



## Sociology 303.01: Sociological Theory

Fall 2004

Dr. Scott Schaffer

Class Meetings: Mon/Wed 3pm to 4:15pm, McComsey 303

Office: Susquehanna House 105 Phone: 717/872.3567 Fax: 717/872.3942

Office Hours: MTWTh 12:30pm to 2pm or by appointment

Course web site: <http://www.millersville.edu/~schaffer/courses/f2004/soc303>

Email: [scott.schaffer@millersville.edu](mailto:scott.schaffer@millersville.edu)

**Caveat:** You should note that *this course is not designed to be a lecture course*. My teaching philosophy, described in fuller detail below, is one that asks you to meet me halfway – to come to class having read the material thoroughly (not just turning the pages, but having thought about the materials), developed ideas and questions about the readings, and being ready to discuss these materials at more than a surface level. If you do that, I will provide you with everything you will need to succeed in the course. *But if you are looking for a course that is just lecture-based, where all you do is memorize and regurgitate, this is not the course for you.*

### Course Description:

This course is designed to provide you with an in-depth study of theories of society and social life since 1800. Social theory may appear to be the most abstract part of your studies in sociology; however, social theory plays a number of roles in our everyday life: theory has helped in the development of our political system, our society, and our culture; theory helps us to understand some of the strange things people do in social settings; and theory attempts to show us how some of the wrongs done to others in the social world can be rectified. Sociological theory is also the foundation of the entire field of sociology; the best way to understand what goes on in sociology as a whole (and your other classes in particular) is through understanding social theory. But more importantly, social theory is a way of seeing the world – and this is the primary skill you will develop throughout the semester.

The thematic discussion for this semester will revolve around issues of structure and agency and the notion or problem of liberation. In the US, we tend to think of ourselves as fully autonomous beings; and your sociological training to date has worked to show you the manner in which societies actively attempt to construct you in particular kinds of ways. This course will engage with that idea more rigorously, looking at the development of our understanding of the impact societies have on us *as well as* the degree that we can have an impact on society.

There are a number of tasks you will be asked to engage in this semester. First, the obvious – you must read all of the assigned readings before coming to class. Many of the readings are difficult, and the lectures are intended to illuminate the issues discussed in them. You should not – and this is your second task – presume that the ideas put forth in lecture are “the answers to the questions.” One of the toughest parts of studying social theory is the realization that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers, only better or worse ones, and it is your job to come up with those answers and to defend them. Third, you will be asked to engage the readings in a variety of ways

– papers, written discussion questions, online group discussions, and in class. Third, much of this course will be dedicated to thinking abstractly about some of the key sociological concepts with which we work every day. Part of the task before you is to work through the different ways in which these concepts are thought of, analyzed, seen in relation to others, and defined, and know that they all represent legitimate and coherent views of society. Finally, you are expected to open yourself up to the materials in this course. They are, as are most university courses, intended to bend your mind, and your task this semester is not to regurgitate what I tell you about these theorists, but to figure out what *you* believe and what *you* can do with what these theorists have to offer you.

This course will be challenging – much of your effort will be devoted to trying to see how these texts and our discussions relate to your lives, and that’s really the point of the course. Your continual preparation during the semester, though, will be crucial to your success. Do not rely on the lectures to substitute for the readings (and vice versa) – they can’t. Ultimately, what you have to say about these texts will be up to you, making this your journey to a better understanding of the world in which you exist.

### Course Texts:

The following four texts are required for this course, and will be used in the order listed. These texts are available at the campus bookstore, or online at amazon.com or barnesandnoble.com. There is also a required article available on the course web site and on Blackboard; this needs to be read for the second class session.

Whimster (ed.), *The Essential Weber: A Reader* (abbreviated EW)  
Bellah (ed.), *Emile Durkheim: On Morality and Society* (abbreviated OMS)  
Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader* (abbreviated MER)  
Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (abbreviated EL)

Highly Recommended Secondary Text: Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (also available at the campus bookstore)

**Course Assignments:** There are five types of assignments for this course. Successful and timely completion of all are critical to your success in the course.

