

# Sociology 321: Survey of Sociological Theory

*"Whenever a theory appears to you as the only possible one, take this as a sign that you have neither understood the theory nor the problem which it was intended to solve" --Karl Popper*

## COURSE DETAILS

Semester/Year: Spring 2011  
Class Location: Online via [laulima.hawaii.edu](http://laulima.hawaii.edu)  
Meeting Times: January 10, 2011 to May 13, 2011

Instructor: Daniel B. Eisen, MA, Lecturer  
Email: [deisen@hawaii.edu](mailto:deisen@hawaii.edu)  
Office Hours: Online via email. I will check my email daily. During the weekdays you should receive a response to any email within 24-48 hours.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to expose students to the major theories and theorists that inform the field of sociology. The first half of the course will focus on the classical theorists (e.g. Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Simmel), while the second half of the course will focus on contemporary social theorists (e.g. Bourdieu, Foucault, Hill-Collins, and Baudrillard). The structure of this course requires regular attendance, as the class will be structured around class discussions and activities. Actively participating in the class discussions and activities will greatly help students satisfactorily complete weekly quizzes, which will assess the student's knowledge of the content covered in that week's lectures and readings.

While this course will explore the theories and theorists separately, the course will encourage students to view theories as ideas that (a) can explain, understand, and predict social phenomena, (b) can be integrated to explain, understand, and predict social phenomena, and (c) can be expanded upon to explain, understand, and predict social phenomena. Overall, the goal of this course is to provide students with a firm understanding of sociological theory, allowing students to apply, expand upon, and integrate the theories that inform the field of sociology.

This course has also been approved as a writing intensive course and, therefore, students will complete a substantial (approximately 20 pages) amount of writing throughout the course. This will be accomplished through the completion of sociological theory portfolio, which will be submitted for a grade at two different points (midterm and final) in the course. The portfolio consists of a collection of 8 short essays that the student will complete throughout the course.

In this course students are asked to have an open mind and explore the many possibilities that sociology offers in the examination of the world around us. Many of the perspectives covered in this course may not agree with the student's worldview. However, students are asked to consider each perspective as a way of looking at the world, rather than as an absolute truth on the subject. Therefore, students should leave this course being able to see various social phenomena from a plethora of viewpoints and choose the perspective that best fits their position on the issues.

### **ABOUT AN ONLINE COURSE**

It has become a common misperception that online courses are easier than face-to-face course, a belief which may encourage students to take an online course less seriously. To successfully complete this course, it is important that students take this course just as seriously as they would a face-to-face course. Students that are successfully in the online learning environment are (a) self-motivated to learn, (b) very disciplined and responsible about meeting due dates, (c) dedicated to reading the chapters and supplemental readings independently, and (d) familiar with accessing the internet, downloading files (.doc, .ppt, .pdf, .mp4 will be used in this course), and uploading files (files must be uploaded as a .doc or .pdf file). If you are having difficulties with any of these processes, or the general operation of laulima, please visit: *Laulima Orientation Tutorials* under Student Documents from the Laulima homepage.

This course is structured to provide some flexibility for students. All course readings and powerpoints will be posted on the first day of class. The remaining material will be posted in four different sections. The material for weeks 1 will be posted on the first day and students must complete the quiz and the discussion boards before they close on January 16, 2011. The material for weeks 2 through 5 will be posted on January 16, 2011 and students must complete all the work before the discussion boards and quizzes close on February 11, 2011 at 11:55 HST. The material for weeks 6 through 10 will be posted on February 12, 2011 and students must complete all the work before the discussion boards and quizzes close on March 18, 2011 at 11:55PM HST. The material for weeks 11 through 17 will be posted on March 19, 2011 and students must complete all the work before the discussion boards and quizzes close on May 10, 2011 at 11:55PM HST.

