

Advanced Sociological Theory **SOCI 6305 Spring 2020**

CRN 10575 3.00 Credit Hours 100% face-to-face instruction
Tuesdays 5:30-8:30; Pafford 202

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There are more ideas on earth than intellectuals imagine. And these ideas are more active, stronger, more resistant, more passionate than "politicians" think.

We have to be there at the birth of ideas, the bursting outward of their force: not in books expressing them, but in events manifesting this force, in struggles carried on around ideas, for or against them. Ideas do not rule the world.

But it is because the world has ideas (and because it constantly produces them) that it is not passively ruled by those who are its leaders

or those who would like to teach it, once and for all, what it must think.

– Michel Foucault

COURSE DESCRIPTION & STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this class, we will review major classical and contemporary theoretical contributions that are foundational to the discipline of sociology. We will begin by examining what theory is, what theory does, and why theory matters. We then explore the origins of sociological theory by reading canonical works by Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. Then, we will assess this classical canon critically as we progress into more contemporary eras. We will read the works of diverse contemporary theorists who informed major schools of thought, including Symbolic Interactionism, Critical Theory, Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Social Constructionism. The course concludes with a close reading of intersectionality theory, featuring a monograph by Patricia Hill Collins, a contemporary sociologist theorizing about social issues relevant to the world in which we currently live.

As we digest these theories, we will critically evaluate the power dynamics of structure versus agency. You will learn to apply social theory to everyday life and to your research projects. By the end of the course, students will be able to understand theoretical concepts and terminology, the assumptions that underpin different theoretical orientations, and how particular theories can explain social realities.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

- Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckmann. 1966. *The Social Construction of Reality*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday. ISBN: 0385058985
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment, 2nd Edition*. New York and London: Routledge. ISBN: 0415924847

- Rojas, Fabio. 2017. *Theory for the Working Sociologist*. New York: Columbia University Press. ISBN: 9780231181655
- Seidman, Steven. 2017. *Contested Knowledge: Social Theory Today, 6th Edition*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. ISBN: 9781119167594
 - The library has the first three books on reserve for 3-hour checkouts. The Rojas book is also available as a library e-book.
- Additional readings on CourseDen

COURSE EVALUATION & GRADING

Evaluation Criteria

- 20% Reading Responses
- 25% Paper 1
- 25% Paper 2
- 30% Final Paper

Grading Scale

A = 90-100
 B = 80-89
 C = 70-79
 F = 0-69

Reading Responses – 20%

To encourage active engagement with the readings and to ensure comprehension, you are required to submit 10 reading responses throughout the term. We have 15 weeks of class, so you may elect to skip a weekly response at times. Or, you may turn in more than 10 and I will count your highest 10 grades for this portion of your course grade. On days with primary theory reading assignments, you must respond to one of the readings from them (not from the Seidman or Rojas texts).

Reading responses should be 1-page, double-spaced, and written in your own words. Responses should contain two parts: 1) a summary that identifies the main points and central argument of the reading, and 2) a critique or question. The summary should be $\frac{3}{4}$ of the response. Each reading response will be graded on a 0-100 scale based on the summary (70), critique or question (20), and writing (10), and averaged to count for 20% of your final course grade.

Papers 1 and 2 – 25% each

This semester I will assign 2 papers (~6 pages each) to assess your understanding of core theories. Paper 1 will be based on classical theories; Paper 2 will be based on contemporary theories. More specific instructions will be given on CourseDen as the due dates approach. I will grade each paper using the conventional numerical system. Papers are worth a total of 50% of your final course grade. All papers should be typed, double-spaced, page-numbered, stapled, and include a title page. Use American Sociological Association (ASA) format.

Final Paper – 30%

The final paper will assess your understanding of the theories covered throughout the semester. It requires you to provide answers from a selection of different questions. It is due by 5:30pm on Tuesday May 5.

The instructor reserves the right to adjust the syllabus as needed.

POLICIES

Please review the [Common Language for Course Syllabi](#). It contains important material pertaining to your rights and responsibilities in this class, including information about accessibility services, academic success, writing support, and the honor code. Because these statements are updated as federal, state, and accreditation standards change, you should review the information each semester.

Attendance

Graduate students need to attend class for the duration of class. You can miss one class this semester without penalty. Two absences result in a 10-point final grade deduction, three absences result in a 20-point deduction, and four or more absences result in a failing grade. Three late arrivals (or early departures) under an hour count as one absence; two incidents of arriving one hour or more after class has started (or leaving early) count as one absence.

Accessibility Services

Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations/accommodations because of a disability/chronic illness, or if they need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify their instructor in writing and provide a copy of their Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR and no retroactive accommodations will be given. For information, please contact [Accessibility Services](#).

