

Sociological TheoryCourse Description:

An examination of important founders of sociological theory: Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, WEB Du Bois, several early women sociologists, Georg Simmel, and George Herbert Mead. We will concentrate on their substantive analyses regarding the emergence of the modern world: the growth of industrialism, post-industrialism, and capitalism, the emergence of democracy and the modern nation state, and the new forms of social relations and value systems under these conditions. Our approach will be historical and comparative, relating the theories to concrete developments rather than only the history of social thought or philosophy. Certain methodological issues will also be discussed regarding theory construction and the nature of a sociological account.

LSU Description:

SOCL 3101 Sociological Theory (3). Prereq.: SOCL 2001 or equivalent. Open to sociology majors; open to others with permission of instructor. Dominant theorists and schools of thought in sociology.

Required Reading

- *Primary text:* George Ritzer and Jeffrey Stepnisky, Classical Sociological Theory, Eighth Edition, 2020, SAGE Publications, ISBN: 9781544354828
- *Secondary text w readings:* Classical Sociological Theory, 4th Edition, Wiley-Blackwell, 2022, by Craig Calhoun, et al.; ISBN 978-1-119-52733-6 or 978-1119527367.
- *Suggested:* Randall Collins, Four Sociological Traditions, Rev edition (Oxford University Press, 1994), ISBN 9780195082081 or 978-0195082081.

Course Requirements:

Knowledge of class lectures, readings, 4 exams to be held in the classroom, a final exam, and occasional unannounced attendance quizzes. We are required to have a "final exam" during finals week, and it will be cumulative, but we will have already covered all the material in the 4 exams during the semester. For this reason, the final will be averaged into your grade (at 10%) only if your grade on the final is higher than your previous exam average. If it's lower, then it will not be counted.

You will be responsible for following all lectures, all readings, and assigned materials on the course web site, <http://www.fweil.com/s3101/>, including any updates. The exams will be based primarily on my in-class lectures, with a smaller percentage on the readings. Grades will be based on the 4 exams, as shown on the class schedule below, and the final, as described above, with up to ten percent from the average of the attendance quizzes. There may be additional opportunities for extra credit work – not guaranteed – which will be announced by email if it comes up. I usually add points to all students' grades, but this is also not guaranteed. This is not a curve; the same number of points are added to all student grades.

Class lecture notes are available on the class website: both my lectures (more important) and lecture notes from the textbook publisher (less important). The most important thing you can do to get a good grade is to attend the lectures.

Updates to the syllabus and/or scheduling information will be posted on the class website: <http://www.fweil.com/s3101/>. Students are responsible for staying informed of that information.

Grades can optionally be posted on the class website by the last five digits of your student number, but *only* if you give me permission to do so. If you want your grades posted on the class website by the last five digits of your student number, please send me an email stating, "Please post my grades on the class website by the last five digits of my student number." Grades will not be posted on Moodle, because I can't make the grade adjustments (noted above) there, and grades on Moodle would not be accurate.

Normal university-approved excuses will be accepted, work can be made up, and the instructor is happy to help students understand material they missed. Any disability accommodations will be handled according to guidelines established by the Office of Disabilities. In addition to the formal disability notifications, the instructor and the Graduate Assistant can help work with you according to your needs. If you miss a class, lecture notes are available on the class website, you can come to office hours, and you can request a meeting with the instructor or the Graduate Assistant.

Note: You must inform the instructor of any university-approved excused absences. Notifications from third parties (e.g., the Athletic program) are NOT acceptable, except in the case of an emergency (e.g., medical) when you are unable to inform me yourself.

Scheduled office hours will be posted on the class webpage or the class Moodle page. The instructor and the Graduate Assistant will each hold office hours. If you want to speak with the instructor or the Graduate Assistant and can't meet during scheduled office hours, email and we will find a time to meet.

Grade Scale:

There will be four exams, plus the final as noted above, plus unannounced attendance quizzes. The four exams will be weighted equally, and up to ten percent of your grade will also come from your average on unannounced attendance quizzes. Students are responsible for keeping up with the class schedule and any updates; any updates will be posted on the class website at <https://fweil.com/s3101/s3101scheduleSpring26.htm>. There may also be opportunities for extra credit work, as noted above, which will be announced by email.

The grade scale is as follows:

97-100	A+
93-96	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
59 & below	F

Note: A higher grade begins at the exact number. For instance, an A is 93.00 to 96.99, and an A- is 90.00 to 92.99.

