

Sociology 386W: Sociological Theory  
T-TH, 11:00 to 12:30; Room 338 TEC  
Fall 2007; 3 credit hours

**Instructor:** Dr. Douglas H. Constance  
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**Office Hours:** T/TH 12:30-1:30;  
Monday 10-12 or by appointment.

### Required Text

George Ritzer and Douglas J. Goodman. 2004. *Sociological Theory*. Sixth Edition. New-York. McGraw-Hill.

### Course Description

The objective of the course is to survey the most relevant sociological theories of the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries. The course is divided into classical and contemporary theories. The characteristics and origins of major sociological schools are explored, including the study of the works and ideas of the classical theorists Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, and Max Weber. The study of contemporary theories includes the investigation of the development of Structural Functionalism, Neo-Marxism, Symbolic Interactionism, Ethnomethodology, Feminist Theory, theories of Modernity, and Post-Modernism. The course is designed for students with advanced knowledge of the history and substantive areas of Sociology.

### Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the class, students will be able to:

- 1) Discuss and explain the major sociological theories.
- 2) Discuss and explain the socio-historical context of the development of sociological theories.
- 3) Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of various sociological theories.
- 4) Apply sociological theories to interpret social reality.

**Exams:** There are three exams during the semester; each is worth 100 points. The exams cover the readings and lectures and are true/false, multiple-guess, and short and medium essays. Make-up exams may be possible if the student notifies the professor before the exam is missed and provides documentation as to the reasons for missing the exam.

**Grading:** A total of 300 points are possible for the semester: an A is 270 or greater points; B is 240-269; C is 210-239 points; D is 180-209 points; and F is less than 180 points.

**Attendance Policy:** Students are expected to attend all classes and participate fully in class activities. A record of attendance will be maintained by the instructor. Punctual attendance is also expected of each student. Please be respectful and arrive to class on time. Students are expected to show appropriate cause for both absences and tardiness and are also expected to initiate action to satisfy all missed class work. Failure to do so will affect grades.

**Instructor Evaluations:** Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

**Academic Dishonesty:** All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students caught cheating will receive an F for that assignment with more severe sanctions as appropriate.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities must register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center and then arrange a conference with the instructor in order that accommodations can be made to assure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

**Religious Holidays:** The Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. "Religious Holy Day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20 of the Tax Code. Students should contact the instructor as soon as possible regarding any missed classes due to "Religious Holy Days".

**Classroom Rules of Conduct:** Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Students shall arrive to class on time and be respectful to their other students. If a student needs to arrive to class late or leave class early the student will make the professor aware of these needs prior to classtime. All cell phones, iPods, and beepers must be turned off and stowed away while in the classroom. Students who disrupt the class will be contacted by the professor to adjust their

behaviors. In extreme cases students who cannot comply with these requirements can be removed and resigned from the class.

**Visitors to the Classroom:** Unannounced visitors to the class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor is allowed to remain in the classroom.

### **Schedule of Reading/Lecture Assignments:**

Week of:

August 20: A Historical Sketch of Sociological Theory: The Early Years (Chapter 1).

August 27: Emile Durkheim (Chapter 3).

Sept. 3: Karl Marx (Chapter 2).

Sept. 10: Max Weber (Chapter 4).

Sept. 17: **Exam #1**

Sept. 24: A Historical Sketch of Sociological Theory: The Later Years (Chapter 6).

October 1: Structural Functionalism, Neofunctionalism (Chapter 7).

October 8: Varieties of Neo-Marxian Theory (Chapter 8).

October 15: Symbolic Interactionism (Chapter 10).

October 22: **Exam # 2**

October 29: Ethnomethodology (Chapter 11).

November 5: Contemporary Feminist Theory (Chapter 13).

November 12: Contemporary Theories of Modernity (Chapter 16).

November 19: Contemporary Theories of Modernity (Chapter 16) (Thanksgiving Break)

November 26: Structuralism, Post-structuralism and the Emergence of Postmodern Social Theory (Chapter 17).

December 3: **Exam # 3** (Thursday, Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>: 11:00-12:30).