

## **SOC 3701 SOCIAL THEORY**

University of Minnesota

Fall 2004

Mondays 5:30-8:50

Blegen Hall 235

Professor: Karen Lutfey

Office: 1148 Social Sciences

Office Phone: (612) 626-7252

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:30-4:00, or by appt.

E-mail: [lutfey@soc.umn.edu](mailto:lutfey@soc.umn.edu)

TA: Susan Mlangwa

Office: 1067 Social Sciences

Office Phone: (612) 624-5296

Office Hours: Mondays, 11:00-1:00, or by appt.

E-mail: [mlang001@umn.edu](mailto:mlang001@umn.edu)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is a survey of major theoretical traditions in sociology, including classical and contemporary theory. Who are the major theorists that have shaped sociology from 1850 to the present? Why did they have the impact they did? What did they have to say about how society works? Our emphasis will not be on theory as dusty old books to memorize and regurgitate, but as dynamic, situated, social conceptualizations that can help analyze and predict social life. We will devote considerable time and energy to understanding the social and intellectual climates from which these theories have grown and those in which they have been embraced and criticized. Because theory is relevant to all types of sociology, my goal is for students not to simply to memorize “the Big Three,” but to learn about theory in ways they can apply to their own interests in sociology and integrate into their own thinking. To this end, we will read and discuss original works with an eye toward generalized concepts about social behavior, social organization, and social change that can be applied to various theories and empirical work.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

By the end of this course, you should have a working knowledge of:

- Some major classical social theorists (Marx, Durkheim, Weber)
- Some major modernist social theoretical perspectives (Structural Functionalism, Symbolic Interactionism)
- Some postmodernist social theory (pertaining to gender, family, and epistemology)
- The historical contexts in which these theories emerged

### **MATERIALS:**

There is one book required for this course, and it is available at the Coffman bookstore:

Lemert, Charles. 2004. *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*.  
Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

### **REQUIREMENTS:**

**1. Class participation and in-class assignments (100 points or 10% of total grade).** The success of this class depends in part on your active and thoughtful participation. Class participation includes attending class, keeping up on assigned readings, and contributing to class discussions.

**To facilitate this process, I ask that you come to each class meeting having prepared one written discussion question based on the assigned readings and/or previous lecture material.** Your question does not have to be typed, but it should be on a piece of paper that could be turned in or traded with a classmate (keeping a running log of questions on one sheet of paper is fine, as long someone else reading the page can see which question is the most recent). It is my hope that, by having prepared a question in advance, you will have given some thought to the material beforehand and will be better prepared to engage in discussion of it.

I will periodically collect these questions and assign points for them as part of your class participation grade. The remaining points for this portion of your grade will come from several additional sources, including in-class assignments I will give to you as individuals, pairs, or small groups, according to the things we are doing in class. These assignments are not scheduled in advance, must be turned in during class, and cannot be made up if you are absent from class unless you have provided a documented excuse for your absence (see make-up quiz policy for excused absences).

**2. Quizzes (150 pts or 15% of total grade EACH).**

There will be 6 quizzes in this class. Each quiz will be a combination of multiple choice, identification, short answer, and essay questions. Quizzes will happen at the beginning of the class period, and will take about 40-45 minutes to complete. Quizzes will have a cumulative dimension in that I will expect your essay answers to reflect an awareness of earlier material where appropriate.

All materials covered in the assigned readings and during class meetings are eligible for inclusion in quizzes. If you know in advance that you will be absent for a quiz, I urge you to make arrangements with me to take the quiz in advance. Students who miss a quiz without making prior arrangements with me must have a documented excuse (e.g., verified illness or family emergency) for missing class in order to receive a make-up quiz. Make-up quizzes are generally different from in-class quizzes, both in terms of the type and content of questions (e.g., more essays, fewer multiple choice questions).

**GRADING:**

There is a total of 1,000 points available in this course:

- QUIZ #1 = 150 points (October 4)
- QUIZ #2 = 150 points (October 18)
- QUIZ #3 = 150 points (November 1)
- QUIZ #4 = 150 points (November 15)
- QUIZ #5 = 150 points (November 29)
- QUIZ #6 = 150 points (December 13)
- CLASS PARTICIPATION = 100 points (ongoing)

Please note that I reserve “A” grades for outstanding work that demonstrates mastery of course materials and creativity in engaging them. You can receive “B” grades by doing all of the work well, and “C” grades by adequately meeting all of the course requirements. I use the following grading scale, although I reserve the right to adjust it.