Standard LSU Statements (as of 8/18/2025):

See <https://www.lsu.edu/academicaffairs/syllabus-statements/index.php>

Expectations

LSU's general policy states that for each credit hour, you (the student) should plan to spend at least two hours working on course related activities outside of class. Since this course is for three credit hours, you should expect to spend a minimum of six hours outside of class each week working on assignments for this course. [Visit the LSU Catalog](#) for more information regarding general information for courses.

LSU Student Code of Conduct

The LSU student code of conduct explains student rights and what is expected of student behavior. Students are expected to understand this code as described on the [Code of Conduct page](#). Any violations of the LSU student code will be duly reported to the Dean of Students.

Disabilities

Each course syllabus should contain a statement reflecting compliance with The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, Section 504. This link contains four example statements: [Sample Syllabus Statements](#)

Permissible Use of Generative AI

As a partner in your learning, it is important to both of us that any assignment submission is a pure reflection of your work and understanding. In this course, using AI programs such as ChatGPT is permitted for the purposes of enhancing your understanding of course materials, encouraging creative exploration and supporting academic growth. These programs should not be used to

produce work that misrepresents your abilities or deceives as to the conditions under which the work was completed.

If you choose to utilize AI programs to generate content, you must clearly acknowledge the use of AI generated material. Proper attribution of AI program use should include an explanation of how the program contributed to the assignment and/or your academic growth. Failing to give proper attribution to the use of AI programs in academic work will be reported to Student Advocacy & Accountability for review under the Code of Student Conduct and may result in impacts to your assignment and/or course grades.

Prohibited Use of Generative AI

As a partner in your learning, it is important to both of us that any assignment submission is a pure reflection of your work and understanding. The introduction of artificial intelligence options to complete academic work jeopardizes my ability to evaluate your understanding of our course content and robs you of the ability to master the subject matter. Therefore, the use of generative AI programs for the purpose of completing course work is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, using AI-generated essays, reports, code, or any other submissions as a substitute for your own original work. If you have questions about the use of specific tools or technologies in relation to course work, seek guidance from your instructor beforehand.

Suspicious of the use of AI programs in academic work will be reported to Student Advocacy & Accountability for review under the Code of Student

Conduct and may result in impacts to your assignment and/or course grades.

Academic Success

The primary ingredients of your academic success are attending class, managing your time efficiently, taking good notes, and developing good critical thinking and communication abilities. LSU has a number of excellent resources that will assist you in developing these skills. The place to begin is the [Center for Academic Success](#) (CAS). The CAS offers guidance on what learning strategies are best suited to your talents, tutoring in the basic subjects, and workshops on a variety of topics, from note taking to time management. [Communication Across the Curriculum](#) assist students in developing the communication skills necessary for academic and professional success. Finally, with respect to professional success, the [LSU Olinde Career Center](#) can assist you in choosing a major and a profession that best suits your talents and passions and help you develop a four year career plan to ensure success when you graduate from LSU.

Nondiscrimination, Sexual Harassment, & Title IX

LSU provides equal opportunity for all qualified persons in admission to, participation in, or employment in the programs and activities which the university operates without regard to race, creed, color, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, sex, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, or veteran's status. LSU has implemented a procedure to address complaints for those who believe they have been subjected to discrimination and/or harassment in violation of this policy. Please know that your instructors are here to support you and listen to your experience. We also want you to know that we are mandatory reporters and must report what we know to the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX. All LSU employees, with few exceptions, are required to report instances of sex- or gender-based harassment and discrimination, including sexual

misconduct and power-based violence (e.g., sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, retaliation, etc.) for which they may not be the victim, but of which they are aware. The Office of Civil Rights & Title IX is the LSU office responsible for investigating complaints regarding any type of discrimination, sexual harassment, or power-based violence. The Office of Civil Rights & Title IX is located in 118 Himes Hall and the phone number is 225-578-9000. If you are aware of an individual who has been victimized, you are encouraged to contact the Office of Civil Rights & Title IX or file an online report by visiting [LSU's Title IX](#) website and clicking the [Report an Incident](#) box. If you have been assaulted, harassed, or a victim of violence, we encourage you to contact the Office of Civil Rights & Title IX. Please reach out for help immediately. Some excellent resources available to Baton Rouge residents include:

- STAR (Sexual Trauma Awareness and Response; 24/7 hotline: 855-435-STAR (7827))
- IRIS Domestic Violence Center; 24/7 hotline: 800-541-9706
- The Lighthouse Program; 225-578-5718
- VIA LINK; 800-273-TALK (8255) [national line but answered from New Orleans]

National resources include:

- RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network); 24/7 hotline: 800-656-4673
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center

For additional information, visit www.lsu.edu/civil-rights the [Office of Civil Rights & Title IX](#) and review [PM-73](#) (Prohibiting Power-based Violence, including Sex- and Gender-based Harassment and Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct).

