



## **SYLLABUS**

### **SOC 400 Sociological Theory McKendree University**

#### **Course Description:**

Welcome to Sociology 400. This course is a combination of both classical and contemporary social theory. First, we will examine the contributions of classical sociological theory and the understanding of the main structures, processes and contradictions of modern capitalist societies. The class will focus on the contributions of four main theorists; Karl Marx, Max Weber, Georg Simmel, and Emile Durkheim. We will also cover modern social theory. The theorists covered in this section of the course have generally taken classical theory and moved it in a new and modern direction. Some theorists have created “Grand Theory” to explain every facet of society. Other theorists have focused very narrowly on only a very small aspect of individual interaction. What they have in common is that they are all 20<sup>th</sup> century thinkers and they all have developed social theory in the sociological tradition. Given the enormous body of work developed by many classical and contemporary theorists and the time limitations within which we must function, we will only cover the major contributions of a few select theorists.

#### **Course Learning Objectives:**

The goals of this course are to:

- 1.) Students will be able to clarify the basic ideas that have come to define classical and contemporary sociological thought.
- 2.) Students will be able to assess the degree to which social theorists help us understand important social processes.
- 3.) Students will be able to distinguish the uniqueness of each theorist and have a general understanding of how each theorist explained the workings of society.

#### **Assessment:**

Students will be evaluated with several measurement techniques, including class participation, exams, writing assignments, and presentations. Using a combination of these measures should provide for adequate assessment of each student’s progress in the course.

#### **Student’s Responsibilities:**

Because this course will be conducted as a seminar, the emphasis will be on the discussion of common readings, rather than the presentation of formal lectures. In order for this approach to be successful, everyone must **engage** in an active exchange of the assigned material.

#### **Text:**

“*Contemporary Sociological Theory and Its Classical Roots: The Basics 4th edition*” by George Ritzer .

The articles for the group presentations are available on Blackboard.

### **Grading Information:**

There will be three non-cumulative essay exams over the reading material. Each of these exams is worth 20% of your final grade. Each student will also participate in a group that will give a 10 minute presentation over one article. The group will receive a grade for their presentation that will be given to each member and each member must participate. This presentation will constitute 15% of your grade. Discussion Board posts will make up another 15% of your grade. The final 10% of your grade will come from writing assignments. This course is designated "Writing Intensive," so be prepared to write at least 20 pages this semester.

### **Make-up exams:**

Should you be unable to take an exam during the designated exam period, you will need to get my approval for a make-up **PRIOR** to the missed exam. I will then set a date for the makeup exam, which you must complete. Failure to complete the makeup exam date will result in a zero on the missed exam. I will also allow makeup exams at my discretion, but a written excuse is usually required. Failure to follow this policy will result in a zero on the missed exam. **NO EXCEPTIONS!!!!**

### **Academic Integrity:**

Any student detected of academic dishonesty will receive the appropriate sanctions, which can include a failing grade ("F") for the course. In cases of serious violations, additional sanctions (such as academic probation or suspension) are possible.

### **Grading Scale:**

A	90-100
B+	80-89
C+	65-79
D	55-64
F	54 and below

### **University Counseling Office**

At times during the college years, some students become overly stressed, anxious or depressed. This happens much more frequently than you might think. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, please call the campus counseling center for help. Appointments to meet with one of our qualified counselors should be made through Lesa Auten, Medical Assistant, (618) 537-6503. These services are free and confidential, so please take advantage of them.

### **Accommodations and ADA Policy**

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), McKendree University provides services, auxiliary aids, and accommodations to meet the unique learning needs of students with disabilities. Students with officially documented disabilities, medical needs, legal problems, or

who are the victims of crimes may qualify for educational accommodations. A student requiring assistance should contact the McKendree Student Success and Advising Center (SSAC). The SSAC provides coordination and implementation of special accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students requiring accommodations for other issues should contact their instructor, Student Affairs, or Health Services. For further information regarding university or course policies, please consult with your instructor and/or refer to the catalog.

**Tentative Course Schedule** (any changes will be announced via Blackboard)

Module 1:

- Week 1: Introduction to the course; Ch. 1 Introduction to Sociological Theory
- Week 2: Ch. 2 Classical Theories I: Durkheim, Marx and Weber
- Week 3: Ch. 3 Classical Theories II pages 45-53 Simmel and pages 57-64 Mead
- Week 4: **Writing Assignment over Classical Theory**; Ch. 4 Contemporary Grand Theories I pages 72-93 (Functionalism) and pages 93-99 (Conflict)
- Week 5: **Presentation and discussion of “*Some Principles of Stratification*” by Davis and Moore; and “*The Structure of Power in America*” by C. Wright Mills**

**Exam 1 –**

Module 2:

- Week 6: Ch. 5 Contemporary Grand Theories II, Neo-Marxian Theory and Critical Theory
- Week 7: Ch. 6 Dramaturgy and Ethnomethodology; **Writing Assignment over Ethnomethodology**
- Week 8: **Presentation and discussion of “*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*” by Erving Goffman”; Writing Assignment over “Presentation of Self”**
- Week 9: **Presentation and discussion of “Studies of the Routine Grounds of Everyday Activities” by Harold Garfinkel**
- Week 10: Ch. 6 Exchange Theory and Rational Choice Theory
- Week 11: **Presentation and discussion of “*Social Behavior as***

