Sociological Theory  
Fall 2011

Instructor: Paul Prew  
Office: AH 113  
Office Hours: Tuesday by appointment  
Office Phone: 389-5674  
Email: paul.prew@mnsu.edu

“The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.”

Karl Marx

“No social study that does not come back to the problem of biography, of history and of their intersections within society has completed its intellectual journey.”

C. Wright Mills

Course Description
Sociological theory is the backbone of the study of Sociology. It provides us with the lens through which we understand the world. Theory is to the sociologist as the microscope is to the biologist (they have theories too, but just play along with the analogy!). Theories frame our understanding and allow us to make sense of a complex social world. In this class, you will be exposed to three of the most notable, if not controversial, social theorists: Marx, Weber and Durkheim. Because they are central to the discipline, we spend more time with these theorists. You will also hear from some lesser-known figures in Sociology to give you perspective on the “voices from below” that are often left out.

Course Objectives
● You will be familiar with the main concepts of the central theorists in Sociology.
● You will gain insight from Sociologists who highlight issues of gender and race/ethnicity.
● You will see the application of Sociology to an increasing international, globalized world.
● You will be able to apply Sociological concepts to the contemporary world.
● You will gain an appreciation for understanding the world through a theoretical lens, developing your own “Sociological Imagination.”

Grading for the Course Will Be Based on the Following:
● Weekly Quizzes 20%
● In-Class and Homework Assignments 25%
● Film Application Papers 30%
● Class Participation and Attendance 25%
● Grades for the course will use the +/- scale and will have divisions as follows: 92 and above = A, from 91.99 to 90 = A-, 89.99 – 88 = B+, 87.99 – 82 = B, etc.

Required Texts
Readings for the course are found on D2L. If you have difficulty with the format, please let me know.
Sociology Majors: Keep Copies of Your Work!
Since Sociological Theory is central to your understanding of Sociology in general, this course is crucial to Sociology Majors and will play a large role in your Senior Seminar course. I have created this class to apply Sociology to the real world and encourage you to relate the theoretical concepts in this course to events in contemporary society. Hopefully, you can take these skills into the courses and interest area of your choice. Also, if you are a Sociology major, you will be asked to apply what you have learned in your Sociology courses to your Senior Seminar class. Therefore, you are strongly encouraged to keep copies of your written work for your portfolio. You may keep a file in the department office, or at home, but make sure you keep copies of your work.

Course Expectations
- I have certain expectations for you when you are in the classroom.
  - **The use of laptops or cell phones is not permitted in the classroom.**
  - Other distractions such as text messages, conversations between students, etc. are not permitted.
  - I will stop the class if students are using laptops, checking cell phones, or otherwise distracting other students in the class.
  - If the problem persists, students distracting others will be asked to leave.
  - I request that you abide by these expectations, not for my benefit, but for the students around you.

Quality of Work and “Academic Honesty”
- Students are responsible for ensuring that their assignments, essays and general intellectual contributions are their own.
  - In other words, I demand that the students’ contributions are the result of their own creativity and critical assessment of the material covered during this course.
- I encourage students to study together and discuss the course material outside of class, but do not write your assignments together.
  - Intentional or unintentional similarities in papers, assignments or answers will result in the students failing the course.
  - This includes:
    - borrowing portions or whole essays from another source such as a friend or “paper mill.”
    - using authors’ ideas without proper credit,
    - submitting a paper that is not your own work,
    - similarities between student papers,
    - copying answers from others in class,
    - submitting work for others such as attendance sign in, assignments, etc.

Students’ Needs
- If you are having trouble in the class understanding the material or doing well on the exams, feel free to contact me.
- If you are worried about how you are doing in the class, contact me early in the term.
  - If you wait until late in the term, it may be too late.
- There are also resources on campus to aid your study skills and provide tutoring.
  - Check the syllabus, or ask me about your options.
- Please let me know if you have any need for accommodations in the classroom to meet your needs.
  - I realize that students have different learning styles and different needs.
  - My objective in this course is to get you to look at the world in a different, more sociological, way.
  - My goal is not to “weed out” those who cannot do well on a test.
  - In this way, I do encourage you to use my office hours or make an appointment to discuss the course material, concerns you may have, or general issues relevant to the course.
- For those of you who may have more specific needs, MSU-Mankato provides students with disabilities reasonable accommodation to participate in education programs, activities or services.
  - Students with disabilities requiring accommodation to participate in class activities or meet course requirements should first register with the Office of Disability Services (contact info below) and then contact me as soon as possible.
Resources for Students on Campus

There are many resources on campus for students, especially those new to the campus. Below you can find the location and contact information for various services on campus. They are there for you, so take advantage of them. All of these resources are aimed at helping you succeed and excel while you are here. Please ask me if there is anything I can help you find. I may be able direct you to other offices that can help you out.