LSU Collegiate Recovery Program

Louisiana State University is committed to supporting students in recovery and assisting those who are exploring recovery resources. LSU's Collegiate Recovery Program is geared toward helping students remain in recovery while at LSU and seeks to advocate for students' recovery when applicable. If you have questions about LSU's Collegiate Recovery Program or available resources, please call 225-578-4826 or email asinge6@lsu.edu.

Wellbeing

Your sense of wellbeing is influenced by many parts of your life. The extent to which you feel happy, healthy and otherwise fulfilled matters to us at LSU. Should you need direction to address any number of problems you may have that is directly influencing your sense of wellbeing, please visit lsu.edu/lsucares or complete the [LSU wellbeing resources and support form](#) to inquire as to specific offices to address your concerns. Please note the form is for non-emergency matters. For those matters requiring immediate attention, call the LSU police at 225-578-3231 or LSU Cares at 225-578-4307. For free, confidential, 24/7 emotional support

and crisis management, call or text The Phone at 225-924-5781 (LSU1) or the Lifeline at 988.

Academic Continuity Plan

In the event of a campus-wide closure, this course may transition to an alternative form of instruction. I will notify you by [e-mail, Moodle announcement] as soon as possible of the format our course will take. For example, the class may be held via Zoom and recorded for those unable to attend, or I will provide a lesson online that you can do asynchronously, or we may cover content at a different pace or schedule. If the emergency closure impacts scheduled tests, I will make alternative arrangements as soon as possible. If alternative formats are not available due to widespread loss of power and/or internet or other extenuating circumstances, the University may schedule makeup days per [Policy Statement 117](#).

Attendance

Absences may be excused at the discretion of the instructor and in accordance with [Policy Statement 22](#).

Sociology 3101: Sociological Theory

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

"Weeks" on this page are approximate. See next page for dates.
See <https://fweil.com/s3101/s3101scheduleSpring26.htm> for updates.

Introduction to Theory. Read chapter 1-2 in Ritzer/Stepnisky, and ch. 1, 4-7 in Calhoun.
Suggested: Collins.

Herbert Spencer. Read chapters on Spencer in Ritzer/Stepnisky, and in Calhoun.

Karl Marx. Read chapters on Marx in Ritzer/Stepnisky, and in Calhoun.

Max Weber. Read chapters on Weber in Ritzer/Stepnisky, and in Calhoun.

Emile Durkheim. Read chapters on Durkheim in Ritzer/Stepnisky, and in Calhoun.

WEB Du Bois. Read chapter on Du Bois in Ritzer/Stepnisky, and in Calhoun.

Early Women Sociologists. Read chapter on Early Women Sociologists in Ritzer/Stepnisky, and ch. 8-9 in Calhoun.

Georg Simmel. Read chapters on Simmel in Ritzer/Stepnisky, and in Calhoun.

George Herbert Mead. Read chapters on Mead in Ritzer/Stepnisky, and in Calhoun.

Sociology 3101 - Class & Exam Schedule - Spring '26

(Watch this page for possible updates)

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
12-Jan Class Introduction	14-Jan Introductory Lectures	16-Jan Introductory Lectures
19-Jan No class (ML King Day)	21-Jan Introductory Lectures	23-Jan Introductory Lectures
26-Jan Introductory Lectures	28-Jan Introductory Lectures	30-Jan Discussion
2-Feb Exam 1	4-Feb Herbert Spencer	6-Feb Herbert Spencer
9-Feb Karl Marx	11-Feb Karl Marx	13-Feb Karl Marx
16-Feb Mardi Gras	18-Feb Mardi Gras	20-Feb Karl Marx
23-Feb Discussion	25-Feb Exam 2	27-Feb Max Weber
2-Mar Max Weber	4-Mar Max Weber	6-Mar Max Weber
9-Mar Spring Break	11-Mar Spring Break	13-Mar Spring Break
16-Mar Max Weber	18-Mar Max Weber	20-Mar Emile Durkheim
23-Mar Emile Durkheim	25-Mar Emile Durkheim	27-Mar Discussion
30-Mar Exam 3	1-Apr Du Bois	3-Apr Holiday
6-Apr Du Bois	8-Apr Women Sociologists	10-Apr Women Sociologists
13-Apr George Herbert Mead	15-Apr No Class	17-Apr No Class
20-Apr George Herbert Mead	22-Apr Georg Simmel	24-Apr Discussion
27-Apr Exam 4	29-Apr Discussion/Flex Time	1-May Discussion/Flex Time
6-May, 3:00-5:00 p.m. Final Exam		