



SOC 296A: Introduction to Sociological Theory

Glatfelter Hall 303 • Tuesday & Thursday • 2:35-3:50pm
Spring 2020

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 1:00-2:30pm, Wednesday 2:00-3:00pm, and by Appointment

Prof. Standlee reserves the right to alter this syllabus and the assignments at any time. Changes may be made to accommodate the specific needs of this class.

“People know what they do; frequently they know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what, what they do does.”

~Michel Foucault: Madness and Civilization - A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason

Course Description

This course introduces and examines the foundational ideas, perspectives and texts in sociological theory. We will begin our study by examining the work of classical theorists such as Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Émile Durkheim. We will then consider modern thinkers including C. Wright Mills and Michel Foucault. The final section of the course will focus on the work of revolutionary theorist as we explore post-modernism, feminist theory, critical race theory, and queer theory.

We will investigate not only the theoretical traditions themselves, but also consider the social context and academic environments from which these thinkers and theoretical traditions emerged. We will trace the roots of contemporary sociological thinking through history, as we explore the strengths, weaknesses, and contributions of seminal works, and those that challenge the regularly accepted canon of sociology.

Required Course Materials

Available at the Campus Bookstore and Online

- *Contested Knowledge: Social Theory Today* 6th edition, by Steven Seidman
- *Classical Sociological Theory* 3rd edition, by Craig Calhoun et.al.
- *Contemporary Sociological Theory* 3rd edition, by Craig Calhoun et.al.
- Additional readings will be posted on Moodle

Moodle

You will need to access Moodle for this course. Moodle will offer access to the syllabus, supplemental readings, discussion board resources, and be used to submit assignments.

Learning Objectives

Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain the major ideas and conclusions of key classical sociological theorists.
- Explain major ideas and conclusions of prominent contemporary theorists.
- Understand how historical and biographical contexts shaped theorists' understandings.
- Read and understand original texts of theorists in the sociological tradition.
- Compare and contrast ideas of theorists who have informed sociological thought.

Gettysburg Curriculum

This course fulfills the Gettysburg Curriculum requirement of *Multiple Inquires: Social Science*.

Course Questions

Below are some of the questions we will use as organizing principles for this course. Keep these in mind in both your reading and writing activities. By the end of the semester, you should be able to provide well thought out, clear, and complete answers to the following questions:

- What are the key theoretical traditions and ideas in sociological theory?
- How do I effectively read and understand sociological theory critically?
- How has sociological theory been influenced by the social context of its emergence?
- What tensions, debates and challenges to the accepted canon of sociological theory exist?
- How can I compare and contrast the significant ideas of key sociological writers?

Grading Scale

A	93-100%	C	73-76%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
B	83-86%	D	63-66%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-62%
C+	77-79%	F	59% and below

Course Assignments and Grading**Reading Notes (15%)**

Beginning Week 2, before the start of class on Tuesday, you are required to turn in a typed 3-page minimum (double-spaced) set of reading notes via Moodle. In the reading notes, you will outline the readings for the given week, and identify main concepts or vocabulary. You may include page numbers from the text for your referral, and use outline or bullet point format. You must address *all* of the readings for the week for full credit. Grading will be 10 points for completed comprehensive notes, 5 points for partial notes, and 0 Points for missing notes. **No late notes will be accepted!**

Discussion Questions and Attendance (15%):

Each Tuesday at the end of class, you are required to submit 2 discussion questions for class on Thursday. One question should refer to a specific concept or quotation from the text. Both questions should stimulate discussion in your classmates. This activity will be completed in class, and counts towards your attendance.

Mid-term Exam (20%)

The mid-term exam will be a take home essay exam, covering readings assigned through Week 6. You will receive a set of essay prompts and have one week to complete the exam. The Mid-term Take Home Essay Exam will be due March 3rd via Moodle. This is a no contact exam, and I will not answer substantive questions about the exam after our class on Tuesday.

Final Comprehensive Exam (20%)

The final exam will be a take home essay exam. The exam will cover readings assigned throughout the *entire* semester. You will receive a set of essay prompts. The Final Comprehensive Take Home Essay Exam will be due by May 8th at 11:30am via Moodle. This is a no contact exam, and I will not answer substantive questions about the exam after our final class meeting.