CourseDen

You are required to regularly check our CourseDen page. This site will include announcements, readings, and other important information.

Academic Honesty

UWG students are expected to adhere to the honor code and maintain academic honesty. Acts of academic dishonesty—including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, excessive collaboration, and resubmitting work from another class—can result in an “F” in the course. Honor code violations are reported to the Office of Community Standards. Trust that I treat academic dishonesty as a serious offense.

Missed and Late Assignments

- *Reading Responses* – Due in class; no late or make-up responses will be accepted.
- *Paper Assignments* – Turn in paper hardcopies of all assignments on the due dates. If you don't turn in a hardcopy by the due date, you may email it to me to have it count as turned in at that time, then turn in the hardcopy when you are on campus next. For each day that you turn in any paper assignment *late*, I will deduct 10 points.
- If class meets on a holy day of your faith, please inform me by January 21 so that we can arrange for missed assignments.

Classroom Environment

This class is an advanced seminar that requires your active participation. The texts require close, deep readings and, although short, may be more challenging to understand. Some of the readings in this course may seem inaccessible or dense due to the jargon-laden language. In order to stay on track, you must come to class having read all of the readings. If you have questions, note them and raise them in class. By staying on top of your readings, you will avoid falling behind as we progress through theories that have contributed to the discipline of sociology. If you need help, please talk with me.

Electronic devices are allowed for class purposes only. Audio and video recording of classes are not allowed without written permission from the instructor.

COURSE CALENDAR

(C) = CourseDen

January 7 **Introductions: The what and why of theory**

Seidman: "Preface," "Introduction"

Rojas: "Preface," "What Counts as Social Theory for This Book?"

January 14 **Marx: Conflict and Capital**

Seidman: "Introduction to Part I," "The Revolutionary Theory of Karl Marx"

Marx (C): "Estranged Labour," "The Manifesto of Class Struggle," "Capital and the Values of Commodities," "Capital and the Fetishism of Commodities," "Labour-Power and Capital"

January 21 **Weber: Bureaucracy and Domination**

Seidman: "The Ironic Social Theory of Max Weber"

Weber (C): "The Spirit of Capitalism and the Iron Cage," "The Bureaucratic Machine," "The Types of Legitimate Domination," "Class, Status, Party," "Types of Social Action"

January 28 **Durkheim: Solidarity and Anomie**

Seidman: "The Promise of Sociology: Emile Durkheim"

Durkheim (C): "Mechanical and Organic Solidarity," "Anomie and the Modern Division of Labor," "Sociology and Social Facts," "Suicide and Modernity"

February 4 **Critiquing the Canon / Marginalized Classical Thinkers**

Connell (C): "Why Is Classical Theory Classical?"

Gilman (C): "Women and Economics" (Part I only)

Du Bois (C): "The Souls of Black Folk" (Chapter I only), "Black Reconstruction and the Racial Wage"

Cooper (C): "The Colored Woman's Office"

February 11 **Symbolic Interactionism**

Cooley (C): "The Looking-Glass Self"

Goffman (C): "On Face-Work"

Garfinkel (C): from *Studies in Ethnomethodology*

PAPER 1 DUE

February 18**Critical Theory**

Lukács (C): from *History and Class Consciousness*

Gramsci (C): from *The Prison*

Horkheimer and Adorno (C): “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception”

February 25**Structuralism**

Saussure (C): from *Course in General Linguistics*

Merton (C): from *Social Theory and Social Structure*

Althusser (C): from “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses

March 3**Structuralism**

Rojas: “Strategic Action”

Rojas: “Values and Social Structures”

Seidman: “The Critical Sociology of Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu”

Bourdieu (C): from *The Logic of Practice*

March 10**Poststructuralism**

Rojas: “Combining Different Theories”

Seidman: “Michel Foucault’s Disciplinary Society”

Foucault (C): from *Discipline and Punish*

*****SPRING BREAK *****

March 24**Social Constructionism**

Berger and Luckmann: *The Social Construction of Reality*

Rojas: “Social Construction”

Seidman: “The Grand Theory of Talcott Parsons, Peter Berger, and Thomas Luckmann”

March 31**Power, Inequalities, Identities**

PAPER 2 DUE

Rojas: “Power and Inequality”

Seidman: “Introduction to Part V”

April 7**Politics of Identity**

Seidman: “Feminist Theory / Masculinity Studies”

Seidman: “Critical Race Theory / White Studies”

Seidman: “Lesbian, Gay, and Queer Theory / Heterosexual Studies”

Anzaldúa (C): from *Borderlands / La Frontera*

Lorde (C): “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House”

April 14**Intersectionality**

Collins: *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Parts 1 and 2)

April 21**Intersectionality**

Collins: *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Part 3)

Collins and Bilge (C): “What is Intersectionality?” 1-30