

“This is a sample syllabus only. Instructor may make changes to the syllabus in future courses.”

APPLIED SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY (SOC 723-QL)

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TEXTS:

Edles, Laura D. and Scott Appelrouth. 2010. *Sociological Theory in the Classical Era*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Grenfell, Michael James (ed). 2012. *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*. New York: Routledge.

Optional Text:

Scott, John. 2014. *A Dictionary of Sociology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Note: All texts are available in paperback editions, a less costly alternative to hard-bound copies.

ABOUT THIS COURSE: Theory is the compass that guides social science. As an applied sociologist, you must master the key concepts of the discipline, be able to relate them to the world around you, and understand the role that theory plays in the research process.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The objectives of this course are:

- To help students develop a clear understanding of some key concepts in classical and contemporary sociology and how these concepts relate to some of the perennial themes in the discipline
- To help students develop an appreciation of the link between sociological theory and practice
- To help students master the art of explaining abstract material in clear, precise ways that are easily understood by a lay audience
- To help students build an online community in which they can support and encourage one another as they complete this graduate program

COURSE DESIGN: This course is divided into modules, each of which should be completed during the designated time. Material is presented sequentially within the module. Start at the top of the module and work your way – item by item – through the material. As with any graduate course, the material

presented in each module is a starting point, a foundation for you to build upon through your own additional reading and exploration.

MY TEACHING PHILOSOPHY: Learning should be fun and exciting. My job as a teacher is to be a catalyst for this process by presenting information to you in a way that is accessible and engaging. As a student, your job is to maintain a positive attitude toward learning and work hard. This is especially important in an online course. In this digital environment we create a virtual classroom, a cyber place where learning occurs. Whether this place will be an effective and pleasant learning environment depends upon our work and the nature of our interactions. If our work displays curiosity, a respect for one another, a commitment to learning and to building a sense of community, this digital class can be truly electric. Remember, ultimately this is your class. Its success depends upon you.

GRADING: Your grade will be determined on a 100 point scale as follows:

Posts/Comments/Participation.....	20 pts
Theory Project.....	40 pts
Final Exam	40 pts
Total	100 pts

Grades will be awarded as follows:

90 points and above	A
80 to 89 points	B
70 to 79 points	C
60 to 69 points	D
59 points and below	F

COURSE PROJECTS:

Posts/Comments—Discussion posts will be conducted using VoiceThread, a software available to you at no cost. Your insights may be posted in video form (preferred), audio, or in writing (least preferred). At a bare minimum you should post something on the discussion board for each module and comment upon posts by two of your classmates. Discussion topics are detailed in each module. These posts and comments are a chance to engage in a discussion while building a respectful learning community. They should go beyond “Well done” or “Good idea.” However, moderation is a virtue. Overly long posts are both ineffective and disrespectful of other people’s time. As an applied sociologist you must learn to make substantive comments in a succinct and engaging fashion.

Approximately midway through the course, you will receive a cumulative grade for your posts and comments for modules completed up until that time. At the end of the course, you will receive another cumulative grade for discussions completed after the first grading period. These grades will depend upon: 1) how well you demonstrate your mastery of the information in the assigned material; 2) how well you connect this information to your own experience as well as to additional research and reading you undertake on your own; and 3) your efforts to foster an online community.

In a traditional class room, you would not expect a lively informative discussion to be confined to the last five minutes of the class. In an online environment, your posts and comments serve as a virtual version of the sort of discussion that occurs in a traditional class room. As such, it is vitally important that students begin posting in advance of the final deadline for a module. Timing is everything. Start

reviewing the material in a module right away and reflect upon the discussion topic as you go. Then, post as soon as you have completed the material. Check the discussion boards frequently, commenting on those posts you find interesting.

Theory Project:As an applied sociologist, you will frequently provide a sociological perspective on a phenomenon or issue under study, explaining relevant sociological theories and their relevance to a project. This assignment mirrors that scenario.