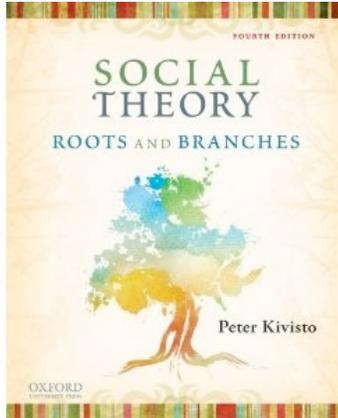
### **STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- (1) Identify and discuss the thoughts and ideas of the major theorists who inform the field of sociology
- (2) Understand how sociological theory can be applied to social phenomena
- (3) Understand how sociological theories can be applied to the same social phenomenon to create different understandings of the phenomenon
- (4) Understand how sociological theories can be integrated with one another to explain social phenomena
- (5) Consider various social issues from multiple perspectives, while being sensitive to the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective

- (6) Coherently describe, discuss, critique, and apply sociological theories to social phenomena in written format

## COURSE TEXTS AND READINGS



Additional readings may be used to compliment the textbook when needed. These additional readings will be available as handouts or available for download at <http://laulima.hawaii.edu>.

Kivisto, Peter. 2010. *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

**QUIZZES:** There will be weekly quizzes based on the assigned readings for each week uploaded to laulima. As the quizzes are designed to ensure that students are completing the readings and comprehending the readings, the quizzes can be taken three times. The students high score on the quiz will be recorded and calculated into the students final grade. There will be a total of 15 quizzes, each worth 20 points for a total of 300 points.

**DISCUSSION BOARDS:** Students must actively participate in online discussion. Each week, video clips, news stories, articles, and other additional material will be posted online for students to examine. Student will be required to respond to the discussion question for each week. Online interactions will be facilitated through [laulima.hawaii.edu](http://laulima.hawaii.edu).

It is important that students remember that the discussion boards are an academic forum and appropriate use of language is expected. Students should remember that this not just another social networking site and that they are being grading on the content that they post on the discussion boards. Comments like "I agree," "I disagree," or "LOL!" will not earn the student credit. Students are, however, encouraged to agree or disagree with each other in the online discussions in a civil manner. If the student agrees or disagrees with someone's post (s)he must provide evidence for why (s)he feels that way. All discussions will be moderated by the instructor and any inappropriate posts will be removed and the student will not earn credit for the post.

Discussion boards are worth 10 points each week, for a total of 150 points.

**THEORY PORTFOLIO ASSIGNMENT:** To successfully complete this course students will be required to complete a theory portfolio, which is a major writing assignment. The completed project will be approximately 20 pages in length. The theory portfolio allows students to discuss, illustrate, apply, and critique sociological concepts and theories. Students are required to submit an midterm theory portfolio on March 18, 2010 and will receive extensive feedback from the instructor. Furthermore, because students are asked to reflect on their course performance at two points in the semester (midterm submission of project and final submission of project) the instructor gains further insight into the theoretical development of each student. The midterm submission of the theory portfolio will be worth 100 points and the final submission of the theory portfolio will be worth 300 points.

In brief, the theory portfolio will contain the following collection of essays (2-3 pages each, unless otherwise noted):

1. Front cover that visually illustrates a sociological concept or theory, along with a 2-3 paragraph explanation about what concept is portrayed and how it is portrayed in the cover.
2. Introduction: A revised definition of sociological theory that the student wrote the first day of class.
3. Essay 1: Why Study Sociological Theory?
4. Essay 2: You don't understand the world until you know this theory...
5. Essay 3: Why \_\_\_\_\_ Theory doesn't work...
6. Application 1: Analyze one day of your life through the eyes of Durkheim, Marx, or Weber
7. Application 2: Analyze on Film or Play using a theorist of your choice
8. Application 3: Analyze a contemporary event from the news in relation to sociological theory.
9. Midterm self-reflection and Final self-reflection

**GRADING SUMMARY:** Therefore, the student's final grade comprises of the following:

Quizzes (15 @ 20 points)	300 points
Discussion Board (15 @ 10 points)	150 points
Theory Portfolio (Midterm Submission)	100 points
Theory Portfolio (Final Submission)	300 points

