



The mission of Concord University is to provide quality, liberal arts based education, to foster scholarly and creative activities and to serve the regional community (<http://www.concord.edu/academics/>).

SOC 406 Sociological Theory

Course CRN: 20346

Class meets: TR 11am-12:15pm Admin 310

Semester Taught: Spring 2019

Professor: Katie Nutter-Pridgen

Credit Hours: 3

Office Location: Admin 215

Prerequisites: None

Office Hours: MW 2-3; TR 1-2; by appt

Email: kpridgen@concord.edu

College/Department Website: <https://www.concord.edu/sws/node/45>

Course Description

This course will critically examine some of the major theoretical orientations in classical and contemporary sociological thought. We will explore the ways these ideas have changed in relation to political, economic, and social transformations - the focus will be on the connections between the underlying assumptions of key theorists and their conclusions about the nature of social life. The major questions to be addressed as a part of the course are: To what extent do sociological perspectives offer insight into ongoing social issues? How have the foundations of each of these views changed over time? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses in each of these positions? How do these theories inform our understanding of contemporary society? We will also take a critical approach to the sociological canon by identifying crucial contributions of female social theorists – these women have been minimized or completely erased, although their ideas remain influential to the foundation of the field. This aspect of the class will allow you to consider the sociology of knowledge and appreciate the ways that scientific thought is embedded in the time and place in which it develops.

Course Management System: Blackboard

Hardware/Software Needed: PC access with internet capabilities

Text requirements:

Lengermann, Patricia and Gillian Niebrugge. 1998. *The Women Founders: Sociology and Social Theory 1830-1930*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press. ISBN 978-1-57766-509-0

New \$36; Rent \$18 (Waveland.com)

Ritzer, George. 2011. *Sociological Theory*. 8th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill. ISBN 978-0-07-811167-9

Full PDF available on Blackboard

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard

Concord University Educational Goals:

1. Skill 4: An ability to analyze, synthesize, and integrate elements, information and ideas.
2. Skill 6: An ability to apply and to transfer academic and experiential learning appropriately from one context to another.
3. Knowledge 3: An ability to interpret events and trends within historical contexts.
4. Knowledge 5: A recognition of the complex interactions between organisms, including human beings, and their environments.
5. Attitudes 3: Respectful attentiveness to differing perspectives and willingness to engage in dialogue across differences in order to seek mutual understanding and equitable conflict resolution.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Outline the historical development of sociological thought and match the main theories with major economic, political, and social events
2. Compare American sociological theory with earlier social theory from Europe
3. Describe the role of gender in the development of the sociological canon; critique the ways that gender inequalities have been addressed
4. List and define several sociological theories, including functionalism, conflict, and symbolic interactionism
5. Name important theorists and match them to their theoretical tradition
6. Apply sociological theories to novel situations, including examples from popular media and current events

Course Expectations

A) Communication

Check the Blackboard course website and your Concord email address frequently. Announcements about changes to the course schedule, syllabus, or class meeting time will be posted there. Review course materials on Blackboard for information BEFORE contacting me with questions – I will not respond to emails asking questions that are directly addressed in course materials.

Email is the best way to get in touch with me – in most circumstances, I will respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays. You may call my office during office hours, but I still have some problems with my voicemail.

ALL communication in the course – in-class, online, or by phone; between students and myself; among students – will be respectful. Deliberately disrespectful behaviors may mean you are ‘called out,’ ignored, penalized, or dismissed from class.

B) Due Dates and Late Work

Out of class assignments must be completed BEFORE the due date and submitted on Blackboard by 11:59pm. Late work can be submitted up to one week late and will be penalized at follows:

Late less than 24 hours	10% penalty	Late 48 hours to one week	50% penalty
Late 24-48 hours	20% penalty	Late more than one week	Not accepted
Late more than 48 hours	25% penalty		

If you have any problems with the course website or submission of assignments, contact the IT Help Desk at 304-384-5291 or cuhelpdesk@concord.edu. Computer problems are **NOT** an acceptable excuse for missing a due date, so I suggest you complete and submit each one as early as possible.

