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### SOC 331: Foundations of Sociological Theory

Anahi Viladrich Dr.

[anahi.viladrich@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:anahi.viladrich@qc.cuny.edu)

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**Foundations of Sociological Theory (331)**  
**Department of Sociology**  
**Queens College of the City University of New York**  
**Fall 2023**  
**Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30 to 8:20 pm**  
**SOC 331**

### **Instructor Information**

**Instructor:** Dr. Anahi Viladrich

**Email:** [anahi.viladrich@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:anahi.viladrich@qc.cuny.edu)

**Website:** <https://www.anahi-viladrich.com>

**Online office hours:** Tuesdays, from 4 pm to 6 pm and by appointment. Please contact Prof. Viladrich by e-mail ([anahi.viladrich@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:anahi.viladrich@qc.cuny.edu)) to set an appointment with her.

### **Course Information**

#### **Course Description**

This is an online course intended to provide students with a comprehensive introduction to the foundations of sociological theory. Through history, and across different disciplines, scientists have attempted to formulate explanations (paradigms and theories) that allow them to make sense of the social world around them. Sociological theories, similar to the ones used in other scientific disciplines, aim to identify patterns, forces, and power relations in order to interpret the past and present as well as to predict the future. In fact, we constantly construct and use theories in our everyday lives—from trying to make sense of group-leadership patterns and consumer choices in cars, to understanding the rising global popularity of opiates among youth, gender differences in homeless populations, and racial disparities in educational outcomes in the United States.

#### **Course Requirements**

This online course will be based on a combination of activities and assignments that include a short and long paper as well as online exercises and library workbooks. Students should attend lectures and participate on online discussions that will be focused on exploring key theoretical concepts in sociology along with their empirical formulation.

#### **Course Goals/Objectives**

1. This course is aimed at demonstrating the social mechanism approach to theory building.
2. Students will review some of the most influential classical and contemporary social theories and apply these theories to weekly exercises.

#### **Learning Objectives**

Upon completion of this course students will have:

1. Learned the methods used for theorizing in sociology. To achieve this objective, students will be exposed to a general introduction to social theory with a view towards understanding theory construction and the predictive value of social theory.
2. Understood social theory, analyzed content, and interpreted different sources of data to support dissimilar theoretical arguments.

### Books & Materials,

Introduction to Sociology (2<sup>nd</sup>. Edition), selected chapters, available at:  
<https://openstax.org/details/introduction-sociology-2e>

All additional required OE readings, along with their links, will be posted on the syllabus.

### Technical Support

Feel free to e-mail [Helpdesk@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:Helpdesk@qc.cuny.edu) or call the Student Support Hotline (718-997-3000).

### Assignments

**1) Readings and Participation in Class:** Much of the success of this course depends on student participation, which will be evaluated based on both quantity and quality. Students are expected to attend all synchronous sessions (to be held on most Tuesdays) and actively participate in online assignments. It is the student's responsibility to keep up with course sessions and with all materials and announcements posted on Blackboard.

The readings are a vital, integral component of this course; they are required for an in-depth understanding of the course contents and for meaningful class discussions.

The topics addressed in class will offer several opportunities for open discussions during synchronous sessions and follow-up (asynchronous) online exercises for the purpose of engaging students in open and enriching interactions. Students must be respectful of the opinions and experiences of their peers, even if they disagree, and be prepared to justify their own claims based on scientific data and grounded information drawn from the class materials and additional readings and resources.

**For every hour spent in the classroom students should do, on average, about two hours of work outside of it.**

**2) Online Exercises:** Students will regularly write responses, complete online tests, participate in discussion groups and engage with key topics that were brought up in class.

**3) Review Tests:** Two review tests, consisting of multiple-choice questions, will be assigned this semester. The purpose of these tests is to evaluate students' critical comprehension of the topics and bibliography. Test 1 will cover all the literature discussed from the beginning of the semester until Week 7, and Review Test 2 will cover the remaining materials, from Week 8 to Week 15.

