



Sociology 436.001: Sociological Theory

COURSE SYLLABUS Spring 2013

Instructor: Yvonne Villanueva-Russell (Associate Professor)

Class Time: Monday & Wednesday: 2:00PM – 3:15PM

Class Location: Ferguson Social Sciences Room 312

Office: Ferguson Social Sciences 232

Office Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays: 8AM-9AM; 11AM-Noon; 1PM-2PM
Fridays: 11AM-Noon
& by appointment

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eCollege Website: <http://www.tamuc.edu/myleo.aspx>

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook:

- 1) Kivisto, Peter. 2013. Social Theory: Roots and Branches (fifth edition). New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780199937127
- 2) Several Xeroxed readings. These will be accessible through the eCollege website

Recommended Textbook

- 1) Ritzer, George. 2010. Contemporary Sociological Theory and Its Classical Roots. (third edition). New York: McGraw-Hill. ISBN: 9780073404387

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog Description:

This course examines the nature of theory and reviews major sociological theories, especially structural-functionalism, conflict theory, exchange theory and

interactionism. Special attention is given to leading figures representing the above schools of thought. Prerequisite: Sociology 111 or its equivalent.

Student Learning Outcomes

- 1) Students will demonstrate comprehension of the major sociological theorist's ideas and concepts as measured through examinations and online discussion boards
- 2) Students will demonstrate the ability to apply sociological concepts and theories through written essays

Course Format: This course will revolve around numerous readings and active discussion in class of these selections, as well as lecture to supplement and provide background information on each theorist or theoretical paradigm. We will spend the bulk of time wading through and struggling to understand the writings through primary readings composed by the actual theorists, themselves. But, we will supplement this with discussions as to the relevance of these ideas, and investigate the socio-cultural circumstances surrounding these writers and their ideas.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

TESTS AND GRADING PROCEDURES

Your grade in this course will be made up of two types of assignments: written papers and online discussion boards. A description of each of these course elements is below:

A. Theorist Question and Answer Papers: 4 @ 100 points each

This course assignment is designed to measure Student Learning Outcome #1: Students will demonstrate comprehension of the major sociological theorist's ideas and concepts as measured through examinations and Student Learning Outcome #2: Students will demonstrate the ability to apply sociological concepts and theories through written essays

1. **Assignment Description:** Over the course of the semester, five Question and Answer papers will be assigned, of which, students will complete ANY FOUR papers of their choosing. These papers will serve as a written review of course material covered, and will occur immediately following the completion of each unit/segment of the course.

A list of paper assignments and the due dates appear below:

Theorist/Theory	Due Date
Structural-Functionalism	(M) February 11
Conflict Theory	(M) February 27
Symbolic Interactionism	(M) April 1
Exchange Theory	(W) April 10
Feminist Theory	(W) April 24

2. **Assessment:** Each Question and Answer Paper will consist of 4 questions which will measure the student's comprehension of sociological theory, as well as

their ability to apply these concepts to real world scenarios. A rubric will be used to grade each exam—this will be shared with students in the assignment instructions. Each paper will be worth 100 points

3. IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT ALL WRITTEN WORK:
 - a. Students will complete ANY FOUR of the five Question and Answer Papers.
 - b. If a student completes all five papers, the 4 highest grades will be recorded. An extra paper cannot be used as extra credit. Papers cannot be re-done or re-graded.
 - c. Students are expected to integrate as many relevant sociological concepts as possible, making sure to define them before using them in their papers.
 - d. Students must cite in-text using APA, ASA or another style they are familiar with
 - e. All written work should be submitted to the dropbox on eCollege by the due date
 - f. Late assignments will receive a 20% deduction in points
 - g. No written assignment will be accepted beyond one week of the original due date.
 - h. Written assignments cannot be re-done or re-graded.
 - i. All written work must be submitted as a *WORD (.doc) attachment* to the dropbox on eCollege. Do not email assignments to your professor, and make sure assignments are .doc or .rtf files.
 - j. Any written work in this class is subject to turnitin review (including posts on discussion boards). Turnitin.com is a website that checks for plagiarism and generates an originality report that notes which parts of a paper appear unattributed to other student papers, internet sources or articles and books. Please make sure that you cite wherever appropriate. If you need help or advice on how to do this, please contact your professor. See document sharing for guidelines on how to cite. **Students who plagiarize will receive a zero on the assignment in question.**