In-class assignments, INCLUDING TESTS, must be made up (completed) within 2 weeks of original due date and:

1. Absence is due to serious (physical or mental) illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (ie: field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays or participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Court-imposed legal obligations (ie: jury duty, appearance, or subpoena) will also be excused. Other reasons may also be approved, please talk to me directly.
2. You contacted me before your absence if possible and *no later* than 24 hours after the in-class assessment happens.

C) Cheating

No cheating. This includes – but is not limited to – plagiarism (the use of any work from books, articles, other students, the Internet, or other sources that are incorrectly cited). All written work must be your own original content and written in your own words. If you have questions about citations, plagiarism, or cheating, please ask me. All work will be scanned by TurnItIn and checked by the instructor.

Course Details

A) Course Overview

This class will provide an overview of sociological theory. The first half of class will focus largely on classical theorists, while the second half will cover contemporary theories. Although we will not be able to trace the development of every sociological theory, we will work together to understand the main contributions of key social theorists.

Each week, you will complete a study guide about main thinkers (such as Comte, Durkheim, Weber, Marx, and Mills, among others) or theoretical traditions (including postmodernism and feminist approaches). You will use the questions on the study guide to introduce you to the basic vocabulary and concepts of each tradition. This material can be complex – you should try your best to answer the questions, usually using the Ritzer text, then bring a copy of your answers to class on Tuesday. We will discuss the answers to the questions in class, giving you an opportunity to add to or edit your responses. Study guides will be due at the end of class on Tuesdays.

We will complicate the traditional canon using the Lengermann and Niebrugge (L&N) text. We will discuss the women who were crucial to the development of sociology and social theory, who were recognized and respected during their day, but who were later erased from the history of the discipline (including Martineau, Addams, Gilman, and others). In addition to learning about main theorists and contributions, we will be able to critique the traditional canon and the ways it has been recently updated.

Each Thursday, you will bring a reflection memo to class. These short memos will help you to think about one aspect of the material more deeply and prepare for class discussion on Thursdays. You will submit your reflection memo at the end of class on Thursday, again giving you time to make small edits where necessary.

During the semester, there will be two tests with multiple-choice, matching, short answer, and essay questions. One paper – essentially, a more in-depth and formal reflection memo – will allow you to explore a theorist or tradition of your choice. Attendance and participation will be taken each day of class.

B) Grade Calculation

12 Study Guides	10 points each	(12x10)= 120 points
12 Reflection Memos	20 points each	(12x20)= 240 points
2 Tests	60 points each	(2x60) = 120 points
1 In-Depth Critique	30 points	= 30 points
Daily attendance and participation		= 50 points
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Total Points Possible		= 550 points*

*There are 560 total points possible, but I have included a 10 point “curve”

C) Grading Scale

<i>Total Points</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Total Points</i>	<i>Grade</i>
495-550	A	330-384	D
440-494	B	Less than 329	F
385-439	C		

D) Study Guides - due end of class every Tuesday

Study Guides will contain questions to assist you in comprehension of main vocabulary and concepts. They can be found on Blackboard under Study Guides on the left-hand menu. You will bring a copy of your study guide to class, which you can edit or add to during our discussion, then turn in at the end of class. The first study guide, about Comte, will be due Tu Jan 29.

E) Reflection Memos – due end of class every Thursday

To facilitate Thursday discussion, each student is required to type a 600-word memo that briefly describes one theoretical concept from each week's readings/lectures and applies it to a current event, media example, or personal experience. Please indicate in your memo how your theoretical concept helps you analyze or understand the example you provide. You are welcome to edit or add to your memo during class – a hard copy is due at the end of class. The first reflection memo is due Th Jan 24.

F) Tests – Th Mar 7 and Tu Apr 30

There will be two tests this semester. Each test will consist of a mix of multiple choice questions, matching, and short answer questions, as well as 1 written essay. The questions will come from the readings and lectures presented during class.

