

Seminar in Sociological Theory  
Fall 2019

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### Course Description

Theory is the foundation of research and the culmination of years of research. Theory allows us to make sense of the data that we collect as social scientists. This course will introduce you to a range of authors and subjects to introduce you to the art of theory. The course is intended to help you build the skills necessary for effective research through informed theory application. While the course will not be a survey of the range of theoretical ideas, it attempts to expose you to a diversity of authors, regions of the world, and topics while still providing a foundation in the pivotal figures in social theory.

The grading for the course breaks down as follows:

- 20% - Class Assignments
- 30% - Research Summary Paper
  - 10% Draft
  - 20% Final Paper
- 15% - Midterm Exam
- 15% - Final Exam
- 10% - Attendance
- 10% - Participation

Grades for the course will use the +/- scale and will have divisions as follows: 93 and above = A, from 92.99 to 90 = A-, 89.99 – 87 = B+, 86.99 – 83 = B, etc.

### Required Texts

- Mills, C. Wright. [1959] 2000. *The Sociological Imagination*. Pp. 100-226. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Amin, Samir. 2004. *The Liberal Virus: Permanent War and the Americanization of the World*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

### Strongly Recommended for your Exams

- Prew, Paul. ed. 2018. *Sociological Theory: SOC458*. McGraw-Hill.

### Additional Required Readings

- The remaining weekly readings for the course are found on D2L (Brightspace). If you have difficulty with the format, please let me know.

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## Course Expectations

- This course will focus on discussion and analysis of the issues presented in the readings.
  - We will discuss the readings in detail.
  - You are expected to attend each class and be prepared to discuss the readings for the day.
- I have certain expectations for you when you are in the classroom.
  - The use of laptops or cell phones is not permitted in the classroom.
  - Other distractions such as text messages, conversations between students, etc. are not permitted.
  - I will stop the class if students are using laptops, checking cell phones, or otherwise distracting other students in the class.
  - If the problem persists, students distracting others will be asked to leave.
  - I request that you abide by these expectations, not for my benefit, but for the students around you.

## Quality of Work and “Academic Honesty”

- Students are responsible for ensuring that their assignments, essays and general intellectual contributions are their own.
  - In other words, I demand that the students’ contributions are the result of their own creativity and critical assessment of the material covered during this course.
  - I encourage students to study together and discuss the course material outside of class, but do not write your assignments together.
  - You may find the University Academic Honesty Policy here:  
<https://www.mnsu.edu/policies/approved/academichonesty.pdf>
  - Intentional or unintentional similarities in papers, exams, assignments, or answers **will result in a 0 for the assignment**. Further violations may result in further action as outlined in the policy statement.
    - This includes but is not limited to:
      - borrowing portions or whole essays from another source such as a friend, website, or “paper mill.”
      - using authors’ ideas without proper credit,
      - submitting a paper that is not your own work,
      - similarities between student papers,
      - completing assignments or quizzes together,
      - copying answers from others in class,
      - using notes during in-class quizzes or exams,
      - submitting work for others such as attendance sign in, review sheets, assignments, quizzes, “clicker” entries, etc.

## Students’ Needs

- If you are having trouble in the class understanding the material or doing well on the exams, feel free to contact me.
  - If you are worried about how you are doing in the class, contact me early in the term.
    - If you wait until late in the term, it may be too late.
  - There are also resources on campus to aid your study skills and provide tutoring.
    - Check the syllabus, or ask me about your options.
  - Please let me know if you have any need for accommodations in the classroom to meet your needs.
    - I realize that students have different learning styles and different needs.
    - My objective in this course is to get you to look at the world in a different, more sociological, way.
    - My goal is not to “weed out” those who cannot do well on a test.
    - In this way, I do encourage you to use my office hours or make an appointment to discuss the course material, concerns you may have, or general issues relevant to the course.
- For those of you who may have more specific needs, MSU-Mankato provides students with disabilities reasonable accommodation to participate in education programs, activities or services.
  - Students with disabilities requiring accommodation to participate in class activities or meet course requirements should first register with the Office of Disability Services (contact info below) and then contact me as soon as possible.

## Resources for Students on Campus

There are many resources on campus for students, especially those new to the campus. Below you can find the location and contact information for various services on campus. They are there for you, so take advantage of them. All of these resources are aimed at helping you succeed and excel while you are here. Please ask me if there is anything I can help you find. I may be able direct you to other offices that can help you out.

