Social Theory (SOCI 101-80) Syllabus

CRN 47700, Fall 2023

Course Description

In this course, we will read theoretical texts every week and consider how they have been used to explain and understand specific social phenomena. Theory must be relevant to real-life, "social facts" for it to survive the test of time. We'll work toward bridging the abstract concepts in our readings with the world around us. By the end of the class, you will likely find that some theories are your favorite; these are often those theories that are also most relevant to your everyday life.

This course covers both classical (the "founding fathers") and contemporary (the 1960s to present) social theorists. We will read and discuss multiple theorists to gain perspective from diverse voices, and we will explore various theoretical perspectives to understand the social world. We will read and discuss the original (often translated) text, which will provide a brief overview of the most important and well-known thinkers within the discipline of sociology. We will cover a wide array of topics, including capitalism, stratification (class/race/gender), criminality, suicide, development of the self, feminist theory, bureaucracies, work, deviance, social constructionism, critical race theory, structuralism, city life, globalization, and social control.

Social theory is amongst the most challenging and rewarding pursuits within sociology. ***This is a difficult course. This class requires a significant amount of reading, writing, and thinking.*** Despite the challenges this course presents, if you do your work diligently and proactively you will succeed in this class and maybe even grow to love it. ☺

Course Modality

This course is delivered completely online in the *asynchronous* modality. That means we will *not* meet synchronously unless you wish to meet for virtual student hours. Canvas will be the main platform for communication and course engagement. All assignments, activities, and assessments will be completed in Canvas by the corresponding due dates. You are expected to review the course site regularly to check due dates, access materials, and stay on top of all course-related communications. Please review the introductory module for detailed information on course expectations, answers to common questions, and support resources.

Meet Your Professor

My name is Dr. Tracy DeHaan, but you can call me Dr. T. I will be your professor this semester. There are a few ways that you may contact me listed below. I monitor the course regularly. I generally respond to emails within a 48-hour window Monday through Friday (except on Holidays). I respond to text messages within several hours between the hours of 11am and 11pm every day.

- Name: Dr. Tracy DeHaan (Dr. T)
- Pronouns: she/her/they/them
- Text: 408.755.5446
- Email: tracy.dehaan@sjsu.edu or Canvas Inbox
- Online Student Hours: Drop-in on Zoom (with waiting room) on Wednesdays from 4:30-5:30 or by appointment.

Required Course Materials and Technology

Textbooks

There is **no required textbook** for this class. All assigned course materials such as assigned readings, podcasts, documentaries, etc. can be found on the Canvas learning management system website. You'll be expected to consume the assigned materials, and **you will perform at your peak if you consume the assigned materials regularly**.

Supplies

You are required to purchase a pack of 4x6 notecards. You can purchase these online or from most office supply stores. You'll need your notecards by the beginning of week 2.

Lectures

Each module contains lecture videos to support your learning. These videos explore the assigned materials and help you to understand them better. Treat the lecture videos as you would class attendance. Please pay attention, take notes, and ask me questions about the content! **You will do your best in the course if you watch them regularly.**

Internet/Computer Access

To be successful in this course, you will need consistent access to an electronic device with a strong Internet connection. Canvas runs best on a desktop/laptop. Please note, there are often glitches in the Canvas app for mobile devices. Therefore, I discourage you from relying solely on your cell phone or tablet to complete the work of the class.

Student Computing Services are available on campus if you need access to an electronic device. If you are a low-income student, you may also qualify for discounted Internet through Xfinity.

Adobe Reader and Adobe Scan

Reader
If you prefer to download the assigned readings, you will need a program that can open PDF files. Adobe Reader is a free software program that can open PDF files, and it is available on Mac, PC, and most mobile operating systems.

Scan
This class requires scanning software to upload hand-written assignments. If you have the proper hardware, you may use it. If you do not have a scanner, please download and use Adobe Scan. It's free,

and it works on cell phones and tablets. It uses your device's camera to take a photo and converts the image to a PDF file for uploading to Canvas.

Free Copy of Microsoft Word

Some of the summative assessments in our class require word processing software. As a student, you are entitled to a free copy of Microsoft Word. Alternatively, you may use Google Docs, which is also free.

Cloud Storage

I highly recommend using a free cloud storage application such as Dropbox or Google Drive to store your work in this class. Not only do these programs allow you to access your files from any electronic device with Internet access, but they also back up your files to the cloud in case your computer is lost, stolen, or damaged. In general, I do not allow for makeup due to lost or damaged electronic files. So, programs like this can be a real lifesaver.

