Course Overview

This course is designed to give you an overview of major themes in sociological theory. In addition, it should give you an idea of the relationship between sociological theory and sociological research, and of the process of building sociological theory.

This course has four broad goals:

1. To present the history of sociological theory
2. To encourage a theoretical mode of thought
3. To consider the theoretical implications of social research and action
4. To write well

Readings and Resources

Required Books

- Available at UNC Student Stores:

- Available at Internationalist Books, 405 W Franklin Street:
  Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. The Communist Manifesto (Pathfinder Press, 1847 (1987)).

Recommended Book

- Available at UNC Student Stores:
Supplementary Readings

All other readings are available either on the web or on the course website. Those available on the web are linked from the course website. A few readings are on reserve in the library, and should also be available by electronic reserve; these are marked with the LIB symbol. The course website is available through http://blackboard.unc.edu and is also linked from http://www.unc.edu/~aperrin.

There are several other good textbooks of social and sociological theory. These include Lewis Coser’s classic Masters of Sociological Thought and Turner et al.’s The Structure of Sociological Theory. You may find copies of these in the library or borrow my copies if you are interested.

Other Resources

Have a dictionary close at hand to look up words you don’t know. You can find an adequate one at http://www.dictionary.com if you prefer using an online version.

The UNC Writing Center (http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb) can help you with writing clearly and correctly.

There is an astonishing amount of information available on the World Wide Web. A significant proportion of that information—though by no means all—is true and relevant. By all means, use the Web to supplement your reading and knowledge, but use it critically and make sure you know the source of the information. You are responsible for establishing the reliability of information you glean from the web and use in course activities including discussions and written work.

FORMAL REQUIREMENTS

The requirements of this course are as follows:

Reading You must complete all the course readings. You are responsible for understanding the readings—make use of your fellow students, your dictionary, the Internet, your TA, and me to make sure you understand the readings. Course time is to be used for substantive discussion and further exploration of the implications of course readings, not for grasping the basic contents.

Reading is due on the first discussion session about the reading. You may decide whether to do readings before or after a lecture pertaining to them.

Participation You must attend, and participate in, all class discussions. You are also responsible for the information contained in course lectures.

Vocabulary Exercises You must turn in two short (one page or less) exercises in which you learn the meaning of a word in one of the class readings whose meaning you did not previously know. You should note the word, its definition, and its meaning in the context of the reading.

Exams There will be two examinations. The midterm examination will be a one-period, essay-style test. You may consult any printed materials you wish during the midterm exam.

The final exam will be a time-limited, take-home exam, due on Monday, May 5, at 3:00 pm. It will be available for pickup on Monday, April 28, by 3:00 pm. You may be required to view a video before taking the exam. If so, this will be announced in class.

Reading Response Choose one of the readings listed as “recommended” and write a short (2–4 page) response that relates the reading to other readings from the class. Your response may be synthetic (discussing the points made and how they are similar to, and different from, others in the class) or evaluative (judging the reading’s usefulness in understanding social phenomena). Due Friday, February 21

Final Paper The final paper is your opportunity to synthesize what you have learned during the class with outside interests and experiences. Your final paper must develop a sociological argument using appropriate sources. It is an academic paper and, as such, must be written in an appropriate style.
Choose an everyday setting—for example, a shopping mall, a café, a restaurant, etc.—and observe closely the interactions you see going on there. Analyze these interactions, and the social system of your observed setting, using at least two theorists from class.

If you have another topic, relevant to the course and its readings, on which you would like to write, you must discuss it and get approval before you begin work on it. Papers on other topics that have not been pre-approved will receive no credit. Due Friday, April 11

Completing these requirements adequately will earn you a B in the course. Completing them exceptionally well will earn you a B+, A-, or A, depending on the quality of work.

**Grading**

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Exercises</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Response</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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**Course Organization**

During most weeks, Monday’s class will be a combined lecture, to be held in Manning 304. Wednesday and Friday will be discussion classes; they will meet as follows:

- **Students with a PID ending in 0–4:** Manning 304
- **Students with a PID ending in 5–9:** Murphey 307

Check the syllabus schedule for exceptions to this rule.

Lectures and videos are integral to the content of the course. Slides and notes will sometimes be posted to the course website, but there is no substitute for attending the lecture.

**Course Policies**

**You are an adult.** As a student in this class, you are provided with a set of resources for learning the class’s contents, and you are expected to fulfill a series of requirements designed to evaluate the depth and breadth of your knowledge of those contents. Your grade, therefore, is a reflection of your success in utilizing the resources you have at your disposal. There will be no in-class quizzes or writing assignments, and there will be no extra credit or make-up assignments.

**You are responsible for the information in the readings and given during lectures.** If you do not understand something I say in a lecture, ask me during the lecture, during a later class, or privately via e-mail or office hours.

**On days when discussions are scheduled, participation is mandatory.** Your participation will be useless—and graded as such—if you have not done the reading.

