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### SOC 302 Foundations of Modern Sociological Theories

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## **SOC 302: Foundations of Modern Sociological Theories**

Section H01 (\*\*\*\*\*) -LEC HYBRID

Location: \*\*\*\*\*



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**Instructor:** Jon MacKay Gobeil

**Office:**

**On-site Office Hours:**

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\*When emailing me, please begin the subject heading as: SOC 302

\*\*For emergency contact only

### **Course Description from Catalogue**

**4 hours, 4 credits.** Theories of nineteenth and early twentieth-century sociologists, including but not limited to Marx, Durkheim, and Weber.

**PREREQ: SOC 300**

### **Course Overview**

This course is designed to serve as an in-depth introduction to foundational sociological theories. The social theories/theorists emphasized in this course do not merely constitute some of the major statements of the field, but also share a common attempt to understand and explain periods of change and transformation in human history. We will seek to uncover certain conceptualizations and assumptions about human nature, society, the relation of the individual and society, the nature of stability and order, and the nature of power and conflict. However, this body of knowledge did not arise in a void, and so some emphasis will also be placed on the hermeneutic/historical dimension of our readings.

Remember, a healthy distrust and a critical eye are necessities in this course, so be prepared.

### **Course Objectives**

After successfully completing the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and explain the contributions of foundational sociological theorists, particularly through the work of Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Max Weber, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Simone de Beauvoir.
2. Identify and explain more recent trends in sociological theory, particularly those which speak to the work of these foundational scholars.
3. Illustrate the significance of historical and social contexts in shaping the lives of theorists and the development of sociological theories.
4. Identify and explain major concepts in social theory, such as: power, order, alienation, rationalization, anomie, social class, ideology, and reification.
5. Apply reasoning and critical thinking skills in order to link empirical evidence used by sociologists to theory building.
6. Read and communicate the ideas of complex sociological texts.
7. Explain the role of theory and how it distinguishes sociology as a scientific discipline.
8. Contrast multiple theoretical perspectives, without giving primacy to any particular perspective, on specific social issues, and explain the origins of the differences.
9. Use and distinguish primary and secondary sources in order to increase the understanding of sociological theories.
10. Use social theory to analyze contemporary social issues.

### **Required Text\***

Most readings will be accessible via the “Foundations of Modern Sociological Theory” Open Educational Resources (OER) site\*. I strongly recommend printing the assigned readings for use. \*Any additional readings will be posted directly on Blackboard.

### **SOC 302 General Learning Objectives**

By engaging in the course, students will:

1. Develop the ability to read and explain (through oral and written communication) complex sociological texts.
2. Identify and distinguish the theoretical traditions represented in a sociological text
3. Explain the role of theory in sociology and gain an appreciation of the craft of theorizing
4. Identify and explain the contributions of a number of foundational theorists
5. Discuss the relationship of theories to the historical and social contexts in which they are developed
6. Contrast multiple theoretical perspectives on a common issue and explain the source of their differences
7. Develop of a capacity for critical thought by applying theoretical concepts to contemporary society and social issues
8. Use key theoretical perspectives in a variety of sociological writing exercises
9. Understand the relationship of empirical evidence to theory building
10. Encourage and enable students to transfer these capacities to the world outside and to contribute to a larger policy debates

### **Course Format**

This course has two portions: In-person meetings and online activities.

During our meeting times, we will engage with the course material through brief lectures and substantial group discussion. One of our goals as a class is to reduce our reliance upon lectures so that we have sufficient time to explore and grasp ideas by applying them to topics in class discussions or activities.

The online portion of the course will include a number of elements. I will be supplementing your reading with short video/audio lectures consisting of two parts: Pre-reading introduction, and post-reading discussion. I will do my best to make these available online by 2PM on Mondays. Along with the readings and video lectures, you will be asked to complete a few different types of assignments, including brief (1-2 page) written responses to posed questions, online research, discussion board participation, and longer essays on the four major sections of the course (3-6 pages).