Course Assignments

Due Dates

Below, you will find information on the assignments you must submit to be successful in this course. Unless otherwise noted in Canvas, assignments are due by 11:59pm (PDT/PST) on their due date. Please write these dates in your calendar or frequently refer to the course schedule (see the final pages of the syllabus). To perform at your best, you'll want to keep up with the course assignments.

Early Submissions

You may always submit assignments early. However, I only release module content a few weeks in advance, as I prefer you to stay on schedule with your cohort. Further, I do not grade assignments until after the due date, so working too far ahead could negatively affect your outcome in the course.

Assignment Weights

Be sure to note the assignment weights listed below. Some assignments are worth a larger portion of your grade. How you perform on heavily weighted assignments can have a drastic impact on your overall course grade. I recommend putting in considerably more time on assignments that are worth more weight.

Assignment Schedule with Weights

Assignment	Due Date	% of Total Grade
Introductory Assignments	Week 1 – See Schedule	7%
Reading Journals	Most M/Ws – See Schedule	44%
Reading Annotations	Most Fridays – See Schedule	16.5%
Mini-Assignments (3 of 5)	See Schedule	12%

Assignment	Due Date	% of Total Grade
Self-Assessment Surveys	September 17, October 17, and November 19	3%
Course Wrap-up Discussion	December 6	2.5%
Hunger Games Book Analysis	December 8	15%

Extra Credit

I do not offer extra credit in my classes. While I can understand the appeal of extra credit assignments, they do not foster the learning of the assigned materials and they create a lot of additional labor for your instructors. With this in mind, make sure you keep up with the due dates in course. Also, reach out early if you are underperforming so I can offer you guidance on how to improve in the course.

Assignment Descriptions

Introductory Assignments

There are four introductory assignments due the first week of class. These are low-risk assessments, and they will be easy to complete with no knowledge of sociology. The goals of these assignments include introducing you to the course, introducing you to the common features of Canvas we'll use throughout the semester, and helping you get to know me and your classmates better.

Reading Annotations

For each module, you will be asked to complete annotations in Hypothes.is for *one* assigned reading within your Canvas annotation group. You must take at least six actions per annotation assignment. Each action is worth 0.25 points for a total of 1.5 points possible.

There are 13 total annotations assigned. You must complete 11 for a chance at full credit, which means you may miss 2 annotations without penalty to your course grade. Your 2 lowest scores are dropped from Canvas as we move through the course. So, don't be alarmed if you don't see scores in the first few weeks of class. Once we've moved through three of these assignments, you'll begin to see your highest scores reflected in your course grade.

Reading Journals

For all other readings in the module, you will be asked to complete a reading journal. These journals will be hand-written on 4x6 notecards. I'll ask you to take notes on the chapter and reflect on what you've read. Each reading journal is worth 2 points.

There are 26 total reading journals assigned. You must complete 22 for a chance at full credit, which means you may miss 4 journals without penalty to your course grade. Your 4 lowest scores are dropped from Canvas as we move through the course. So, don't be alarmed if you don't see scores in the first few weeks of class. Once we've moved through five of these assignments, you'll begin to see your highest scores reflected in your course grade.

Mini-Assignments

Throughout the semester, I will offer five mini-assignments for you to complete. You must complete three of them for credit. This means you'll have some flexibility in terms of which mini-assignments you'd like to complete. In general, the mini-assignments will require you to consume supplemental materials, self-reflect, and apply what you've learned to your own lived experience.

Self-Assessment Surveys

Throughout the semester, I will require 3 self-assessment surveys. These provide you with an opportunity to reflect on your learning process and set goals as we move forward in the class. There are no "wrong" answers, so feel free to answer them with honesty. These are there to help you succeed, and I will not judge you if you're falling short of your personal goals. I'll offer support where I can if you are struggling or need help.

Book Analysis

For this portion of the course, you will be required to read Suzanne Collins' fictional piece titled *The Hunger Games.* Please note, there is no strict reading schedule for this book. You must manage the reading on your own schedule *and* have it completed by the time the book analysis is due. You will analyze the book for social theoretical concepts and apply what you've learned in class to the plot. This assignment serves as your final exam in the class.

Classroom Policies

Attendance

Attendance in this course means logging onto Canvas and interacting with module materials. According to the [University Policy S20-9](#), instructors may drop any student who neither logs onto Canvas on the first scheduled day of class nor informs the instructor 48 hours after the first day of instruction of their intent to continue in the class. There is a long waitlist for this course. Therefore, no-show attendance drops will be enforced.

