

Modern Sociological Theory

Sociol 376 ONLINE: Summer 2020
Jul 20—Aug 15, 2020
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Professor A. Aneesh
Email: aneesh@uwm.edu

Introduction

Do we actively manage the impressions others may have about us? Perhaps. Are elections the most important part of a democracy? Perhaps not. Why are we developing so many technologies ranging from webcams to traffic cameras to put ourselves under surveillance? This course not only provides answers to such questions of social importance; it also seeks to train you how to think. While one of the objectives of this course is to make you conversant with the most important theories in contemporary sociology, it will not be sufficient to simply memorize facts about theories. We will read about them, talk about them, write about them, and use them in analyzing novel events. It is of critical interest not only to students who wish to major in sociology, but also to those, who need tools to think and talk about their society with a view to broader life satisfaction.

Beware, we will be covering almost a semester worth of material in four weeks. While covering this amount of material in four weeks may seem painful but it will be over, you guessed it, in just four weeks.

When you access the course website for the first time, look around and get familiar with the environment. Under "Content," you will find full course information, quizzes, writing assignment guidelines, virtual class participation guidelines, and evaluation criteria. You can find the course materials under their weekly module. Follow the "To do list," and make sure you complete all the requirements every week. I will put up my lecture notes and slides ahead of time. Again, welcome aboard! Let's have a "thoughtful" summer together.

Required Texts

All required texts will be provided on CANVAS. No purchase of textbooks necessary.

Exams

Exams are a highly troubling feature of modern times, I agree. But there is nothing you and I can do about them, except take and give them. Response Paper, Quizzes, and Discussion forum participation are three types of exam in this course. For more details, visit the course website.

	Points
Response Papers	300
Quizzes	240
Discussion participation	100
Total	640

Week 1: Review of Classical Theory

Module 1: Karl Marx

First Assignment: Write a 200-word essay on yourself (self introduction), and upload a small picture of yours. Your introduction and picture will be available for the whole class to view, get to know you (and admire).

Read Lecture: Marx, Technology, and our Work Life (CANVAS)

Read: Karl Marx's Manifesto (CANVAS)

Week 1: Review of Classical Theory

Module 2: Max Weber

Read lecture: Max Weber: The Ethos of an Age and the Mode of our Work (CANVAS)

Read: Notes on Weber's Protestant Ethic and Capitalism (CANVAS)

Read: Bureaucracy and Rationalization (CANVAS)

Read: Scientific Management (CANVAS)

Week 1

Module 3: Functionalism

Lecture Slides: Functionalism

Read: Functionalism (CANVAS)

Week 2

Module 1: Conflict Theory

Lecture Slides: Conflict Theory

Read: Conflict Theory (CANVAS)

Week 2

Module 2: Symbolic Interactionism

Lecture Slides: Symbolic Interactionism (CANVAS)

Read: Symbolic Interactionism (CANVAS)

Week 2

Module 3: The Body

Lecture Slides: Sociology and the Body (CANVAS)

Read: Rediscovering the body (CANVAS)

Week 3

Module 1: Jurgen Habermas

Lecture Slides: Habermas and Modernity (CANVAS)

Read: Jurgen Habermas (CANVAS)

Week 3

Module 2: Thomas Kuhn

Lecture Slides: Science (CANVAS)

Read: Thomas Kuhn (CANVAS)

Read: John Law: Notes on Actor-Network Theory (CANVAS)

Week 3

Module 3: Structuralism

Lecture Slides: Structuralism (CANVAS)

Read: Claude Levi-Strauss (CANVAS)

Read: Aneesh's two-page commentary on Levi-Strauss's book *The Raw and the Cooked*. (CANVAS)

Week 4

Module 1: Althusser

Lecture Slides: Marxist Structuralism (CANVAS)

Read: Louis Althusser (CANVAS)

Read: Althusser, *Ideology* (CANVAS)

Week 4

Module 2: Post-structuralism

Lecture Slides: Post Structuralism (CANVAS)

Read: Michel Foucault (CANVAS)

Week 4

Module 3: Postmodernism

Lecture Slides: Postmodernism (CANVAS)

Read: Baudrillard, *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* (CANVAS)

Syllabus Links

1. *Students with disabilities.* Notice to these students should appear prominently in the syllabus so that special accommodations are provided in a timely manner. <http://uwm.edu/arc/>
2. *Religious observances.* Accommodations for absences due to religious observance should be noted. <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm>
3. *Students called to active military duty.* Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty should be noted.
Students: <http://uwm.edu/active-duty-military/>
Employees: <https://www.wisconsin.edu/ohrwd/download/policies/ops/bn9.pdf>
4. *Incompletes.* A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work.
https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_31_INCOMPLETE_GRADES.pdf
5. *Discriminatory conduct.* 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.
https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discrimina_duct_Policy.pdf
6. *Title IX/Sexual Violence.* Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education program or activities, and UWM policy prohibits such conduct (see Discriminatory Conduct, above). This includes sexual violence, which may include sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, and/or stalking in all educational programs and education-related areas. UWM strongly encourages its students to report any instance of sex discrimination to UWM's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@uwm.edu). Whether or not a student wishes to report an incident of sexual violence, the Title IX Coordinator can connect students to resources at UWM and/or in the community including, but not limited to, victim advocacy, medical and counseling services, and/or law enforcement. For more information, please visit: <https://uwm.edu/sexual-assault/>.
7. *Academic misconduct.* Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University. <http://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/facultystaff/policies/academic-misconduct/>
8. *Complaint procedures.* Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy.
https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discrimina_duct_Policy.pdf
9. *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 respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School.
<http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S28.htm>
10. *LGBT+ resources.* Faculty and staff can find resources to support inclusivity of students who identify as LGBT+ in the learning environment. <http://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/>
11. *Other.* The final exam requirement, the final exam date requirement, etc.
<http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm>