Course Description and Objectives

This course presents an introduction to contemporary thought through examination and utilization of the sociological imagination. While we may think of some contemporary theoretical approaches as ‘old,’ this course is an attempt to make our past theories our present. Meaning, we can use older theories to understand our past and apply them to our present understanding and situation. Throughout the semester we will cover a wide range of theorists who pushed the boundaries of more classical theorists, like Marx, Weber and Durkheim, etc. The goals and objectives of the course are:

- Be able to read and understand theory/theoretical writing
- Be able to understand and eventually engage with theory and the relation to other theorists/theory
- Be able to apply theories to understand and explain contemporary events.
- Have fun!

Given these goals, there will be significant amounts of time spent closely engaging with a number of interesting theoretical interpretations and their branches of social theory. Most importantly, the course will use the theoretical approaches to help understand current events with a critical eye.

Since theory is often difficult and complex, familiarity with the reading and taking the time to read and participate in class is essential. Theory is often a dialectical experience – meaning you learn more not just from reading, but also hearing the interpretations of others of that theory.
Accessibility
If at any time in the semester things may come up, please come to me with questions or concerns sooner rather than later. Many things can be reevaluated given enough time and in a way, that are better for you as students and can help in the long run. Don’t fret about asking for help! Ask!

Office Location/Office hours
Bolton Hall 756, Wednesday 2-4pm, or by appointment: sbaran@uwm.edu
These are times I have specifically set up for you to talk with me. If you have questions, are confused or need more detail, this is a time where you can do that. It is much better to come for help or clarify any issues sooner rather than later! 😊

Required Texts
There no required book for you to purchase. All the readings will be available to print/scan/download on to your Kindle/nook or other electronic device.

Course Requirements
There are no tests or quizzes but there are written papers, discussion boards and participation is important for theoretical analysis.

Theory Application
These short papers should demonstrate comprehension of sociological concepts and theories. In order to complete this assignment, each week you will turn in a paper that shows engagement with the concepts that are blended with either a current event, research proposal or issue that you feel the theory directly applies. (For example, you could use Marx’s theory of alienation to describe work productivity). You are able to drop 2 papers throughout the semester, in essence, you do not have to write 2 papers OR if you write all the papers, the 2 lowest grades will be dropped, but you still have to participate in the online discussions for that week.

IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT ALL WRITTEN WORK:

- Papers are to be 4 full pages in length, but there will be no penalty for an in-depth engagement with the material that goes beyond 4 pages.
- Students will complete ANY 11 of the weekly theory application papers (there are 13 total, and you are able to miss 2)
- If a student completes all 13 papers, the 11 highest grades will be recorded. An extra paper cannot be used as extra credit. Papers cannot be re-done or re-graded.
- Students are expected to integrate as many relevant sociological concepts as possible, making sure to define them before using them in their papers.
- Students must cite in-text using APA, ASA or another familiar style.
- All written work should be submitted to the dropbox on D2L by the Sunday of that week.
- Written assignments cannot be re-done or re-graded.
h. All written work must be submitted as a WORD (.doc) attachment to the dropbox on D2L. Do not email assignments to your professor, and make sure assignments are .doc files.

i. Any written work in this class is subject to checks for plagiarism. Please make sure that you cite wherever appropriate. If you need help or advice on how to do this, please contact your professor. **Students who plagiarize will receive a zero on the assignment in question.**

**Discussion Questions**

The night before each class, pose 2 – 3 questions to D2L. This class is part lecture/part discussion because theory is less fun when it’s taught at you, versus a shared learning process.

**Final Paper**

You will complete a research topic (based on a course-related topic of your own choosing after consultation with me), annotated bibliography and final research paper proposal of 7-10 pages. Research and theory are often inextricably linked, therefore, it is important to make research have a theoretical basis.

**Readings**

ALL READINGS ARE AVAILABLE ON D2L

**Week 1**

September 4: What is theory? What is social theory? Fact? Introductions and syllabus review

September 6: Review of classic theorists and theories: Marx and Engels (selections of *Communist Manifesto, German Ideology and Capital*) and DuBois (*Souls of White and Black Folk* selections)

**Week 2: Critical theorists and the Frankfurt School**


September 13: DeBord, *Society of the Spectacle*; Barron, *Culture, Convention*

**Week 3: Critical Theory**

September 18: Simmel, *Fashion; Metropolis and Mental Life*; Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*

September 20: Reisman, *The Lonely Crowd*; Goldman, *Chapter 1*
Week 4: Chicago School

September 25: Drake (not the artist) & Cayton, *The Black Metropolis*; Frazier, *Pathology of Racial Prejudice*; Blauner, *Internal Colonialism*


**Research Proposal Topic Due**

Week 5: Structural Functionalism

October 2: Durkheim, Intro, *Normality of Crime*; Merton, *Anomie*; other selections