Late Assignment Policy

Late Grace Period

Due dates are important! They help to keep you on track and allow you to learn along with your cohort. So, whenever possible, you should submit assignments by their due dates. However, I know that "life" happens, and you can't always submit work before the deadline. Sometimes we just forget to do the work! Therefore, all other assignments may be submitted up to three days late without penalty. This is a grace period everyone receives; you do *not* need to request it.

Note: Canvas will flag the assignment as late after the due date/time. Unfortunately, I cannot change the settings to prevent this. Despite this designation on Canvas, I will not apply late penalties until after the grace period has ended.

Late Penalty Period

After the three-day grace period, the following late penalty period rules apply:

- Surveys may **not** be submitted past the grace period.
- Reading Journals and Annotations may be submitted up to three days past the grace period for up to half credit.
- All other assignments may be submitted up to 3 days past the grace period with a 10% per day penalty.

Symptomatic COVID-19 Late Policy

If you have contracted symptomatic COVID-19, and experience symptoms that interfere with your ability to continue in the class, please notify me as soon as possible. You will be asked to submit one of the following:

1. A dated doctor's note stating you have tested positive.
2. A dated, positive PCR test result with your name visible.
3. A picture of a positive antigen (at-home) test next to your student ID and a dated slip of paper (you may also write the date on the test cartridge).

Upon approval, you will have all assignment due dates suspended for five days after the positive test date without penalty. Symptoms persisting beyond this five-day period should be reported to the DRC on campus for potential semester-long health accommodations.

If you contract symptomatic COVID-19 at the end of the semester, and you've completed at least 75% of the coursework with a passing grade before infection, you will be provided the option to receive an "incomplete" grade in the class. In incomplete grade provides you with an additional year to complete the coursework.

Requesting an Exception to the Late Policy

Because I have incorporated both flexibility and drop schemes into the course, I do not generally make exceptions to my late policy without disability accommodations through the AEC on campus. However, if you have extenuating circumstances that have prevented you from completing a major component of the course without a drop scheme in place, please reach out to discuss your options. I will work to accommodate you *if* it's in your best interest for your learning process.

Sharing Course Materials

Per University Policy S12-7, my lectures and slides are considered my legal, intellectual property. Therefore, you should not share my YouTube lecture videos or the files posted to Canvas without my written consent. The only exception to this rule is if you have a documented disability requiring an interpreter. Infractions may be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes acts that the CSUs find to be undesirable and counteractive to learning. These behaviors include any action that results in an unfair advantage, or which compromises the integrity of the academic standards of the university or college. The two most common forms of academic dishonesty are cheating and plagiarism.

Occasionally, you may feel overwhelmed by the amount of work you need to accomplish. Some students turn to academic dishonesty to alleviate this pressure. Taking this route devalues your degree or certificate, and when you enter the workforce or transfer and cannot meet the expectations, you will struggle further. So, please don't choose this path when confronted with academic stress. If you cheat, you may get a warning, receive no credit for the assignment, or be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development for disciplinary action.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

AI software, such as ChatGPT has gained popularity among college students. AI tools can help clarify concepts or help you deepen your understanding of a theory. However, the information contained in these databases is not always accurate. So, you should not confidently rely on them if you wish to be successful in this class.

You must also refrain from using AI software to craft answers for homework assignments. Doing so is a form of plagiarism, which will be treated as academic dishonesty in my class. ***AI submissions are very easy for me to spot***. I also use Turnitin's AI detector to confirm my suspicions. So, please do not take the risk. It's not worth it!

Communications Protocols

Preferred Name and Pronouns

If you'd like to be known by a name different from the name on the roster, or if you have a personal pronoun, please contact me, and I will make every effort to call you by the name and pronoun you use.

You can identify your pronoun in Canvas as well. Here are directions: [How do I select personal pronouns in my user account as a student?](#)

If you'd like to learn more about personal pronouns, go to [mypronouns.org](#).

Canvas Notifications

You are responsible for regularly checking your email associated with Canvas for any course updates and/or announcements. Be sure to [confirm your settings](#) so you receive communication from the class.

Communicating about Grades

Due to the Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA), I am not allowed to discuss grades through email. If you have concerns over an assigned grade or would like more personal feedback about your performance in the class, please reach out to me through Canvas Inbox or attend student hours.

Netiquette Guidelines

- **Think before you post**. Be aware of who may be able to view your posting and how your post may be interpreted. Try to maintain a fair and objective tone.
- **Stay on topic**. Make sure your communication is related to the subject/task at hand and does not wander off-topic.

