

**Fayetteville State University
College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Sociology**

**SOCI 351 Contemporary Sociological Theory
Fall 2011**

I: Locator and Other Information:

Course & Section: SOCI 351-45 (Weekend & Evening Term II)
Instructor's Name: *Dr. Kwaku Twumasi-Ankrah* **Office Location:** TS 110
Semester Credit Hours: 3
Class Time: MW 6:00 p.m. –8:50 p.m. **Bldg/Room:** TS 203
Telephone: (910) 672-1122
Email: kankrah@uncfsu.edu or kankrah@nc.rr.com
Office Hours: MW: 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.; TR: 2:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.; other times by appointment.

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II: Course Description:

SOCI 351 is a study of the major contemporary sociological theories, with critical analyses of the writings of American and modern social theorists. The course builds on the classical foundations of sociology, providing students with an understanding of the link between the classical European tradition and contemporary sociological perspectives. *Prerequisites: SOCI 210 and SOCI 350.*

Course Arrangement: Lectures, student research and class discussions will be used as the teaching techniques. Lectures for the course will focus on major theorists, their theoretical formulations, and the key social issues or problems they intended to address. Student research and discussions will focus on the application of a sociological theory or sociological perspective to a social problem.

III: Textbook:

Required:

Wallace, R.A. and Alison Wolf. 2006. *Contemporary Sociological Theory: Expanding the Classical Tradition*, Sixth Edition, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. (W&W)

Recommended:

Delaney, Tim. 2005. *Contemporary Social Theory: Investigation and Application*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

IV: Course Goals, Objectives & Competencies:

Course Goals:

1. The primary goal of the course is to provide students with analytical frameworks and skills that are necessary for critical and logical thinking and abstract reasoning;
2. A second goal is to expose students to various social problems and issues which were of sociological significance to theorists and how they tackled them;
3. A third goal is to establish the link between theory and research; theory, research and social policy;
4. The final goal is to provide students with an understanding of the foundation of the major theoretical perspectives in sociology.

Course Objectives:

1. To introduce students to the nature of and diversity in sociological theory so that their choice of a particular theoretical perspective could be guided by a sound knowledge base;
2. To help students acquire analytical skills and a good sense of critical thinking that is grounded in rationality. This is intended to enhance students' understanding of social issues and problems so that they can make informed and knowledgeable decisions in everyday life;
3. To expose students to major issues and problems in contemporary sociological theory and how different theorists have addressed them;
4. To introduce students to contemporary theoretical models in sociology;
5. To guide students in developing the depth, effects, and applicability of social theory in general, and of American Social theory in particular.

Behavioral Objectives/Competencies:

Upon completion of the course students should be able to:

1. Associate major theorists with their basic theoretical formulations;
2. Trace the development and growth of basic sociological perspectives;
3. Compare and contrast theories, pointing out differences and similarities;
4. Analyze current issues and problems from a particular theoretical perspective or theorist's point of view;
5. Demonstrate knowledge of the connection between theory and research in sociology in writing.

V: Course Requirements:

1. **Examinations & Quizzes:** Students will take two (2) multiple-choice examinations and a number of quizzes based on assigned readings and class discussions. Make-up requests will be granted only under very severe circumstances for missed examinations and quizzes for which the instructor's prior permission was not obtained for the absence or tardiness. Some quizzes will be given impromptu or unannounced. ***Students may not be able to make up for unannounced quizzes for which they were late or absent.***

2. **Written Assignments:** Students will complete a number of research and writing assignments (*Schedule will be provided*). The assignments will represent each student's own effort and must conform to guidelines provided. All assignments must be typed (double-spaced), proof-read, and stapled together before they are submitted for grading.

3. **Completion of Exams and Assignments:** All exams and assignments will be timed and must be completed promptly as scheduled. *Requests to take exams or quizzes ahead of schedule may not be granted.* Penalty points of up to ten points will be assessed for each tardy activity.

4. **Class Attendance/Participation:** Students are expected to attend class ready to ask and answer questions and be actively involved in discussion of scheduled/assigned topics. One (1) penalty point will be imposed for each absence and/or tardiness in excess of two (2), excused or not excused. Except in severe circumstances, students must remain in class for its entire duration. Personal appointments and activities may not be scheduled to conflict with class time since an absence of any form is not creditable.