B. Online Discussion Boards: 2 @ 34 points each

This course element is designed to measure Student Learning Outcome #1: Students will demonstrate comprehension of the major sociological theorist's ideas and concepts as measured through examinations and online discussion boards

1. **Assignment Description:** In addition to written papers, will extend our class discussion using two online discussion boards over the course of the semester.

Here are some ground rules for our discussion boards:

- a. **There are no minimums or maximums on how much or how little you post on the discussion boards. The goal is to achieve quantity & quality. I am striving for us to have a genuine conversation on the boards this semester.** You may post a new question, start a new thread, or simply respond to other students. For this to happen, we need a couple of guidelines: post or reply, and then **follow-up**. You will not achieve full points by just logging on in the last hour of

the last day and posting a couple of random comments on others' posts. Ideally, you'll post something, check back in a few hours and check-in again over the course of several days to interact, reply, respond and comment on what others have said on a single thread. **You don't always have to post a new topic or start a new thread.** You should aim to contribute meaningfully and engage in actual reciprocal interaction, extending a thread to its maximum.

- b. This discussion will take place within a set timeframe. After the deadline, your professor may post some summary comments of the discussion, highlighting the themes and questions that have emerged. Discussion boards cannot be made up. If you miss out, there is no way to makeup these points.
- c. Students should feel free to honestly post and defend their opinions, but should be tolerant of other students who express views that are contrary to their own. Discussion boards are places where *dialogue* occurs. They are not a debate that is to be "won" or places where "conversion" takes place. Feel free to explore differences in view points, but do not allow these conflicts to escalate into personal attacks. Please do *not* play devil's advocate or pretend to take a stance that is not genuine or authentically held.
- d. Full, complete sentences are required. Do not use jargon, abbreviations, or acronyms. So, no "LOL," "SMH," "IMHO" or "BTW," please.
- e. **IMPORTANT:** Demonstrate your "sociological imagination" by integrating relevant theories and concepts to help explain, support and defend the arguments you plan to make. **You will usually need to draw upon the articles for support. Be sure to CITE appropriately.**
- f. Spell-check your posts. You may want to draft your response in Microsoft Word, spell-check it, then cut and paste it into the discussion board on eCollege. You will not be able to go back and edit your post once it has been submitted to eCollege.

Here are the essentials for our discussion boards this semester:

Cardinal Rules- OBEY!!!	Try NOT to:	Try to:
Wikipedia cannot be used as a credible source of information	Do not rely on personal experiences as your "proof"	Take a firm stance & defend it
The Bible cannot be used as an academic source of information	Do not rely on overly-psychological or psychoanalytical explanations	Pose a question to take the discussion deeper
Do NOT call people "crazy"	Do not give us more to read- summarize and provide a link to a website for those who are	Engage in reciprocal interaction with other students within a single thread

	curious, instead	
Do NOT attribute deviance to the whims of individuals in which patterns cannot be deciphered	Do not post overly-long or overly-complex responses	Give us something new to think about
Do NOT simply say "I agree" with someone's post (send them a private email, instead)	Do not wait until the last day to post. Do no post only on one day at one sitting.	Cite whenever appropriate

2. **Assessment:** Discussion board grades will be decided on the following rubric:

Grading rubric- discussion boards

Criteria	Possible Points	Your Points
Did student post more than once, and on more than on one day at one sitting?	3	
Did student make a genuine attempt to engage in ongoing conversation within a single thread?	4	
Did student contribute and add something original & valuable to the discussion	6	
Did student demonstrate comprehension of the assigned readings	6	
Did student integrate sociological concepts and theories where appropriate?	6	
Did student put comments in sociological context rather than personal opinion	3	
Was the student collegial and professional in interactions with fellow students?	3	
Proper grammar and citations used throughout	3	
SCORE	34 points	points

3. IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT DISCUSSION BOARDS:

- a. Each discussion board is worth 34 points
- b. *Discussion board assignments CANNOT be made up
- c. *All students must participate in BOTH discussion boards
- d. *Any written work in this class is subject to turnitin review (including posts on discussion boards). Turnitin.com is a website that checks for plagiarism and generates an originality report that notes which parts of a paper appear unattributed to other student papers, internet sources or articles and books. Please make sure that you cite wherever appropriate. If you need help or advice on how to do this, please contact your professor. See document sharing for guidelines on how to cite. **Students who plagiarize will receive a zero on the assignment in question.**

C. Attendance & Participation: 25 points

Regular class attendance is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the material covered during the semester. Therefore, attendance and participation in class will be taken and recorded regularly. Occasions may arise which make it necessary for a student to miss class, but absences on test dates will not be excused without significant extraneous circumstances. It is your responsibility to have an understanding of course material whether you were present in class or not. A total of **25 points** will be awarded based on attendance and participation in this class.

Habitual tardiness or premature exit from the class will constitute an unexcused absence. If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to make sure that you sign the attendance sheet. Do not bother trying to sign in a friend as if they were present when they were not—I check signatures for consistency, and there will be serious repercussions if I discover this practice occurring.

Grading Procedures:

A total of 493 points are attainable in this course. The breakdown of points is as follows:

Question & Answer Papers (4 @ 100 points each)	=	400 points
Online discussion boards (2 @ 34 points each)	=	68 points
<u>Attendance & participation</u>	=	25 points
Total points	=	493 points

Final course grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

443 – 493	(90-100%)	A
394 – 442	(80-89%)	B
345 – 393	(70-79%)	C
295 – 344	(60 -69%)	D
294 and below	(50% and below)	F

Grades of Incomplete:

I do not assign grades of incomplete in this course. Your grade will assigned based on the points you have earned from all completed work at that time. It is your responsibility to finish assignments prior to their due dates or to make alternate arrangements for their completion. Do not assume I can or will extend due dates or course requirements for your individual needs or preferences. All coursework must be submitted by 5PM on Monday, May 6th.

I do not drop students from my courses. If you feel Sociology 436 is not the course for you, please take the necessary steps to remove yourself from this class. Simply not participating or logging on, in hopes that I will remedy the situation for you

will not occur. You are responsible for the consequences stemming from either coming to class, or not coming to class. [Student may submit a "drop request" through MyLeo to drop this course.]

Important dates:

Last Day to Drop: Feb 29, 2013

Last Day to Withdraw from the semester: April 26, 2013

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

This is primarily a face to face course, but will utilize eCollege for two online discussion boards. Course handouts, instruction assignments, PowerPoint lectures will be posted on eCollege as a supplement. In order to access eCollege, student will need the following:

Ability to open Adobe Acrobat files (.pdf), PowerPoint files (.ppt) and Word files (.doc)

Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means our courses work best if you are using a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0, or 8.0).

Your courses will also work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari 2.0 or better. Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser (3.0) on both Windows and Mac operating systems.

It is strongly recommended that you [perform a "Browser Test"](#) prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login to eCollege, click on the 'myCourses' tab, and then select the "Browser Test" link under Support Services.

For those of you who are not familiar with eCollege, I suggest you take the tutorial offered online. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact the folks in Technology Services.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

eCollege technical concerns: Please contact the eCollege HelpDesk, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by sending an email directly to helpdesk@online.tamuc.org. You may also reach the HelpDesk by calling 1-866-656-5511, or through online chat by clicking on the "Live Support" tab within your eCollege course.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement:

I expect each of you to be active and thoughtful participants within our classroom and learning community. You are to expect the same of me. This includes completing our readings related to course topics, individual written assignments, and completion of exams.

Email I [Yvonne.VRussell@tamuc.edu] is the best way to reach me, as I check it daily. You can expect to receive a reply to any inquiry within 24 hours (M-F). It is advisable to include the course number and your full name in any electronic correspondence with me.

