

# SOCIAL THEORY

Sociology 3140, University of Utah

Online course

Instructor: Marcel Paret, BEHS 408-A, [marcel.paret@soc.utah.edu](mailto:marcel.paret@soc.utah.edu)

Office hours – Wednesdays, 2:00pm-3:00pm

Prerequisite: SOC 1010

Credits: 3

Teaching assistant/grader: Shane Miller

## Course Description

Social theory operates at multiple levels. This course primarily addresses grand theories, which examine broad structures and trends. These grand theories provide a foundation for the discipline of sociology. Throughout the course, we will compare and contrast different theories by consistently posing a series of questions: What is the division of labor, and what are its functions and consequences? Where do groups (classes, races, genders, etc.) come from? How do individuals fit within social structures? How is inequality produced and reproduced? What is the state and what role does it play? What are the driving forces of history and social change?

The objectives of the course include:

- to identify the concepts that social theorists deploy, and describe how the concepts relate to each other and form a comprehensive whole;
- to compare and contrast different social theories;
- to develop critical thinking, reading, and writing skills;
- to apply social theory to student lives and current events;
- to critically examine the contemporary world, including your own experiences, through application of theory, and to discuss possible alternatives.

The course includes twelve modules, with each one devoted to a different theorist or pair of theorists. After briefly addressing Adam Smith, we then turn to three different theoretical traditions: Marxism (Marx, Lenin, Gramsci, Fanon); sociology (Durkheim, Foucault, Weber, Du Bois); and feminism (MacKinnon, Collins, Mohanty, Anzaldua, Butler).

## Course schedule

All assignments are due at 11:59pm on the specified date in Canvas.

## Office hours

I will hold weekly office hours on Wednesdays from 2:00pm-3:00pm. All students are welcome. To visit your instructor in office hours, please sign up for a 10 minute time slot through Canvas. For information on how to participate in office hours, view the Contact Me page in the Canvas course.

## Reading

*Reading is central to this course.* Effective reading skills are crucial for your own personal, professional, and intellectual development, and reading is invaluable in terms of grasping the course material. It will be difficult to do well in the course if you do not read regularly.

All of the readings for the course are available, for free, on Canvas. You can find the readings within the overview page for each Module.

I do NOT expect that you will fully comprehend each reading on your own. The lectures will help you follow the reading. I do expect, however, that you will take the time to read fully and carefully, and that you will make a serious attempt to follow what you read. Struggling through the readings will make the lectures more valuable.

The reading consists of brief passages selected specifically for this course. I have selected these brief passages to encourage you to read, and to help you focus on the most important content.

Here are some tips for how to read successfully:

- *Before* you begin reading, review the guiding questions listed at the top of the reading page.
- Read the entire text carefully, searching for the answers to the guiding questions as you read. Attempt to answer the guiding questions before you watch the lectures.
- Follow the reading and guiding questions as you watch the lectures.
- Re-read and, within the online text, click links to watch related videos to help you further understand the reading.

One of the best ways to do well in the course is to follow the guiding questions carefully, to develop answers to them, and to find passages in the text that support those answers. Reviewing the guiding questions and brainstorming answers to them is a great way to prepare for the exams.

## **Weekly participation exercises: Surveys and Reflections**

Throughout the course, you will complete weekly participation exercises that enable you to interact with other students in the course, respond to and evaluate the course material, and consider applications of the theory to the world around you. These exercises are brief. They typically consist of 3-4 multiple choice or short answer questions. Effort will determine your grade. As long as you complete all of the questions, you will earn full credit.

For each Module, you must complete two brief exercises: a Survey and a Reflection. Surveys are due on Fridays, and Reflections are due on Mondays.

Surveys ask you to give your general opinion about the theory and its relevance to the world. Questions may ask you, for example, to indicate whether you agree with the particular theorist, to provide a relevant example, or to consider how the theory relates to your own life.

Answers to the Surveys will be publicly available to all students. The answers will also be entirely anonymous, i.e. other students will not be able to identify which answers are yours, unless you write your name or other identifying information in your answer.

Reflections ask you to respond to the Survey results, and to reflect on the theory for the particular Module by indicating what you like about the theory and what parts of theory you find confusing.

## **Theory Debate Paper**

There is one short paper assignment of 500-600 words, which will require you to construct a debate between two of the theorists with regard to a current topic. More details about the assignment are available in Canvas. The paper will be due on the due date and time listed in Canvas.

## **Application Essays**

To make social theory relevant, we must examine how it relates to our own experiences and to the world around us. The Application Essay assignments require you to apply the theories to current events and personal experiences by writing short essays of 150-200 words.

Please pay close attention to the word count! Students often ask if it is acceptable to go over the word limit. My answer: NO. I have developed these essay assignments over several years, and it is entirely possible for you to address the prompt within the 150-200 word range.

There is one Application Essay assignment for each Module. You must complete any 7 of the 12 assignments. You may choose which essays to complete. Please keep in mind that we will only grade the first 7 essays that you complete. *We will not grade additional essays.*

Application Essays are due on Wednesday in the week after the Module begins.

## Exams

There will be two exams, a Midterm Exam and a Final Exam. Both exams will be cumulative, covering all of the course material up to that point. The exams will require you to demonstrate a basic understanding of the theories, and to compare and contrast them.

You may NOT bring any materials (e.g. notes, readings, phones, tablets, etc.) to the exam. You must take the exam on your own. No other students may be in the room while you take the exam, and you may not contact any other person while you take the exam.

The Midterm Exam will take place between the availability dates listed in Canvas, and the Final Exam will take place between the availability dates listed in Canvas. You may take each exam at any time during the specified window.

You must take both exams through Canvas, using the ProctorU application. Prepare for your exams now by reading the *How Does a Student Get Set up for a ProctorU Exam?* guide and completing all of the steps described in Step 1. Then, give yourself enough time before the exam to complete Steps 2 and 3 in the guide, so you will be well-prepared to take the exam by the due date.

## Grade calculations

Your final grade will depend on the following five components:

Participation exercises            260 points    (26 percent)

- Each participation exercise is worth 10 points. You must complete the entire exercise to earn points; there is no partial credit. If you complete all 24 participation exercises (12 surveys and 12 reflections), you will earn an additional 20 “completion points.”

Application essays                240 points    (24 percent)

- Each application essay exercise is worth 30 points, with three possible grades: check-minus (10 points); check (20 points); check-plus (30 points). You must complete 7 application essays, and if you complete all 7 essays (any grade) you will earn an additional 30 “completion points.” Please see the Application Essay Grading Rubric for further details.

Theory debate paper               100 points    (10 percent)

- You will receive a single score out of 100 points for the Theory Debate Paper. Please see the Theory Debate Paper Grading Rubric for further details.

Midterm exam                        200 points    (20 percent)

- The Midterm Exam will include 25 questions, with each question worth 8 points. Many of the questions have multiple answers (e.g. choose the two correct answers out of four options), which provide opportunities for partial credit.

Final exam                      200 points      (20 percent)

- The Final Exam will include 25 questions, with each question worth 8 points. Many of the questions have multiple answers (e.g. choose the two correct answers out of four options), which provide opportunities for partial credit.

*Total*                              *1,000 points*

I will determine your final letter grade by the total number of points you earn out of 1,000 possible points. Total points will translate into letter grades as follows:

A	900-1000 points	B-	500-599 points	D+	150-199 points
A-	800-899 points	C+	400-499 points	D	100-149 points
B+	700-799 points	C	300-399 points	E	0-99 points
B	600-699 points	C-	200-299 points		

To help you keep track of your progress through the course, below are two hypothetical examples of scores on the various items, leading to a final grade of either A or B.