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Final Grade

850 points

A+ (97% and above) = 825 and above  
A (94% to 96%) = 799 to 824  
A - (90% to 93%) = 765 to 798  
B+ (87% to 89%) = 739 to 764  
B (84% to 86%) = 715 to 738  
B - (80% to 83%) = 680 to 714  
C+ (77% to 79%) = 654 to 679  
C (74% to 76%) = 629 to 654  
C - (70% to 73%) = 595 to 628  
D+ (67% to 69%) = 569 to 594  
D (64% to 66%) = 544 to 568  
D - (60% to 63%) = 510 to 543  
F (0% to 59%) = 0 to 509

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
Week 1: January 10- January 14	SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION & CRITICAL THINKING	bell hooks: "Conversations" bell hooks: "Critical Thinking" C. Wright Mills: "The Promise"
<b>JANUARY 16, 2011</b>	<b>QUIZ AND DISCUSSION BOARDS FROM WEEK 1 MUST BE COMPLETED BY 11:55PM HST</b>	
Week 2: January 17- January 21	KARL MARX	Marx: "Commodities" Marx: "The General Formula for Capital" Marx: "Alienated Labor" Marx: "The Communist Manifesto"

Date	Topic	Readings
Week 3: January 24- January 28	Emile Durkheim	Durkheim: "What is a Social Fact"  Durkheim: "On Mechanical and Organic Solidarity"  George Ritzer: Suicide Excerpt from <i>Sociological Theory</i> (Laulima)
Week 4: January 31- February 4	Weber	Weber: "The Nature of Charismatic Domination"  Weber: "Class, Status, and Party"  Weber: "Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy"
Week 5: February 7- February 11	Marx, Durkheim, and Weber on Religion	Marx Religion excerpt from <i>Sociological Theory</i> (Laulima)  Durkheim: "The Human Meaning of Religion"  Weber: "The Spirit of Capitalism"
<b>FEBRUARY 11, 2011</b>	<b>QUIZZES AND DISCUSSION BOARDS FROM WEEKS 2 TO 5 MUST BE COMPLETED BY 11:55PM HST</b>	
Week 6: February 14- February 18	SIMMEL: THE PROBLEM AND BASICS OF SOCIOLOGY	Simmel: "The Problem of Sociology"  Simmel: "Conflict as the Basis of Group Formation"  Simmel: "The Stranger"

Date	Topic	Readings
Week 7: February 21-February 25	SIMMEL: MONEY AND CONSUMERISM	Simmel: "The Philosophy of Money"  Simmel: "Fashion"  Simmel: "Percuniary Canons of Taste"
Week 8: February 28- March 4	SI FOUNDATIONAL VOICES: MEAD, BLUMER, SCHUTZ	Mead: "The Fusion of the I and Me in Social Activities"  Blumer: "Society as Symbolic Interactionism"  Schutz: "Indirect Social Relationships"
Week 9: March 7 -March 11	GOFFMAN	Goffman: "Performances"  Goffman: "Stigma" Excerpt (Laulima)
Week 10: March 14- March 18	WRITER'S WORKSHOP	
<b>MARCH 18, 2011</b>	<b>QUIZZES FROM WEEK 6 TO 10, DISCUSSION BOARDS FROM WEEK 6 TO 10 &amp; MIDTERM SUBMISSION OF THEORY PORTFOLIO MUST BE COMPLETED BY 11:55PM HST</b>	
Week 11: March 21-March 25	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
Week 12: March 28-April 1	ETHNOMETHODOLOGY	Garfinkel: "Studies of the Routine Grounds of Everyday Activities"  Ethnomethodology Excerpt from <i>Sociological Theory</i> (Laulima)

