Fayetteville State University  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Department of Sociology  
Spring 2014

1. Locator Information

Instructor: Dr. Druann Heckert  
Course name and number: Contemporary Sociological Theory (351)  
Semester Credit Hours: 3  
Day and Time Class Meets: T-TH: 11:00-12:15  
Office Location: Taylor 210D  
Office hours: MWF 10-12; T 12:15-2:15  
Office phone: 672-1503  
Email Address: dheckert@uncfsu.edu

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II. Course Description

Sociology 351: Contemporary Social Theory  
A study of the major contemporary sociological theories with critical analyses of the writings of American social theorists.

III. Disabled Student Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ACA) of 1990, if you have a disability or think you have a disability to please contact the Center for Personal Development in the Spaulding Building, Room 155 (1st Floor); 910-672-1203.

IV. Textbook

V. Student Learning Outcomes

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 attempted addressing 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

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 and be able to make course-focused oral presentations to an audience;
5. Demonstrate knowledge of the connection between theory and research in sociology in writing and group projects.

VI. Course Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

First Exam..........................25 percent
Second Exam.........................20 percent
Theoretical Paper ............20 percent
Homework.........................15 percent (The student will take notes on 5 chapters of at least four pages): due with the final exam
Class Presentation of paper......10 percent
Class Participation..............10 percent

The paper will be discussed in class. You will need to write a paper of approximately six pages pertinent to contemporary social theory. You can write a description of a theorist and his/her ideas (e.g., Robert Merton, C. Wright Mills). Or, you can write a description of
a particular theory or theoretical idea (e.g., ethnomethodology). Or, you can take a contemporary social theory and apply it to a social institution or issue (e.g., labeling theory and body image among modern females).

Any disruption of the class – including utilizing cell phones and other electronic devices, acting in a disrespectful manner to fellow students or the professor, talking with neighbors, etc – will result in a zero for the participation portion of the grade.

Numerical Scale

A……..90-100  
B……..80-89  
C……..70-79  
D……..60-69  
F……..0-59  

VII. Academic Support Services  
The University College Learning Center is available. The instructor holds 8 hours of office hours per week. If you have any trouble understanding the material – either the class notes or the text – I encourage you to ask during my office hours.

VIII. Course Outline and Assignment Schedule  
The sections listed for reading assignments are meant as a guide to facilitate your completion of the text. The calendar is subject to change or adjustment as needed throughout the semester.

Week 1 (January 13-17)  
Chapter 1: The Understanding of Society

Week 2 (January 22-24)  
Chapter 1: The Understanding of Society

Week 3 (January 27-31)  
Chapter 2: Functionalism

Week 4 (February 3-7)  
Chapter 2: Functionalism

Week 5 (February 10-14)  
Chapter 5: Symbolic Interactionism
Week 6 (February 17-21)
Chapter 5: Symbolic Interactionism

Week 7 (February 24-28)
Chapter 3: Conflict Theory

Week 8 (March 3-7)
**March 3: Test 1**

Week 9 (March 17-21)
Chapter 4: Evolution and Modernity: Macrosociological Perspectives

Week 10 March 24-28)
Chapter 6: Phenomenology

Week 11 (March 31-April 4)
Chapter 7: Theories of Rational Choice

Week 12 (April 7-11)
Chapter 8: Rediscovering the Body: The Sociology of the Body and Sociobiology

Week 13 (April 14-16)
**Class Presentations**

Week 14 (April 21-25)
Chapter 9: Conclusion: Evaluating Sociological Theory

Week 15 (April 28-May 2)
**Test 2: Final exam**
**Homework due with the final exam**

April 16—Theoretical Analysis due

All exams are to be taken with the class. A make-up exam can be granted by the professor for exceptional circumstances such as death in the family or illness. Make-up exams will only be given on the last day of class – May 2– from 10– 12.

**IX. Teaching Strategies**

The teaching strategies used in this class will include a combination of lecture, discussion, and class exercises. Audio and visual material will be used as appropriate.
X. Selected References