970-1,000	A+	870-899	B+	770-799	C+	670-699	D+	599 and below	F
930-969	A	830-869	B	730-769	C	630-669	D		
900-929	A-	800-829	B-	700-729	C-	600-629	D-		

**WHAT I EXPECT OF YOU:**

1. *Make a sincere effort to learn the course material.* This includes completing assigned readings on time and bringing your reader to each class session. It also includes making use of our TA and of me so that we can help you if you are struggling with the course. I respect that students have family and work responsibilities, but to do well in this class you'll need to do the work.
2. *Treat everyone in the class with respect.* This includes listening to others when they are speaking, sharing the floor with other students, giving consideration to opinions that differ from yours, and not disrupting other student's learning experiences or my teaching.
3. *Behave with common courtesy.* Arrive to class on time and, barring emergency, remain for the entire class period. Don't read the newspaper, chit-chat, or snooze during class. Please turn off cell phones, beepers, or any other electronic devices that may disrupt class.

**WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT OF ME:**

1. *Make a sincere effort to teach this course to the best of my ability.* This includes teaching in a way that is appropriate for your skills and abilities, and in a way that is as responsive to your needs as is feasible. It also means that I strive to keep this class updated and interesting so it will be engaging for all of us.
2. *Treat you with respect and impartiality.* This especially includes being prepared for class, returning your written work in a timely way, and assuring fair, impartial, and consistent grading on exams and assignments. It also means that I will be open to diverse perspectives expressed in class.
3. *Behave with common courtesy.* This especially includes being on time to class and to my office hours, finishing class on time, and responding to your emails and phone calls in a timely way. It also means that I will do my best to make myself available to you for appointments outside of office hours when necessary.

**UNIVERSITY AND COURSE POLICIES:**

1. In this course, all exams and in-class assignments should be completed in class and therefore turned in directly to me. However, if you find yourself in the position of trying to turn something in at another time, please be aware that as a general policy *I do not accept assignments submitted electronically, by fax, or under my office door.* I do accept assignments submitted in class, to me personally, to the TA, or to my mailbox in the Sociology Department main office (909 Social Sciences), where an administrative assistant should sign and date the assignment before it is turned in. (See "Requirements" section for late and make-up exam policies.)
2. I do not authorize class notes generated by note-taking services for this course.
3. Accommodations will be made for students with disabilities, so please notify me in the first week of classes if you have specific needs.
4. Scholastic misconduct, which includes cheating and plagiarism, will not be tolerated and will be dealt with according to University policy. Instances of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade for this course. (Please see attached page of University and Department policies.)
5. Incompletes are given only in the most extenuating of circumstances, and never in lieu of a failing grade. Legitimate reasons for incompletes include verified illnesses and family emergencies, which will require written documentation. (Please see attached page of University and Department policies.)

**COURSE SCHEDULE (tentative and subject to minor adjustments):**

<b><u>DATE</u></b>	<b><u>TOPIC &amp; ASSIGNMENTS</u></b>
<b>SEPTEMBER 13:</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION: WHY BOTHER WITH SOCIAL THEORY?</b> Syllabus Lemert, pp. 1-20, "Social Theory: Its Uses and Pleasures"  <b>SOCIAL &amp; INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT OF CLASSICAL THEORY</b> Lemert, pp. 21-7, "Modernity's Classical Age: 1848-1919" Lemert, pp. 162-3, "W.E.B. DuBois" DuBois, pp. 163-8, "Double Consciousness and the Veil" Lemert, p. 168, "Charlotte Perkins Gilman" Gilman, pp. 169-70, "The Yellow Wallpaper"
<b>SEPTEMBER 20:</b>	<b>KARL MARX</b> Lemert, p. 29, "Karl Marx" Marx, pp. 30-6, "Estranged Labour" Marx, pp. 36-7, "Camera Obscura" Marx & Engels, pp. 37-41, "Class Struggle"
<b>SEPTEMBER 27:</b>	<b>KARL MARX</b> Marx, pp. 49-58, "The Values of Commodities" Marx, pp. 58-60, "The Fetishism of Commodities" Marx, pp. 60-65, "Labour-Power and Capital"
<b>OCTOBER 4:</b>	<b>EMILE DURKHEIM</b>  <b><u>QUIZ #1</u></b> Lemert, pp. 70-1, "Emile Durkheim" Durkheim, pp. 71-2, "Anomie and the Modern Division of Labor" Durkheim, pp. 73-5, "Sociology and Social Facts"
<b>OCTOBER 11:</b>	<b>EMILE DURKHEIM</b> Durkheim, pp. 75-83, "Suicide and Modernity" Durkheim & Mauss, pp. 83-90, "Primitive Classifications and Social Knowledge" Durkheim, pp. 90-99, "The Cultural Logic of Collective Representations"