Blackboard Discussion: Starting in the second day of the course, you will participate in online discussions with your classmates through the Blackboard system. This system will enable you to engage in an ongoing discussion with your compatriots at any time. You are required each week to post *two discussion questions* and *two responses to others’ questions or responses to posted questions*. You are also strongly encouraged to respond to the responses your question gets – after all, it is discussion. Your discussion questions *must* be posted *prior to the Mon and Weds class session in each week*; your responses to others’ questions *must* be posted during the rest of the week. More information will be handed out in the first class session.

Exams: There will be three exams in this course: one each after the Weber and Durkheim books, and a final exam in the scheduled exam session. The first and last exams will involve concept identification and essay questions; the second will involve concept identification questions in conjunction with a take-home paper (see below). For each of the exams, you will receive the questions that are fair game for the exam one week in advance.

Papers: There will be two take-home papers assigned during the semester: one after the Durkheim book, and one after the *Marx-Engels Reader*. These papers, which will require you to engage in critical and analytic discussions of the readings and course themes, will give you an opportunity to think more deeply about the issues we're dealing with this semester. Paper topics will be provided two weeks in advance of their due dates.

Pop Quizzes: There will be as many as four (4) pop quizzes given during the semester (on average, one per major text we read, though don't count on this). These quizzes are designed to ensure that you are keeping up with the readings and are retaining the information and ideas presented therein. As they are pop quizzes, you should expect one at any time, *especially* after a class session in which there was not good discussion or students were not prepared. In no event will there be a makeup quiz given; if you are going to be absent on a particular day, please let me know *in advance* that you will not be there. Excuses given after the fact will not be accepted.

Class Participation: Your participation in this course is vital to your success. On some days, participation will simply be your attendance; on others, your participation in discussion will be the entirety of your participation. In any case, this is not a class where slacking is healthy – the success of each and every class session rests in part on your contribution. Should I find that the class is not adequately prepared for discussion or participating, I will, shall we say, not be pleased. Do your best to avoid that situation.

**Grade Breakdown**: Grades for this course will be letter grades with +/- modifiers, save for the discussion questions and journals, which are pass/fail (A or F). You cannot pass the course without submitting *all* paper assignments and the journals.

First Exam (Weber):	10%
Second Exam (Durkheim):	10%
First Paper (Durkheim):	10%
Second Paper (Marx):	20%
Final Exam:	20%
Blackboard Discussion:	10%
Pop Quizzes:	5%
Class Participation/Discussion	15%

**Attendance, Timeliness, Presentation, and Academic Dishonesty Policies:**

Attendance: The materials here are difficult, and class sessions are designed to help you gain a greater facility in reading social-theoretical texts. Hence, this course can only be fully and successfully completed if you attend every class session having read the materials in advance. My general policy regarding attendance is this: If you're there, great – I'm happy to see you; if you're not, that was your call to make. You should, however, make every effort to let me know in advance if you will miss a class session. It is in your best interest to attend every session prepared to discuss the materials at hand; lecture notes do not necessarily good thoughts make...

Timeliness: As you know, the tempo of the semester system does not allow one to fall behind, and everything in this course builds to the final research paper. As such, you are requested and required to submit all assignments on the time and date announced. Except in the case of a severe, catastrophic, and well-documented misfortune that befalls you (such as your departure from this mortal coil), **no late papers will be accepted, and no makeup exams will be scheduled except in advance of the exam time and date. In no event will a makeup pop quiz be given.** In the event of a catastrophe, you must contact me by phone or e-mail as early as possible. Papers

must be submitted to the instructor in person at the time and date due, to the Sociology Department office prior to the deadline, or by e-mail to me before the deadline.

Presentation: The papers you will undertake in this course represent a significant portion of your time this quarter and are intended to get you to think about the nature of the society in which you find yourselves. The expectation is that you will pursue these assignments with vigor and a clear intent to do well in the development of your analytic and critical thinking skills. As such, **you are required to proofread and spell- and grammar-check all work submitted during this course.** There is no excuse for submitting shoddy work in a time when any decent word processing program can polish your work. Any paper submitted with copious errors will automatically lose *two full letter grades* (with no appeal). If a second paper is submitted without being proofread, that paper – and any future unproofed paper – will automatically receive a zero (0).

