SOCI 101-02 Social Theory

Course and Contact Information

Instructor
Peter Chua

Email
Please use Canvas <Inbox> for electronic communication

Communication
Please check your Canvas mail and Canvas announcements regularly

Office Location
DMH 223

Office Hours
Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:30 – 2:55 p.m. and by appointment

Class Days/Time
Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:30 – 11:45 a.m.

Classroom
DMH 226A

Prerequisite
SOCI 1 Introduction to Sociology and junior-level standing

Co-Requisite
SOCI 100w Writing Workshop

Recommendation
Completion of at least one other sociology courses to appreciate fully the issues and debates discussed in this course

Course Website
sjsu.instructure.com

SJSU operates a web-based learning management software called “Canvas by Instructure.”
This course uses Canvas as its website to distribute reading materials, selected handouts and assignments, and other instructional materials and to submit selected assignments.

To familiarize yourself with the login process and security,
go to www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/canvas/index.html
To log-in, use:
- Your 9-digit SJSU ID number as the username.
- Your SJSUOne password as the password.
To reset your password, go to sjsuone.sjsu.edu/sjsuone/resetpassword/

For technical support, go to isupport.sjsu.edu/ecampus/ContentPages/Home.aspx
Contact me if you have course-specific questions.
Course Description

This is an upper-division introductory course in sociological theory. It is an innovative course that focuses on the ways sociologists and others use social theories to address substantive issues and problems in our society. It goes beyond the standard coverage that surveys the major perspectives in sociology and presents the historical development of social theories, which has promoted often student boredom and disengagement. Instead, this course emphasizes how sociological theories can develop appropriate solution-based interventions to social problems once we understand properly the generative mechanisms causing these problems.

We will start by examining problems related to deterministic arguments related to biology, psychology, and “culture.” We will then examine theories to address general problems related to situational injustice, institutional and systemic crisis, and empirical research questions.

This course offers you the opportunity to hone your skills in reading, analyzing, comparing, and critically evaluating major social theories. That is, we will be asked to develop further your skills of critical analysis and self-expression by applying theories appropriately, and presenting clear written arguments about our social surroundings.

Required Readings and Materials

Required Readings

• Sociology 101: Social Theory Readings, Fall 2017. Readings and class handouts are available at the Canvas site in PDF format for course participants.

Reference Readings on Introducing Sociology and Social Problems


Technology Requirement

Students are required to have regular access to:

• A dependable personal computer with capacity to access the internet and the Canvas learning management system course website
• A dependable web browser with appropriate settings and an updated version for your computer to access and use Canvas, library databases, and other relevant websites
• A dependable personal computer printer to print reports and assignments
• An office software suite with basic word-processing capacities as such Google Docs (Google account required; available for “free” at docs.google.com), LibreOffice (available free at www.libreoffice.org), or Microsoft Office
• An PDF reader app

The SJSU Library and Our Library Liaison

The library provides online tutorials on using the library and academic integrity (see library.sjsu.edu/online-tutorials). See login.libaccess.sjlibrary.org/login to get online access to library databases. Kathryn Blackmer Reyes (Kathryn.BlackmerReyes@sjsu.edu), the Library Liaison to sociology, is available by appointment and for consultation.
Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon on successful completion of this course, participants will be able to:

CLO1: Explain—in a comparative manner—the central theoretical concepts and perspectives in sociology

CLO2: Assess the strengths and weaknesses of interpretive and critical perspectives and the weaknesses of out-of-date perspectives in sociology

CLO3: Enact appropriate personal, research, and social change activities by using the best sociological perspective to address a range of likely events related to situational injustice, institutional crisis, and systemic crisis

CLO4: Deepen your recognition of how sociology differs from non-sociological inquiries

The following table indicates how this course supports in ensuring your successful completion of the B.A. sociology program outcomes (PLOs):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLO1: Be able to think sociologically about the relationship between social structure, interaction, identities, &amp; inequalities</th>
<th>CLO1</th>
<th>CLO2</th>
<th>CLO3</th>
<th>CLO4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLO2: Be able to identify and explain major sociological theories and apply them to everyday life</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO3: Be proficient in qualitative and quantitative research design, data collection and data analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO4: Be proficient in oral and written communication skills appropriate to the discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO5: Be able to practice sociology as educated and civically engaged persons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Requirement and Assignments

Active in-class participation (to assess CLO#1, #2, #3, and #4): Required readings and in-class activities provide introductory insights and important details on social theorists and their theories. Take good notes on your questions. Please bring your questions and the readings to class so we can discuss them closely. If you do not understand specific readings, I urge you strongly to meet with me in my office so we can discuss them more thoroughly. Quizzes on the readings will assess your preparation and understanding on the assigned readings. Mini-lectures focus on substantive materials and analysis and expand on the materials introduce in the readings. The lectures relate to but not necessarily cover every important aspects of the readings. Make sure not to form improper habits of passive listening, passive notetaking, and regurgitation.

