

## SOC303: Sociological Theory

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 Office hours: M 2:30-3:45; W 2:30-4  
 Course times and locations: AH 222; TR 10-11:30

This course is an upper-level seminar for sociology majors. It is designed, in conjunction with research methods, to prepare you to do the kinds of thinking needed for the independent research you will do in senior seminar. In addition, this course will acquaint you with the major traditions of thought in sociological inquiry. We'll pay special attention to how contemporary theory builds on and develops classical concepts and to how sociological theory can inform our understanding of present-day social problems, such as environmental issues, crime, and failed states.

### **Texts**

The required text is available at the DePauw Bookstore. All other readings will be on Moodle or as e-books at the Roy O. West library (as marked on the syllabus).

Garner, Roberta and Black Hawk Hancock. (Eds.) 2014. *Social Theory: Continuity and Confrontation*. University of Toronto, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.

### **Evaluation**

This course will have three exams, two short papers, and a final paper.

Exam 1	25
Exam 2	25
Exam 3	25
2 short papers	10 (5 each)
Final Paper	10
Participation	5

**\*\*Late work and make-up exams will be accepted only in the case of serious, documented illness or family emergencies.**

### Short Papers

Short papers help students develop the skills for understanding social theory by providing practice with identifying arguments and applying them to new material. Each student will write a first short paper in the first seven weeks of the course and another in the next seven weeks of the course (i.e., one in classical theory and one in contemporary theory). The paper has two components:

1. An inclusive summary of the argument of the selection. In other words, your summary should not just focus on an aspect of the argument.
  - a. Your summary should be supported with relevant quotes from the text. These quotes should be followed with an in-text citation with the

theorist's surname (not Garner and Hancock), and the page number (eg Durkheim 31). You do not need a bibliography.

2. An application or a comparison of this theorist's ideas. In general, the application will be assigned for classical theorists. For contemporary theorists, you should make a meaningful comparison with another theorist we cover. For instance, I might discuss how Ritzer's ideas extend those of Weber's or how Parsons draws on Durkheimian theory. (You may also compare the work of two contemporary theorists.)

Other information:

- Note that when multiple readings from the same theorist are assigned on the same day, you only need to summarize one. Choose the reading most relevant to the application.
- Professor Bordt has some good strategies for reading theory; I adapt those with her permission in Appendix A.

Papers should be typed double-spaced and stapled and should be 2-3 pages.

#### Final Paper (3-5 pp)

The final project gives you the opportunity to start preparing for your senior seminar by using a theory to formulate a research question that you would be able to test with independent research.

#### Participation

DePauw makes it possible for students to become good at something in the most efficient way possible: doing it. Therefore, participation is a key element of the course. Everyone is expected to come to class on time, having read the assigned texts for the day and prepared to discuss them. In addition, I will frequently ask students to work together in groups, sometimes presenting their work to the class. In Appendix B, I give more details on expectations.

#### Grading

90% and above = A-, A

80%-89% = B-, B, B +

70%-79% = C-, C, C+

60-69% = D

59% and below = F

#### What the Grades Mean.

A = Work that goes beyond the requirements of the assignment by adding new insight, creativity and/or particularly thoughtful analysis. Demonstrates a comprehensive command of the course material, an exceptional ability to apply concepts to the real world, and a superior ability to organize and express ideas.

B = Work that adequately meets the requirements of the assignment. Demonstrates a solid command of the course material, an ability to apply concepts to the real world with only minor problems, and good organization and expression of ideas.

C = Work that partially meets the requirements of the assignment. Demonstrates acceptable command of the course material, a basic ability to apply concepts to the real world with some gaps and problems, and moderate skill in the organization and expression of ideas.

D = Work that marginally meets the requirements of the assignment. Demonstrates little command of the course material, minimal attempt to apply concepts to the real world, and limited ability to organize and express ideas.

F = Work that does not meet the requirements of the assignment. Demonstrates no command of the course material, unable to appropriately or consistently apply concepts to the real world, and insufficiently organizes and expresses ideas.

### **Academic Integrity**

All students are expected to adhere to DePauw's code of academic integrity. Please see a list of examples of academic dishonesty at:

<http://www.depauw.edu/handbooks/academic/policies/integrity/types/>

### **DePauw Disability Statement**

Special Needs: DePauw University is committed to providing equal access to academic programs and university-administered activities and reasonable modifications/accommodations to students with disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended in 2008. Any student needing special accommodations due to a disability should contact the Coordinator of Student Disability Services, Pam Roberts, 302 Harrison Hall or call (765) 658-6267.

### **Readings and Graded Work (Subject to Revision)**

**\*\*Readings are in the course text, unless otherwise noted.\*\***

**\*\*Please note that there is a paper due during the last two weeks of class\*\***

**\*\*Please note that there is an exam during the last two weeks of class\*\***

### **Week 1 Introduction: Modernity and Its Discontents (Th 8/27)**

### **Week 2: Foundations: Hobbes, Kant, and Rousseau (9/1-9/3)**

#### Readings:

T: "Of the Natural Condition and the Commonwealth" (Hobbes) "Wholesale Ruin" from Chapter 2, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (Moodle); Hobbes in Somalia (Moodle); "A New Approach to Order in Somalia" (Moodle)

Th: “Of the Social Contract” (Rousseau-- Moodle.); 1.4 (Immanuel Kant); 1.5 (Friedrich Nietzsche)

**Week 3 Marx (9/8-9/10)**

Week 3 (9/8-9/10)

T: Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts (Marx) (p.48-54.); *The Managed Heart*, Chapter 1 (Hochschild – Moodle)

**Paper option!**

Th: The rest of 2.1 (Marx)

Week 4 (9/15-9/17)

T: chapters 3 and 4 “The Growth Imperative of Capitalism” and “The Environment and Capitalism” in Magdoff and Foster, *What Every Environmentalist Needs to Know About Capitalism* (e-book); “Ryan and Durning, Prologue; Coffee; and Conclusion(Moodle);

**Paper option (relevant reading of Marx + any of today’s readings)**

Th: Durkheim – reading 3.1.2 and 3.1.3

Week 5 (9/22-9/24)

T: 3.2 The Legacy of Durkheim + Kane, “Sports and Academic Culture” (moodle)

**Paper option (relevant Durkheim reading + Merton or Kane)**

**Th: EXAM 1 Location TBA**

Week 6 Weber (9/29-10/1)

T: 4.1 Weber

Th: 4.2 The Legacy of Weber: George Ritzer (You don’t need to read Skocpol.)

**Paper option**

Week 7: (10/6-10/8)

**T:** “The Death Factory” and “Epilogue” from Sofsky and Templer, *The Order of Terror: The Concentration Camp* (e-book);

**Paper option**

Th. Pp. 11-24, “Nature and Space” and pp. 223-247, “Compulsory Villagization in Tanzania” from *Seeing Like A State* (Scott – Moodle)

**Paper option**

Week 8: (10/13-10/15)

T: Charrad and Adams, pp 6-8; Ikpe, “Patrimonialism and Military Regimes in Nigeria” (Moodle)

Th: Chapter 6: The American Emergence, 6.1, 6.3, 6.5

Week 9 (10/20-10/22) FALL BREAK

Week 10 (10/27-10/29)

T: Chapter 7 Reconstructed Marxism – just 7.1 and 7.2

**Paper option**

Th: Chapter 8 American Hegemony and Its Critics: pp. 279-294; 302-310

**Paper option**Week 11 (11/3-11/5)

**T: EXAM 2 Location TBA**

TH Chapter 9: The Social Theory of Erving Goffman

**Paper option**Week 12 (11/10-11/12)

T: Chapter 10: Power, Bodies, and Subjects: The Social Theory of Michel Foucault

**Paper option**

Th: Alice Goffman, “On the Run...” (Moodle)

Week 13 (11/17-11/19)