Academic Dishonesty: Absolutely **NO** form of academic dishonesty (defined as the use of prohibited materials during an examination, any kind of communication with another person other than the professor or an exam proctor during an examination, the representation of another's work as your own whether that work was purchased or freely offered) will be tolerated in this course. As it is contrary to both the mission of the university and to MU policies, any act of academic dishonesty will be met with an immediate failure on the assignment at minimum, and failure in the course and referral to Student Affairs for judicial board proceedings at most. Just don't even think about it – it robs us all of the learning experience.

Grading: I do my best to ensure that my evaluation of your work is as impartial as possible and reflects the quality of what you submit at the due date and time. If you have issues with my evaluation of your work, you may submit a one-page statement of how it is you think I misunderstood what you presented in your work (and only what appears in the work submitted) *no sooner than 24 hours after I return the work to you.* We will then meet to discuss the issue. Please note that I reserve the right to elevate your grade, maintain the grade applied, or to lower the grade depending on that re-evaluation.

Other Issues: My teaching philosophy is such that I see you as being primarily responsible for your success in the course. I do not teach in a “spoon-feeding” manner; my job is to provide you with the tools to enable your own education, and I will do that to the best of my abilities during the semester. Should you not wish to take a course like this that requires that you commit yourself to doing your best by your own motivation, it would be best for you to find another course. I also work to respond to issues that come up in class, either during the semester or on a daily basis. To that end, I reserve the right to change, adapt, or amend this syllabus, the reading schedule, and other policy issues at any time in order to make possible the improvement of the course; *however, I will only do so with the consent of and input from the class as a whole.* Finally, any issues that you feel are impacting on your ability to do well in the course, whether they are issues inside or outside the classroom, should be brought to me as soon as possible. If the issue is not adequately resolved through the discussion with me, proper university protocol requires that you speak with Dr Glazier, the Sociology/Anthropology department chair. I take what goes on in this course very seriously and personally; I hope you will as well.

### **My Expectations of You During the Term**

As should be clear by now, I take what I do in this course very seriously, and I expect the same from you. This is not the kind of course that allows you to be irresponsible with regard to your work, your attitude, your comportment, or your behavior in the classroom or while interacting with other classmates. To make perfectly clear what these expectations are, I submit the

following; you will be asked to sign a contract signifying your acceptance of these “rules of the game,” and your failure to satisfy them will result in your failure in the course:

- Adequate preparation for class sessions: Below, you will find the full and complete reading schedule for the semester. It may slow down a bit at points, and may need to be adjusted to account for the depths to which we are addressing the material. However, it is provided to you *in advance, and you have no excuse for not knowing what reading is due in what week*. The way I teach is such that I rely on your preparation to make the course work. If you don’t do that, the course suffers, not just for me, but for you and all your classmates. It is your responsibility to have read the material before the first class session of each week, to have prepared your ideas about and questions on the materials, to post discussion questions and responses when required, and to contact me in person or via email when you have problems with the material.
- Ask questions: In a class such as this, it has to be run on the basis of your questions. The theoretical perspective that motivates this course is one that requires you to question things, including and especially what others in positions of “authority” have told you (myself included). To boot, I rely on your questions to know the extent to which you have a grasp on the materials and issues we’re dealing with, and if no one asks any questions, I will assume that you understand everything fully and move on with what I want to talk about. **If you don’t understand something or if you want to know more about it, ask.** Which leads me to...
- Know that you’re all in the same boat: For most people in the room with you, this will be one of the first sociology courses you’ve been in. It will most likely be the first time you’ve addressed the issues and concepts we’ll be using during the semester. Therefore, I would expect that none of you will “know it all,” which means that no one will look like a fool or look stupid for asking questions, saying you don’t know something, or expressing confusion about what we’re discussing. Any question that any of you will pose during this term will most likely be one that most, if not all, of your classmates has. They will thank you for it.
- Show some respect: The people who are sitting around you in this course come from different backgrounds, have different beliefs, and come up with different ideas. They are at MU for the same reason you are – to learn about the world around them. They deserve your respect; and while some good-natured ribbing should be expected, absolutely no disrespect will be tolerated.
- “Schaffer makes this look easy...”: At times, you will say to yourself, “Schaffer, we’re not at your level,” or you’ll think that I’m intentionally pitching the materials and ideas over your head. Remember: It’s my job to know this material, to know it well, and to present it to you in a way that challenges you to rise to the level that it’s at. I’ve dealt with these materials countless times in countless ways (though I’m still learning about it, in large part because the stuff we’ll talk about this semester is currently going on all around you and changing your world), so for me, it *is* easy. I don’t expect the same from you. If you feel like what I’m saying or what you’re reading is going over your head, there’s a very simple solution: *Tell me*. I rely on your questions, both on Blackboard and in class, to know where you’re at with the materials and ideas we’re discussing. If I don’t get questions, I can only assume that all of you understand the material and are ready to deal with it in the ways that I’m asking you to. If you’re not ready for that, just ask – I’ll help you become able to do this.