Evaluation of class participation and analytical creativity based on the following criteria: raising open-ended questions you based on the readings, your attention to details in the readings, your ability to synthesize discussions, and your overall contribution to the discussion. Factors that aid in your participation include completing the assigned work before class, arriving to class on time and staying for the whole time, paying attention, and actively and respectively listening to the discussion. Factors that may limit your full participation include digital and mobile distractions (checking your phone, messages, emails, or online websites), reading any materials not related to the discussion, and not staying awake. You may not earn any credit related to participation if you miss ten or more class sessions (which is about 40% or more of the course).
Skill-practice assignments (to assess CLO#1, #2, #3, and #4): You are expected to complete several short skill-practice assignments. The assignments ask you to apply and synthesize the assigned readings and aim to deepen your grasp of theoretical positions and debates. Your lowest grade will be dropped. Directions will be provided during the semester.

Final report and presentation (to assess CLO#1, #2, #3, and #4): The final essay and presentation expand on issues raised in the readings and mini-lectures and allow for the sharpening of your analytical, speaking, and argumentative abilities. You will be asked to write an eight-page argumentative essay. Learning to write well can be developed only through persistence and hard work. In addition to my specific suggestions and encouragement, there are university resources available to help you foster these skills. Details given later will address the specific organization and content for the assignment.

In-class exams (to assess CLO#1, #2, #3, and #4): The exams, which consists of short-answer questions, evaluate your understanding and application of theoretical concepts and, approaches.

Final Examination or Evaluation
The final exam consists of short-answer questions tentatively and evaluates your understanding and application of theoretical concepts and approaches. More details can be found in University Policy S06-4 (www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S06-4.pdf) which states that: “There shall be an appropriate final examination or evaluation at the scheduled time in every course, unless specifically exempted by the college dean who has curricular responsibility for the course.”

Grading Information
Evaluation Principles
Your final grade derives from multiple methods of evaluation and several opportunities for practice, improvement, and learning with on meaningful feedback. Evaluation is fair and just, reflecting your effort and learning based on clear directions and criteria.

Determination of Your Course Grade
The satisfactory completion of the following requirements determines your overall grade:

- 20% Active participation & analytical creativity during reading discussion & in-class activities
- 25% Skill-practice assignments
- 30% Two in-class exams (15% each)
- 15% Final report, due tentatively Dec 7
- 10% Report presentation, starting tentatively Nov 28

Grading Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>98-100</td>
<td>Demonstrates excellent understanding of the course materials. Embodies a sociologist-in-training who is highly ethical, competent, and professional or equivalent. Consistently contributes in promoting class discussion and the learning of others and deepens learning that is self-initiated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-97</td>
<td>Demonstrates good level of understanding of the course materials. Embodies a sociologist-in-training who is ethical, competent, and professional or equivalent. Shows some gaps in argumentation, writing, and completed tasks. Contributes to class discussion, yet in a limited manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89</td>
<td>Demonstrates an acceptable yet uneven level of understanding of the course materials. Embodies a sociologist-in-training who is satisfactorily ethical, competent, and professional or equivalent. Shows major gaps in argumentation, writing, and completed tasks. Contributes to class discussion minimally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-87</td>
<td>Demonstrates an acceptable yet uneven level of understanding of the course materials. Embodies a sociologist-in-training who is satisfactorily ethical, competent, and professional or equivalent. Shows major gaps in argumentation, writing, and completed tasks. Contributes to class discussion minimally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79</td>
<td>Demonstrates an acceptable yet uneven level of understanding of the course materials. Embodies a sociologist-in-training who is satisfactorily ethical, competent, and professional or equivalent. Shows major gaps in argumentation, writing, and completed tasks. Contributes to class discussion minimally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-77</td>
<td>Demonstrates an acceptable yet uneven level of understanding of the course materials. Embodies a sociologist-in-training who is satisfactorily ethical, competent, and professional or equivalent. Shows major gaps in argumentation, writing, and completed tasks. Contributes to class discussion minimally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>Demonstrates an acceptable yet uneven level of understanding of the course materials. Embodies a sociologist-in-training who is satisfactorily ethical, competent, and professional or equivalent. Shows major gaps in argumentation, writing, and completed tasks. Contributes to class discussion minimally.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D+ 68-69 Demonstrates poor but passing understanding of the course materials. Embodies a sociologist-in-training who is not quite ethical, competent, and professional or equivalent. Shows highly significant gaps in writing, assignments, and participation.