### Tutoring and Other Services for All Students

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<tr>
<th>Center for Academic Success</th>
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<tr>
<td>Memorial Library in ML 125 (lower level)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone: 507-389-1791</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:academicsuccess@mnsu.edu">academicsuccess@mnsu.edu</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.mnsu.edu/success/">http://www.mnsu.edu/success/</a></td>
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### General Information and Help with Study Skills

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<th>Student Relations, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences</th>
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<tr>
<td>Advising &quot;U&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Armstrong Hall 114</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone No: 507-389-6306</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://sbs.mnsu.edu/advisingu/advisingu.html">http://sbs.mnsu.edu/advisingu/advisingu.html</a></td>
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### Resources for International Students

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<th>The International Student Office (ISO)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kearney International Center</td>
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<td>250 Centennial Student Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone: 507-389-1281 (V) or 800-627-3529 (MRS/TTY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:iso@mnsu.edu">iso@mnsu.edu</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.mnsu.edu/iso/">http://www.mnsu.edu/iso/</a></td>
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### Facilities and Resources for Students with Disabilities

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<th>Office of Disability Services</th>
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<td>132 Memorial Library (lower level)</td>
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<td>Phone: 507-389-2825 (Voice/TTY)</td>
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<td>Email: <a href="mailto:julie.snow@mnsu.edu">julie.snow@mnsu.edu</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.mnsu.edu/dso/index.html">http://www.mnsu.edu/dso/index.html</a></td>
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### Sexual Violence Awareness Education

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<th>The Women's Center</th>
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<tr>
<td>218 Centennial Student Union</td>
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<td>Phone: (507) 389-6146</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.mnsu.edu/wcenter/">http://www.mnsu.edu/wcenter/</a></td>
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### Diversity Resources

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<th>Institutional Diversity Departments</th>
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<td><a href="http://www.mnsu.edu/cultdiv/departments/">http://www.mnsu.edu/cultdiv/departments/</a></td>
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### Resources for First-Generation College Students and Others

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<th>Student Support Services</th>
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<td>355 Wiecking Center</td>
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<td>Phone: (507) 389-2797</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.mnsu.edu/sss/">http://www.mnsu.edu/sss/</a></td>
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### Confidential Help to Assist Students in Resolving Personal, Social, and Educational Concerns

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<th>The Counseling Center</th>
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<tr>
<td>245 Centennial Student Union (CSU)</td>
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<td>Phone: (507) 389-1455</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.mnsu.edu/counseling/">http://www.mnsu.edu/counseling/</a></td>
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### Student Health Services

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<th>Medical Clinic</th>
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<tr>
<td>21 Carkoski Commons</td>
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<td>Phone: 507-389-6276</td>
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<th>Health Education</th>
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<tr>
<td>100 Carkoski Commons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone: 507-389-5689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.mnsu.edu/shs/">http://www.mnsu.edu/shs/</a></td>
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Course Assignments

**Weekly Quizzes:**

At the beginning of each week, you will be asked to take a brief in-class quiz regarding the readings assigned for that week. The quizzes may contain multiple choice, short answer, and/or brief essays.

**In-Class and Homework Assignments:**

The assignments are designed to relate the course material, which is very theoretical in nature, to the world that exists around us. The assignments will use the readings from the previous and current week. We will discuss your homework, so it is imperative that you complete the readings before class.

You will find the assignments on D2L listed with their due date. Each paper varies with respect to its questions. Answer the questions as if you are trying to explain them to a friend or family member who does not know the subject of sociology.

From time to time, I will give you assignments to work on at home and bring to class to discuss. These assignments are designed to build your skills in applying theory to contemporary, real-world situations.