- Do your best work: I do not expect perfection from any of you. Chances are that none of you will give me perfect work, and I'm not looking for that in any case. The issues we will discuss here are difficult and will most likely be new to you, and the assignments and questions I will pose to you will be challenging (and probably will ask you things you've never been asked before). What I am looking for is a good faith sign that you are doing the best work you are capable of doing. I will take this and push on it; I will challenge you to do even better work; and I will help you achieve your potential in this course. But I can't do that if you're not trying your hardest in the course.

### **Lecture and Reading Schedule:**

Please note that you are expected to have completed the readings listed for each week by the first class session of the week. The first session will focus primarily on dealing with your questions about the materials and the discussion questions you've posted on Blackboard; the second session will work to fill in the gaps in our discussion, either with further discussion or with lecture. While my lectures, when they happen, will touch on issues raised in the readings, you should not presume that they are a substitute for actually doing the readings or vice versa. Please ensure you have read and thought about the readings prior to each class session, and come prepared with something to say about them. You should, at the very least, be ready to discuss these five things:

- What the readings were about (in other words, a brief summary of the argument)
- Responses to appropriate discussion questions
- One interesting thing about each of the readings
- One question you had about the readings
- One thing that made you angry, changed your mind about something, or made you rethink something you thought you knew.

I would also recommend the purchase of "sticky note" flags. These should be used to flag places in the readings that are important, either because they have sparked an idea or because you have a question on them. I would suggest flagging places in the texts that you have questions on with a *red* flag; answered questions with a *green* flag; and key points in the readings with a *blue* flag. Regardless of the code you use, you should flag the readings in addition to taking notes on them. It will be a great help come exam and paper time.

### **Week 1 - Introduction to the Course**

#### **Read Sewell, "A Theory of Structure" (on course web sites)**

M Aug 30 – Introduction to the Course: Mechanics

W Sep 1 – Introduction to the Course: Themes, Issues, and Analytic Tools – read Sewell, "A Theory of Structure and Agency" (available on the course web sites)

### **Weeks 2-6 - Weber, Modernity/Modernization and Rationality (?)**

#### **Week 2: Read *EW*, pp. 311-358 (recommended: *EW*, pp. 295-310); *CMST*, pp. 133-168**

M Sep 6 – **No class – Labor Day.**

W Sep 8 – Discussion on *EW*, pp. 295-358

**Week 3: Read EW, pp. 25-80, 101-112 (recommended: EW, pp. 11-24); CMST, pp. 119-132**

M Sep 13 – Discussion on EW, pp. 11-80, 101-112  
W Sep 15 – Fill-in lecture and discussion on EW

**Week 4: Read EW, pp. 131-160, 176-200 (recommended: EW, pp. 119-130)**

M Sep 20 – Discussion on EW, pp. 119-160, 176-200  
W Sep 22 – Fill-in lecture and discussion on EW