Essay Assignments (30%)*

Upon completion of each of the three theoretical traditions (Classical, Modern, Revolutionary) of the course, you will write a 4-6 page essay (double-spaced) that addresses the following:

- Compare and contrast the central arguments of 2-3 of the thinkers from this theoretical era, identifying areas of agreement and disagreement.
- Outline the key concepts in each work you select, and include a comprehensive discussion of the argument(s) or data from the text that is used to support and explain the theoretical concepts.
- Provide a discussion of the social impact of these theoretical traditions in both their own historical era and the present.

***Essay Assignments are designed to meet the 4th hour requirement for this course.**

Course Policies

Gettysburg College Honor Code

All students of Gettysburg College are required to adhere to the College's Honor Code. Academic dishonesty, including (but not limited to) cheating and plagiarism, will not be tolerated. If you have any questions or concerns regarding whether or not something is plagiarism, please contact me. Further information and the complete Honor Code can be found at <https://www.gettysburg.edu/offices/academic-advising/honor-code/>

- **All submitted work must include a signed copy of the Honor Code pledge:**
I affirm that I have upheld the highest principles of honesty and integrity in my academic work and have not witnessed a violation of the Honor Code.

Academic Resources

This is a writing intensive course. If you feel that writing is not your strongest ability, I encourage you to contact the Writing Center, located on the ground floor of Breidenbaugh Hall. The Writing Center's peer tutors can help you develop and organize ideas, revise and edit drafts, and share writing strategies for this and other classes. The center is open Sunday through Thursday from 4:00-10:00pm for drop-in visits and appointments. Visit the Writing Center at <https://www.gettysburg.edu/academic-programs/english/student-opportunities/the-writing-center.dot> for more information.

Citation Format

Students in this course are required to follow ASA (American Sociological Association) guidelines for citation and style format. The Department of Sociology's Style Guide and other resources are available at <https://www.gettysburg.edu/academic-programs/sociology/current-students/writing-guides.dot>

Attendance

Attendance is vital for this course. You may have **2 unexcused absences** during the semester. Your final grade will be reduced by one letter grade for each unexcused absence beyond the two. Students with extraordinary circumstances are required to meet with me.

Late Work

Assignments are due by the beginning of the scheduled class. Late papers will be accepted within 3 days of due date, with a 10% late penalty. **No papers will be accepted after 3 days.** Students may request an extension before the due date to avoid a late penalty, but an extension will only be granted in the case of extreme and documented circumstances.

Technology Use

Cell phones and other electronic devices should be turned off before class. **Do not text or use your phone during class.** Please come to class prepared to take notes.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and need special accommodations for any aspect of this course, contact me by the end of the second week of class so that we can make arrangements.

Religious Holidays

Gettysburg College is fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Students have the right to engage in essential practices of their faith while minimizing conflict with the course requirements. Contact me to make accommodations for your Religious Observances.

Classroom Conduct

A core tenant of Gettysburg College's mission is "the worth and dignity of all people." I consider this one of the most important things that you will learn in this class. The nature of the material we are going to cover may include difficult discussions and challenging ideas. Throughout this course, students are expected to treat one another and the professor thoughtfully and with respect. Above all, it is your responsibility to acknowledge the worth and dignity of all your classmates, yourself, and your professor. To help everyone accomplish this, **hate speech is unacceptable, and racist, sexist, homophobic, Islamophobic, transphobic, classist or other pejorative or discriminatory language will not be tolerated.** I know that we are in a time of great social tension and emotions can run high. We will discuss concepts that make you uncomfortable, make you question your values, and even sometimes make you angry. This is part of developing your intellectual and ethical identities. It is your responsibility to manage your emotions and behavior properly at all times. If you cannot, you will be asked to leave.

Pronoun and Name Usage

This course affirms people of diverse identities, including all gender expressions and gender identities. If I refer to you by an incorrect pronoun ("s/he"), please notify me of your correct pronoun (she, he, they, ze, etc.). Additionally, if you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, let me know. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

SOC 296A: Introduction to Sociological Theory – Course Schedule

Introduction

Week 1: January 21 & 23

Course Introduction and Syllabus Review

Weekly Readings

- *Classical Sociological Theory*, Introduction
- *Classical Sociological Theory*, Chapter 39 “On Sociological Theories of the Middle Range”
- *Contested Knowledge*, Introduction (Also available on Moodle)

Classical Theoretical Tradition

Week 2: January 28 & 30

Weekly Readings

- *Contested Knowledge*, Chapter 2 “The Revolutionary Theory of Karl Marx”
- *Classical Sociological Theory*, Part III “The Sociological Theory of Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels”