**Film Application Papers:**

Three times during the term, you will watch a film that we will interpret theoretically. The films have been chosen to address various concepts by the theorists we cover in class.

The Film Application Papers can be found on D2L and are listed by their due date. You can then watch the film with the questions in mind so you may take notes. After the film, we will discuss the film in relation to the theorists.

Feel free to ask me any questions about these assignments. I will happily go over them in more detail in class, or provide more information.

**Class Participation and Attendance:**

I may create a seating chart to facilitate the documentation of class participation. Since you must be present to participate in class, attendance will be part of your participation grade. I will also evaluate your participation and performance.
Weekly Readings

Week 1 (August 22 - 24)

Introduction to Theory: The Major Theoretical Perspectives and Why They Are Important

No Readings (but get a head-start on next week’s readings because they are due on Monday)

Week 2 (August 29 - 31)

What Is Theory?: Analyzing the Various Approaches

The Conflict Approach - Qualitative:

The Conflict Approach - Quantitative:

The Functionalist Approach:

The Symbolic Interaction Approach:

(August 31, NOTE: Theory and Methods Assignment Due)

Week 3 (September 7)
(No Class September 5)

Max Weber: Weber’s Analytical Categories
Turner, Beeghley and Powers, The Emergence of Sociological Theory, pages 170-210

Week 4 (September 12 - 14)

Emile Durkheim: Social Integration
Ritzer and Goodman, Sociological Theory, pages 71-91
Ritzer and Goodman, Sociological Theory, pages 92-107 (Recommended)

(September 14, NOTE: Weber Assignment Due)
Week 5 (September 19 - 21)

Emile Durkheim: The Division of Labor
Emile Durkheim, The Division of Labor in Society, pages 200-225

(September 21, NOTE: Durkheim Assignment Due)

Week 6 (September 26 - 28)

Karl Marx: “Human Nature,” Alienation and Analysis of Capital
Ernst Fischer, How to Read Karl Marx, pages 37-66
Ernst Fischer, How to Read Karl Marx, pages 74-88, 100-118 (Recommended)

Watch the Application Film: The Efficiency Expert
Rationalization, The Division of Labor and Alienation

Week 7 (October 3 - 5)

Karl Marx: Primitive Accumulation: The Origins of Capitalism
Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 3, pages 873-895, 914-930

(October 3, NOTE: Spotswood / The Efficiency Expert Film Application Paper Due)

Week 8 (October 10 - 12)

Immanuel Wallerstein: The World-System
Immanuel Wallerstein: Historical Capitalism pages 13-43

(October 12, NOTE: World-Systems Perspective Assignment Due)

Week 9 (October 17 - 19)

Phil Zuckerman, The Social Theory of W.E.B. Du Bois, pages 67-111
Phil Zuckerman, The Social Theory of W.E.B. Du Bois, pages 1-17 (Recommended)

(October 17, NOTE: Revision of Spotswood / The Efficiency Expert Film Application Paper Due)

Watch the Application Film: Burn!
Colonialism to Capitalism
Week 10 (October 24 - 26)

Imperialism
“The White Man’s Burden”: Kipling’s Hymn to U.S. Imperialism
http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5478/

(October 26, NOTE: Burn! Film Application Paper Due)

Week 11 (October 31 - November 2)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman: Gender and Social Structure
Lengermann and Niebrugge: The Women Founders, pages 105-148

(November 2, NOTE: Gilman and Gender Assignment Due)

Week 12 (November 7 - 9)

Patricia Hill Collins: Black Feminist Sociology
Patricia Hill Collins: Black Feminist Thought, pages 45-67, 227-249, 273-290

Watch the Application Film: Salt of the Earth
Gender and Race/Ethnicity

Week 13 (November 14 - 16)

Discussion of Major Theoretical Themes

(November 16, NOTE: Salt of the Earth Film Application Paper Due)

Week 14 (November 21 - 23)
(No Class - Thanksgiving Break)

(November 21, NOTE: Revision of Burn Film Application Paper Due)

Week 15 (November 28 - 30)

Course Wrap-Up

(November 28, NOTE: Revision of The Salt of the Earth Film Application Paper Due)