**4) Library Session and Assignments:** Under the guidance of QC Librarian Max Garland, students will learn how to use academic databases and conduct on-site searches with a view towards designing comprehensive, yet focused, literature reviews on specific research topics. The Library Session will be preceded by a workshop exercise on generating key terms, and followed by a post-workshop assignment in which students will practice choosing a title and specific keywords suitable to their respective Literature Review papers.

**5) Literature Review Paper:** This paper will be based on the analysis of the existing literature on specific research topics chosen by the students (in consultation with the instructor). This paper will be developed in several steps that include Library exercises (see above) and the submission of a Topic Paper followed by the Literature Review Paper. Please read the detailed sections below.

#### **a) Topic Paper**

This is an individual assignment that will help students clarify their ideas about a specific topic of interest. In this one-page paper (no more than 250 words), students will state the significance of the topic selected as well as their rationale for choosing it, particularly regarding its theoretical and empirical relevance (e.g., theories explaining domestic violence; racial differences in incarceration rates; reasons for dropping out of school). Papers should include a minimum of two peer-reviewed journal articles. Please do not quote, use your own words, and ask yourself: *Why am I interested in this topic? Why is this topic relevant from a sociological theory perspective? What would I like to find out about it?* All papers should be submitted as Word or PDF files, should be typed, double-spaced, spell-checked and proofread. Please use one-inch margins and 12-point font. Papers will be uploaded on the corresponding Blackboard's Assignments folder.

#### **b) Literature Review Term Paper**

This paper will expand on the topic paper submitted earlier by conducting a literature review on students' specific topics of interest. For example, based on a specific research issue (selected for the Topic Paper), a Term Paper could explore different conceptualizations of race and ethnicity in the literature on obesity and health disparities, or compare theories that explain racial/ethnic differences in educational outcomes in the United States. Papers may also discuss the strengths and weaknesses of two or more theories addressing a specific social problem or issue. Students will write a critical summary of the key findings and properly cite each author. Papers must be between 4-5 pages, include a minimum of 5 references (drawn from peer-reviewed journal articles) and be typed, double-spaced, spell-checked and proofread. References should follow a standard scholarly citation format used for peer-reviewed articles, such as the ones from ASA, APHA, AMA, AAA or APA. Papers should include page numbers and use one-inch margins and 12-point font. Papers must be uploaded on Blackboard on the respective folder.

**General Guidelines for Writing:** Learning to express one's ideas in a clear and concise way requires practice; therefore, students should start working on their papers early and be able to accomplish their written tasks in a successful and timely manner. Students may read *The Elements of Style*, by W. Strunk and EB. White, to guide their work and writing throughout the semester. It is important to keep in mind that even the most accomplished writers and scholars need to rewrite and edit their work several times as part of the overall writing process.

## Assessment

The final course grade will be calculated based on the following assignments/activities:

	Percentage of Final Grade
Readings and Participation in Class	10
Online discussion and exercises	35
Review Test #1	10
Review Test #2	10
Library assignment	
Pre-Workshop Exercise	2.5
Post-Workshop Exercise	2.5
Topic Paper	10
Term Paper	20
Total	100

Students will be assigned the following final letter grades, based on calculations coming from the course assessment section.

### Grading Equivalencies

A+ 97-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69
A 93-96	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 60-66
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	F 0-59

A grade of D is the lowest passing grade in the undergraduate division

### Important note on missed classes and late work

Students must take responsibility for meeting deadlines and class requirements. Unless there is a justified reason, two points will be deducted for each day that homework is late. They must communicate with the instructor about circumstances that may interfere with their online attendance and completion of class assignments in a timely fashion.

### **Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Candidates with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: 1) register with and provide documentation to the Special Services Office, Frese Hall, Room 111; 2) bring a letter indicating the need for accommodation and what type. **This should be done during the first week of class.** For more information about services available to Queens College candidates, visit <https://www.qc.cuny.edu/StudentLife/services/specialserv/Pages/default.aspx>

### **CUNY Policy On Academic Integrity**

Academic Dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion as provided at <https://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/legal-affairs/policies-procedures/academic-integrity-policy/>. Please read this document, paying careful attention to the sections on plagiarism and Internet plagiarism. If you are not sure how to cite work you have found on the internet, please review the APA Guidelines provided by the [Purdue OWL](#).