G) In-Depth Critique – due Wed May 8

You will complete a critique of a theorist or theoretical perspective of your choice. Details about this assignment will be available on Blackboard.

I) Attendance and Participation – each class day

Everyone will start class with 50/50 points for their attendance and participation grade. For each day you are absent, I will subtract 2 points. Points may also be deducted for arriving late, leaving early, sleeping/texting/or being otherwise distracted, or coming to class unprepared. You may earn additional points for especially meaningful contributions to class discussions. Excused absences are available ONLY with appropriate documentation.

University Policies/Required Notices to Students **Accessibility/Accommodations**

Concord University is committed to responding to the needs of students with disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please inform your instructor at the beginning of the class semester if you have a disability and are requesting accommodations. It is your responsibility to self-disclose that you are requesting accommodations. The University and instructor will provide you with a reasonable accommodation. You should register with CU's Disability Services Office, located in the Athens campus Jerry and Jean Beasley Student Center, Bottom Floor, across from the Campus Post Office. The Disability Services Office phone is 304-384-6086 or you can email the Director, Nancy Ellison, at nellison@concord.edu for assistance.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is morally unacceptable as well as destructive to the learning and teaching atmosphere. Academic dishonesty includes the giving or receiving of improper help on examinations or assignments, falsifying documents, and plagiarism (the act of stealing and using, as one's own, the ideas or the expression of the ideas of another). Such dishonesty can lead to a variety of penalties — including but not limited to failure of assignment, failure of course, loss of institutional privileges, or dismissal from the University. (See University Catalog Academic Policies and Procedures.)

Concord University Honor Code

A Concord University Honor Code was approved by students, staff, faculty, administration, and the CU Board of Governors. The Code states:

"As a member of the Concord University Community I will act with honesty and integrity in accordance with our fundamental principles and I will respect myself and others while challenging them to do the same."

The Honor Code is intended to unite the Concord community behind a culture of honesty, integrity, and civility.

Class/Online Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance is part of a student's academic obligation at Concord. Irregular attendance may affect academic performance adversely and is detrimental to the atmosphere of a class. (See University Catalog Academic Policies and Procedures.)

Emergency Alert System

In an effort to increase safety and security on our campus, Concord University encourages everyone to register for instant text message alerts. Alerts will only be used for security and safety notices. All students, faculty, and staff are eligible to receive text message alerts on their cell phones or email alerts. Please contact the IT Help Desk for further assistance (304-384-5291).

Emergency Information

Emergency/courtesy telephones are located at the main entrance of each residence hall and at various other locations on campus. Emergency telephones can be identified by the flashing blue light and will provide the user with a direct link to Public Safety at the press of a button. To report an on-campus emergency, call 304-384-5357 or 911. The Office of Public Safety is located on the bottom floor of the Rahall Technology Center. For further emergency information go to:

<http://www.concord.edu/administration/office-public-safety>.

Inclement Weather Policy

As a general policy, the University will remain in normal operations during adverse weather conditions. In the event of severe weather conditions, the following may occur:

University Closure

No students or employees are to report.

Classes Cancelled

Students do NOT report BUT employees are expected to report to work at their normal time.

Operating on an Inclement Weather Delay

Under this schedule, all 8 a.m. classes will start at 10 a.m. Students and faculty will follow the Inclement Weather Schedule. (See <http://www.concord.edu/emergency-alerts> for Athens/Beckley Inclement Weather Schedules.)

**Announcements invoking the late schedule or other options referenced above are aired on area radio and television stations and are sent as text and email messages to those enrolled for this service.*

Student Conduct

In classrooms, online, laboratories, and during any activities that are part of course requirements, students are expected to observe reasonable rules of conduct.

Sexual Harassment & Assault

Federal law, Title IX, and Concord University policy prohibits discrimination, harassment, and violence based on sex and gender (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, and retaliation). If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can receive confidential counseling support through the Concord University Counseling Center (304-384-5290). Alleged Violations can be reported non-confidentially to the Concord University Title IX Coordinator at 304-384-6327 or titleix@concord.edu. Reports to Campus Security can be made at (304-384-5357). As an employee at Concord University, I am a mandatory reporter which means I must report any sexual misconduct I am made aware of. This includes verbal or written (such as in an assignment) disclosures of sexual harassment or sexual assault.

