the film, but a critical analysis using relevant social theories. Papers should be 2-3 pages double-spaced and all references should be cited. You can due up to two for each exam, with each paper worth a maximum of 5 points. Papers must be turned in before the exam date (No papers will be accepted after the exam). Thus, once exams open no extra credit papers will be accepted. There will be a folder on blackboard for turning in extra credit papers. Please note if you are caught plagiarizing an extra credit assignment you will not get any extra credit for the course. This means that if you have completed extra credits they will become zeros.

Grade		Grading Scale
Exam 1	25%	100-90 = A
Exam 2	25%	89-80 = B
Papers	35%	79-70 = C
Quizzes	15%	69-60 = D
Total	100%	59-0 = F

University Polices

University Code of Conduct

Please see: <https://netreg.shsu.edu/mirror/codeofconduct.html>

Academic Dishonesty

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. Students who participate in academically dishonest activities should be aware that they will receive an F for the course **at the minimum**. For more information, please see <http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/728eec25-f780-4dcf-932c-03d68cade002.pdf>

Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

- If you have a disability please come talk with me and notify the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities at the beginning semester so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

For more information on Sam Houston State’s policy on students with disabilities, please see <http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/9edd8433-cad5-40d1-b4bf-6a91b08f90e4.pdf>

Religious Holidays

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20....” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. For more information, please see <http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/0953c7d0-7c04-4b29-a3fc-3bf0738e87d8.pdf>

Visitors in the Classroom (Not applicable)

Instructor Evaluations

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor form toward the end of the semester.

Text

Farganis, James. *Readings in Social Theory: The Classical Tradition to Post-Modernism*. 7th edition. New York: McGraw Hill. (Represented by a F on the syllabus)

There are several readings on blackboard as PDFs. (Represented by a “B” on the syllabus)

Course Schedule

* Readings to be completed by the week listed.

Week 1: Introduction: August 23

- No Reading: Start reading for week 2 (which is to be completed by Monday/Tuesday)
- Introduce Yourself on Discussion Board
- Review Powerpoint

Week 2: Marx: August 28

Readings

F: Marx and Engels: *The Manifesto of the Communist Part*, 31-42

F: Marx and Engels: *The German Ideology*, 50-54

B: Marx: *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, 7 pages

F: Marx: *The Fetishism of Commodities*, p. 43-50

Schedule

Monday-Tuesday, August 28-29: Quiz

Wednesday, August 30: Powerpoint and Video Open

Monday, September 4: Paper Due

Marx EC Movies: *Modern Times, Silkwood*

Week 3: Durkheim: September 4

Readings

F: Durkheim: "Egotistic Suicide and Anomic Society," p. 64-72

F: Durkheim: *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, p. 73-80

B: Durkheim on Mechanical and Organic Solidarity

B: "Is Facebook Making Us Lonely?"

Schedule

Monday-Tuesday, September 4-5: Quiz

Wednesday, September 6: Powerpoint and Video Open

Monday, September 11: Paper Due

Durkheim EC Movies: *The Gods Must be Crazy, Pleasantville*

Week 4: Weber: September 11

Readings

F: Weber: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 85-88

F: Weber: "Bureaucracy," p. 89-99

F: Weber: "Power, Domination, and Types of Authority," p. 100-108

B: Ritzer: "McDonaldization, 17 pages

Schedule

Monday-Tuesday, September 11-12: Quiz

Wednesday, September 13: Powerpoint and Video Open

Monday, September 18: Paper Due

Weber EC Movies: *Brazil, Metropolitan*

Week 5: Functionalism and Conflict Theories: September 18

Readings

Functionalism

F: Davis and Moore: "Some Principles of Stratification," p. 143-50

F: Merton: "Manifest and Latent Functions," p. 161-178

Conflict Theory

F: Dahrendorf: "Social Structure, Group Interests, and Conflict Groups," p. 181-188

