

SOCIAL THEORY

Sociology 3140-090, University of Utah

Spring 2025

Online course

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| Instructor: | Marcel Paret, BEHS 408-A, marcel.paret@soc.utah.edu |
| Virtual office hours: | Wednesdays, 2:00pm-3:00pm (sign up using SignUpGenius) |
| Teaching assistant: | Sebastian Miscenich |
| Prerequisite: | SOC 1010 |
| Credits: | 3 |

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 they relate to each other;
- 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.

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, Anzaldúa, Butler).

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 SignUpGenius. 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. Effort will determine your grade. As long as you complete all of the questions, thoughtfully and carefully, you will earn full credit.

For each Module, you must complete two brief participation exercises: a Survey, and a

Reflection. Surveys are due on Fridays. 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.

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.

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.

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.

Both exams will take place between the respective availability dates listed in Canvas. You may take each exam at any time during the specified window.

You must take the exam through Exam Services at the University of Utah

<https://online.utah.edu/exams-and-proctoring/>). You will have the option of taking the exam at the UOnline Center in the Marriott Library, at one of the service sites in Sandy or St. George, or through one of the remote exam proctoring options. Please note that some of these options may require an additional fee.

You may bring one 8.5” x 11” hard copy page (single-sided) of notes, handwritten or typed, to the exam. You must take the exam on your own. You may not have contact with any other person while you take the exam.

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 (hypothetical) | B grade (hypothetical) |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Participation exercises | 230 | 120 |
| Application essays | 220 | 170 |
| Theory debate paper | 90 | 75 |
| Midterm exam | 175 | 110 |
| Final exam | 185 | 130 |
| Total points | 900 | 605 |

University policies

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities.

All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the [Center for Disability & Access](#) (CDA). CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. Prior notice is appreciated. To read the full accommodations policy for the University of Utah, please see Section Q of the [Instruction & Evaluation regulations](#).

In compliance with ADA requirements, some students may need to record course content. Any recordings of course content are for personal use only, should not be shared, and should never be made publicly available. In addition, recordings must be destroyed at the conclusion of the course.

If you will need accommodations in this class, or for more information about what support they provide, contact:

Center for Disability & Access

801-581-5020

disability.utah.edu

65 Student Services Building

201 S 1460 E

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Safety at the U

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more safety information and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, contact:

Campus Police & Department of Public Safety

801-585-COPS (801-585-2677)

dps.utah.edu

1735 E. S. Campus Dr.

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Addressing 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 university officials:

Title IX Coordinator & Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

801-581-8365

oeo.utah.edu

135 Park Building

201 Presidents' Cir.

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Office of the Dean of Students

801-581-7066

deanofstudents.utah.edu

270 Union Building

200 S. Central Campus Dr.

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

To file a police report, contact:

Campus Police & Department of Public Safety

801-585-COPS (801-585-2677)

dps.utah.edu

1735 E. S. Campus Dr.

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

If you do not feel comfortable reporting to authorities, the U's Victim-Survivor Advocates provide free, confidential, and trauma-informed support services to students, faculty, and staff who have experienced interpersonal violence. To privately explore options and resources available to you with an advocate, contact:

Center for Campus Wellness

801-581-7776

wellness.utah.edu

350 Student Services Building

201 S. 1460 E.

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Academic Misconduct

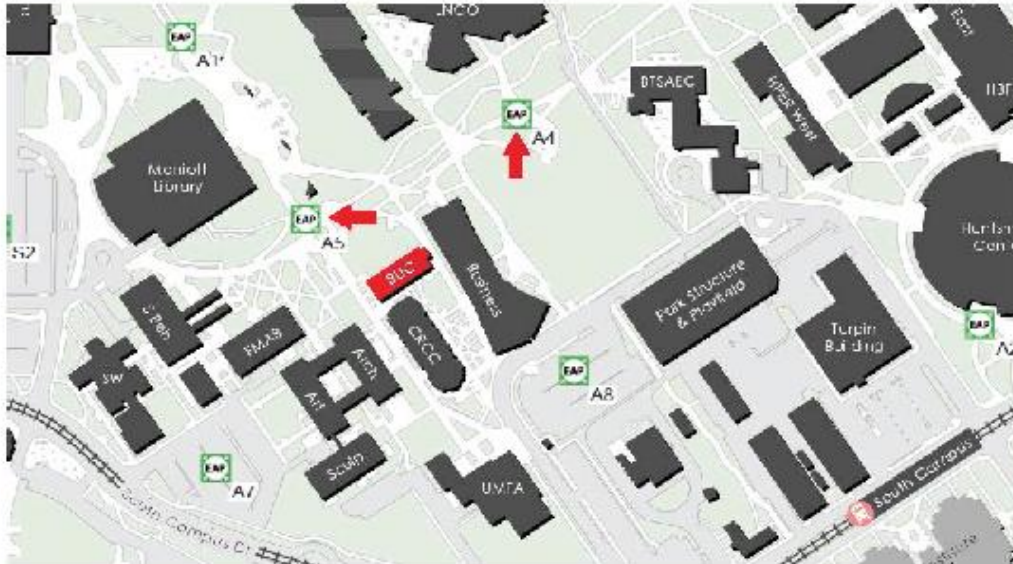
It is expected that students comply with University of Utah policies regarding academic honesty, including but not limited to refraining from cheating, plagiarizing, misrepresenting one's work, and/or inappropriately collaborating. This includes the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools without citation, documentation, or authorization. Students are expected to adhere to the prescribed professional and ethical standards of the profession/discipline for which they are preparing. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty or who violates the professional and ethical standards for their profession/discipline may be subject to academic sanctions as per the University of Utah's Student Code: [Policy 6-410: Student Academic Performance, Academic Conduct, and Professional and Ethical Conduct](#).

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on an individual assignment, and/or failure in the course. Academic misconduct, according to the University of Utah Student Code:

"...Includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information...It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct."

For details on plagiarism and other important course conduct issues, see the U's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

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 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.

