

SC 400 Sociological Theory

John Carroll University
Summer 2013 III Online Course



Dr. Wendy Wiedenhoft Murphy

E-mail: wwiedenhoft@jcu.edu

Office Hours: available via email Monday – Friday 10am – 3pm

Required Texts

All course readings may be accessed through Blackboard

Course Objectives

Broadly speaking, sociological theory is concerned with developing philosophical, scientific understandings and explanations of the social world. Some sociological theories focus on macro-level aspects of the social world, like economic and political institutions, while others concentrate more on micro-level aspects of the social world, including emotions and social interaction. However, most sociological theory involves studying the processes of how social institutions and social interactions develop and change over time. This course will focus on the historical development of sociological theory through the work of individual theorists. The ideas of these theorists did not arise out of thin air, but from their observations and reflections about what was going on in society. This is particularly evident during periods of significant social change, such as the French Revolution and World War II. Theorists are influenced also by reading and building on the work of each other. For example, some contemporary theorists use Marx's theory of capitalism to explain the current state of global inequality.

Sociological theory tends to be abstract; therefore, students are often apprehensive about reading original or primary texts. I do not care to rely exclusively on textbooks when teaching sociological theory, which means that we will be reading a significant amount of primary, theoretical work in this course. I want you to know up front that I know how challenging much of the reading is that I have assigned for this course. It is not my intention to frustrate you, but to help you learn how to read and engage the ideas of different theorists. I will certainly take the time to **post notes on blackboard** in order to highlight the main ideas you should be getting out of each of the assigned readings. I encourage you to email me any questions you have about the readings as well.

Course Organization

This course is organized around three theoretical schools:

- 1) Marx and Neo-Marxist Theory
- 2) Weber and Neo-Weberian Theory
- 3) Durkheim and Neo-Durkheimian Theory

Given that this is a four week course, we will cover one theoretical school per week. The following reading schedule outlines the required reading materials for each theoretical school.

Course requirements:

Your final grade for this course will be composed from the following:

Exams: 60% of the final grade. There will be 3 essay exams (one for each theoretical school). I will post essay questions on blackboard and you will submit your answers to me via email by 5pm on the dates indicated on the reading/exam schedule.

Online Discussions: 25% of the final grade. We will be using **blackboard** for online discussions on a **daily basis** (Monday – Friday). I will provide a prompt, by 10am (or earlier), which you must respond to by 5pm. Additionally, you must comment on another student's response by 7pm. The times are deadlines...you are free to post comments and responses **as early as you would like**.

Final: 15% of the final grade. For your final you will be required to find a theoretical reading (article/book chapter/etc), provide a summary of this reading, and explain why you would recommend teaching it in a future sociological theory course. More detailed guidelines will be posted on blackboard.

Course Policies

Make-up Work: To receive full credit for any assignment it must be turned in by the deadline indicated on the syllabus. You must contact me **before** exams or online discussions are due in order to obtain permission to turn in any late work. All late work will receive a **maximum grade of 70%**.

Incompletes: Incompletes will only be given when you are otherwise passing the course, but cannot complete it due to some unforeseen circumstances beyond your control.

Holidays: If you observe religious holidays that conflict with any of the course assignments, please let me know in writing within the first week of the semester.

Academic Honesty: “Academic honesty, expected of every student, is essential to the process of education and to upholding high ethical standards. Cheating, including plagiarism, inappropriate use of technology, or any other kind of unethical behavior, may subject the student to severe academic penalties, including dismissal. All work submitted for evaluation in a course, including tests, term papers, and computer programs, must represent only the work of the student unless indicated otherwise. Material taken from the work of others must be acknowledged. Materials submitted to fulfill requirements in one course may not be submitted in another course without prior approval of the instructor(s)” (Undergraduate Bulletin, 2007-2009:6). If you are caught plagiarizing an assignment in this class, you will receive a zero for that assignment and will not be permitted to make-up the assignment.

Students with Disabilities: “Students with documented disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations if needed. If you believe you need accommodations, please see me or JCU’s Coordinator for Students with Disabilities (ext. 4967) as soon as possible. Accommodations will not be granted retrospectively” (former Legal Counsel).

Grading Breakdown

100%-94%:	A	86%-83%: B	76%-73%: C	66%-63%: D
93%-90%:	A-	82%-80%: B-	72%-70%: C-	62%-60%: D-
89%-87%:	B+	79%-77%: C+	69%-67%: D+	Below 60%: F

Reading / Exam Schedule

Week One: Marxist and Neo-Marxist Theory
Monday July 22 – Monday July 29

Readings:

Blackboard, Perlman: *Primitive Accumulation*
Blackboard: Avineri, *Fetishism of Commodities and the Division of Labor*
Blackboard, Marx & Engels: *The Communist Manifesto*
Blackboard, Gaspers: *Is the Manifesto Still Relevant?*
Blackboard, Shannon: *World Systems Theory*
Blackboard, Marcuse: *One-Dimensional Man*
Blackboard, Forsyth: *Fanon—Marx of the Third World*

Exam #1 Due Monday July 29 @ 7pm (no online discussion due this day)

Week Two: Weber and Neo-Weberian Theory

Tuesday July 30– Tuesday August 6

Readings:

Blackboard, Weber: Class, Status, Party

Blackboard, Weber: The Spirit of Capitalism

Blackboard, Allen: Why Didn't Asia Develop?

Blackboard, Ritzer: *McDonaldization*

Blackboard, Ritzer: *Enchanting a Disenchanted World*

Blackboard, Foucault: *Panopticon*

Exam 2 Due Tuesday August 6 @ 7pm (no online discussion due this day)

Week Three: Durkheim and Neo-Durkheimian Theory

Wednesday August 7 – Wednesday August 14

Readings:

Blackboard, Hornsby: *Durkheim*

Blackboard, Durkheim: *Origins of These Beliefs*

Blackboard, Putnam: *Bowling Alone*

Blackboard, Simmel: *Metropolis and Mental Life*

Blackboard, Goffman: *Presentation of Self*

Blackboard, Freud: *Civilization and Its Discontents*

Exam 3 Due on Wednesday August 14 @ 7pm (no online discussion this day)

Final Due Friday August 16 @ 7pm