

**SOCIOLOGY 54-H  
SOCIAL THEORY  
Spring 2019  
Fridays 10-10:50  
Room 3305**

**Instructor: John Fox, Ph.D.  
Office: 3003  
Phone: 650-949- 7419  
Email: foxjohn@fhda.edu**

**Office Hours:  
Mondays 8-9am  
Wednesdays 9-10am**

**INTRODUCTION**

Sociology is the study of social interaction and human groups. With its roots in the Industrial Revolution, sociology is concerned with the causes and consequences of social phenomena. While related to other social sciences, sociologists believe that society itself is an object of study, or as Emile Durkheim claimed, *sui generis*, or a thing in and of itself. Many sociologists have looked at the causes of social phenomena—or social theory. Some theories, for better or worse, have gained more prominence than others, and these theories not only dominate this discipline but are influential in other social sciences. Therefore, you do not need to be a sociology major to take this seminar.

This honors seminar is an introduction to these social theories. While a lot has changed since the industrial revolution, some of them are proving to withstand the test of time. Whatever criticisms we may have of these theorists (and I have plenty), these thinkers have at least provided us worthwhile ideas to think about—therefore, they are complex. In this seminar you will not understand everything that is assigned (I certainly don't), but you will think a lot, understand a little, and hopefully enrich your academic, professional, and personal lives.

**READINGS**

The weekly readings will be provided for you. There is no textbook or reader to buy.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

According to Henry Giroux, outcome-based education “is a pedagogy useful for creating armies of number crunchers and for downgrading teachers to supervising the administration of standardized tests, but not much more.”<sup>1</sup> That said, these are the Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to exhibit understanding of a sociological concept discussed in class.
- Students will practice and apply understandings of directed readings, discussions and projects in sociology.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.globaleducationmagazine.com/critical-interview-henry-giroux/>

- Students will learn how to critically analyze and interpret sociological data.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Response Papers:** For each weekly reading, write a 1-2 page, typed, double-spaced response paper. Include in the response paper 1) The author(s)' thesis, argument or main points, 2) how the thesis, arguments, or main points are supported, and 3) your evaluation of the reading; in other words, what did you learn, and did the author(s)' make a compelling case?
2. **Reading Presentation:** Each student will choose one reading and present it to the class. In your presentation, discuss the thesis and evidence in fifteen minutes. Then, facilitate a class discussion of the reading; bring in some questions you would like to discuss with your fellow students and instructor. Since there are more students than readings, some of you will be working in pairs or trios.
3. **Participation:** To participate in the discussion, you must 1) show up to class, and 2) read the assigned material, and 3) engage the presenters in the discussion. Failure to do this will result in a penalty.

In order for this to work, all of you must come to class and do the assigned readings and presentations, on time. Failure to do so will only be excused in cases of: cultural, national or religious holidays; work or family obligations; trouble with the legal system; illness; death of a family member; or traffic accident. If you miss a class you will be assigned an extra reading and response paper in lieu of your participation that day.

## GRADING POLICY

The total number of points possible is 300.

1. Response Papers: **1/3 of your final grade.** This will be graded on how well you address the arguments and evidence in each reading, and your evaluation of each reading.
2. Presentation and Reading Facilitation: **1/3 of your final grade.** This will be graded on how well you address the thesis and evidence and the quality of the discussion you facilitate.
3. Participation: **1/3 of your final grade:** This will be graded on how well you engaged your fellow classmates in the discussion.

## INDIVIDUAL NEEDS AND COLLEGE RESOURCES

Students at Foothill College (and most other community colleges) come from a variety of backgrounds and life histories, and there are many resources here that I encourage you to take advantage of, such as the Adaptive Learning/Disability Resource Center, Psychological Services, the Teaching and Learning Center, and Veterans Resource Center. Please let me know if there are circumstances that interfere with your success in the class and I will provide more information or a referral to campus resources. To quote Albus Dumbledore in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, "Help will always be given at Hogwarts to those who ask for it." The same goes for Foothill.

## THINGS THAT BOTHER ME

- **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY— Cheating and plagiarism are betrayals of trust that will result in a zero score on the assignment and being reported to the Dean of Student Affairs.**
- **INSULTING OR DISRESPECTING MYSELF OR ANY OTHER STUDENT**
- **INTERRUPTING, TALKING OUT OF TURN, CHATTING WITH FRIENDS, OR OTHERWISE DISTRACTING MYSELF OR ANY OTHER STUDENT—Possible consequences include being assigned a different desk or being asked to leave.**
- **SLEEPING**
- **CELL PHONES—INCLUDING TEXT MESSAGING!—Possible consequences of using your cell phone in class range from public embarrassment to asking you to leave the class to having you meet with me before you return to class.**
- **SURFING THE INTERNET—I understand that some of you, legitimately, use your laptop to take notes or record the lectures. However, if I see you on Facebook or otherwise surfing the Internet without my permission, the privilege of using your laptop in class will be revoked. *Therefore, those using laptops must sit in the first two rows.***
- **TARDINESS—If you must come late, come as quietly as possible.**
- **COMING TO CLASS UNPREPARED TO PARTICIPATE**
- **GETTING READY TO LEAVE 5 MINUTES BEFORE CLASS IS OVER.**

## COURSE SCHEDULE

**(Readings are to be done prior to class meeting on the date listed and response papers are due on that date)**

4/8: Intro to the course

4/15: Karl Marx, “Alienated Labor”

4/22: Max Weber, “Science as a Vocation”

4/29: Emile Durkheim, “What is a Social Fact?”

5/6: W.E.B Du Bois, “Souls of Black Folk”

5/13: Erving Goffman, “On Face-Work”

5/20: Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno, “The Culture Industry”

5/27: Holiday—No class!!!

6/3: Michel Foucault, “Panopticism”

6/10: Arlene Stein and Ken Plummer, “I Can’t Even Think Straight”

6/17: Patricia Hill Collins, “Learning from the Outsider Within.”