F: Mills: "The Structure of Power in America," p. 189-197

F: Zweigenhaft and Domhoff: "The Ironies of Diversity," p. 198-216

Schedule

Monday-Tuesday, September 18-19: Quiz

Wednesday, September 20: Powerpoint and Video Open

Monday, September 25: Paper Due

Conflict EC Movies: *The Milagro Beanfield War, Braveheart, Chinatown*

Week 6: Exchange Theory and Symbolic Interaction: September 25

Readings

Exchange

F: Blau: "The Structure of Social Associations," p. 219-231

Symbolic Interaction

F: Mead: *Mind, Self, and Society*, p. 126-138

F: Blumer: *Society as Symbolic Interaction*, p. 274-280

F: Goffman: *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, p. 281-289

Schedule

Monday-Tuesday, September 25-26: Quiz

Wednesday, September 27: Powerpoint and Video Open

Monday, October 2: Paper Due

Week 7: Phenomenological Sociology and Ethnomethodology: October 2

Readings

F: Berger: *The Sacred Canopy*, p. 248-260

F: Garfinkel: "Studies in the Routine Grounds of Everyday Activities," p. 261-270

Schedule

Monday-Tuesday, October 2-3: Quiz

Wednesday, October 4: Powerpoint and Video Open

Monday, October 9: Paper Due

EC Movies for Week 6 and 7: *Borat, Boyz n the Hood, My Big Fat Greek Wedding, Lost in Translation*

Week 8: Exam 1: October 9

The exam will be open from Sunday, October 8 at 12:00 am to Saturday, October 14 at 11:59pm.

Week 9: Polanyi: October 16

Readings

B: Polanyi, p. 33-76

Schedule

Monday-Tuesday, October 16-17: Quiz

Wednesday, October 18: Powerpoint and Video Open

Monday, October 23: Paper Due

Week 10: Theories of Power: October 23

Readings

B: Lukes: *Power: A Radical View*, p. 11-57

Schedule

Monday-Tuesday, October 23-24: Quiz

Wednesday, October 25: Powerpoint and Video Open

Monday, October 30: Paper Due

EC Movies: *V for Vendetta*

Week 11: Critical Theory: October 30

Readings

B: Marcuse: *One-Dimensional Man*, p. 335-347

Schedule

Monday-Tuesday, October 30-October 31: Quiz

Wednesday, November 1: Powerpoint and Video Open

Monday, November 6: Paper Due

EC Movies: *Wall-E, Dr. Strangelove*

Week 12: Bourdieu: November 6

Readings

B: Bourdieu, *A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, p. 1-63

Schedule

Monday-Tuesday, November 6-7: Quiz

Wednesday, November 8: Powerpoint and Video Open

Monday, November 13: Paper Due

EC Movies: *Gosford Park, The Talented Mr. Ripley*

Week 13: Foucault: November 13

Readings

B: Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 3-31, 135-140, 195-230

Schedule

Monday-Tuesday, November 13-14: Quiz

Wednesday, November 15: Powerpoint and Video Open

Monday, November 20: Paper Due

EC Movies: *1984, The Truman Show, The Virgin Suicides, One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest, Divergent*

Week 14: Feminist Theory: November 20

Readings

F: Smith: "Women's Experience as a Radical Critique of Sociology,"
p. 363-371

F: West and Zimmerman: *Doing Gender*, p. 384-392

Schedule

No Quiz

Monday, November 20: Powerpoint and Video Open

Monday, November 27: Paper Due

EC Movies: *Tootsie, All About My Mother, Mr. Mom, Frida, Nine to Five, Private Benjamin, Thelma and Louise, The Whale Rider*

Week 15: Postmodernism and Globalization: November 27

Readings

Post-Modernism

B: Best and Kellner, p. 1-5

B: Best and Kellner, p. 111-126

Globalization

F: Held and McGrew: "Divided World, Divided Nations," p. 438-442

B: Castells, "Materials for an Exploratory Theory of Network Society," 16 pages

Schedule

Monday-Tuesday, November 27-28: Quiz

Wednesday, November 29: Powerpoint and Video Open

Monday, December 4: Paper Due

EC Movies: *Matrix, Scary Movie, Stepford Wives, Bladerunner, The Constant Gardener, El Norte, Slumdog Millionaire*

Week 16: Exam 2: December 4

Exam will be open from Saturday, December 2 at 12:00am to Thursday, December 7 at 11:59pm.

*Syllabus is subject to modification.