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Office hours: Tuesday 11 A – 7P; and by appointment

SYA 4120
Contemporary Social Theory
TR 9:30 – 10:50
GS 103
Fall 2011
3 credits

In this course, we will study a broad range of sociological perspectives and social theorists that have been influential in shaping contemporary social analysis. In the first half of the course, you will learn about the major theoretical perspectives that developed in the middle of the twentieth century in the U.S., including structural functionalism, critical theory, exchange theory, symbolic interactionism, and phenomenology and ethnomethodology. In the second half of the course, you will learn about an array of critical theoretical perspectives that emerged in the later part of the 20th century: feminist social theory, poststructural and postmodern theories, contemporary theories of modernity, and theories of globalization.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the importance of theory for analyzing societies and social processes.
2. Distinguish the core assumptions of major theoretical perspectives in sociology.
3. Demonstrate comprehension of the history of sociological theory and the core ideas and concepts of the theories and theorists most central to the development of the discipline of sociology.
4. Evaluate the relative utility of each theoretical perspective for making sense of various dimensions of societies and social processes.
5. Use theoretical perspectives in sociology to interpret significant social phenomena and social changes that have shaped contemporary societies in the present period.
6. Distinguish between social theories and sociological theoretical perspectives.
7. Analyze one's own life experiences through the lenses of various contemporary social theories and sociological theoretical perspectives.
8. Draw upon social theories to envision possibilities for social change.

Reading

There is one required text for this course:

Scott Appelrouth and Laura Desfor Edles, *Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era: Text and Readings*, 2007

All assigned reading should be completed prior to the class session for which it is assigned. Study guides are available on Blackboard to accompany most of the assigned reading. Although completion of these is not required, completion of them prior to the relevant class session will contribute greatly to your understanding and likely will result in better preparation for exams.

Quizzes

Daily reading quizzes will be available on Blackboard and must be completed prior to each class session. Quizzes may be taken repeatedly until students get a satisfactory score (up until the beginning of the class session for which they are assigned); only the score of the last attempt will count.

Evaluation

Your grade in this course will be based on your performance on three online exams and daily quizzes. Exams will consist of multiple choice, short-answer, and essay questions, all devised to assess students' achievement of the learning objectives defined above; each will count for 25% of your grade. Daily quizzes are devised to help you comprehend reading material assigned for each class session; these may be taken repeatedly until the student earns a satisfactory score. The daily quizzes will count for the other 25% of your grade.

Grade Scale

A	94-100	A-	90-93	B+	87-89	B	83-86
B-	80-82	C+	76-80	C	70-75	D	60-69
F	0-59						

Reading Schedule (subject to change)

Aug 23: Introduction

Aug 25: Structural Functionalism – Parsons (21-55)

Aug 30: Structural Functionalism – Merton (56-69)

Sept 1: Critical Theory (71-93)

Sept 6: Critical Theory: Horkheimer and Adorno (94-107)

Sept 8: Critical Theory – Marcuse (107-117)

Sept 13: Exchange Theory – Homans (119-136)

Sept 15: Exchange Theory – Blau (137-156)

Sept 20: Symbolic Interactionism – Blumer (157 – 177)

Sept 22 Exam #1 Online
Sept 27: Dramaturgy – Goffman (177-191)
Sept 29: Dramaturgy – Goffman (191-228)
Oct 4: Emotion management – Hochschild (229-257)
Oct 6: Phenomenology – Schutz, Berger and Luckmann (259-294)
Oct 11: Ethnomethodology – Garfinkel (295-311)
Oct 13: Feminist Theory (314-355)
Oct 18: Feminist Theory (355-377)
Oct 20: Exam # 2 Online
Oct 25 Poststructural and Postmodern theories (379-395)
Oct 27: Poststructural and Postmodern theories: Foucault (396-411)
Nov 1: Poststructural and Postmodern theories: Baudrillard, Lyotard (411-444)
Nov 3: Contemporary Theoretical Syntheses: Bourdieu
Nov 8: Contemporary Theoretical Syntheses: Habermas
Nov 10: Contemporary Theoretical Syntheses: Giddens
Nov 15: The Global Society: Wallerstein
Nov 17: The Global Society: Sklair, Said
Nov 22: Catch-up and/or review
Nov 29: Catch-up and/or review
Dec 1: Exam #3 Online

COURSE POLICIES

Time Commitment

To be successful in this course, I estimate that you will need to commit at least 8 hours per week.

Email Policy

The preferred method to contact me (other than coming to see me during my office hours) is through messages in Blackboard. Except for weekends and holidays, generally I will respond to these messages within 24 hours. Such messages should only be used to communicate personal or confidential matters; otherwise, please use the Questions/Concerns discussion board within the course.