- **Write clearly**. Even though the online environment may seem more informal, this is still an academic course. As such, intelligible, mature communication is expected. Correct spelling and grammar are required. Proper composition and punctuation are expected. Avoid all forms of shorthand or "text talk."
- **Use appropriate language and style**. Avoid using offensive language. You should also avoid using ALL CAPS and repeated punctuation (???? Or !!!!).
- **Be considerate of others**. Do not make derogatory, condescending, or harassing remarks. Communication should be well-intentioned, well-articulated, and aimed at fostering a positive learning environment. Be aware of how sarcasm may be interpreted by your readers.
- **Allow for misunderstandings**. Keep in mind that writing can convey an incorrect tone or intention in the absence of nonverbal communication. Therefore, you should make allowances. What you may perceive as rudeness may be unintended.
- **Cite your sources**. If you post work that is not your own, be sure to put the passage in quotation marks and cite both the author and the page number. If you are paraphrasing an author's arguments, make sure you cite them by name.

Potential Work Stoppage

The California Faculty Association (the labor union of Lecturers, Professors, Coaches, Counselors, and Librarians across the 23 CSU campuses) is in a difficult contract dispute with California State University management. It is possible that we will call a strike or other work stoppage this term. I promise to promptly inform you of any schedule disruption. Our working conditions are your learning conditions; we seek to protect both. For further information go to www.CFAbargaining.org.

Course Grades

My Grading Philosophy

I encourage you to separate yourself from mainstream ideologies about course grades. We are socialized to believe that grades reflect personal intelligence, abilities, and potential. In our class, grades are an evaluation of context-specific assignments measured against the course learning objectives. I view grades as a form of communication that leads to meaningful learning when combined with critical feedback. I encourage you to interpret them this way as well. Grades should serve as a reflection of your learning *process*, and act as motivation for improvement and/or continued effort.

Feedback

I aim to provide meaningful feedback on all summative assessments within two weeks of the due date. In most cases, I will provide you with grading comments and/or annotated comments on most formative assessments to give you insights into how you performed and how you could improve moving forward. You will not receive feedback on your self-assessment surveys.

Canvas as a Grading Tool

Canvas is an online tool used to help you succeed in this class. All grades are posted to Canvas, and you should calculate your *current* course grade using that tool. While I post grades for individual assignments to Canvas, you should **not** rely on these automatic calculations for a full understanding of your position

in the class. Large assignments carry much more weight and can rapidly raise/drop your grade. Further, missed and dropped assignments do not affect your grade until a "0" is entered; this can make your grade look inflated. Your "current" grade may not reflect your overall position/potential in the class.

Assigning a Letter Grade

All assignments will be given point scores. The points you earn will be divided by the points possible in the course. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. For example, if you receive an 89.5% your grade will be rounded to 90 as an A-minus. If you receive an 89.4% your grade will be rounded to 89 as a B-plus.

The course percentages will be assigned a letter grade as follows:

Percentage	Letter Grade
94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
88-89%	B+
84-87%	B
80-83%	B-
78-79%	C+
73-77%	C
70-72%	C-
68-69%	D+
60-67%	D
Below 60%	F

University Policies and Resources

Per University Policy S16-9, relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for the recording of the class, etc. is available on the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' Syllabus Information web page. Make sure to review these university policies. You may also find information on common campus resources such as counseling services, mentoring and tutoring, computers, writing assistance, and food and shelter support.

Minimum Participation

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the semester for instruction, preparation/studying, or course-related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, you should have:

- A deeper understanding of the most important social theorists and social theories.
- Strengthened your reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.
- A deeper understanding of contemporary social life.
- A stronger foundation for taking more advanced courses in sociology.
- Cultivated the competence to "discover" the theory within texts.

Course Schedule

The course schedule below is subject to change with fair notice. Changes will be announced on Canvas. All assigned materials may be found under the "Modules" link on Canvas as they become available (about two weeks in advance). All assignments are due by 11:59pm (PDT/PST) on the date they are due.

Week 1 – August 21-25

Module 0 – Introductory Module

- Review: Introductory Module on Canvas
- Submit: Canvas Notification Assignment – August 21
- Submit: Canvas Headshot Assignment – August 21
- Submit: Reading Annotations for the Syllabus – August 24
- Submit: Introductory Discussion Post and Replies – August 25

Week 2 – August 28-September 3

Module 1 – Classical Theory – Karl Marx

- Submit: Reading Journal for *Manifesto of the Communist Party* – August 28
- Submit: Reading Journal for *Marx on Suicide* – August 30
- Submit: Reading Annotations for *Alienated Labor* – September 1
- Submit: Mini Assignment #1 (Submit 3 of 5) – September 3