### Tutoring and Other Services for All Students

Center for Academic Success  
Memorial Library in ML 125 (lower level)  
Phone: 507-389-1791  
Email: [academicsuccess@mnsu.edu](mailto:academicsuccess@mnsu.edu)  
<http://www.mnsu.edu/success/>

### General Information and Help with Study Skills

Student Relations, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Advising "U"  
Armstrong Hall 114  
Phone No: 507-389-6307  
<https://sbs.mnsu.edu/advising/>

### Resources for International Students

The International Student Office (ISO)  
Kearney International Center  
250 Centennial Student Union  
Phone: 507-389-1281 (V) or 800-627-3529 (MRS/TTY)  
E-mail: [iss@mnsu.edu](mailto:iss@mnsu.edu)  
<http://www.mnsu.edu/international/>

### Facilities and Resources for Students with Disabilities

Office of Disability Services  
132 Memorial Library (lower level)  
Phone: 507-389-2825 (Voice/TTY)  
Email: [julie.snow@mnsu.edu](mailto:julie.snow@mnsu.edu)  
<http://www.mnsu.edu/access/index.html>

### Sexual Violence Awareness Education

The Women's Center  
218 Centennial Student Union  
Phone: (507) 389-6146  
<http://www.mnsu.edu/wcenter/>

### Diversity Resources

Institutional Diversity  
<http://www.mnsu.edu/cultdiv/>  
Institutional Diversity Departments  
<http://www.mnsu.edu/cultdiv/isc/>  
Institutional Diversity Events  
<http://www.mnsu.edu/cultdiv/activities/>

### Resources for First-Generation College Students and Others

Student Support Services  
355 Wiecking Center  
Phone: (507) 389-2797  
<http://www.mnsu.edu/sss/>

### Veterans Resource Center

Centennial Student Union, Room 167  
Phone No: 507-389-5726  
[http://www.mnsu.edu/veterans/resource\\_center/](http://www.mnsu.edu/veterans/resource_center/)

### Confidential Help to Assist Students in Resolving Personal, Social, and Educational Concerns

The Counseling Center  
245 Centennial Student Union (CSU)  
Phone: (507) 389-1455  
<http://www.mnsu.edu/counseling/>

### Student Health Services

Medical Clinic  
21 Carkoski Commons  
Phone: 507-389-6276  
<http://www.mnsu.edu/shs/>

Health Education  
100 Carkoski Commons  
Phone: 507-389-5689

### Resources and Volunteer Opportunities for Food Insecurity on Campus and in the Community

Campus Kitchen  
Student Activities  
Centennial Student Union 173  
Phone: 507-389-6076  
Email: [Karen.Anderson@mnsu.edu](mailto:Karen.Anderson@mnsu.edu)  
<https://www.mnsu.edu/activities/kitchen/>

### Campus Cupboard

The Campus Cupboard is a food shelf for college students experiencing food insecurity with the philosophy of "take when you need, give when you can."  
331 Dillion Ave  
Mankato, MN 56001  
<https://www.facebook.com/campuscupboard/>

If you do not see a campus resource on this list, please let me know, and I can add it to future syllabi and my webpage.

## Readings

(Readings are due at the beginning of the week for which they are assigned)

### Week 1

(August 27)

*Introduction, Course Themes, and Syllabus*

Szymanski, Albert J., and Ted George Goertzel. 1979. "An Insider's Guide to Sociology: Radical and Otherwise." Pp. 1-34 in *Sociology: Class, Consciousness, and Contradictions*. New York: D. Van Nostrand Company.

### Week 2

(September 3)

*The Sociological Imagination (Grand Theory and Abstracted Empiricism)*

Mills, C. Wright. [1959] 2000. *The Sociological Imagination*. Pp. 3-99. New York: Oxford University Press.  
<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-sociological-imagination-9780195133738?cc=us&lang=en&>

### Week 3

(September 10)

*The Sociological Imagination (Psychologism and the Role of Sociologists)*

Mills, C. Wright. [1959] 2000. *The Sociological Imagination*. Pp. 100-226. New York: Oxford University Press.  
<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-sociological-imagination-9780195133738?cc=us&lang=en&>

### Week 4

(September 17)

*Emile Durkheim: The Division of Labor*

Durkheim, Emile. [1933] 1984. "Mechanical Solidarity, or Solidarity by Similarities." Pp. 31-67, "Solidarity Arising from the Division of Labour, or Organic Solidarity." Pp. 68-87, and "The Causes." Pp. 200-25 in *The Division of Labor in Society*. New York: The Free Press.

<http://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Division-of-Labor-in-Society/Emile-Durkheim/9781476749730>

### Week 5

(September 24)

*Karl Marx*

Marx, Karl. [1844] 1975. "Estranged Labor" in "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844." Pp. 270-282 in *Karl Marx Frederick Engels Collected Works Vol. 3, Marx and Engels: 1843-1844*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Marx, Karl. [1859] 1987. "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy." Pp. 261-292 in *Karl Marx Frederick Engels Collected Works Vol.29, Marx: 1857-1861*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Marx, Karl. [1887] 1977. "The Transformation of Money into Capital." Pp. 157-186 and "Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist." Pp. 738-748 in *Karl Marx Frederick Engels Collected Works Vol. 35, Marx Capital, Vol. I*. New York: International Publishers.

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/108664/capital-by-karl-marx/>

### **Week 6**

(October 1)

*W.E.B. Du Bois: Colonialism and the Origin of Race*

Du Bois, W.E.B. [1903] 2007. "Of the Dawn of Freedom," "Of the Quest of the Golden Fleece," and "Of the Faith of the Fathers." Pp. 10-29, 94-113, and 133-145 in *The Souls of Black Folk*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-souls-of-black-folk-9780199384129?q=du%20bois&lang=en&cc=us>

Du Bois, W.E.B. [1939] 2007. "The Trade in Men." Pp. 91-103 in *Black Folk Then and Now: An Essay in the History and Sociology of the Negro Race*. New York: Oxford University Press.