October 4: Parsons, *Professions and the Social Structure, School Class as Social System*, Anyon, *Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work*

Week 6: Symbolic Interaction

October 9: Cooley & Mead, *Mind, Self & Society*; Goffman *Presentation of Self*

October 11: Becker Intro and *Outsiders*; other selections

**Annotated Bibliography Due**

Week 7: Culture

October 16: Bourdieu, *Forms of Capital, Legitimate Language*; Ritzer, *McDonaldization*

October 18: Bordo, *Unbearable Weight, Anorexia Nervosa*; Barron, *Tattoo Culture, Celebrity Culture* Circle back to Adorno, Simmel

Week 8: Critical Race Theory/Race theory

October 23: Omi & Winant, *Racial Formations*; Bonilla-Silva, *Frames of Colorblind Racism*


Week 9: Intersectionality


November 1: Smith, *Sociology from Women’s Experience*; Hill Collins and Hilge, *Selections*

**First Draft of Paper Due**

Week 10: Queer Theory
November 6: Serano, Selections; Butler, Gender Trouble; Pitts, Visibly Queer

November 8: Lorde, Sister Outsider; Pascoe, “Dude”; Connell/Messerschmidt

Week 11: Women of Color Feminisms

November 13: Combahee River Collective, Black Feminist Statement; Collins, Afrocentric Epistemology; Apollo selections

November 15: Richie, Woman of Color Feminisms; Smith, Heteropatriarchy; Alarcon, selections

Week 12: Other Feminist Theory

November 20: Connell, Selections from Masculinities; Lorber, Body and Ideology; Goldman, Chapter 11; Rich, Compulsory Heterosexuality; Smith, Critique of Sociology

Revisions of 1st Draft Due

Week 13: Structural & Post-structural

November 27: Bourdieu, Structures and Habitus; Anderson Imagined Communities; Foucault, The Carceral

November 29: Foucault, Intro and Panopticon; Shearing and Stenning (selection)

Week 14: Post-modern

December 4: Baudrillard, Advertising and Simulations; Barron, Communication

December 6: Haraway, Cyborg Manifesto; Modest_Witness, Pitts, Post modern

Week 15: Post-Colonialism

December 11: Said, Orientalism; Mohanty, Third world Women, Gilley, colonialism

December 13: Anzaldua, Selections from Borderlands, Bridge Across my Back; Spivak, Can the subaltern speak?

Final Paper due last day of Finals Week.

UNIVERSITY AND SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICIES

The Secretary of the University maintains a web page that contains university policies that affect the instructor and the students in this course, as well as essential information specific to conduct of the course. The link to that page is: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/news_events/upload/Syllabus-Links.pdf

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities. In the pursuit of equal access and in compliance with state and federal laws, the University is required to provide accommodations to students with documented
disabilities. It is expected that a statement be placed on your syllabus informing students to contact you to arrange needed accommodations. A sample syllabus statement can be found here: https://uwm.edu/arc/wpcontent/uploads/sites/97/2015/08/Recommended-Syllabus-Statement.pdf.

**Religious Observances.** Policies regarding accommodations for absences due to religious observance are found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm

**Students called to active Military Duty.** Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty are found at the following: https://uwm.edu/active-duty-military/

**Incomplete.** You may be given an incomplete if you have carried a course successfully until near the end of the semester but, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond your control, have been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of course work. An incomplete is not given unless you prove to the instructor that you were prevented from completing the course for just cause as indicated above. The conditions for awarding an incomplete to graduate and undergraduate students can be found at the following: https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_31_INCOMPLETE_GRADES.pdf

**Discriminatory Conduct** (such as sexual harassment). Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience and well-being of students, faculty and staff. Policies regarding discriminatory conduct can be found at: https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discriminatory_Policy.pdf

**Academic Misconduct.** Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Policies for addressing students cheating on exams or plagiarism can be found at the following: https://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/facultystaff/policies/academic-misconduct/

**Complaint Procedures.** Students may direct complaints to the Sociology Department Chair or the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the Sociology Department Chair, the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences, or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. Policies may be found at:

https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discriminatory_Policy.pdf

**Grade Appeal Procedures.** A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the sociology department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College of Letters & Science. Procedures for undergraduate student grade appeal can be found at:

https://uwm.edu/letters-science/advising/answers-forms/policies/appeal-procedure-for-grades

Procedures for graduate student grade appeal can be found at

https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/appealing-academic-decisions/

**Final Examination Policy.** Policies regarding final examinations can be found at the following:

http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm
**Book Royalties.** In accord with Department of Sociology policy, the royalties from the sale of faculty-authored books to students in their classes are donated to a UWM Foundation/Sociology Account to support future awards and activities for UWM students in Sociology.

*Update 08/2018*

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*Syllabus disclaimer:* Course syllabus/calendar is subject to change.