

**SOC 3250**  
**Contemporary Sociological Theory**  
**Dr. Lisa New Freeland**  
**Spring 2009**

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Office: Blair Hall 3130  
Phone: 581-8365  
Email: [lnewfreeland@eiu.edu](mailto:lnewfreeland@eiu.edu)

Office Hours: MWF 9am-10am  
Tue 10am-11am  
and by appt.

Throughout your other sociology courses, you will spend ample time discussing substantive areas of social reality. You will also learn how, where, and when to study human dynamics and group behavior and then how to analyze the resulting data. This class will continue your introduction to social theory so that we may answer the “why” question of social reality. We will review contemporary and modern sociological theory predominately since WWII, the influences and criticisms of the theories, and finally applications of the theories.

Though this class is designated to cover contemporary theory, understanding the development of these theories through the classical roots is essential. **Classical Social Theory is a prerequisite for this course.** Discussion of each theoretical perspective will begin with a look at the historical influences. Theory is dense and abstract material and the best way to truly comprehend it is to work with many formats and make the knowledge your own. We will use a combination of secondary texts, original works, and contemporary research applications. This is not a straight lecture class. Each of you will participate in small and large group discussions and we will do substantive applications throughout the semester. I would suggest you form study groups to discuss the material outside class, as this is often the most beneficial way to study theory.

#### Course Objectives

This course is designed to provide each student with the tools necessary to:

1. Be familiar with social explanation and theoretical debates of past and present,
2. Recognize the most important sociological theorists in contemporary schools of thought,
3. Understand the relationship and importance of theory to the discipline as a whole,
4. Synthesize theoretical perspectives,
5. Begin applicative model formation, and
6. Write a thoughtful and integrated technical sociology paper with the appropriate style and sophistication of an upper division college level.

#### Texts:

Delaney, Tim. 2005. *Contemporary Social Theory: Investigation and Application*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Newman, David and Jodi O'Brien, eds. 2004. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life, Readings*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.

## Class Policies

*Attendance* is expected at each class meeting. Material provided will extend beyond the information in the text. As it is impossible to evaluate each piece of information on an exam, your presence is vital to a comprehensive understanding of the material. You are responsible for all material, announcements, and decisions made in class regardless of your attendance. Find a buddy, make a friend, form a group.

*Your participation* is expected at each class meeting. I will be prepared for an hour of education and thought provoking discussion. Each student should be prepared both with readings and frame of mind. The emphasis in this course is on education rather than evaluation.

*Academic dishonesty* in any form (including cheating and plagiarism) will not be tolerated. Please review department and university guidelines on this subject. In this course any infraction of academic dishonesty results in a failing grade for this course and could lead to further action by the university such as expulsion. Consequences will be decided according to the severity of the offense. Every incident is reported to the Department of Judicial Affairs regardless of severity.

*Exams* will be taken at the appointed time unless you have extreme documented circumstances and have notified me prior to the scheduled exam. If you are late to an exam, you have only the time remaining in which to complete the exam. If you arrive after someone has completed the exam and left the room, you have missed the exam and will receive a zero. All make-ups are to be completed during finals week.

*Papers and homework assignments* are due at the beginning of the designated class period. No assignments will be accepted late for any reason. I will take assignments early.

*Excused absences* due to school sponsored activities are handled according to university policy. You should notify me in advance.

*Accommodations* are made for students with special needs per the guidelines of the Office of Disability Services. Please provide your documentation and see me to make arrangements.

If by some extreme circumstances I should be late to class, I ask that you wait fifteen minutes. If by that time I have not arrived nor have you been given a message by departmental faculty or staff, you are free to leave.

To ensure that the classroom environment is conducive to learning, the following *behaviors are prohibited* in sociology and anthropology classes: Eating, sleeping, reading unrelated materials, exiting and reentering during class, tardiness, discussions not assigned by the professor, and littering.

If you have *questions*, need further explanations, or require additional help with the material, please see me as soon as possible. As with most college courses, this material builds upon itself. Waiting for help puts you at an immediate disadvantage for future content.

## Some Study Suggestions

Though I make suggestions early in the semester, students often do not give them focus until after the first exam. I have chosen to include them here for your reference throughout the semester in hopes that you will seriously consider them. 1) Study some each week rather than waiting until the exam. There is a great deal of material and it is dense and abstract in nature. 2) Complete your reading assignments on time as they are essential to your participation. 3) Study in groups as this will increase your engagement in the material and thereby should increase your comprehension.

