

Survey of Sociological Theory
Soc 321 Spring 2018

Course meeting: Tues/Thurs 9-10:15am; Webster 101 Collaborative classroom

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Welcome to Survey of Sociological Theory! This course provides an introduction to classical and contemporary sociological theory. What is sociological theory? Theory provides us conceptual frameworks and analytical tools to analyze social life. Theories offer insight into large and important phenomena that profoundly shape societies across the globe such as capitalism, modernity and post-modernity, and industrialization, along with their associated social problems like class inequality, colonialism, and the anomie or social isolation of modernity. Perhaps most importantly, theory offers us the ability to look beyond taken-for-granted social realities, to pierce the surface of our everyday lives and assumptions in order to *critique* society and imagine more just and utopian futures.

The course will emphasize classical sociological theory (Marx, Weber and Durkheim) since the ideas of these 19th century thinkers provide a “vocabulary” that continues to animate contemporary theorizing and social research. We will also explore a selection of contemporary theories and theorists.

In this course, we will work together to learn how to interpret primary texts (the original writings of key thinkers). We will also pay special attention to different ideas about the relative role of material conditions and ideas or individual agents and broad social structures in shaping important social conditions. Finally, this course should inform your future coursework by developing your practice of thinking deeply and critically to examine issues like power, identity, class/inequality, and social change.

The course is animated by the following learning objectives:

Student Learning Objectives:

- 1) Students will be able to evaluate sociological theories and use them to analyze and understand aspects of the social world.
- 2) Students will demonstrate confidence using and assessing concepts and approaches from Marx, Weber, and Durkheim (Classical Sociology) and will demonstrate working familiarity with a selection of contemporary sociological theories including: rational choice theory, structural-functionalism, feminist approaches, and Bourdieu.
- 3) Students will demonstrate the ability to interpret selected primary sources in theory.
- 4) Students will be able to compare and contrast different theoretical approaches to power, class/inequality, identity, and social change.
- 5) Students will employ evaluative parameters to assess and evaluate different theories (idealism vs. materialism; structure vs. agency; individualism vs. holism; conflict vs. consensus).
- 6) Students will develop skills in analytical writing, close-reading, offering constructive criticism to peers, and small-group collaboration.

How will the course proceed?

Readings:

You will be expected to spend time *carefully* reading the assigned textbook and primary source materials outside of class. Lectures and class activities will build directly off of the assigned readings and will presume your familiarity with readings. Come to class with *questions* and *reactions* to the readings. This will allow us to make the most of class time.

Required Textbook: Michele Dillon, Introduction to Sociological Theory: Theorists, Concepts, and their Applicability to the Twenty-First Century, 2nd edition, Wiley-Blackwell (2014)

This text is available as an e-book through the UH library [you must login to access]. New and used copies are available for purchase or rent at the bookstore.

Primary Text readings (and other assigned supplementary readings): Will be distributed via our course website on Laulima under the “resources → “assigned readings” folders, organized by week.

When primary readings are assigned you must first read them on your own. During class, you will have the chance to re-read sections and deepen your understanding of primary readings.

Collaborative Learning:

This class adopts a collaborative and student-centered approach. I also expect you to take an **independent** and **active** role in your own learning. The idea is to make the learning more meaningful and enjoyable. My hope is that by working together, you will learn to deepen your

understanding of theory and find creative ways to apply and use theory to understand issues and social phenomena that you care about.

We have the privilege of working in Webster 101, the collaborative classroom that is fully equipped to integrate with technology and media. Your preparation, group-related work, and participation will be a significant part of your grade.

Please note also that any lectures/power points used by the instructor will be posted on Lulima for your reference.

Major Assessments: *All class assignments should be submitted to the instructors via Lulima to the appropriate “assignment” folders.*

- 1) **Reading responses (~23% of final grade)** You will have regular short assignments/reading responses to turn in based on textbook and primary source readings approximately every other week, but sometimes every week. This will prepare you to understand course concepts and be ready for group collaboration. Submit all assignments to Lulima assignment folders.

- 2) **Participation, Attendance, and Group Work (~23% of final grade):**
This includes attendance and active engagement in group activities. You will receive maximum credit if you come prepared and play an active role. We will ask you to sign in every day as a way of taking attendance and this will count toward your participation grade. You will also receive additional points for particularly strong engagement and focus during class time. You will often work in small groups to produce or present something to the rest of the class. You may be asked to submit this group work and this will count toward your participation grade as well. We will randomly shuffle the class seating by table so that you have a chance to learn with and from different people throughout the semester.