### **Netiquette**

Please maintain a professional demeanor when posting online. You can be respectful even when you have a difference of opinion. Treat others as you'd want to be treated yourself. Don't type in all caps, as that is the online equivalent of shouting. If you need to emphasize a word or phrase, use italics.

### **Statement on student wellness**

As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. QC services are available free of charge. You can learn more about confidential mental health services available on campus at:"

<https://www.qc.cuny.edu/StudentLife/services/counseling/counseling/>

### **Use of Student Work**

All programs in New York State undergo periodic reviews by accreditation agencies. For these purposes, samples of student work are occasionally made available to those professionals conducting the review. Anonymity is assured under these circumstances. If you do not wish to have your work made available for these purposes, please let the professor know before the start of the second class. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

### **Course Evaluations (for Fall and Spring semesters only)**

During the final four weeks of the semester, you will be asked to complete an evaluation for this course by filling out an online questionnaire. Please remember to participate in these course evaluations. Your comments are highly valued, and these evaluations are an important service to fellow students and to the institution, since your responses will be pooled with those of other students and made available online, at the [Teaching Evaluations Data: Spring 2010 – Present](#) (<http://ctl.qc.cuny.edu/evaluations/data/>). All responses are completely anonymous; no identifying information is retained once the evaluation has been submitted.

## Class Schedule & Logistics

This schedule, including readings and assignments, is subject to change. Students will be notified in writing of such changes. **Please note that all the information regarding this class will be posted on Blackboard.** All lectures will be synchronous (via Zoom) while all other exercises and assignments will be asynchronous and posted on Blackboard.

W	DATE	Session	TOPICS	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
1	Thursday	Synchronous Session	Introduction	Syllabus	Quiz
2	Tuesday	Synchronous	Sociological Research	Openxtax, Chapter 2  Optional: Massengill, Chapters 1-3: <a href="https://sociology.princeton.edu/sites/sociology/files/soc_ug_writing_guide.pdf">https://sociology.princeton.edu/sites/sociology/files/soc_ug_writing_guide.pdf</a>	Read Materials & Class Exercises
	Thursday	Synchronous Session	Sociological Research	Openxtax, Chapter 2:  Optional: Massengill, Chapters 1-3: <a href="https://sociology.princeton.edu/sites/sociology/files/soc_ug_writing_guide.pdf">https://sociology.princeton.edu/sites/sociology/files/soc_ug_writing_guide.pdf</a>	Read Materials & Group Work
3	Tuesday	Synchronous Session	The Sociological Imagination	Mill, Wrights. <i>The Sociological Imagination</i> , Chapter 1:	Read Materials & Class Exercises

					<a href="https://sites.middlebury.edu/utopias/files/2013/02/The-Promise.pdf">https://sites.middlebury.edu/utopias/files/2013/02/The-Promise.pdf</a>  Appendix: <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PDB-1Un3HAGKAJf9odB7fXocGP08X-DN/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PDB-1Un3HAGKAJf9odB7fXocGP08X-DN/view?usp=sharing</a>	
	Thursday		Synchronous Session	The Sociological Imagination	Mill, Wrights. <i>The Sociological Imagination</i> , Chapter 1: <a href="https://sites.middlebury.edu/utopias/files/2013/02/The-Promise.pdf">https://sites.middlebury.edu/utopias/files/2013/02/The-Promise.pdf</a>  Appendix: <a href="https://www.imprs-demogr.mpg.de/courses/01ws/TSI.pd">https://www.imprs-demogr.mpg.de/courses/01ws/TSI.pd</a>	Read Materials & Group Work
4	Tuesday		Synchronous Session	The Classics	OpenStax's Chapter 1: Additional materials will be posted on BB.	Read Materials & Class Exercises
	Thursday		Synchronous Session	The Classics	OpenStax's Chapter 1: Additional materials will be posted on BB.	Read Materials & Group Work
5	Tuesday		NO CLASS Monday's Schedule	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Thursday		Synchronous Session	Developing a specific topic for a Research paper	Check Materials from Week No. 3 and Week No. 5	Class Exercises