## Evaluation

3 Unit grades (25% each) 75%

1 Writing Assignment 25%

A=90-100%, B=80-89%, C=70-79%, D=60-69%, F=<60%

Or by natural breaks if that benefits the aggregate.

## Assignments

Unit grades:

Each unit grade will employ a variety of evaluative techniques chosen for the specific content evaluation. They will evaluate your performance across the following categories:

- Theorist/theory recognition
- Comprehension of the readings and theoretical elements
- Influences to and development of contemporary theory
- Synthesis of major themes and their treatment by theorists

and scored using the following point system:

- 20 multiple choice questions at 2 points each
- 10 matching questions at 2 point each
- 4 of 6 listing or identify at 5 points each
- 2 of 4 short essays at 10 points each

Failure to follow directions (written and verbal) will mean a deduction in exam grades.

## Writing Assignments:

This is a writing intensive class. You will have revision opportunities for your paper (both content and writing) and I would encourage you to take those opportunities seriously. You may use your compare/contrast paper from this class for portfolio submissions. If you wish to do so, please attach a submission form to the final draft of your paper when turning it in to me.

Your writing assignment will have three parts. The first two are applications of theories learned from the first two units (functionalism and conflict respectively) to an article from the supplementary text. I will score these applications out of ten points each and return them to you with feedback. The second part of your writing grade comes from a compare and contrast paper in which you will include these two applications and compare/contrast them as they apply to the assigned article. The paper grades are calculated out of eighty possible points; forty coming from writing style and forty from sociological theoretical content. A paper workshop will be held in class before the due date. Papers must be typed, double-spaced, stapled and absolutely no more than 5 pages in length excluding bibliography. A copy of the complete writing matrix must be attached to the front of your paper. Failure to follow any of these directions will mean a deduction in points.

## Tentative Course Schedule

Reading assignments are on the right hand side. Have the appropriate assignment read by the date is listed.

|               |   | Delaney | N&O                                  |
|---------------|---|---------|--------------------------------------|
| <u>UNIT 1</u> |   |         |                                      |
| Jan 12-14     | Course Introduction, Defining Theory, Identifying intellectual categories of theories | 1       |                                      |
| Jan 16-23     | Functionalism   | 3       |                                      |
| Jan 26-30     | Conflict  | 4       |                                      |
| Feb 2-6       | Critical  | 10      |                                      |
| Feb 9-16      | Compare and Contrast Apps., Review, and Exam 1  |         | “Savage Inequalities”<br>pp. 261-270 |
| <u>UNIT 2</u> |   |         |                                      |
| Feb 18        | Review exam study practices; Discuss paper assignment                                 |         |                                      |
| Feb 20-27     | Symbolic Interaction  | 5       |                                      |
| Mar 2-6       | Exchange  | 6       |                                      |
| Mar 9-13      | Feminist  | 9       |                                      |
| Mar 23-27     | Compare and Contrast Apps., Review, and Exam 2  |         | “What is Wanting”<br>pp.318-332      |
| <u>UNIT 3</u> |   |         |                                      |
| Mar 30        | Paper Workshop  |         |                                      |
| Apr 1-3       | Bridging theories   |         |                                      |
| Apr 6-10      | Postmodern  | 11      |                                      |
| Apr 13- 17    | Ritzer  | 12      |                                      |
| Apr 20-24     | Turner  | 13      |                                      |
| Apr 27        | Compare and Contrast Apps.  |         | “Smile Factory”<br>pp.236-247        |
| Apr 29-May1   | Modern Applications and Review  | 14      |                                      |

SOC 3250: Contemporary Social Theory  
STATEMENT OF NOTIFICATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

In the past years, I have seen a disturbing increase in academic dishonesty in my courses. Many students have claimed that they were not aware of the expectations of following directions, scholarly activity, or the consequences for not meeting the expectations. Not only is ignorance not bliss, it is not an excuse. The bottom portion of this page must be signed and returned to Dr. New Freeland before your name will be entered in the grade book and any scores recorded. Your signature denotes that you have read the syllabus and understand the consequences of failing to follow directions, academic dishonesty, and the expectations of this course.

Detach here

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Sign below and return to Dr. New Freeland

I have been provided a copy of the course syllabus for SOC 3250. I have read and do understand the information provided in the attached syllabus regarding class expectations and the computation of grades, including the deduction of points from exams and writing assignments for failure to follow written and verbal directions. I also have been made aware of the severe consequences for academic dishonesty and do know that any infractions will result in an automatic failure of this course.

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Student Signature and date

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Student Printed Name