Date	Topic	Readings
Week 13: April 4- April 8	EXCHANGE AND RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY	<p>Homans: "Social Behavior as Exchange"</p> <p>Emerson: "Power-Dependence Relations"</p> <p>Coleman: "Human Capital and Social Capital"</p> <p>Honneth: "Personal Identity and Disrespect"</p>
Week 14: April 11- April 15	THEORIES OF GENDER	<p>Martineau: "Political Non-Existence of Women"</p> <p>West and Zimmerman: "Doing Gender"</p> <p>Messner: "Masculinities and Athletic Careers" (Laulima)</p>
Week 15: April 18- April 22	PARSONS AND MERTON	<p>Parsons: "The Subsystems of Society"</p> <p>Merton: "The Unanticipated Consequences of Social Action"</p> <p>Alexander: After NeoFunctionalism</p> <p>Ritzer: Structural Functionalism Excerpt from <i>Sociological Theory</i> (Laulima)</p>
Week 16: April 25- April 29	CONNECTING THE PAST TO THE PRESENT (WEBER--RITZER)	<p>Weber: Bureaucracy</p> <p>Ritzer: "The Macdonalization of Society" <i>Excerpt</i></p> <p>Ritzer: <i>Enchanting a Disenchanted World</i> Excerpt</p>

Date	Topic	Readings
Week 17: May 2- May 6	POSTMODERN SOCIAL THEORY	Foucault: "Panopticism"  Baudrillard: "Advertising"  Baudrillard: <i>Simulation and Simulacra</i> Excerpt
Week 18: May 9- May 13	FINAL EXAM WEEK	FINAL EXAM WEEK
MAY 10, 2011	<b>QUIZZES FROM WEEK 12 TO 17, DISCUSSION BOARDS FROM WEEK 12 TO 17 &amp; FINAL SUBMISSION OF THEORY PORTFOLIO MUST BE COMPLETED BY 11:55PM HST</b>	

### POLICIES/EXPECTATIONS

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** While the course is structured in a weekly format there are four due dates that students must meet--January 16, 2010, February 11, 2011, March 18, 2011, and May 10, 2011. No late work will be accepted beyond the due dates listed in the schedule. All due dates are based on Hawaii Standard Time (HST).

**LAULIMA ISSUES:** If you are having technical issues with Laulima, you must contact the Laulima helpdesk. Go to Request Assistance from the Laulima homepage or email [admin@laulima.hawaii.edu](mailto:admin@laulima.hawaii.edu).

**TECHNOLOGY ISSUES:** As this is an online class it is the students responsibility to ensure that (s)he has access to a reliable computer and internet connection. Due to the structure of the course (students have five to six weeks to complete all the work for the specific section of the course), computer crashes or internet outages are not valid excuses. Students are advised to complete work early and plan for glitches with technology, student's should NOT wait until the last minute to complete and submit their assignments.

**EXTRA CREDIT:** There may be a possibility that extra credit will be offered during this course. However, in order for any extra credit to be applied to a student's final grade, all course work must be completed. If a student fails to complete an assignment or an exam the extra credit will not be counted towards the student's final grade.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** The University of Hawaii explicitly prohibits cheating or plagiarism in the academic environment. The student code of conduct defines these as: *"Cheating includes but is not limited to giving or receiving unauthorized assistance during an examination; obtaining unauthorized information about an examination before it is given; submitting another's work as one's own; using prohibited sources of information during an examination; fabricating or falsifying data in experiments and other research; altering the record*

*of any grade; altering answers after an examination has been submitted; falsifying any official University record; or misrepresenting of facts in order to obtain exemptions from course requirements."*

*Plagiarism includes but is not limited to submitting, in fulfillment of an academic requirement, any work that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without attributing that borrowed portion to the individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation another's idea and particular phrasing that was not assimilated into the student's language and style or paraphrasing a passage so that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral or artistic material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved; or "drylabbing," which includes obtaining and using experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of a course or from previous terms."*

Any student that is found to violate these policies will automatically be awarded a "0" for the assignment or exam that the student has violated these policies on. If a student is found to engage in academic dishonesty a second time, he or she will receive an automatic "F" in the class.

**ACCOMODATIONS AND KOKUA:** Students who need accommodations in this class due to the impact of a disability are encouraged to contact both the instructor and KOKUA to ensure the appropriate accommodations are made. KOKUA can be reached at (808) 956-7511 or (808) 956-7612. KOKUA is located in room 013 of the Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services.