Having completed modules on the classic sociological theorists, you will pick a contemporary social phenomenon or issue. Assume you are the only sociologist in a group formed to address the topic you have chosen. Determine what concept (or concepts) from each of two of the classical sociologists apply to the topic. Then, develop a presentation for your colleagues explaining these theoretical concepts and why they are relevant to the group's work. Pick the concept (or concepts) you believe most relevant and show how this concept could be incorporated into your group project. For example, the concept might provide a central theoretical framework and hypotheses for your study, or it might offer a key strategic insight for solving a problem.

Your presentation should not run more than 15 minutes in length. You get to choose the format – PowerPoint, video, Prezi, or something else. But, be careful in your selection. Just as in the real world, it must work when I click the button. Remember, not everyone has the latest version of the newest super-duper AV software. So select programs and file formats that are widely used and readily available. (Also, this is an exercise in using common programs to create extraordinary presentations. You should not have to go out and purchase any type of presentation software or other equipment. If you do not have access to these tools, let me know, and I will make accommodations for you.)

You will be graded on the substance of your presentation (80% of your score) and the style (20% of your score). And while this is an exercise in presenting abstract material to a non-sociological audience, that does not mean sacrificing theoretical content. Rather it is an exercise in expressing theoretical concepts in a straight-forward and engaging manner. Your presentation is expected to be based upon the same level of academic rigor associated with a formal term paper. You want a finished product that engages an intelligent lay audience and yet would have a group of social theorists saying, "That student knows her/his stuff."

Exam – There will be a take-home final exam in this class. This exam is worth 40 points. It will consist of two sections. For the first section you will complete a scholarly review of one of two books – *Suicide* by Emile Durkheim or *The Sociological Imagination* by C. Wright Mills. This review should explain the historical context of the work, its impact upon the discipline, the intellectual tradition and/or roots influencing the work, the principal concepts and theoretical argument presented in the book, and your personal evaluation of the work. Your review should draw upon at least four scholarly articles dealing with the chosen work. This section will account for 20 points, 15 of which will be based on substance and five of which will be based upon style. Students are encouraged to begin work on this review early in the semester and complete it well before the rush of final exams. The second section of the exam will consist of three comprehensive essay questions testing knowledge of the material covered in the course. This section will also be worth 20 points with 15 points awarded based upon substance and five upon style. The exam will be accessible on **DATE TBA** and will be due by **TIME, DATE TBA**.

NETIQUETTE: Respect the opinions of others – and their right to express them during class discussions. Don't wait until the last minute to post online; after all, you would not wait until the last five minutes of class to speak and then expect a wonderful discussion to unfold. Be mindful of how your posts and actions will affect our online community. Be supportive of one another; no one rises by putting someone else down.

PARTICIPATION: Everyone participates in this class.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT (Paraphrased from the UAB catalog): Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. Such dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, abetting (i.e., helping someone else cheat), fabrication, misrepresentation of work, and plagiarism (i.e., presenting some other's work as your own.) Violations will be dealt with severely and to the extent allowed by UAB policies on academic misconduct. If you are unsure about what constitutes academic misconduct, refer to <http://main.uab.edu/Sites/undergraduate-programs/general-studies/academic-success/67537/> on the UAB website.

Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct. Plagiarism is the presentation of work as your own that is, in fact, not your own, such as copying the work of other students or failing to properly quote and reference library or internet sources. Whether you plagiarize intentionally or just carelessly, ignorance or plagiarism will not be accepted as an excuse. Go to the following web site and learn how to avoid plagiarism: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

You may search the web for additional descriptions of plagiarism and how to avoid it. If you are still unsure after investigating these sources, ask the instructor.

Tentative Course Outline^{*+}

Module 1. The Applied Tradition in Sociology -- Jan. 5 - 11

Intro

An Old Family Tradition

Settings

The Sociological Imagination

Readings - Applied Tradition

Weinstein, Jay. 2014. "What is the Place of Theory in Applied Sociology?" *Applied Sociology: Questions and Answers*. Retrieved 12/22/2014.