D 63-67 Demonstrates serious deficiency in competing assigned tasks (including participation) at the appropriate level and unacceptable understanding of the course materials. Shows very limited effort to learn the material and succeed academically and professionally.

D- 60-62

F 59 & below

Request for an Incomplete Grade
To receive an incomplete for the course, you must inform the instructor in person seven-days before the last day of instruction. A grade of incomplete will only be considered for students who are:

- Passing the course with a C or better,
- Present a legitimate, non-academic reason to the instructor, and
- Have only one major assignment left to finish.

Promotion of Caring, Accessible, Enriching and Mutually Respectful Learning Environment for All
My pedagogical values...

- I have high expectations for your performance in class and on assignments and for every student to be competent sociologists. I believe you can do the work, and I will coach you through the process. I demand a lot from you because I seek to develop you further academically and professionally.
- I think learning should be fun, exciting, and challenging.
- I am interested in your academic development and personal well-being.
- I think that learning and teaching are complex, endlessly fascinating collaborations.

As the instructor, I expect myself...

- To work hard to help you succeed in the course
- To be available if you need extra help
- To share my knowledge, training, and professional experiences and show how to make use of course content
- To model professional skills, ethics, and values
- To treat all students fairly, justly, and reasonable, particularly related to grading
- To provide meaningful feedback on your work
- To take lead in maintaining a positive, challenging learning environment

As students, you are expected...

- To be motivated and have a positive attitude to learn the course materials
- To commit a reasonable amount of effort to complete the readings and assignments, persevere, and have fun in learning the materials and to grow from mistakes
- To be prepared and participate verbally every class session. The prerequisite for such active participation is attendance.
- To lead class discussion as part of your participation
- To read the assigned materials before coming to class so we can discuss them in detail. This means that you are familiar with the assigned readings and can raise thoughtful questions that encourage an interactive-learning and student-centered discussion.
- To complete required readings and assignments on time — that is, before coming to class. Written work should be proofread and edited. Assignments are due at the beginning of class. There will be substantial loss of credit for late work.
Do NOT email them to me. Do NOT turn them in to the department office; this is a College of Social Sciences policy. Do NOT slide them under my office door.

- To be responsible in your learning and conduct yourself professionally by:
  - Attending class regularly. If you missed class, talk with your peers to learn what happened and get notes. After talking to classmates, if you have additional questions, talk with me in person.
  - Not disrupting the learning environment and the learning by your peers
- To contribute in maintaining a positive, respectful, and challenging learning environment and ensure a thoughtful and respectful engagement with the subject matter
- To cooperate and collaborate with your peers in teams, in class, and outside of class

- **To practice academic integrity and your owned intellectual work.** Academic dishonesty such as plagiarism and cheating violates university regulation. It will not be tolerated. Do give proper acknowledgement to ideas, facts, and arguments that you did not initially construct or demonstrate. This applies to in-class discussions and all written work. Notwithstanding this warning, you are strongly encouraged to discuss the class readings with students in or out of class, but acknowledge the ideas you received from others regardless of how casually you come to such ideas. **Note:** Your written work in this course may be evaluated for plagiarism using [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com), a plagiarism detection service contracted by SJSU

- To prevent class disruption and student inattentiveness resulting from the personal use of cell phones, smart phones, laptop computers, and other mobile communication devices during the class. Please leave the classroom to send and read text messages and make personal phone calls.
- To use laptop computers during class for note-taking and other class-related work only. Those using computers during class for work not related to that class must leave the classroom.

*University Policies*

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ [Syllabus Information web page](https://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/).
This is the tentative schedule, subject to change with fair notice through in-class announcements.