*Exchange*” by George Homans

**Exam 2 –**

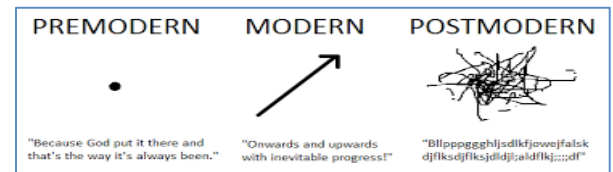
Module 3:

Week 12: Ch. 8 Contemporary Feminist Theories; **Writing Assignment over Feminist Theory; Presentation and discussion of “*Women’s Experience as a Radical Critique of Sociology*” by Dorothy Smith**

Week 13: Ch. 9 Postmodern Grand Theories

Week 14: Ch. 10 Globalization Theory; **Writing Assignment over Globalization Theory**

Week 15: **Presentation and discussion of “*Going Global: New Pathways for Adolescents and Emerging Adults in a Changing World*” by Lene Arnett Jensen and Jeffrey Jensen Arnett; Wrap up and review**



**Exam 3 – FINALS WEEK**

### Written Communication Rubric

Skill	Level of performance			
	Advanced	High intermediate	Low intermediate	Beginning
<b>Purpose</b>	4	3	2	1
	Demonstrates skillful mastery of the assigned purpose of the writing task.	Demonstrates thorough understanding of the assigned purpose of the writing task.	Demonstrates basic awareness of the assigned purpose of the writing task.	Demonstrates minimal or no attention to the assigned purpose of the writing task.
<b>Content and/or Use of Evidence</b>	4	3	2	1
	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject. Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant evidence to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore or support ideas. Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant evidence to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work. Demonstrates an attempt to use credible, relevant evidence to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Content is only minimally appropriate for the assignment. Demonstrates limited success in using credible, relevant evidence. Evidence may be inappropriate for the discipline or assignment.
<b>Organization</b>	4	3	2	1
	Organizational pattern is clear and consistently observable. Paragraphs are arranged logically and connected with strong transitions.	Organizational pattern is generally clear and consistently observable with few exceptions.	Organizational pattern is intermittently observable. Transitions may be weak or missing.	Organizational pattern is not observable. The assignment is not well organized or cohesive.
<b>Syntax and Mechanics</b>	4	3	2	1
	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency. The tone is fully appropriate for the task, and the writing is virtually error free.	Uses straightforward language that conveys meaning to readers. The tone is generally appropriate for the writing task, and the writing has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The tone is not entirely appropriate for the writing task, and the writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage. Overall, the tone is not appropriate for the writing task.

## Oral Communication Rubric

Skill	Level of performance			
	Advanced	High intermediate	Low intermediate	Beginning
Purpose	4	3	2	1
	Demonstrates skillful mastery of the assigned purpose of the speaking task.	Demonstrates thorough understanding of the assigned purpose of the speaking task.	Demonstrates basic understanding of the assigned purpose of the speaking task.	Demonstrates minimal or no attention to the assigned purpose of the speaking task.
Content	4	3	2	1
	All content is appropriate for the assignment.	Most content is appropriate for the assignment.	Content is somewhat appropriate for the assignment.	Content is minimally appropriate or inappropriate for the assignment.
Organization	4	3	2	1
	Organizational pattern is clearly and consistently observable throughout the presentation. The presentation is entirely cohesive.	Organizational pattern is often clearly and consistently observable. The presentation is mostly cohesive.	Organizational pattern is intermittently observable. The presentation is somewhat cohesive.	Organizational pattern is not observable. The presentation is not cohesive.
Language	4	3	2	1
	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, enhancing the presentation's effectiveness. Language in the presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the presentation's effectiveness. Language in the presentation is mostly appropriate to audience.	Language choices are generic and intermittently support the presentation's effectiveness. Language in the presentation is somewhat appropriate to audience.	Language choices do not support the presentation's effectiveness. Language in the presentation is not appropriate to audience.
Delivery	4	3	2	1
	Delivery techniques (i.e., posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling. Speaker appears polished and confident.	Delivery techniques (i.e., posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) often make the presentation compelling. Speaker appears mostly polished and confident.	Delivery techniques (i.e., posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) intermittently make the presentation compelling. Speaker appears somewhat polished and confident.	Delivery techniques (i.e., posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) do not make the presentation compelling. Speaker does not appear polished and confident.
Discipline-specific conventions:	4	3	2	1
	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of conventions particular to the discipline, including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices.	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to the discipline, including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices.	Demonstrates uneven use of conventions appropriate to the discipline, including basic organization, content, and presentation.	Demonstrates limited attention to conventions appropriate to the discipline and/or fails to conform to disciplinary expectations.