I will do my best to minimize reading. In return, I expect you to complete the readings assigned. Consistent participation in discussion forums and attendance are essential to perform well in this course.

Thus, the in-class and virtual meetings are to provide you with alternative views of the course material, and should hopefully stimulate ideas about the subjects which can then be expressed in your Section Essays.

One thing to take into consideration when starting this course: Given the time constraints and the breadth of material that needs to be covered, this course requires extensive reading, preparation, good attendance (both in-person and electronically), a high level of participation and focus, and a keen desire to learn and apply important sociological concepts. In other words, this course demands a sense of responsibility that is expected of college students who are very serious about the learning process. This class centers on what I consider the essentials of critical thinking: (1) the ability to shift in and out of multiple perspectives and glean knowledge from each perspective; (2) the ability to apply knowledge gleaned from each perspective; and (3) a willingness to embrace a diversity of viewpoints.

### **Ground Rules**

Respect and consideration for each other are essential in this class. I expect you to be sensitive to the different experiences and perspectives people may bring to our group. Like the saying goes, “until you walk a mile in someone else’s shoes,” you don’t really know where they are coming from. Differences of opinion should be expressed and discussed in a productive and considerate manner. Disrespectful or aggressive behavior will not be tolerated. Showing respect not only involves “doing no harm,” it also involves “doing”: that means listening, participating, and generally being engaged in the course. I expect you to turn off phones, avoid unnecessary use of computers, and be present during class meetings. I also expect you to provide the

same consideration when participating online. Because we have so much material to cover, it is essential that you arrive on time (or engage with the online material in a timely manner) and are prepared to stay for the duration of the class period.

### Methods of Evaluation

<u>Grading</u>	
Attendance and Participation	20%
Online Assignments	25%
Section Essays	40% (10% each)
Final Assignment	15%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Grading Overview

As you can see above, the major portions of your grade will be based upon three specific areas. Discussion participation is an important element to any course, and even more so here. Participation refers specifically to participation on the discussion boards and in virtual meetings. ***Folders with Discussion Board links are required participation.*** Online assignments refer to any graded activity that is not one of your four Section essays or the final. These include written responses to questions, research activities, real-world application of topical material, and other traditional forms of assessment. Your Section Essays are to serve in place of exams. Given the breadth of the material, I believe that exams do not provide an adequate way to track your progress in the course. Thus, you will have four “mini” term papers that focus on the specific sections outlined in the syllabus below. These essays serve as both a personal reflection on the material and a way to demonstrate that you have understood it. More details about these essays can be found in their assignment descriptions.

### Attendance Policy

Attendance is a significant portion of your grade. Any participation opportunity or activity that is missed will result in a score of zero. Because much of the learning in any course comes from lectures, discussions, and activities that occur in class, ***20% of your final grade will be given to attendance and participation.*** Given that we only meet a few times over the course, this should not be an issue.

In the event of a severe illness or personal issue that is causing your absence, please contact me as soon as you are able. We will make whatever arrangements necessary to ensure that you do not fall behind in class. I recommend exchanging contact information with at least one other classmate should you need to share notes, etc.

### Academic Integrity

Short version: Don't plagiarize or cheat. It is wrong. You are likely to be caught and the consequences are serious.

“The most common but not the only forms of academic dishonesty are cheating on examinations and plagiarism, which is the appropriation of the words or ideas of another person, whether taken from print or electronic media, which is then passed off as one's own” (Lehman Graduate Programs and Policies, p. 24). Academic honesty is respected and expected at Lehman College. Any assignment you submit (homework, lab, or writing assignments) in this class must be your own work. Though we will often collaborate in class, writing will be your own. All writing should be original language and use the proper citations when engaging someone else's work or ideas.

Any academic dishonesty will incur severe penalty in this class. For more information refer to <http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/student-affairs/documents/student-handbook-02.pdf>

### Disability Access

Lehman College is committed to providing access to all programs and curricula to all students. Students with disabilities who may need classroom accommodations are encouraged to register with the Office of Student Disability Service. For more information, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services, Shuster Hall, Room 238, phone number, 718-960-8441. If you have any concerns please speak with me after class or during office hours. I will do whatever is possible to accommodate your academic needs.