Key to readings:

- **C** = Course readings posted on the Canvas website
- **IST** = Pip Jones, Liz Bradbury and Shaun Le Boutillier’s *Introducing Social Theory*, 2nd ed. (2011)

### Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Session and Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Before Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2: Aug 29</td>
<td>Clarifying the Social Problems to Solve</td>
<td>Between me and the other world there is even an unasked question…. How does it feel to be a problem? —W. E. B. Du Bois (1909:11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Session and Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading Before Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Ethnomethodology.” [Pp. 118-123. [IST]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7: Sept 14</td>
<td><strong>Rejecting Media Determinism in Sociology</strong></td>
<td>Chandler, Daniel. 1995. “Technological or Media Determinism.” [c]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Ethnomethodology.” [Pp. 118-123. [IST]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Session and Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading Before Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OPTIONALLY READ FOR CLASS:  
Excerpt from “Emile Durkheim.” Pp. 71-73. [IST]  
Durkheim, Emile. 1897 [1951]. “Suicide.” [C] |
| 10: Sept 26           | Solutions to Situational Injustice | Marx, Karl (with Friedrich Engels). 1844-1859. “Selected Key Marx’s Concepts.” [C]  
OPTIONAL READINGS FOR YOUR REFERENCE:  
Marx. “Historical Materialism” [C] |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Session and Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Before Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14: Oct 10</td>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19: Oct 26</td>
<td>Thinking about Institutional Crisis: Human Rights and the Community (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Session and Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading Before Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OPTIONAL READINGS FOR YOUR REFERENCE:  
OPTIONAL READINGS FOR YOUR REFERENCE:  
Gunderson, Christopher. 2014. “The Persistent Return of the Wretched of the Earth: Neo-Zapatismo and Revolutionary Theory.” New York: CUNY Graduate Center Program in Sociology. [C] |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Session and Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Before Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Durkheim, Emile. “What is a Social Fact?” [c]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>OPTIONAL READINGS FOR YOUR REFERENCE:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26: Nov 21</td>
<td><strong>Formulating Theory by Answering Empirical Questions (2)</strong></td>
<td>Smith, Dorothy. 1974. “Knowing a Society from Within: A Women’s Standpoint.” [c]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27: Nov 28</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28: Nov 30</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29: Dec 5</td>
<td>Closing Remarks</td>
<td>Miles, Sheila. “How to Present Your Sociological Education to the Labor Market” [c]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hammond, Osbourne &amp; Patel. “Viewpoints from Three Sociology Graduates” [c]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Freeland, Kay. “A Sociology Graduate in Employment” [c]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>White, Tracia Lain. “Being a Sociologist Employed in Public Agencies” [c]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30: Dec 7</td>
<td>Review</td>
<td>ASSIGNMENT DUE: Final Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 18 Mon. 845a-12n</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SJSU CAMPUS EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

FIRES, EARTHQUAKES AND OTHER DISASTERS

- Call 9-1-1 or use a blue light telephone to summon University Police assistance for any campus police, fire, or medical emergencies. Give your name, the nature of the emergency, and your specific location. Stay on the line until the University Police Dispatcher tells you to hang up.
- Use extinguishers for minor fires. If a fire appears uncontrollable, close all room doors to confine the fire, pull the building fire alarm lever, evacuate the area or building, and then call 9-11.
- Remain calm during an earthquake. “Duck, cover and hold” under a desk or table, or stand in a doorway or against an interior wall. Wait at least two minutes after shaking stops before leaving a building. Move to a clear area well away from structures or overhead hazards such as trees or power lines.
- Help disabled persons evacuate the building. Follow instructions of Building Emergency Team members and University Police. Do not use elevators.
- Tune to radio station KSJS 90.5 FM for campus information. A campus information line will be set up as soon as possible after a major emergency -- call 924-SJSU (924-7578) for instructions, information, and updates.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

- Call 9-1-1. Give your name, the nature of the emergency, and your specific location. Tell the University Police Dispatcher what assistance you need (ambulance, paramedics, etc.).
- Assist the victim until help arrives. If you, or someone in the area, are trained in CPR, perform CPR if necessary. Stop bleeding with direct pressure to the wound. Do not move a victim unless his or her life is in immediate danger. Do not leave victims unattended. Be careful about contaminating yourself and others if hazardous materials may be involved.
- For minor first aid, report in person to the Student Health Center weekdays from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. or call University Police at 924-2222.

BUILDING EVACUATION

- Leave by the nearest safe exit when you hear the building emergency alarm (fire alarm), or if you are told to do so by University Police or a Building Emergency Team member.
- Take keys, books, wallets, prescription medicines and important personal belongings with you in case you cannot re-enter immediately. Move at least 150 feet away from all structures. Do not smoke.
- Use the stairs. Do not use elevators--in case of fire or earthquake, many elevators stop in place and you may be trapped or exposed to deadly smoke.
- Re-enter a building only after University Police or Building Emergency Team members tell you that it is safe to do so.

POLICE - FIRE - MEDICAL EMERGENCY
DIAL
9 – 1 – 1

For further information visit the University Police Web site at:
http://www.sjsu.edu/police/