6	Tuesday		Synchronous Session	The Sociology of Race and Ethnicity	OpenStax, Chapter 11: Race and Ethnicity Additional materials will be posted on BB.	Read Materials & Class Exercises
	Thursday		Synchronous Session	The Sociology of Race and Ethnicity	OpenStax, Chapter 11: Race and Ethnicity Additional materials will be posted on BB.	Read Materials & Group Work
7	Tuesday		Synchronous Session	Medical Sociology	OpenStax, Chapter 19: Health & Medicine	Read Materials & Class Exercises
	Thursday		Synchronous Session	Medical Sociology	OpenStax, Chapter 19: Health & Medicine	REVIEW TEST # 1 All materials from Week 1 to 7
8	Tuesday		Synchronous Session	Sociology of Education: Theoretical Perspectives	OpenStax: Chapter 13, Education. Additional materials will be posted on BB.	Read Materials & Class Exercises
	Thursday		Synchronous Session	Sociology of Education: Theoretical Perspectives	OpenStax: Chapter 13, Education. Additional materials will be posted on BB.	Library Workshop Exercise

9	Tuesday		Library Session Synchronous	Literature Searches Session led by QC Librarian	Students' Selected Topics	TBA
	Thursday		Synchronous Session	Working on Topic Papers	Students' Selected Topics	Post-Library Workshop Quiz
10	Tuesday		Synchronous	Urbanization & Social Movements	OpenStax: Chapters 20 and 21 Additional materials to be posted on BB.	Read Materials & Class Exercises
	Thursday		Synchronous Session	Urbanization & Social Movements	OpenStax: Chapters 20 & 21 Additional materials will be posted on BB.	Read Materials & Group Work
11	Tuesday		Synchronous Session	Socialization & Social Interaction	OpenStax: Chapters 4 & 5 Additional materials will be posted on BB.	Read Materials & Class Exercises
	Thursday		Synchronous Session	Socialization & Social Interaction	OpenStax: Chapters 4 & 5 Additional materials will be posted on BB.	Read Materials & Group Work
12	Tuesday		Synchronous Session	Theories of Deviance	OpenStax: Chapter 7 Additional materials will be posted on BB.	Read Materials & Class Exercises
	Thursday		Synchronous Session	Theories of Deviance	OpenStax: Chapter 7 Additional materials will be posted on BB	Read Materials & Group Work

13	Tuesday		Synchronous	Theoretical perspectives on Media Analysis	OpenStax, Chapter 8 Additional materials will be posted on BB	Read Materials & Class Exercises
	Thursday		Synchronous Session	Theoretical Perspective on Media Analysis	OpenStax, Chapter 8 Additional materials will be posted on BB.	Read Materials & Group Work
14	Tuesday		Synchronous	Intersectionality Theory	OpenStax: Chapter 12 Gender, Sex & Sexuality Additional materials will be posted on BB.	Read Materials & Class Exercises
	Thursday		Synchronous Session	Intersectionality Theory	OpenStax: Chapter 12 Gender, Sex & Sexuality Additional materials will be posted on BB.	Read Materials & Group Work
15	Tuesday		Synchronous	Changing Working Conditions in a Global World	OpenStax chapter 18: Work and the Economy. Additional materials will be posted on BB.	Read Materials & Class Exercises
	Thursday		Synchronous	Changing Working Conditions in a Global World	OpenStax chapter 18: Work and the Economy. Additional materials will be posted on BB.	Read Materials & Group Work
16	Tuesday		Synchronous	Literature Reviews Revision	Discussion of Final Papers	N/A
	Thursday		Asynchronous	REVIEW # 2	All Materials from Week 8 to Week 15	All Materials from Week 8 to Week 15