**Week 5: Read EW, pp. 245-287 (recommended: EW, pp. 205-214); CMST, pp. 169-186; and Ritzer and Palczak, “Rationalization and the Deprofessionalization of Physicians” (available on course web site)**

➤ **W Sep 29: Midterm Exam Prep Sheet available**

M Sep 27 – Discussion on EW, pp. 205-287, and Ritzer and Palczak  
W Sep 29 – Fill-in lecture and discussion on EW  
➤ **Midterm Exam Prep Sheet handed out and discussed**

**Week 6: First Midterm Examination**

M Oct 4 – Midterm exam prep session – this session will be entirely motivated by your questions, *so come prepared*  
W Oct 6 – **First Midterm Examination in class**

**Weeks 7-10 – Durkheim, Individual/Collective Relations, and the Maintenance of Society**

**Week 7: Read OMS, pp. 3-42; CMST, pp. 65-94**

M Oct 11 – **No class: Fall Recess.**  
W Oct 13 – Discussion and lecture on OMS, pp. 3-42

**Week 8: Read OMS, pp. 43-85, 114-166; CMST, pp. 95-104**

M Oct 18 – Discussion on OMS, pp. 43-85, 114-166  
W Oct 20 – Fill-in lecture and discussion on OMS

**Week 9: Read OMS, pp. 167-224; CMST, pp. 105-118; Schwartz, “Mourning and the Making of a Sacred Symbol: Durkheim and the Lincoln Assassination” (available on course web site)**

➤ **M Oct 25: Midterm Exam Prep Sheet/Paper Assignment available**

M Oct 25 – Discussion on OMS, pp. 167-224, and Schwartz  
➤ **Midterm Exam Prep Sheet and Paper Assignment handed out and discussed**  
W Oct 27 – Fill-in lecture and discussion on OMS

**Week 10: Second Midterm Examination/First Paper**

M Nov 1 – Midterm exam and paper prep session – this session will be entirely motivated by your questions, *so come prepared*  
W Nov 3 – **Second Midterm Examination and First Paper DUE at the start of class**

**Weeks 11-14 – Marx, Capitalism, and the Need for Liberation**

**Week 11: Read *MER*, pp. 7-15, 26-53, 143-45; *CMST*, pp. 1-34**

M Nov 8 – Discussion on *MER*, pp. 7-15, 26-53, 143-45

W Nov 10 – Fill-in lecture and discussion on *MER*

**Week 12: Read *MER*, pp. 66-125, 133-35, 203-17; *CMST*, pp. 35-65**

M Nov 15 – Discussion on *MER*, pp. 66-125, 133-35, 203-17

W Nov 17 – Fill-in lecture and discussion on *MER*

**Week 13: Read *MER*, pp. 469-500**

➤ **M Nov 22: Second Paper Assignment available**

M Nov 22 – Discussion on *MER*, pp. 469-500

➤ **Second Paper Assignment handed out and discussed**

W Nov 24 – No class: Thanksgiving Recess.

**Week 14: Read *MER*, pp. 522-48, 586-93; Nelsen and Barley, “For Love or Money? Commodification and the Construction of an Occupational Mandate” (available on course web site)**

M Nov 29 – Discussion on *MER*, pp. 522-48, 586-93, and Nelsen and Barley

W Dec 1 – Paper prep session – this session will be entirely motivated by your questions, so *come prepared*

**Week 15 – Marcuse and the Failings of Liberation**

**Week 15: Read *EL* in its entirety (skim pp. 7-23)**

➤ **M Dec 6: Second Paper Assignment DUE at the start of class; Final Exam Prep Sheet available**

M Dec 6 – Discussion on *EL*

➤ **M Dec 6: Second Paper Assignment DUE at the start of class**

W Dec 8 – Fill-in lecture and discussion on *EL*

➤ **Final Exam Prep Sheet handed out and discussed**

**Finals Week – Final Examination**

**M Dec 13 – Final exam prep session – this session will be entirely motivated by your questions, so *come prepared***

**F Dec 17, 1015am to 1215pm – Final Examination in McComsey 303**

### Summing Up – Due Dates

**Every Monday – entire set of readings completed for the entire week**

**Every Monday and Wednesday, 9am – Discussion questions posted on Blackboard**

**Every Sunday, 12midnight – Responses to discussion questions posted on Blackboard**

Wed Sep 29 – First Midterm Examination Prep Sheet handed out

**Wed Oct 6 – First Midterm Examination**

Mon Oct 25 – Second Midterm Examination Prep Sheet/First Paper Assignment handed out

