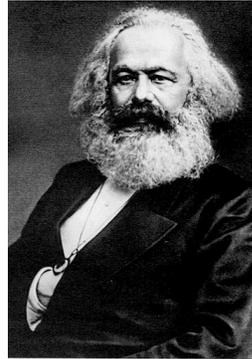


Sociological Theory ©

Spring 2020

Instructor: Paul Prew
Office: MH 222K
Office Hours: Tuesday 12-5pm and
Friday 12-5pm (by appointment)
Note: Office hours may not be regular during the first
and last weeks of the term and during finals week
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“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 allow us to see the world at different levels of abstraction and to connect the lived experiences of people with the social world they inhabit. 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:

- 30% Weekly Quizzes
- 20% Film Application Term Paper
- 30% In-Class and Homework Assignments
- 20% Class Participation and Attendance
- Grades for the course will use the +/- scale and will have divisions as follows: 93 and above = A, from 92.99 to 90 = A-, 89.99 – 87 = B+, 86.99 – 83 = B, etc.

Required Texts

- Prew, Paul. ed. 2018. *Sociological Theory: SOC458*. McGraw-Hill.
- Additional Readings for the course are found on D2L. If you have difficulty with the format, please let me know.

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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.

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.
 - You may find the University Academic Honesty Policy here:
<https://www.mnsu.edu/policies/approved/academichonesty.pdf>
 - Intentional or unintentional similarities in papers, exams, assignments, or answers **will result in up to a 35% reduction in your grade.**
 - This includes but is not limited to:
 - borrowing portions or whole essays from another source such as a friend, website, or “paper mill.”
 - using authors’ ideas without proper credit,
 - submitting a paper that is not your own work,
 - similarities between student papers,
 - completing assignments or quizzes together,
 - copying answers from others in class,
 - using notes during in-class quizzes or exams,
 - submitting work for others such as attendance sign in, review sheets, assignments, quizzes, “clicker” entries, 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

Center for Academic Success
Memorial Library in ML 125 (lower level)
Phone: 507-389-1791
Email: academicsuccess@mnsu.edu
<http://www.mnsu.edu/success/>

General Information and Help with Study Skills

Student Relations, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Advising "U"
Armstrong Hall 114
Phone No: 507-389-6307
<https://sbs.mnsu.edu/advising/>

Resources for International Students

The International Student Office (ISO)
Kearney International Center
250 Centennial Student Union
Phone: 507-389-1281 (V) or 800-627-3529 (MRS/TTY)
E-mail: iss@mnsu.edu
<http://www.mnsu.edu/international/>

Facilities and Resources for Students with Disabilities

Office of Disability Services
132 Memorial Library (lower level)
Phone: 507-389-2825 (Voice/TTY)
Email: julie.snow@mnsu.edu
<http://www.mnsu.edu/access/index.html>

Sexual Violence Awareness Education

Violence Awareness & Response Program
218 Centennial Student Union
Phone: (507) 389-5127
www.mnsu.edu/varp/

Diversity Resources

Institutional Diversity
<http://www.mnsu.edu/cultdiv/>
Institutional Diversity Departments
<http://www.mnsu.edu/cultdiv/isc/>
Institutional Diversity Events
<http://www.mnsu.edu/cultdiv/activities/>
The Women's Center
<http://www.mnsu.edu/wcenter/>
LGBT Center
<http://www.mnsu.edu/lgbtc/>

Resources for First-Generation College Students and Others

Student Support Services
355 Wiecking Center
Phone: (507) 389-2797
<http://www.mnsu.edu/sss/>

Veterans Resource Center

Centennial Student Union, Room 167
Phone: 507-389-5726
http://www.mnsu.edu/veterans/resource_center/

Confidential Help to Assist Students in Resolving Personal, Social, and Educational Concerns

The Counseling Center
245 Centennial Student Union (CSU)
Phone: (507) 389-1455
<http://www.mnsu.edu/counseling/>

Student Health Services

Medical Clinic
21 Carkoski Commons
Phone: 507-389-6276
<http://www.mnsu.edu/shs/>

Health Education

100 Carkoski Commons
Phone: 507-389-5689

Resources and Volunteer Opportunities for Food Insecurity on Campus and in the Community

Campus Kitchen
Student Activities
Centennial Student Union 173
Phone: 507-389-6076
Email: Karen.Anderson@mnsu.edu
<https://www.mnsu.edu/activities/kitchen/>

Campus Cupboard

The Campus Cupboard is a food shelf for college students experiencing food insecurity with the philosophy of "take when you need, give when you can."
331 Dillion Ave
Mankato, MN 56001
<https://www.facebook.com/campuscupboard/>

If you do not see a campus resource on this list, please let me know, and I can add it to future syllabi and my webpage.

Course Assignments

Weekly Quizzes:

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

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.

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.

If you have homework, 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 may 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 Paper and Assignments:

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. A review sheet is available for each film. You can then watch the film with the questions in mind so you may take notes. After you watch the film, you will answer a selection of these questions in an assignment in class for the first two films. For the third film, you will complete a take home assignment based on your review questions. After you complete these assignments, 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.