Course-related questions

Post course-related questions to the Questions/Concerns discussion board (or ask your question during class sessions). Asking course-related questions in this way allows other participants with the same question to benefit from the responses. Also, make sure you review this forum prior to posting a question; it may have already been asked and answered in previous posts. Except for weekends and holidays, questions will generally be answered within 24 hours.

Announcements

You are responsible for reading all announcements posted by the instructor. Check the announcements each time you login to be sure you have read all of them since your last login session.

Policy on Late Work and Incompletes

No make-up exams or quizzes will be allowed except under exceptional circumstances. In the case of such exceptional circumstances, students should contact me prior to the exam due date to request an extension. If circumstances beyond the student's control make it impossible for a student to complete required work by the end of the term, incompletes will be permitted *if* a student has completed more than 50% of the exams and quizzes in the course with an average grade of 'C' or better.

Disability Policy

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require special accommodation due to a disability to properly execute course work must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) – in Boca Raton, SU 133 (561-297-3880; in Davie, MOD I (954-236-1222); in Jupiter, SR 117 (561-799-8585); or at the Treasure Coast, CO 128 (772-873-3305) – and follow all OSD procedures.

Code of Academic Integrity Policy

Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the University mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the University community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty.

The FAU Code of Academic Integrity prohibits dishonesty and requires a faculty member, student, or staff member to notify an instructor when there is reason to believe dishonesty has occurred in a course/program requirement. The instructor must pursue any reasonable allegation, taking action where appropriate. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:

(A) Cheating

1. The unauthorized use of notes, books, electronic devices, or other study aids while taking an examination or working on an assignment.
2. Providing unauthorized assistance to or receiving assistance from another student during an examination or while working on an assignment.

3. Having someone take an exam or complete an assignment in one's place.
4. Securing an exam, receiving an unauthorized copy of an exam, or sharing a copy of an exam.

(B) Plagiarism

1. The presentation of words from any other source or another person as one's own without proper quotation and citation.
2. Putting someone else's ideas or facts into your own words (paraphrasing) without proper citation.
3. Turning in someone else's work as one's own, including the buying and selling of term papers or assignments.

(C) Other Forms of Dishonesty

1. Falsifying or inventing information, data, or citations.
2. Failing to comply with examination regulations or failing to obey the instructions of an examination proctor.
3. Submitting the same paper or assignment, or part thereof, in more than one class without the written consent of both instructors.
4. Any other form of academic cheating, plagiarism, or dishonesty

For more information, see the Code of Academic Integrity in the University Regulations at http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD)

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<http://www.osd.fau.edu/>

Information Resource Management (IRM)

Students who confront computing, network, or other technological difficulties during this course may seek assistance from the University's IRM Department. Visit the IRM site at www.fau.edu/irtm/index.php for information and resources; questions not addressed by existing resources on the IRM website can be directed to IRM's online "Helpdesk" at www.fau.edu/helpdesk/. The helpdesk provides an online ticket submission system to help resolve any technological difficulties you may have throughout the course. If unable to login to the FAU website, you may call the helpdesk at (561) 297-3999.

University Center for Excellence in Writing (UCEW)

The University Center for Excellence in Writing is a valuable resource for any student interested in improving writing skills. The Center provides one-on-one consultation with trained consultants to enhance writing skills and address problem areas. As I grade written work throughout the semester, I will recommend seeking consultation from the UCEW to any student who demonstrates writing deficiencies. The Center has walk-in locations on all campuses; see www.fau.edu/UCEW/WC for further information and for all center locations.

Library Resources

Students in this course will be required to make use of the university's library services for some assignments. The library's website is <http://www.fau.edu/library>. From this website, students may gain access to online articles and databases; these may be directly accessed from any computer on any FAU campus, but they may also be accessed from home or elsewhere by logging into Off Campus Connect (EZ Proxy). The link to Off Campus Connect can be found on the library's homepage. Students unskilled in use of the library's resources may seek help from the Reference Department. From the library's homepage, click on "Ask a Librarian"; from this site, you may initiate contact with a librarian through chat, text, email, phone, or in-person. From this "Ask a Librarian" page, you may also click on Reference Department where you will find an array of resources that will guide you in the effective use of library resources.

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

The University's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) offers resources that students may find helpful in improving their study skills and facilitating academic success. Their website is <http://www.fau.edu/ctl>. I strongly encourage students to visit this website and to make use of its many valuable resources, including especially "Tips for Success and Academic Resources" (<http://www.fau.edu/ctl/TipsForSuccessAndAcademicResourcesStudentResources.php>).