### **Use of Technology and Blackboard Information\***

We will be using Blackboard, a web-based communication program (available at <http://www.lehman.cuny.edu>) for most of the class activities. We will go over how to access the site and its topography during the first week of class. If you do not have your account at this site, make sure to register and create your account as soon as possible. Call the CUNY Help Desk (212-541-0981, 9am-5pm, M-F) or stop by the Lehman IT Help Desk (718-960-1111) if you have any problem in creating your account.

The major areas to look for on the Blackboard site can be found in the box on the left-hand side. These include:

**Instructor Info:** As you might expect, this contains information about the instructor for the course.

**Syllabus/Course Info:** You will find an electronic version of the syllabus here, along with information on grading, course topography, and guides for Online Research and Citations.

**Course Calendar:** You can keep track of important dates regarding the course here.

**Announcements:** Announcements will be posted on Blackboard and sent to the email address you have registered to your Blackboard account. You are responsible for reading these announcements.

**Course Materials by Week:** This is where you will find the bulk of the materials for the course. The section is divided into sub-sections pertaining to each week of the course. Here you will find digital versions of the readings, links to Lectures, assignment descriptions, and access to specific discussion boards.

**Assignment Quick Links:** Though the assignments can also be found under "Course Materials by Week", this link also provides a quick way to access and track assignments for the course.

**Discussion Board:** You can access the entire discussion board from here, where you will see the different headings for each. Please be sure to make your posts on the appropriate forums, otherwise you may not receive credit.

**Classroom Chat Space:** You can access the Slack-based chat platform for the course through this link, along with details on registering for the room. This space is provided to allow you to communicate directly with one another.

**My Grades:** If you would like to quickly access your current grades, you can do so by click on this link.

\*To use electronic databases at the library's website, you need to have a valid Lehman email address. Make sure that your Lehman email address is activated.

\*When you send me an email, make sure to write "SOC 302" as the first item on the subject line of your email. Without this designation, your email may be missed and may not be read.

### **The Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) and the Science Learning Center (SLC)**

The Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) and the Science Learning Center (SLC) are two of the tutoring centers on campus. The ACE provides appointment-based and drop-in tutoring in the humanities, social sciences, and writing, as well as general writing and academic skills workshops. The SLC provides drop-in tutoring for natural science courses. To obtain more information about the ACE and the SLC, please visit their website at <http://www.lehman.edu/issp>, or call the ACE at

718-960-8175, and the SLC at 718-960-7707. I encourage students to take advantage of these resources. They are not just for when you are struggling, but can help all students in achieving their academic goals.

## **Mutual Expectations**

### ***What You May Expect of the Instructor:***

- *A sincere effort to help you learn the course material* – I intend to spend enough time and effort in class preparation to make the material as understandable and interesting as I possibly can.
- *Accessibility*– I agree to be available to you outside of class should you desire help, clarification, etc. Naturally, I cannot promise to be free to talk with you at length at any time during the day or night. If you get in touch with me at a time when I am occupied with something that can't wait, I will gladly set a time to meet with you. You can expect responses to emails within 24-48 hours, though I frequently try to respond sooner. However, if you have contacted me, and have not received a response within 48 hours, please don't hesitate to contact me again. It is possible that I overlooked your previous message.
  - In the event of an emergency, you are welcome to contact me via phone or text at (###) ###-#### between the hours of 12PM to 7PM, Monday through Friday. When contacting me in this manner, be sure to identify yourself properly so I know who I am speaking with or receiving a message from. If you have a preferred method of response, please indicate it in your initial message.
- *Attention/courtesy*- When you are speaking, you have my undivided attention. I will never ridicule you or express disagreement in an impolite way.
- *Fairness*- Your grade will be based upon your performance and participation. It will not be based upon personal consideration or whether we agree upon an issue.