5. Student Behavior Expectations: -The instructor will respect all students and will make every effort to maintain a classroom climate that promotes learning for all students. Students must accept their responsibility for maintaining a positive classroom environment by abiding by the following rules:

- a. Students are expected to *arrive at class on time, remain in class until dismissed by the instructor, and refrain from preparing to leave class until it is dismissed. Students may not schedule other activities (e.g., employment, doctor's appointments, meetings with other instructors, etc), to coincide with this class period.*
- b. Student/teacher relationships, as well as relationships among peers, must be respectful at all times.
- c. Students must refrain from any activity that will disrupt the class. **Cell phones** and **beepers** must be turned off before students enter the classroom and are not permitted to wear headphones or other paraphernalia that may be distracting to the classroom environment.
- d. Students are not permitted to use profanity in the classroom.
- e. Students will not pass notes or carry on private conversations while class is being conducted.
- f. Students cannot bring **visitors**, especially children, to class. Adult visitors may be permitted with the instructor's permission from the instructor.
- g. **Consequences for Failing to Meet Behavioral Expectations:** The first time a student violates one of the above rules, the instructor will warn him or her privately, either after class or before the next class. (Faculty members reserve the right to warn students publicly if needed.) The second time a student violates the guidelines, the instructor may deduct as many as twenty points from the student's next exam grade. If a student violates the guidelines three times, the instructor will report the student to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action according to the FSU Code of Student Conduct.

VI: Course Evaluation: The distribution of points for the various course activities is as follows:

Examinations	60 points
Writing Assignments	15 points
Quizzes	15 points
Class Attendance & Participation	10 points

Grading Scale: A: 92-100; B: 83- 91; C: 74- 82; D: 64- 73; F: Less than 64

VII: COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

This calendar is subject to change or adjustment, as needed, throughout the semester.

WEEK	TOPIC	READING(S)
1	COURSE ORIENTATION & INTRODUCTION a) Understanding Society b) The Structure of Sociological theory c) Theory and Understanding	W&W: Chapter 1
2	STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONALISM a) Intellectual Roots b) Contributions of Talcott Parsons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parsons' Action Schema • AGIL System • Social Change c) Contributions by Robert Merton <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theories of the Middle Range d) Neofunctionalism	W&W: Chapter 2

- 3 CONFLICT THEORY W&W:Chapter 3
- a) Intellectual Roots
 - b) The Two Traditions
 - c) **Tradition I:** Conflict Theory and Critique of Society
 - Marxist and Neo-Marxist Sociology
 - Critical theory: The Frankfurt School
 - Wright Mills and R. Dahrendorf
 - Pierre Bourdieu
 - d) **Tradition II:** Conflict Theory and Analytic Sociology: Weber's Legacy
 - Ralph Dahrendorf
 - Lewis, Coser
 - Randall Collins
4. MACROSOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON EVOLUTION AND MODERNITY W&W:Chapter 4
- a) Intellectual Roots
 - b) The End of Capitalism: Karl Marx's Classless Society
 - c) Evolutionary Universals: Parson's Evolutionary Model
 - d) Rationalization and Communicative Action: Jürgen Habermas
 - e) Structuration Theory, High Modernity, and Globalization: Anthony Giddens
- *Examination 1*
- 5 SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM W&W: Chapter 5
- a) Intellectual Roots: Max Weber and Georg Simmel
 - b) George H. Mead's Contributions
 - The Development of Self
 - Symbolic Meaning
 - c) Herbert Blumer's Contributions
 - Structure and Process
 - Methodology
 - e) Erving Goffman's Contributions
 - Dramaturgy & Interaction Order
- 6 PHENOMENOLOGY/ ETHNOMETHODOLOGY W&W:Chapter 6
- a) Intellectual Roots of Phenomenology
 - Edmund Husserl
 - Alfred Schutz
 - b) Harold Garfinkel's Contributions: Ethnomethodology
 - Background and Definition
 - Doing Ethnomethodology
 - c) Peter Berger's Contributions
 - The Social Construction of Reality
 - d) Dorothy E. Smith's Feminist Standpoint Theory