T: Chapter 11: The Social Theory of Pierre Bourdieu

**Paper option**

Th: Chapter 13: Issues of Race and Ethnicity in a Post-Colonial World, pp 455-473

**Paper option**Week 14 (11/24 + Thanksgiving)

T: Chapter 14: Highlighting Gender and Sexuality, pp 485-502; 510-517

**Paper option**

Th: Thanksgiving

Week 15 (12/1-12/3)

T: Chapter 17: Global Views, 611-635; Barthes, 601-608 and Review

**Paper option**

**Th: EXAM 3 Location TBA**

Week 16: (12/8-12/10)

T: Paper Draft 1 due

Th: Paper – final draft due

## APPENDIX A

### Advice on Reading for this Course (adapted from Prof. Bordt)

Please bring your books or articles to class for discussion on the days they are assigned. Although not the eco-friendliest suggestion, I highly recommend that you print off the Moodle articles. This will allow you to mark up the articles, make notes and have them available during discussion.

You are responsible for all of the assigned readings, even those that we do not specifically discuss in class. Reading and understanding ideas on your own is part of the college experience. This does not mean you cannot ask for help when you need it; please bring your questions to class or to me.

When to Read. You should read each assignment and come to class prepared to discuss it on the day in which it appears on the course schedule. For example, the readings listed for Tuesday should be read before coming to class on Tuesday.

How to Read. Develop a system of reading and note taking that will allow you to answer the following questions after each article:

1. What is the author's main point or argument?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this argument? (e.g., Does the author present sufficient evidence to back up his/her argument? Can you think of counter-evidence that the author ignores? Is the logic consistent? Does the author have a particular bias?)
3. How does this article relate to this week's topic and other readings?
4. What are the implications of this reading for your own life?

In the margins of the books/articles note places where you have questions, where the text is confusing, and where the author makes a statement that you think is especially worthy of our attention. [Note: if you want to resell your books and minimize marking them up use Post-It notes or some other system to engage with the reading.]

## APPENDIX B

### Class Participation (Adapted from Prof. Bordt)

An important component of this class is discussion. There are different kinds of contributions you can make to discussion, all of which you are expected to work on over the course of the semester. None of these are possible without coming to class each session having read the assigned readings:

1. Listening closely to your colleagues, in order to build on what has already been said;

2. Asking colleagues to clarify unclear contributions;
3. Summarizing key ideas that have emerged during the discussion;
4. Articulating an answer to a posed question;
5. Raising questions that help advance discussion;
6. Proposing an original idea related to the topic of discussion;
7. Drawing on evidence (social scientific data, personal experience, popular culture) to either support or challenge ideas;
8. Constructively critiquing an idea offered in the readings or by a class member (including me);
9. Pointing out how various comments complement each other or are at odds;
10. Playing “devil’s advocate.”

I want to stress that we will be *working* on these skills. You are not expected to have these perfected by the first day of class or even by the end. All I am asking is that you make a good faith effort to practice them. My job is to provide a safe and non-threatening atmosphere that, hopefully, will facilitate discussion.

### Grading Participation

“A” grades are reserved for students who are always in class; show evidence of having read and thought about the reading with some depth; listen well to other students; help focus our discussions with thoughtful comments and questions about the broader implications and comparative possibilities of the readings; take a leadership role in discussion; and generally offer creative, imaginative ways of engaging the texts and the themes of the course.

“B” grades are for students who are always or almost always in class (no more than one absence) and take a thoughtful part in our discussion; participate actively and well, engaging in texts and themes of the course with some depth; and occasionally take leadership for the direction of the discussion.

“C” grades are for students who come to class regularly but rarely speak or are active in discussion but have 2-3 absences or participate in discussion in a way that shows little evidence of having thought much about the readings.

“D” grades are for students who attend irregularly (4 absences) or rarely show signs of having done or thought much about the readings.

“F” grades are for students who miss 5 or more classes or do not speak or show evidence of having done the reading.