In case of emergency, you may leave word for me through the Sociology & Criminal Justice department, who can forward your message to me: 903-886-5332.

Check your MyLeo email account regularly for announcements about our class!!!

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

I. Course Specific Procedures:

A. Makeup Exams:

Makeup exams and makeup discussion boards will not be given under any circumstances

B. Late Work

Written assignments are expected to be type-written, properly cited, and submitted to the dropbox on eCollege by the deadline noted in the assignment instructions. Assignments that are late will have a **deduction of 20%** of the assignment's value subtracted from their score. Assignments will no longer be accepted after **one week** has passed from the original due date.

C. Extra Credit and Curving:

From this syllabus it is very clear as to the number of assignments and the possible points to be attained in the course. From day one, you begin earning a grade in this class, so remember that when you decide to skip class, choose not to do the readings, or fail to take detailed lecture notes.

Do not rely on a friend to take notes for you, or for your instructor to explain what the readings are about, as it is your responsibility to read, listen and comprehend the material presented. If you do not understand a concept or issue, please ask me to clarify or stay after class for further elaboration. **I do not provide copies of class notes to students.** The exams will reflect a balance of in-class lecture and discussion, as well as outside readings so it is important for you to be consistently diligent in your efforts throughout the semester.

I have never and will never curve the grades of a class to conform to an artificial bell curve or other objective or subjective standard, so requests to do so will fall on deaf ears. That means that it is the students' responsibility to prepare for the exams, to make sure that they have acquired all information possible through attending lectures and doing the readings, and that they perform to the best of their abilities on the exams. I will assist the class by means of lectures, discussion, study guides and reviews, but I do not intend to manipulate your test score, drop a test score or inflate your test score so that it will be more to your liking. An improvement of grades will come from your studying efforts, and not from your

instructor's generous grading, so please do not expect or ask for more, or extra points in the course.

D. A Note about final grades:

Final grades are assigned on the 90, 80, 70% scale noted above. These percentages and their corresponding grades are firm. That is, if your final average is a 68% you have earned a "D." Let me spare you the conversation that inevitably follows: No, I cannot and will not round your grade up to a 70% or a "C." Students often protest this act, saying they were "only 2 points shy of a passing grade." This is not exactly correct. In truth, they were 2 percentage points away from the next grade, amounting to being 10 raw points off. This is the equivalent of an entire grade difference on a major quiz. Percentage points and raw points are two very different things. I will *not* round up a full percentage point in awarding you the next highest grade.

E. Academic Honesty:

Cheating is defined as the unauthorized use of texts or other aids in completing tests or assignments. Cheating is also defined as the use of materials in any assignment employed from any source without direct attribution (plagiarism). Please be conscientious and careful about giving credit and not taking someone else's work as your own. If in doubt, cite. If you are unfamiliar with how to cite, please see me and I will help you learn this valuable skill. A student who is guilty of cheating shall suffer serious penalties and at minimum, will receive a **zero** on the assignment in question. Blatant cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Department Head, who may wish to take further action independent of your professor's punishment. **Students who are found guilty of academic dishonesty will receive a zero on the assignment in question.**

*****If in doubt, check with your professor on citing procedures, format and style. See notes above about the use of turnitin.com in this class.**

F. Decorum and Civility

It is your prerogative to come to class, and I have provided an incentive for you to do so through attendance and participation points. However, by coming to class, you are making the commitment to be alert, attentive and courteous. Gossiping, phone calls, texting and newspaper reading can all wait until 11AM, and will not be tolerated while class lecture and discussion are occurring. If you lack the will power to control your behavior during class, please stay at home and do not distract other students who wish to listen and learn in our class. All cellular telephones, beepers and electronic devices should be turned off or set on silent mode before entering the classroom. Cells phones must not be visible and may not be checked during examinations.

II. University Specific Procedures:

**A. Special Needs:
ADA Statement**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library

Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Your professor will make every effort to accommodate your learning and testing needs as they are made known to me, as well. If you are an international student, or if English is not your primary language, you will be allowed to use a paperback dictionary during examinations.

