Sociological Theory
Eastern Illinois University
Soc 3050-001 Fall 2012

Class: MWF 10:00 - 10:50 **Room:** 3103 Blair Hall
Professor: Darren Hendrickson, Ph.D. **Office:** 3122 Blair Hall
Phone: 581.8364 **E-mail:** dhendrickson@eiu.edu
Office Hours: MW 3:30 - 4:30, Th 12:00 - 2:00, or by appointment

"Whatever sociology may be, it is the result of constantly asking the question, what is the meaning of this?"
- C. Wright Mills

Required Text:

George Ritzer. 2010. *Contemporary Social Theory & Its Classical Roots: The Basics.* 3rd ed. McGraw-Hill: New York, NY.

Course Description and Objectives:

What is sociological theory? Sociological theory is often defined as a body of organized, verifiable ideas that scholars have developed to explain various aspects of society and social behavior. As such, sociological theory is used to help us understand how people interpret, understand, and experience the social world. This course is designed to provide an overview of the major perspectives in sociological theory from the late 19th century through today. Studying and understanding theory is important because sociological theory, along with research methods and social statistics, is a central component of both the sociological curriculum and the social research process. Furthermore, sociological theory provides important frameworks for thinking about and understanding both society and our everyday lives. Finally, sociological theories can often lead us to think about and see the world differently.

The specific objectives for this course are as follows:

- To begin to learn how to think both theoretically and sociologically
- Become versed in the major classical and contemporary theoretical perspectives in sociology
- Provide opportunities to apply classical and contemporary sociological theory to social issues of both past importance and current concern
- Develop a knowledge base of both classical and contemporary sociological theories that you can use in your sociological analyses of a variety of social issues
- To encourage and provide opportunities for critical thinking

These objectives will be met through lectures, class discussions, readings, video presentations, and examinations.

Readings:

The reading assignments for each week are indicated below in the syllabus. You are expected to complete the assigned readings in advance of the respective class session so you will be prepared for lecture and discussion. In class we will deal with additional, and occasionally different, material than is found in the corresponding readings. Nonetheless, class lectures and discussion are designed to build off of and complement assigned readings.

Course Requirements:

(1). *Examinations.* There will be a total of four examinations in this course. Three of the exams are scheduled during the semester and will take place during regular class time (see schedule below). The fourth exam will be administered during finals week on Tuesday, December 11th from 10:15-12:15.

(2). *Theory Application Assignments.* Given that one of the primary objectives of this course is for you to develop the ability to apply classical and contemporary sociological theories to social issues there will be a number of in-class "theory application assignments." These assignments will require you to explain, in writing, how a theory, or theoretical ideas, applies to a specific scenario or issue presented in class. For example, we may watch a video clip or review a current story in the news and then you will be asked to explain how one or more of the theories addressed in class applies to and explains material presented in the video clip or news story. There will be at least 6 "theory application assignments" over the course of the semester and you are required to complete a minimum of 4 of these assignments. If you choose to complete more than 4 "theory application assignments" I will use your 4 highest scores when calculating your final course grade. Please note, because these assignments will be completed in-class there will not be opportunities to make-up these assignments if you miss class.

(3). *Participation.* Students are expected to both raise and answer questions and remain active participants in this course. In this course I will pose many questions for discussion and everyone is expected to contribute to that discussion – this is learning.

Grading Scale:

100%-90%.....A
89%-80%.....B
79%-70%.....C
69%-70%.....D
59%-0%.....F

Basis for Final Grade:

Exam #1.....22.5%
Exam #2.....22.5%
Exam #3.....22.5%
Exam #4.....22.5%
Theory Applications..... 10%
Total.....100%

WebCT:

Exam and assignment grades will be available through WebCT. Furthermore, a copy of the course syllabus, other important course documents, and course announcements will also be posted on the WebCT course page. Detailed information about accessing WebCT is available at the following site: http://www.eiu.edu/online/student/

Course Schedule:

Aug. 20 - Aug. 24	General Course Introduction Emile Durkheim Ch. 1 - Introduction to Sociological Theory Ch. 2 - Classical Theories I pp. 15 - 21
Aug. 27 - Aug. 31	Emile Durkheim (cont'd) Ch. 2 - Classical Theories I pp. 15 - 21 Karl Marx Ch. 2 - Classical Theories I pp. 21 - 30
Sept. 5 - Sept. 7	Karl Marx (cont'd) Ch. 2 - Classical Theories I pp. 21 - 30
Sept. 10 - Sept. 14	Max Weber Ch. 2 - Classical Theories I pp. 30 - 43
Sept. 17 - Sept. 21	Georg Simmel Ch. 3 - Classical Theories II pp. 45 - 53
	Exam #1 – Monday, Sept. 17th
Sept. 24 - Sept. 28	Thorstein Veblen George Herbert Mead Ch. 3 - Classical Theories II pp. 53 - 65
Oct. 1 - Oct. 3	W.E.B. Du Bois Structural Functionalism Ch. 4 - Contemporary Grand Theories I pp. 66 - 87
Oct. 8 - Oct. 12	Structural Functionalism (cont'd) Ch. 4 - Contemporary Grand Theories I pp. 66 - 87
Oct. 15 - Oct. 19	Structural Functionalism (cont'd) Ch. 4 - Contemporary Grand Theories I pp. 66 - 87 Conflict Theory Ch. 4 - Contemporary Grand Theories I pp. 87 - 93
	Exam #2 – Wednesday, Oct. 17th
Oct. 22 - Oct. 26	Conflict Theory (cont'd) Ch. 4 - Contemporary Grand Theories I pp. 87 - 93
Oct. 29 - Nov. 2	Systems Theory (cont'd) Neo-Marxian Theories Ch. 4 - Contemporary Grand Theories I pp. 93 - 104 Ch. 5 - Contemporary Grand Theories II pp. 106 -122

Nov. 5 - Nov. 9	Neo-Marxian Theories (cont'd) Ch. 5 - Contemporary Grand Theories II pp. 106 -122

Exam #3 – Friday, Nov. 9th

Nov. 12 - Nov. 16	Symbolic Interactionism, Exchange Theory, Rational Choice Theory Ch. 6 - Contemporary Theories of Everyday Life pp. 137 - 149; pp. 155 - 169
Nov. 19 - Nov. 23	Thanksgiving Break
Nov. 26 - Nov. 30	Feminist Social Theory Ch. 8 - Contemporary Feminist Theories
Dec. 3 - Dec. 7	Globalization Theory Ch. 10 - Globalization Theory

Exam #4 – Tuesday, Dec. 11th – 10:15-12:15

Policies:

Attendance: Students are expected to attend class on a regular basis. Attendance will be taken on a daily basis, but it will not be used as part of your final grade calculation. Regular class attendance is strongly recommended. Much of the material presented during class time will be included on the examinations. You are responsible for any course material that you miss if you are not in class, regardless of the reason for your absence. Most certainly your grade will suffer if you miss a number of classes.

Late/Missed Assignments & Exams: Assignments are to be turned in on time and examinations are to be taken when scheduled. If, for some reason, you are going to miss an examination or an assignment due date, you must notify me in advance. If you fail to notify me in advance that you are going to miss an examination, you will not be able to make-up that exam. Make-up exams will only be given with a legitimate excuse (e.g. medical reason, family emergency) and may be somewhat different than the original exam.

Cheating and Plagiarism: Not allowed. If you are found cheating or plagiarizing you will receive a zero for that assignment, exam, or quiz and you will be immediately reported to the Office of Student Standards. See the University policy regarding academic integrity for details about plagiarism.

Tape/Video Recorders: The use of tape recorders, or other recording devices, during class is not allowed. Exceptions will be made only under special circumstances.

Cell Phones/Text Messaging: I understand that many of you like to stay connected and many important people are constantly trying to get a hold of you, but if you have a cell phone please turn off or disable the ringer before coming to class. Furthermore, text messaging during class is not permitted or tolerated.

Special Needs: Students with documented disabilities are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) to address any necessary academic accommodations. Adaptations of methods, materials, or testing can be made to provide for your equitable participation in class as long as I am aware of your needs before tests and assignments.

Medical Emergencies Statement: For medical emergencies, go to the nearest phone and call 911. All faculty offices have telephones and during normal business hours (8:00-12:00 and 1:00-4:30), the Sociology Office (Blair 3170) is open. Be sure to state the floor and room number

of the emergency to the 911 operator. If possible, someone should go to the central entrance of Blair Hall to direct EMS personnel to the medical emergency scene. If the medical emergency is on the second or third floor, someone else should hold the elevator on the first floor for EMS use.

Tornado Statement: In case of a tornado warning, proceed to the center of the hallway on the first floor, near the posted severe weather signs. Under no circumstances should you attempt to leave the building.

Building Fire Statement: In case of fire, activate the fire alarm and exit the building. When a fire alarm sounds, everyone must exit the building and cannot re-enter the building until allowed by the building coordinator or fire department official. Fire alarms are located at the north and south ends of the corridors just inside the fire doors. The closest exits for all classrooms in Blair are on the north and south ends of the building. Under no circumstance should the elevator be used. Group assembly areas for all classes in Blair are either on the patio area between Blair and Old Main or on the southeast corner of the North Quad. As you exit the building, continue moving well away from the exits so that you do not impede the egress of other students of the work of fire officials. Move a safe distance away from the building.

Note: All material in this course syllabus, including exam dates, may be subject to change