**Wed Nov 3 – Second Midterm Examination and First Paper Assignment Due**

Mon Nov 22 – Second Paper Assignment handed out

**Mon Dec 6 – Second Paper Assignment Due**

Wed Dec 8 – Final Examination Prep Sheet handed out

**Fri Dec 17, 1015am to 1215pm – Final Examination**

### Paper and Essay Exam Evaluation Guidelines

More information on these guidelines and examples of what I expect is available in the “How to Write a ‘Schaffer Paper’” handout, which is available on the course web sites. These, though, are the overall guidelines *in order of importance*. This is also conveyed in the evaluation sheet, attached as the last sheet of the syllabus; this will

- 1. Strength and clarity of response to the paper topic’s main question.** Each paper assignment will ask you to respond directly to an argumentative question, and you should ensure that your paper contains a direct and clear response to this question.
- 2. Strength and cohesiveness of the argument.** The papers you will write in this class are argument-based – it isn’t enough to deliver a simple one-sentence statement that answers the question. Instead, you need to take the time to show me how it is you came to that response – the thought process you went through, the references you drew from in order to figure out your position, and how you put everything together. In algebra, it was called “showing your steps”; here, it’s just good argumentation.
- 3. Accuracy in presentation and understanding of materials.** While most of this course is devoted to the development of your own perspective on these thinkers and the world, there are some minimum “correct” and “incorrect” understandings of what the authors said. You need to be sure that you accurately represent what each author says, that you accurately and adequately cite any reference to the original text(s), and that you explain any unorthodox presentation of the authors’ works.
- 4. Presentation – spelling, grammar, tone, and the actual submitted paper.** As it’s become ridiculously easy to ensure that your work is cleanly presented, you must ensure that your paper is spell- and grammar-checked prior to submitting it for evaluation. You should also endeavor to ensure that it’s proofread, either by you, a discussion group member, or someone else – and this proofreading should be both for the technical matters *and* for clarity of argument. Otherwise, you’re paper will appear bad, even iff its the most brilliant thing ever written.

**Deductions:** The following are automatic deductions without appeal:

- Not reaching minimum page count: 1/3 letter grade per page the paper is short;
- Not utilizing minimum number of texts: 1/3 letter grade per text the paper is short;
- Not proofreading the paper: up to one full letter grade the first time, with revisions possible at my discretion; the second time, your paper will receive a zero (0);
- Not citing all references to original texts: 1/3 letter grade;
- Copious use of direct quotes to stand in for your own work: 1/3 letter grade;
- Not including a bibliography when required by the assignment: one full letter grade.

Also, note that I grade on a letter grade with +/- additions, so there should be no dallying around with the math.

In general, grades on papers indicate the following (and note that failing to meet these criteria will generally result in a failing grade):

- “A” – directly answers the assigned question; well-argued in a logical order, making clear how the evidence presented is utilized
- “B” – evades answering the assigned question; fairly well-argued, but reasoning process or analysis of the evidence weak
- “C” – no attempt to answer assigned question; paper reads more like a book report than an analysis; evidence presumed to make argument on its face.

**Course Evaluation Criteria:**

I know that on occasion, it’s difficult to figure out what a professor expects of you in order to pass the course or to receive a particular grade. In order to assuage that concern, here is the set of expectations I have of you during this term; please note that they are *not* listed in order of importance:

- Consistent attendance in class sessions, with you having read the materials, come prepared to discuss the materials, and come prepared to pose any questions that you have, either verbally or as a “blind question”;
- Attendance in my office hours whenever you have a question or need help in understanding the materials or issues under discussion;
- Thoughtful reflection on the course materials and issues prior to coming to class, and thoughtful discussion of these materials and issues during class sessions;
- The diligent pursuit of all assignments, with you committed to doing your best work on each one;
- And, overall, your commitment to doing your best work in every class session and on every assignment.