Assignment	A grade	B grade
Participation exercises	230	120
Application essays	225	170
Theory debate paper	90	75
Midterm exam	175	110
Final exam	185	130
Total points	905	605

## **Disability services**

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the [Center for Disability Services](#), 162 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

## **Academic misconduct**

Per University of Utah regulations (Policy # 6-400). “A student who engages in academic misconduct,” as defined in Part I.B. and including, but not limited to, cheating, falsification, or plagiarism, “may be subject to academic sanctions including but not limited to a grade reduction, failing grade, probation, suspension or dismissal from the program or the University, or revocation of the student's degree or certificate. Sanctions may also include community service, a written reprimand, and/or a written statement of misconduct that can be put into an appropriate record maintained for purposes of the profession or discipline for which the student is preparing.” Please refer to the Student Code for full elaboration of student academic and behavioral misconduct policies (<http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>).

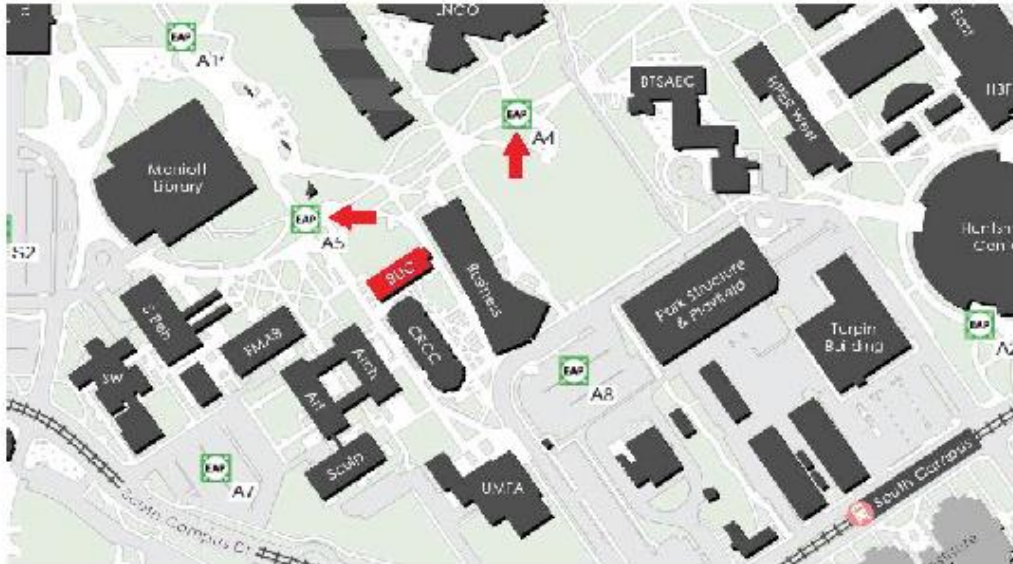
## **Sexual misconduct**

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran’s status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

## **Safety**

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit [safeu.utah.edu](http://safeu.utah.edu).

# CSBS EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN



## BUILDING EVACUATION

EAP (Emergency Assembly Point) – When you receive a notification to evacuate the building either by campus text alert system or by building fire alarm, please follow your instructor in an orderly fashion to the EAP marked on the map below. Once everyone is at the EAP, you will receive further instructions from Emergency Management personnel. You can also look up the EAP for any building you may be in on campus at <http://emergencymanagement.utah.edu/eap>.



## CAMPUS RESOURCES

**U Heads Up App:** There's an app for that. Download the app on your smartphone at [alert.utah.edu/headsup](http://alert.utah.edu/headsup) to access the following resources:

- **Emergency Response Guide:** Provides instructions on how to handle any type of emergency, such as earthquake, utility failure, fire, active shooter, etc. Flip charts with this information are also available around campus.
- **See Something, Say Something:** Report unsafe or hazardous conditions on campus. If you see a life threatening or emergency situation, please call 911!

**Safety Escorts:** For students who are on campus at night or past business hours and would like an escort to your car, please call **801-585-2677**. You can call 24/7 and a security officer will be sent to walk with you or give you a ride to your desired on-campus location.