B. Statement on Student Behavior

As stated in the student handbook: "All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment." (See Student Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct, for more information.) Please refer to the section on discussion boards about expected behaviors in these forums.

All cellular telephones, beepers and electronic devices should be turned off or set on silent mode before entering the classroom. **Cell phones must not be visible and may not be checked during examinations. Students are also not permitted to leave the classroom and re-enter it during an examination.** Be sure to have sharpened pencils, tissues and restroom needs taken care of prior to the beginning of the test.

COURSE OUTLINE/CALENDAR

Test dates and written assignments are scheduled tentatively at this time. They may be changed but advanced notice will be given in class. You are expected to read the assigned material prior to its discussion in class.

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment/Notes
(M) Jan 14	Introductory Remarks	None	
(W) Jan 16	Early origins of Sociology & Sociological Theory	Lecture Only	Movie: <i>Modern Times</i>
(M) Jan 21	NO CLASS	NO CLASS	NO CLASS
(W) Jan 23	The role of positivism in foundational sociology	"What is a Social Fact?" p. 44	See "Positivism" handout on eCollege
(M) Jan 28	Emile Durkheim	"On Mechanical and Organic Solidarity" p. 39	
(W) Jan 30	Emile Durkheim	"Anomic Suicide"	
(M) Feb 4	Durkheim's lasting legacy	"Altruism and Fatalism: The Characteristics of Palestinian Suicide Terrorists"	
(W) Feb 6	Structural-Functional Theory	"The Unanticipated Consequences of Social Action" p. 197	
(M) Feb 11	Karl Marx	"Commodities" p. 23 AND "The General Formula for Capital" p. 33	Structural-Functional Q & A Due
(W) Feb 13	Karl Marx	"Alienated Labor" p. 3	
(M) Feb 18	Karl Marx	"Manifesto of the Communist Party" p. 15	
(W) Feb 20	Marx's lasting legacy	"A Manifesto of the Twenty-First-Century Academic Proletariat in North America" on eCollege	
(M) Feb 25	Conflict Theory	"The Basics of Conflict Theory" p. 235	
(W) Feb 27	Max Weber	"The Sociology of Charismatic Authority" p. 91 AND "Bureaucracy" p. 85	Conflict Q & A Due
(M) March 4	Max Weber	"The Spirit of Capitalism" p. 74	

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment/Notes
(W) March 6	Weber's lasting legacy	"Culture and Politics" p. 221	Online Discussion board
March 11-15	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
(M) March 18	Charles Horton Cooley	"Social and Individual Aspects of Mind" p. 165	
(W) March 20	George Herbert Mead	"The Fusion of the I & the Me" p. 190	
(M) March 25	Symbolic Interactionism	"Society as Symbolic Interactionism" p. 250	
(W) March 27	Illustrating Symbolic Interactionism	In-class exercise	
(M) April 1	Erving Goffman	Read "Aces and Bombers" on eCollege SKIM "Performances" p. 257	Symbolic Interactionism Q & A Due
(W) April 3	Exchange Theory	"Formulation of Exchange Theory" p. 320	
(M) April 8	Illustrating Exchange Theory	"Rule Enforcement Without Visible Means: Christmas Gift Giving in Middletown" on eCollege	
(W) April 10	Feminist Theory	"Doing Gender" p. 328	Exchange Theory Q & A Due
(M) April 15	Dorothy Smith	"Sociology from Women's Experience" p. 360	
(W) April 17	Patricia Hill Collins	"Toward an Afrocentric Feminist Epistemology" p. 350	
(M) April 22	Illustrating Feminist Theory	"'Am I Not a Woman?' The Rhetoric of Breast Cancer Stories in African American Women's Popular Periodicals" on eCollege	
(W) April 24	Postmodernism & the Beastie Boys	Lecture Only	Feminist Q & A Due
(M) April 29	Michel Foucault	"Panopticism" p. 508	
(W) May 1	Foucault's lasting legacy	The Politics of Health as a School-Sponsored Ethic" on eCollege	Online Discussion board
(M) May 6	FINAL EXAM 1:15PM-3:15PM		