### ***What I Will Expect of You***

- *A sincere effort to learn the course material.* It is impossible to understand course material if you do not read the material and spend only a few hours per week preparing for assignments. I expect you to do your best to understand the course material.
- *Careful and complete* reading of the assignments.
- *Class Attendance and Participation* increase one's ability to learn the material. I expect that you will attend class regularly and participate in class discussion forums.
- *Promptness*- Please come to class on time and leave at the end of the class period. If you need to leave early for any reason, please sit at the back of the classroom and, before the class begins, inform me that you will need to leave early.
- *Attention*- Just as I will not be inattentive or impolite to you, I expect your undivided attention. When a student or an instructor is speaking, I expect you to give that person your undivided attention. Also, please do not engage in "side-bar" conversations during the class. This makes it difficult for other students to hear and to follow the content of the presentation. If such a conversation would be relevant to the material, it is also likely that other students would benefit from hearing it.

- *Courtesy/Civility*- I expect that you will treat everyone with respect both inside and outside of the classroom. Please do not be rude. Please do not send me rude or inappropriate e-mails. You are, however, encouraged to ask questions and seek clarifying information.

**FALL 2018 TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE**

Topics covered and dates of readings are subject to change contingent upon the speed which we are able to cover the material.  
All syllabus changes will be discussed in class and posted on Blackboard.

<b>Week</b>	<b>TOPICS AND READINGS</b>	<b>Homework Due</b>
01	Introduction	“Introductions” Assignment
<b><u>SECTION ONE: ON SOCIAL ORDER</u></b>		
02	Introductory Essay: “Social Order in Other People” Excerpt from Emile Durkheim’s <i>The Rules of Sociological Method</i>	
03	Excerpt from Emile Durkheim’s <i>The Division of Labor in Society</i>	“The Social Fact” Assignment
04	Excerpt from Harold Garfinkel’s <i>Studies in Ethnomethodology</i> Excerpt from Berger and Luckmann’s <i>The Social Construction of Reality</i>	“Whither Social Solidarity” Assignment
<b><u>SECTION TWO: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CAPITAL AND EXCHANGE IN SOCIETY</u></b>		
05	Introductory Essay: “Values, Markets, and Crises” Excerpt from Karl Marx’s <i>The German Ideology</i>	“Into the Breach” Assignment
06	Excerpts from Marx’s <i>Capital</i> , and <i>Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844</i>	*First Section Essay Due*
07	Excerpts from Pierre Bourdieu’s <i>The Forms of Capital and Distinction</i>	
<b><u>SECTION THREE: THE RATIONAL SOCIETY</u></b>		
08	Introductory Essay: “It’s All Part of the Plan” Excerpts from Max Weber’s <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i>	“Capital Experiences” Assignment
09	Excerpt from Max Weber’s <i>Bureaucracy</i> Excerpt from Richard L. Rubenstein’s <i>The Cunning of History</i>	*Second Section Essay Due*
10	Excerpt from Herbert Marcuse’s <i>One-Dimensional Man</i>	“The Iron Cage of Coping Mechanisms” Assignment
<b><u>SECTION FOUR: IDENTITY, DOMINATION, AND MARGINALIZATION</u></b>		
11	Introductory Essay: “Who Decides What Counts as Knowledge?” Excerpt from W.E.B. Du Bois’ <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i>	*Third Section Essay Due*
12	Excerpt from Frantz Fanon’s <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i>	
13	Excerpt from Simone de Beauvoir’s <i>The Second Sex</i> Excerpt from Patricia Hill Collins’ <i>Black Feminist Thought</i>	
<b><u>CONCLUSIONS: FOR EACH THEORY, A MAP OF THE WORLD</u></b>		
14	Conclusions	“Mediated Intersectionality” Assignment
**	Final Exam Period Begins	*Fourth Section Essay Due*
**	<i>All outstanding assignments due by 11:59PM</i>	Final Assignment Due