Assignments

- Weekly Reading Notes Due Tuesday

Week 3: February 4 & 6

Weekly Readings

- *Contested Knowledge*, Chapter 4 “The Ironic Social Theory of Max Weber”
- *Classical Sociological Theory*, Part V “The Theory of Max Weber”

Assignments

- Weekly Reading Notes Due Tuesday

Week 4: February 11 & 13

Weekly Readings

- *Contested Knowledge*, Chapter 3 “The Promise of Sociology: Durkheim”
- *Classical Sociological Theory*, Part IV “The Sociological Theory of Emile Durkheim”

Assignments

- Weekly Reading Notes Due Tuesday
- **Classical Theoretical Tradition Essay Due Thursday, February 13**

Modern Theoretical Tradition

Week 5: February 18 & 20

Weekly Readings

- *Classical Sociological Theory*, Part VI “The Self”
- *Moodle*: “Society in America,” Excerpt Vol. 1
- *Moodle: The Soul of Black Folks*, Chapter 1

Assignments

- Weekly Reading Notes Due Tuesday

Week 6: February 25 & 27

Assignments

- **Mid-term Take Home Essay Exam Passed Out February 25**

NO CLASS - February 27

Week 7: March 3 & 5

Weekly Readings

- *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, Part I “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life”
- *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, Part I “Symbolic Interactionism”

Assignments

- **Mid-term Take Home Essay Exam Due March 3 Submitted on Moodle**
- Weekly Reading Notes Due Tuesday

Week 8: March 10 & 12

- **NO CLASS - Spring Break**

Week 9: March 17 & 19

Weekly Readings

- *Contested Knowledge*, Chapter 7 “The Moral Sociology of C. Wright Mills”
- *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, Part IV “The Power Elite”
- *Moodle: The Sociological Imagination*, Excerpt

Assignments

- Weekly Reading Notes Due Tuesday
- **Modern Theoretical Tradition Essay Due Thursday, March 19**

Revolutionary Theoretical Tradition

Week 10: March 24 & 26

Weekly Readings

- *Contested Knowledge*, Chapter 12 “Michel Foucault’s Disciplinary Society”
- *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, Part V “The Sociological Theory of Michel Foucault”

Assignments

- Weekly Reading Notes Due Tuesday

Week 11: March 31 & April 2

Weekly Readings

- *Contested Knowledge*, Chapter 14 “Feminist Theory and Masculinity Studies”
- *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, “The Conceptual Practices of Power”
- *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, “Black Feminist Epistemology”
- *Moodle: “The Combahee Women’s Collective,”* Excerpt

Assignments

- Weekly Reading Notes Due Tuesday

Week 12: April 7 & 9

Weekly Readings

- *Contested Knowledge*, Chapter 15 “Critical Race Theory/White Studies”
- Moodle: “Anzuldua, Asante, Kendall and McIntosh,” Excerpt

Assignments

- Weekly Reading Notes Due Tuesday

Week 13: April 14 & 16

Weekly Readings

- *Contested Knowledge*, Chapter 16 “Lesbian, Gay and Queer Theory/Heterosexual Studies”
- Moodle: “Butler, Katz & Rich,” Excerpt

Assignments

- Weekly Reading Notes Due Tuesday
- **Revolutionary Theoretical Tradition Essay Due Thursday, April 16**

Emerging Post-Disciplinary Theory

Week 14: April 21 & 23

In-Class Video and Discussion

- *Networks of Outrage and Hope* by Manuel Castells

Weekly Readings:

- *Contested Knowledge*, Chapter 19 “Global Capitalism: Immanuel Wallerstein and Manuel Castells”

Assignments

- Weekly Reading Notes Due Tuesday

Week 15: April 28 & 30

Weekly Readings:

- *Contested Knowledge*, Introduction to Part VII
- *Contested Knowledge*, Chapter 22 “Jeffery Alexander”
- *Contested Knowledge*, Chapter 23 “Nancy Fraser”

Assignments

- Weekly Reading Notes Due Tuesday
- **April 30: Final Comprehensive Take Home Essay Exam Passed Out**

Final Comprehensive Exam

- **Final Comprehensive Take Home Essay Exam Due on Friday, May 8 via Moodle by 11:30am. NO LATE FINAL EXAMS WILL BE ACCEPTED!**