I know that you have other responsibilities or interests you have to attend to, and I am sympathetic to the various pulls on your time. However, you should note that I take very seriously what you do in this course, and I expect that your continued presence in this course will mean that you too take that seriously. If you’re not interested in doing your best – or even better than you think your best might be – in the course, withdraw now. Presuming that you do take your work in here seriously, and you do your best to meet the expectations as listed above, you will pass the course. Failure to attend to your responsibilities in this course will result in your failure in this course.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of this semester, you will be able to do the following (among other things):

- Understand some of the key theoretical texts in sociology and how they underpin every bit of sociological work we do;
- Analyze these key texts with regard to the key theme of freedom and liberty;
- Develop clear, well-thought, and increasingly sophisticated responses to questions posed;
- Display facility in and fluency with some of the key sociological and theoretical concepts and utilize them in the development of oral and written arguments;
- And deploy key social-theoretical concepts and ideas in the development of ideas regarding a future “just society.”

**A final note:** I won't lie to you – this course is difficult. Chances are that you've not yet been exposed to original social-theoretical texts and aren't used to having to read and critically evaluate these kinds of works and come up with your own understanding of the materials. At times, you will be frustrated, feel like you just don't “get it,” hate my guts, or otherwise be dissatisfied or discontented with the course.

I most likely won't help with this feeling. My job is to provide you with the tools to meet and exceed the course objectives listed above and your own expectations of what you're capable of. In order to do that, I have to push on you, challenge your ideas, compel you to justify your claims and ideas, call you on whatever BS you might feel like throwing forth, and so on. I will do all of this, and probably more when needed, so that by the end of the semester, you are capable of comprehending, utilizing, and creating sociological theories.

As I see it, I'm here to give you the spoon; I'm not here to feed you with it. If you're looking for a course that's going to tell you “what you need to know,” this isn't it (and if you're a sociology major, that might be a problem). I will tell you what you need to *do* and how it is that you can do it. Beyond that, it is your responsibility to pursue the tasks I set before you – and I am quite serious about that. You need to meet me halfway in this course; otherwise, I can't guarantee you'll pass the course.

If at any point, you feel that you're not getting it or are having any problems with materials, assignments, etc., *come see me immediately*. Fifteen minutes in my office hours can clarify everything for you – but you have to be the one to take responsibility for your success. Good luck.

**Paper Evaluation Sheet**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Your task on receiving this is to revisit your paper, identify the elements of what you wrote that merited these comments and criticisms, and figure out how to improve on them. Each of the grades on these criteria will count equally in the computation of your paper grade.

**Strength and clarity of response to question.**

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. How directly did the paper respond to the assigned question (“TBQ”)? | S | E | G | F | P |
| 2. How well-argued was the response?                                    | S | E | G | F | P |
| 3. Did the logic/structure make sense?                                  | S | E | G | F | P |
| 4. Did the writer seem sure about what they were saying?                | S | E | G | F | P |

**Use of evidence in support of response.**

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. How well did the paper use evidence from the readings in developing the response?                                 | S | E | G | F | P |
| 6. Did the writer cite all evidence they utilized?   | S | E | G | F | P |
| 7. Was the evidence that was utilized used correctly (i.e., in accordance with usual understandings of the authors)? | S | E | G | F | P |

**Explanation of how evidence supports response.**

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8. How well did the writer show <i>how</i> and <i>why</i> their evidence supported what they were saying? | S | E | G | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**Development of analytic framework and criteria for recognizing concepts.**

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. How clearly did the writer define their analytic framework and/or concepts and show how they would recognize them? | S | E | G | F | P |
| 10. Other “intangibles” (writing style, clarity, etc.).   | S | E | G | F | P |

Deductions: \_\_\_\_\_

Essay/Paper Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

[Key: S = Superior; E = Excellent; G = Good; F = Fair; P = Poor]