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/black-folk-then-and-now-an-essay-in-the-history-and-sociology-of-the-negro-race-9780195325829?lang=en&cc=gb>

Du Bois, W.E.B. [1944] 1985. "Colonialism, Peace, and Democracy after the War." Pp. 229-44 in *Against Racism: Unpublished Essays, Papers, Addresses, 1887 -1961*, edited by Herbert Aptheker. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

### **Week 7**

(October 8)

*Eduardo Galeano: Primitive Accumulation*

Galeano, Eduardo. [1973] 1997. "Lust for Gold, Lust for Silver." Pp. 21-70 in *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

[https://monthlyreview.org/product/open\\_veins\\_of\\_latin\\_america/](https://monthlyreview.org/product/open_veins_of_latin_america/)

### **Week 8**

(October 15)

*Waziyatawin: Genocide*

Waziyatawin. 2008. "How Minnesotans Wrested the Land from Dakota People." Pp. 17-70. in *What does Justice Look Like? The Struggle for Liberation in Dakota Homeland*. St. Paul, MN: Living Justice Press.

[http://www.livingjusticepress.org/index.asp?Type=B\\_BASIC&SEC={C77C5426-031A-4F37-A7A4-09B76B8B3C5B}](http://www.livingjusticepress.org/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={C77C5426-031A-4F37-A7A4-09B76B8B3C5B})

### **Week 9**

(October 22)

*Samir Amin: United States Hegemony*

Amin, Samir. 2004. *The Liberal Virus: Permanent War and the Americanization of the World*. Pp. 7-112. New York: Monthly Review Press.

[https://monthlyreview.org/product/liberal\\_virus/](https://monthlyreview.org/product/liberal_virus/)

### **Week 10**

(October 29 - *No Class*)

*Draft Paper Due*

**Week 11**

(November 5)

*John Bellamy Foster, Brett Clark, and Richard York: The Ecological Rift*

**In Class Midterm Exam:** Application of Theory to Amin's *The Liberal Virus*

Foster, John Bellamy, Brett Clark, and Richard York. 2010. "Carbon Metabolism and Global Capital Accumulation." Pp. 121-50 and "The Planetary Moment of Truth." Pp. 151-64 in *The Ecological Rift: Capitalism's War on the Earth*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

[https://monthlyreview.org/product/ecological\\_rift/](https://monthlyreview.org/product/ecological_rift/)

**Week 12**

(November 12)

*Immanuel Wallerstein: The World-System*

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 2004. "The Modern World-System as a Capitalist World-Economy." Pp. 23-41 and "The Modern World-System in Crisis." Pp. 76-90 in *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction*. Durham: Duke University Press.

<https://www.dukeupress.edu/world-systems-analysis>

**Week 13**

(November 19)

*Patricia Hill Collins: Matrix of Domination*

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2009. "Work, Family, and Black Women's Oppression." Pp. 45-67, "U.S. Black Feminism in Transnational Context." Pp. 227-249, and "Toward a Politics of Empowerment." Pp. 273-290 in *Black Feminist Thought*. New York: Routledge.

<https://www.routledge.com/Black-Feminist-Thought-Knowledge-Consciousness-and-the-Politics-of-Empowerment/Hill-Collins/p/book/9780415964722>

**Week 14**

(November 26)

*Seung-Kyung Kim: Gender and the Division of Labor*

Kim, Seung-Kyung. 1997. "Women Caught between Global Capitalism and South Korean Patriarchy." Pp. 1-18 and "The Myth of Social Mobility: Its Creation and Reproduction among Women Workers." Pp. 57-96 in *Class Struggle or Family Struggle? The Lives of Women Factory Workers in South Korea*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<http://www.cambridge.org/US/academic/subjects/anthropology/social-and-cultural-anthropology/class-struggle-or-family-struggle-lives-women-factory-workers-south-korea?format=PB>

**Week 15**

(December 3)

*Discussion of Course Themes*

**In Class Final Exam:** Application of Theory to Kim's *Class Struggle or Family Struggle*

**Final Exam Week**

(December 10)

*Final Paper Due*

Required primary texts include novels by Don DeLillo, Bret Easton Ellis, William Gibson, Mark Leyner, Donald Barthelme, and Jonathan Foer. We will also read literary criticism and cultural theory by Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, Guy Debord, Jim Collins, John Docker, and Jean-Luc Nancy, among others. REQUIRED TEXTS: 1. Primary Texts: DeLillo, Don. *White Noise: Text and Criticism*. Mark Osteen, ed. New York: Penguin, 1998. The required attribute is supported by text, search, url, tel, email, password, date, month, week,

time, datetime-local, number, checkbox, radio, file,

types along with the

form control elements. If present on any of these