**Assignments are due on the dates listed.** Make sure you give yourself sufficient time to finish assignments by their due dates. You will lose roughly one letter grade per day between the due date and
the date the paper is received. You may make the calculation yourself as to whether your work will improve sufficiently in the extra time to make up for the grade reduction. In exceptional cases, I may grant an extension; you must discuss this with me in advance.

**Your participation in this course is covered by the UNC Honor Code** (see [http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/studinfo.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/studinfo.html)). I take academic dishonesty—including, but not limited to, plagiarism—very seriously. There will be no excuses or second chances; if you have plagiarized the ideas or words of someone else without giving credit, you will be referred to the Student Attorney General. If you have questions as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, check [http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/plagiarism.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/plagiarism.html) or consult your TA or me.

**Course Schedule**

**January 8** Lecture: “Why Theory?” and course overview

**January 10** Lecture: Sociology, Social Theory, and the Problem of Modernity
Reading:
- Plato, “The Allegory of the Cave” (Book VII of *The Republic*) [www](http://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/platoscave.html)
- Immanuel Kant, “What is Enlightenment?” [www](http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/etexts/kant.html)

**January 13** Lecture: Émile Durkheim: Social Facts and Solidarity
Recommended Reading:
- Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method* [LIB]

**January 15** Discussion: Modernity and Sociology
Reading: Durkheim, “Anomie and the Modern Division of Labor,” “Sociology and Social Facts,” and “Suicide and Modernity,” pp. 70–82 in Lemert

**January 17** Discussion: Religion and Classification

**January 20** No Class - Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday

**January 22** Lecture: Émile Durkheim: Religion and Symbols
Recommended Reading:

**January 24** Discussion

**January 27** Lecture: Karl Marx: Humanity, Alienation, Capitalism
Recommended Reading:
- Michael Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent* [LIB](http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/labour.htm)

**January 29** Discussion
**Readings:**
- Marx, “Camera Obscura,” pp. 36–37 in Lemert

**January 31** Discussion

**February 3** Lecture: Karl Marx: Political Programme
**Recommended Reading:**
- Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air* [LIB]
- Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts* (Cambridge University Press 2000) [LIB]

**February 5** Discussion
**Reading:** Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, Preamble and Part I (pp. 21–36)

**February 7** Discussion
**Reading:** Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, Part II (pp. 36–46) and conclusion (pp. 56–58)

**February 10** Lecture: Marx and Weber: Opposing Worldviews?
**Recommended Reading:**
- Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* [LIB]

**February 12** Discussion
**Reading:** Weber, “Class, Status, Party,” pp. 115–125 in Lemert

**February 14** Discussion

**February 17** Lecture: Max Weber: Rationalization and Bureaucracy

**February 19** Discussion

**February 21** Discussion *(Reading Response Paper Due)*

**February 24** Lecture: Georg Simmel: Social Forms
**Recommended Reading:**
- Lewis Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict* (Free Press, 1956) [LIB]

**February 26** Discussion
**Reading:** Simmel, “The Isolated Individual and the Dyad” and “The Triad” (excerpts) from Kurt Wolff, ed., *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* [WWW]

**February 28** Discussion
**Reading:** “The Stranger,” pp. 184–188 in Lemert


**March 5** Exam Review *(Q&A Format - have questions ready!)*

**March 7** Midterm Exam
March 17 Lecture: Erving Goffman: Strategies of Interaction
   Recommended Reading:
   • Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart* [LIB]

March 19 Discussion

March 21 Discussion

   Recommended Reading:
   • Michèle Lamont, *Money, Morals, and Manners* [LIB]
   • Michèle Lamont, *The Dignity of Working Men* [LIB]

March 26 Discussion

March 28 Discussion

March 31 Lecture: Theory of Race
   Recommended Reading:
   • W.E.B. duBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* [LIB]
   • Heribert Adam, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind* (University of California Press, 1993) [LIB]

April 2 Discussion
   Reading: Henry Louis Gates, Jr., “‘Race’ as the Trope of the World,” pp. 532–539 in Lemert

April 4 Discussion
   Reading: Frantz Fanon, “Decolonizing, National Culture, and the Negro Intellectual,” pp. 359–364 in Lemert

April 6 Lecture: Theory of Gender
   Recommended Reading:
   • Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus* (Routledge, 1997) [LIB]
   • Dorothy Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic* (Northeastern University Press, 1987) [LIB]
   • Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (Routledge, 1990) [LIB]

April 9 Discussion
   Reading: Betty Friedan, “The Problem that Has No Name,” pp. 356–359 in Lemert

April 11 Discussion (**Final Paper Due in class**)

April 14 Video: *Blade Runner: The Director’s Cut* Part I
   Recommended Reading: Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Trans. Edmund Jephcott; Stanford University Press, 2001) [LIB]

April 16 Video: *Blade Runner: The Director’s Cut* Part II

April 21 Lecture: From Modernity to Post-Modernity
   Recommended Reading:
• Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* [LIB]
• Paul de Man, *The Resistance to Theory* [LIB]

**April 23** Discussion

**April 25** Discussion/Wrap-up

**April 28, 3:00 PM** Take-home exam available, 155 Hamilton Hall

**May 5, 3:00 PM** Take-home exam due, 155 Hamilton Hall