Technology Services

Contact the CU Help Desk at extension 5291 from campus or 304-384-5291 off campus. You may also e-mail cuhelpdesk@concord.edu.

Tentative Course Schedule

Syllabus Disclaimer

The schedule of topics will likely be edited throughout the semester, especially due to inclement weather. The most up-to-date course schedule can be found on Blackboard. (Bb = reading available on Blackboard; L&N = The Women Founders book)

- 1/15 – 1/17 Introduction to the Course and Defining Sociological Theory
Syllabus
Main Trends of the Modern World, Jackall and Vidich (Bb)
- 1/22 – 1/24 The Shifting Sociological Canon
Women in the History of Sociology – L&N Ch 1
- 1/29 – 1/31 The Origins of Social Theory
Auguste Comte – Excerpt from *The Positive Philosophy* (Bb)
Harriet Martineau – L&N Ch 2
- 2/5 – 2/7 The Development of Sociology as a Discipline
Emile Durkheim – Ritzer Ch 3; *The Rules of Sociological Method*, p 31-47 (Bb)
Jane Addams – L&N Ch 3
- 2/12 – 2/14 Social Structure and Human Interaction
Max Weber – Ritzer Ch 4; "Science as a Vocation" in *From Max Weber* (Bb)
Charlotte Perkins Gilman – L&N Ch 4
- 2/19 – 2/21 Structural Functionalism – Ritzer Ch 7
Talcott Parsons – "The Place of Sociological Theory" in *The Social System* (Bb)
Robert Merton – *Social Theory and Social Structure*, p 73-91 (Bb)
- 2/26 – 2/28 Development of Conflict Perspective
Karl Marx – Ritzer Ch 2; Preface and selection from *The German Ideology* (Bb)
C. Wright Mills – Selections from *The Sociological Imagination* (Bb)
- 3/5 Classical Sociological Theory Conclusion
3/7 Test 1
- 3/11 – 3/15 Spring Break
- 3/19 – 3/21 Symbolic Interactionism – Ritzer Ch 10
Herbert Blumer – Selections from *Symbolic Interactionism* (Bb)
Erving Goffman - Introduction to *Frame Analysis*, p 1-20 (Bb)
- 3/26 – 3/28 Postmodernism / Poststructuralism
Poststructuralism and Lyotard – E.C. Cuff, selections from *Perspectives in Sociology* (Bb)
Postmodernism and Foucault – Ritzer, *Sociological Theory* p 611-620
Michel Foucault – "What is Enlightenment" *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (Bb)
- 4/2 – 4/4 Development of Black Feminist Thought
Anna Julia Cooper and Ida B. Wells-Barnett – L&N Ch 5

bell hooks – selection from *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Bb)

- 4/9 – 4/11 Feminist Theory – Ritzer Ch 13
Dorothy Smith – “Sociological Theory: Methods of Writing Patriarchy”
in *Feminism and Sociological Theory* (Ruth Wallace editor, pp. 34-64) (Bb)
Marianne Weber – L&N Ch 6
- 4/16 – 4/18 Theories of Race and Ethnicity
William J. Wilson – The Declining Significance of Race (Bb)
Charles Willie – The Inclining Significance of Race (Bb)
Critical Race Theory – *Racial Domination* by Desmond and Emirbayer (Bb)
- 4/23 – 4/25 Critical Theory – Ritzer, p 281-294
Douglas Kellner – *Theory, Culture, and Society*, Vol. 10: pp. 43-60 (Bb)
Jürgen Habermas – *The Theory of Communicative Action II*, p 374-403 (Bb)
- 4/30 Test 2
- 5/2 Flex Day – meetings with instructor or make-up for inclement weather cancelations
- 5/8 In-Depth Critique Due