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC &amp; ASSIGNMENTS</u>
<b>OCTOBER 18:</b>	<p><b>MAX WEBER</b></p> <p><u><i>QUIZ #2</i></u>  Lemert, pp. 99-100, "Max Weber"  Weber, pp. 100-4, "The Spirit of Capitalism and the Iron Cage"  Weber, pp. 104-10, "The Bureaucratic Machine"</p>
<b>OCTOBER 25:</b>	<p><b>MAX WEBER</b></p> <p>Weber, pp. 110-12, "What is Politics?"  Weber, pp. 112-15, "The Types of Legitimate Domination"  Weber, pp. 115-25, "Class, Status, Party"</p>
<b>NOVEMBER 1:</b>	<p><b>STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM</b></p> <p><u><i>QUIZ #3</i></u>  Lemert, pp. 187-97, "Social Theories and World Conflict: 1919-1945"  Lemert, pp. 271-82, "The Golden Moment: 1945-63"  Lemert, p. 208, "Talcott Parsons"  Parsons, pp. 209-11, "The Unit Act of Action Systems"  Lemert, pp. 296-7, "Talcott Parsons"  Parsons, pp. 297-99, "Action Systems and Social Systems"</p>
<b>NOVEMBER 8:</b>	<p><b>STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM</b></p> <p>Lemert, p. 225, "Robert K. Merton"  Merton, pp. 225-37, "Social Structure and Anomie"  Merton, pp. 304-9, "Manifest and Latent Functions"  Lemert, p. 247, "W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki"  Thomas &amp; Znaniecki, pp. 248-53, "Disorganization of the Polish Immigrant"  Parsons, pp. 300-3, "Sex Roles in the American Kinship System"</p>
<b>NOVEMBER 15:</b>	<p><b>SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM</b></p> <p><u><i>QUIZ #4</i></u>  Lemert, p. 157, "William James"  James, pp. 157-62, "The Self and Its Selves"  Lemert, p. 184, "Charles Horton Cooley"  Cooley, p. 185, "The Looking-Glass Self"  Lemert, p. 220, "George Herbert Mead"  Mead, pp. 220-5, "The Self, the I, and the Me"</p>

**DATE**

**TOPIC & ASSIGNMENTS**

**NOVEMBER 22:**

**SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM**

Lemert, pp. 331-2, "Erving Goffman"  
Goffman, pp. 332-6, "On Face-Work"  
Lemert, p. 383, "Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann"  
Berger & Luckmann, pp. 384-8, "Society as a Human Product"

**NOVEMBER 29:**

**POSTMODERNISM**

**QUIZ #5**

Lemert, p. 388, "Dorothy Smith"  
Smith, pp. 388-90, "Knowing a Society From Within: A Woman's Standpoint"  
Lemert, p. 535, "Patricia Hill Collins"  
Collins, pp. 536-46, "Black Feminist Thought in the Matrix of Domination"  
Lemert, p. 557, "Judith Butler"  
Butler, pp. 557-68, "Imitation and Gender Subordination"

**DECEMBER 6:**

**POSTMODERNISM**

Lemert, p. 465, "Michel Foucault"  
Foucault, pp. 465-70, "Power as Knowledge"  
Lemert, p. 457, "Jean-Francois Lyotard"  
Lyotard, pp. 457-9, "The Postmodern Condition"

**DECEMBER 13:**

**FUTURE DIRECTIONS, LOOSE ENDS & CLOSING COMMENTS**

**QUIZ #6**

***THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM FOR THIS CLASS.***