How to Write Your Papers and Homework Assignments!

Here is a description of what I expect in your answers to your film application papers and homework assignments. Basically, I want you to follow three steps: **First**, define and explain the concept you will use; **second**, briefly describe your example; **third**, demonstrate how the concept fits the example you provided.

1. **First**, explain the concepts and/or ideas that you will choose to apply to the film.
 - a. Begin your paragraph with, “[the concept or idea you chose] is defined by ...” Then explain in a paragraph what specific ideas from the text and notes the concept is using. You may use quotes, but paraphrase what the quotes say. Explain what the quote means in detail.
2. **Second**, briefly describe the example you will use to apply to the concept/idea.
3. **Third**, demonstrate how those ideas fit the concepts and/or ideas you have chosen.
 - a. For this paragraph you want to state, “[this concept] fits the situation because the definition says [x] and in the film, [x] is present because [explain what it is about the things you just stated about your definition that fits the example you chose].” What SPECIFICALLY ties your concept to the example you use?
4. Here is an example of what I am looking for:
 - a. Do not rely on things like, “the man was alienated from process because he didn’t have any say in his job.”
 - b. I want to see something like: *Alienation from process includes the ideas that people do not have creative activity that belongs to them, but their activity is a draining process and their labor is given to someone else (lecture notes). The skill and interesting nature of work is taken away as the worker becomes a mere appendage of the machine (Fischer 1996:58). In the film, the manager introduced a new machine that would create uniform parts for the shoes. The shoemaker now stood in front of the machine, feeding the leather in and pulling the finished part out the other side. Instead of measuring, transferring the measurements to the leather and then cutting custom parts for each person’s shoes, the shoemaker must now follow the machine as it makes uniform parts. The change by the owner has taken the interesting nature and the skill out of the work by not allowing the worker to create the individual shoe. The worker mentioned how draining it was to sit in front of the machine. The worker was drained as Marx argued because their creative activity was taken away from them. The product was the capitalist’s, and the capitalist took away the interesting, creative nature away from the job. The worker was left as an appendage to the machine because the machine did all the creative work, and the shoemaker was only needed for his physical work.*

Weekly Readings

Week 1

(January 13-15)

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

Text: *Sociological Theory* "A Historical Sketch of Sociological Theory: The Early Years." pages 1-39

Week 2

(January 22, **No Class Monday Jan. 20**)

Max Weber: Weber's Analytical Categories

Text: *Sociological Theory* "Max Weber." pages 41-86

Week 3

(January 27-29)

Emile Durkheim: Social Integration

Text: *Sociological Theory* "Emile Durkheim." pages 87-120

Week 4

(February 3-5)

Karl Marx: "Human Nature," Alienation and Analysis of Capital

Text: *Sociological Theory* "Karl Marx." pages 121-139

Week 5

(February 10-12)

In Class Essay for the Application Film: The Efficiency Expert (Attendance Required Both Days)

Bring your reading materials to class. Essay is open book, open notes.

Week 6

(February 17-19)

Immanuel Wallerstein: The World-System

D2L Reading: Immanuel Wallerstein: *Historical Capitalism* pages 13-43

Week 7

(February 24-26)

W.E.B. Du Bois: The Color Line: On International Relations

D2L Reading: Phil Zuckerman, *The Social Theory of W.E.B. Du Bois*, pages 67-111

Week 8

(March 2-4)

In Class Essay for the Application Film: Burn! (Attendance Required Both Days)

Bring your reading materials to class. Essay is open book, open notes.

Spring Break

(March 9-11)

Week 9

(March 16-18)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman: Gender and Social Structure

Text: *Sociological Theory* “Contemporary Feminist Theories.” pages 141-176

Week 10

(March 23-25)

Patricia Hill Collins: Black Feminist Sociology

D2L Reading: Patricia Hill Collins: *Black Feminist Thought*, pages 227-249

Week 11

(March 30-April 1)

Discuss the Application Film: *Salt of the Earth*

Week 12

(April 6-8)

Historical Sketch of Sociological Theory

Text: *Sociological Theory* “A Historical Sketch of Sociological Theory: The Later Years.” pages 178-218

(NOTE: *Salt of the Earth Film Term Paper* Due April 8)

Week 13

(April 13-15)

Health Care and Theory

D2L Reading: Charlotte Reading. “Structural Determinants of Aboriginal Peoples’ Health.” pages 3-15

D2L Reading: Cyndy Baskin. “Current Theories and Models of Social Work as Seen through an Indigenous Lens.” pages 75-100

Week 14

(April 20-22)

Corrections and Theory

Text: *Sociological Theory* “Strain and Cultural Deviance Theories.” pages 219-242

Text: *Sociological Theory* “Labeling, Conflict, and Radical Theories.” pages 244-263

Week 15

(April 27-29)

Course Wrap Up

Finals Week

(NOTE: *Revision of The Salt of the Earth Film Term Paper* Due)