Missing class: Absences will be excused for documented illness or family emergency. Please provide an official note to the TA. Absences, especially repeated unexcused absences, will affect your participation grade. Regardless, anytime you must miss class please attend office hours or meet with a peer to find out what you missed. Please contact the TA Holly Sevier (hsevier@hawaii.edu) regarding all attendance matters.

- 3) **Paper #1: Using and applying Classical Theory (5-7 pages) (~23% of final grade):**
You will be asked to interpret and analyze a film, which will be screened during class time, depicting a contemporary social event [or any other contemporary issue/event of your choice] using the ideas of Marx, Weber or Durkheim. Additional assignment and grading details will be provided.

- 4) **Paper #2: Final Paper in lieu of final exam (8-10 pages). Using and applying Contemporary Theory (8-10 pages) (30% of final grade):** You will be asked to interpret and analyze a contemporary issue/event *of your choice* using the ideas of two theorists (you must discuss at least one contemporary theory and one other theorist except for the theorist you focused on for paper #1). Use the textbook and primary source readings *only*, in addition to film or news/magazine articles about the chosen issue/event. More assignment and grading details to be provided.

Paper submission process: for both paper #1 and paper #2:

You will be asked to first submit a draft to Laulima. Then a week later you will submit a revised final draft. You are strongly encouraged to peer-review your first draft outside of class. A sample peer-review guide will be provided. You will receive extra points if you submit evidence of peer review, which will be a short write-up or cover page explaining how you revised your initial draft to significantly improve it in response to peer review (this is your 'peer review cover letter'). You are also welcome to discuss your draft thesis or an outline, or your introductory paragraph with the TA or Professor during office hours.

Please also consult with paper guidelines and grading rubric as well as the policies regarding plagiarism, which will be distributed. Submit the final draft paper and optional peer review cover letter to the appropriate Laulima Assignment folders.

Assignment/Paper Late Policy: *Late papers will be penalized for each day late (1 point subtracted for each day late for papers, ½ point per day late for short assignments) up to 50% of possible assignment credit. After that point, assignments will not be accepted unless you have obtained permission from the TA or professor. The only exceptions for late penalties are for documented emergencies or illness with an official note/excuse. However, if you anticipate having trouble meeting your deadlines due to work, family or other school-related commitments, please discuss your situation with us or request an extension from the TA in advance of the deadline. We are always willing to work with you or to offer help during office hours.*

Extra credit/or the chance to improve your grade:

You will be given the chance to review and rewrite your papers within 10 days after receiving your paper grade. Make sure that you understand your grade and the instructor or TA's comments (only substantial revisions will be accepted). Please include an additional "cover letter" explaining how you further revised your paper. You will receive the higher grade.

KOKUA for Students with Disabilities:

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability is invited to contact me privately. I would be happy to work with you, and the KOKUA Program (Office for Students with Disabilities), to ensure reasonable accommodations in my course. KOKUA can be reached at (808) 956- 7511 or (808) 956-7612 (voice/text) in room 013 of the Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services.

Plagiarism:

Papers with evidence of plagiarism, even unintentional, will not be accepted.

Consequences for plagiarism include the following:

- 1) You must meet in person with the professor or TA *within one week* (during office hours or by appointment) of receiving an email regarding identified plagiarism. Failure to do so will result in an automatic grade of 0 for the assignment.
- 2) The professor/TA will notify your academic advisor.
- 3) You will receive a 0 for the assignment unless the assignment is immediately fixed. Delay in addressing the plagiarism will be treated as turning in the paper “late” (grade penalties apply).
- 4) Consequences for the 2nd instance of plagiarism include the same as above, with an automatic 0 for the assignment and potential failing of course.

How to not plagiarize:

It is each student's responsibility to learn about plagiarism and how to avoid it. The professor and TA are also available to answer questions during office hours. We will also distribute additional guidelines and helpful tips.

A brief summary of the American Sociological Association's Style Guide, which explains the rules clearly, can be found at: <http://www.buffalostate.edu/library/docs/asa.pdf>

The following definition of plagiarism comes from The University of Hawaii System wide Student Conduct Code:

The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials (E7.208, Pages 4 and 5).

(For the entire Student Conduct Code, see: <http://www.hawaii.edu/apis/ep/e7/e7208.pdf> and http://studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/downloads/conduct_code/UHM_Student_Conduct_Code.pdf.)

Phones, Laptops, Electronic Devices:

For the sake of mutual respect, and in order to create a positive learning environment, use of electronic devices is strictly restricted to note-taking or instructional group work tasks. Please do not text or browse the internet. If you feel you must look at your electronic devices for other purposes, please wait until after class. Or, if it is urgent please leave the room.