<http://www.aacc.edu/socgeo/gajweinsapsoc1.cfm>

Turner, Jonathan H. 1998. "Must Sociological Theory and Social Practice be So Far Apart? A Polemical Answer," *Sociological Perspectives*, 41(2): 243 – 258.

Putting theory to work to change health behavior

Discussion

Module 2.Theory Construction -- Jan. 12 - 18

Intro

Foundations of Sociology

Settings

A Map of Social Theories - Alan MacFarlane

Settings

Readings -- Social Theory

Edles, Laura Desfor and Scott Appelrouth. 2010. *Sociological Theory in the Classical Era*.

Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press. Pages 1 - 16.

“Chapter 3, The Role of Theory in Sociological Practice” in *Doing Sociology*.

Liebersohn, Stanley. 1991. “Einstein, Renoir, and Greeley: Some Thoughts About Evidence in Sociology.” *American Sociological Review* 57 (1): 1 – 15.

Discussion

Module 3.Ibn Khaldun -- Jan. 19 - 25

Intro

Ibn Khaldun

BBC Documentary on Khaldun - 45 mins

Ibn Khaldun and the Rise and Fall of Empires

Ideas of Ibn Khaldun -- 26 mins

Discussion

Module 4.Karl Marx -- Jan. 26 - Feb. 8

Intro

Readings - Marx (Part 1)

The Communist Manifesto <http://www.anu.edu.au/polsci/marx/classics/manifesto.html>

Edles, pgs.17 – 41

Alan MacFarlane on Karl Marx

Why Marx was Right -- Terry Eagleton

Marx - Part 2 (Feb 2 - 8)

Readings - Marx, Part 2

Edles, pgs 41 – 80

Marx's Theory of Alienation (Chapt. 1)

Marx's Theory of Class and Exploitation

"Why Marxism is on the Rise Again" - *The Guardian*

Discussion

Module 5.Emile Durkheim -- Feb. 9 - 15

Intro

Reading – Durkheim

Edles, pgs. 94 - 122 and pages 134 - 152.

Alan MacFarlane on Emile Durkheim

Durkheim and Social Solidarity

Discussion

Module 6. Max Weber -- Feb 16 - Mr 1

Intro
Reading - Max Weber
Edles, pages 167 - 181, 201 - 220.
MacFarlane on Max Weber
Freiburg Address
Max Weber visits North Carolina
Discussion

Applied Theory Project – Mr 2 – 8

Module 7. W.E.B. Dubois -- Mr 9 - 15

Intro
Reading – Dubois
Edles, pages 325 – 370
W.E.B. Dubois and The Philadelphia Negro
Discussion

Module 8. Pierre Bourdieu -- Mr 16 - 21

Intro
Ghassan Hage on Pierre Bourdieu
Reading - Pierre Bourdieu
Grenfell, pages 43 - 126.
Discussion

Module 9. Anthony Giddens -- Mr 30 - Ap 5

Intro
Anthony Giddens at theory.org.uk
Anthony Giddens - Understanding Society
The Music of Structuration
Anthony Giddens -- On Climate Change
Discussion

Module 10. Naomi Klein -- Ap 6 - 12

Intro
Naomi Klein - 99% and fight against climate change
This Changes Everything
Laura Flanders Interview with Naomi Klein
Beautiful Solutions
Naomi Klein Blog
Discussion

Module 11. David Gauntlett -- Ap 13 - 17

Intro

David Gauntlett on Play

Making is Connecting

Participation Culture

Caine's Arcade

Caine's Arcade 2

Making is Connecting.org

Discussion

* Assigned readings/activities are listed under each section on the Blackboard site.

+ Details subject to change at discretion of instructor. Any changes will be promptly noted and disseminated to the class.