Week 3 – September 4 (Labor Day)-10

Module 2 – Classical Theory – Émile Durkheim

- Submit: Reading Journal for *What is a Social Fact?* – September 5
- Submit: Reading Journal for *The Normality of Crime* – September 6
- Submit: Reading Annotations for *Suicide* – September 8
- (Optional) Submit: Course Feedback Survey – September 10

Week 4 – September 11-17

Module 3 – Classical Theory – Max Weber

- Submit: Reading Journal for *The Spirit of Capitalism* – September 11
- Submit: Reading Journal for *Bureaucracy* – September 13
- Submit: Reading Annotations for *Class, Status, Party* – September 15
- Submit: Self-Assessment Survey #1 – September 17

Week 5 – September 18-23

Module 4 – Classical Theory – Georg Simmel

- Submit: Reading Journal for *Metropolis & Mental Life* – September 18
- Submit: Reading Journal for *The Miser and the Spendthrift* – September 20
- Submit: Reading Annotations for *Fashion* – September 22

Week 6 – September 25-October 1

Module 5 – Classical Theory – Marginalized Voices

- Submit: Reading Journal for *DuBois Selected Excerpts* – September 25
- Submit: Reading Journal for *The Dependence of Women* – September 27
- Submit: Reading Annotation for *If Men Were Seeking the Franchise* – September 29
- Submit: Mini Assignment #2 (Submit 3 of 5) – October 1

Week 7 – October 2-8

Module 6 – Classical Theory – The Chicago School

- Submit: Reading Journal for *Society as Symbolic Interactionism* – October 2
- Submit: Reading Journal for *The Looking-Glass Self* – October 4
- Submit: Reading Annotations for *The Fusion of the 'I' and the 'Me'* – October 6

Week 8 – October 9-15

Module 7 – Classical Theory – Influential Voices Outside the Discipline

- Submit: Reading Journal for *Conspicuous Consumption* – October 9
- Submit: Reading Journal for *Civilization and Its Discontents* – October 11
- Submit: Reading Annotations for *The Madman*- October 13
- Submit: Self-Assessment Survey #2 – October 15

Week 9 – October 16-22

Module 8 – Contemporary Theory – Neo-Classical Theory (Part I)

- Submit: Reading Journal for *Social Structure and Anomie* – October 16
- Submit: Reading Journal for *The Paradox at the Heart of Modernity* – October 18
- Submit: Reading Annotations for *The McDonaldization of Society* – October 20
- Submit: Mini Assignment #3 (Submit 3 of 5) – October 22

Week 10 – October 23-29

Module 9 – Contemporary Theory – Neo-Classical Theory (Part II)

- Submit: Reading Journal for *Unanticipated Consequences of Social Action* – October 23
- Submit: Reading Journal for *Dying to Succeed* – October 25
- Submit: Reading Annotations for *The Power Elite* – October 27

Week 11 – October 30-November 5

Module 10 – Contemporary Theory – Micro Sociology

- Submit: Reading Journal for *Performances* – October 30
- Submit: Reading Journal for *Outsiders: Becoming a Marijuana User* – November 1
- Submit: Reading Annotations for *The Gloried Self* – November 3
- Submit: Mini Assignment #4 (Submit 3 of 5) – November 5

Week 12 – November 6-12

Module 11 – Contemporary Theory - Poststructuralism

- Submit: Reading Journal for *Distinction* – November 6
- Submit: Reading Journal for *Discipline and Punishment* – November 8
- Submit: Reading Annotations for *Panopticism* – November 10

Week 13 – November 13-19

Module 12 – Contemporary Theory – Gender/Queer Theory

- Submit: Reading Journal for *If Men Could Menstruate* – November 13
- Submit: Reading Journal for *Femininity and Masculinity* – November 15
- Submit: Reading Annotations for *Capitalism and the Gay Identity* – November 17
- Submit: Self-Assessment Survey #3 – November 19

Week 14 – November 20-26 (Thanksgiving Break)

- No assigned materials.

Week 15 – November 27-December 3

Module 13 – Contemporary Theory – Critical Race Theory

- Submit: Reading Journal for *The Theoretical Status of the Concept of Race* – November 27
- Submit: Reading Journal for *Wages of Whiteness* – November 29
- Submit: Reading Annotations for *Máscaras, Trenzas, y Greñas* – December 1
- Submit: Mini Assignment #5 (Submit 3 of 5) – December 3

Week 16 – December 4-8

Course Wrap-up

- Submit: Course Wrap-Up Discussion Post and Replies – December 6
- (Optional) Submit: End-of-Semester Course Survey – December 6
- Submit: Book Analysis – December 8