**Sociology 4715/5715 -- Sociological Theory**

Fall 2020

Prof. Malcolm Holmes

Virtual office hours: MWF 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. (meetings will be held via Zoom)

Email: [mholmes@uwyo.edu](mailto:mholmes@uwyo.edu) Use UWYO email for all correspondence (emails will receive a reply

within a few hours unless sent after hours or on a weekend)

***Course Delivery:***

This course will be delivered via Zoom conferencing on MWF 9:50 – 10:40 a.m. for the entire semester (barring Covid-19 related changes in UW course delivery policies).

Zoom is a video-conferencing service provided by the university. Students will need to have a computer with a microphone and video camera. The link to participate in the Zoom video conferences will be provided on WyoCourses.

I will record the lectures. Recorded lectures will be made available to students who miss class ***if*** they have an authorized excuse for their absence. ***You must have documentation to receive access to recorded lectures!*** This is discussed further in the section on course quizzes below. For additional information, see [UW Regulation 2-108 (Student Attendance Policy)](http://www.uwyo.edu/regs-policies/_files/docs/regulations-2018/uw_reg_2-108_approved_7-12-18.pdf) for detailed information on the University’s attendance policy.

If you have any IT related challenges, please contact the UWIT Service Center:  <https://uwyo.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/1940/Portal/Requests/ServiceDet?ID=8890>

***Overview and Objectives***

This course focuses primarily on the classical tradition of sociological theory. Sociological theorists and theories come and go, and comparatively few are influential for more than a few decades. Among the early sociologists, the contributions of Spencer, Marx, Weber, Simmel, Durkheim, and Mead remain critical to the discipline. These theorists identified and developed ideas that broadly define the scope of sociology today. We will discuss the historical development of sociology in the context of their theoretical perspectives, as well as examining the structure of the theories with respect to their logical forms, strengths, and limitations.

In addition to introducing students to the sociological tradition, the course aims to develop deep reading and critical thinking skills. Except for a couple of background lectures, I do not use PowerPoint presentations. You must have your book available during class meetings. The theories covered in the course are complex, and comprehending them requires students to engross themselves in the material. Deep reading is the key to success in the course. This involves active, thoughtful and deliberate reading. When you encounter material that you find difficult or confusing, you have to work to through it. My lectures will clarify things for you, but they are not sufficient background to prepare for quizzes. Be sure to bring your book to class and take good lecture notes, as some material I cover is not in the text.

Deep reading promotes critical thinking, the intellectually disciplined process of analyzing and synthesizing information. The theorists we will discuss were hardly in lockstep in their understanding of society. Indeed, their images of the social world are rather disparate in their logic and structure. As students we tend to glom onto a theorist whose ideas resonate with us (for me it was George Herbert Mead), and defend it against all criticism. As I subsequently learned, no theory or theorist is entirely correct. The ideas of various perspectives are complementary and relevant to different aspects of the social world. In short, absolute truth does not exist, as Sir Isaac Newton could attest had he been around to engage intellectually with Albert Einstein. And our ideas are hardly immune to criticism! Think for yourself but listen to those who disagree with you!

***Textbook***:

Jonathan A. Turner, Leonard Beeghley, and Charles H. Powers, *The Emergence of Sociological Theory* (7th edition), Sage Publications.

***Course Requirements****:*

*Quizzes* -- Students are required to complete seven (7) quizzes (50 points each), which will be administered via the WyoCourses. ***Required quizzes will be administered only during specified class period unless the student has an authorized excuse for the absence.*** ***You must have documentation to make up a quiz!***  Each quiz will require that you answer two or three short-essay questions. You will be allotted 15 minutes for each question. The exams will be open book, but you will gain little advantage if you fail to engage in deep reading. Your textbook contains figures that outline important points that will help you organize your ideas, but it will be impossible to “lookup” the answer and write a good essay in the time allotted. ***Do not use quotes—I want you to show me what you know, not how well you copy. Quotes will not be treated as your work. If any section of an exam answer is written verbatim from the textbook, the student will receive a grade of zero for that exam.***

In order to take a makeup quiz, a valid University excuse or doctor’s excuse for your absence must be obtained. University excuses can be obtained from the Office of Student Life. The Office of Student Life (OSL) will provide the excuse, provided the students' absence meets the criteria for an authorized absence. For further information on obtaining an excused absence, contact the OSL or visit their website at: <http://uwacadweb.uwyo.edu/OSL/absences.htm>. Doctor’s excuses must be obtained from your healthcare provider. Be advised that student health does not provide excused absences. These excuses must be for the quiz date and must state that you were unable to attend the class period that day. Doctor’s appointments do not constitute an excused absence. Excuses need to be presented to the instructor by the class period following the excused absence to be accepted, barring exceptional circumstances.

*Seminar Paper* (**SOC 5715 students only**) - In addition to the above requirements, which all students must fulfill, students enrolled in SOC 5000 are required to complete a seminar paper (approximately15 pages of text) that applies a theoretical perspective presented in class to analyze some contemporary social phenomenon (100 points). For example, what can Marx’s analysis of conflict tell us about current political divisions in the US? Or, what can Durkheim’s analysis of religion tell us about declining religiosity among younger age cohorts in the US? Please discuss your topic with me well in advance of the due date to ensure that you select an appropriate and manageable topic. You must follow the format of the *American Sociological Association* in preparing the paper. Students will present their papers to the class, and that material may be included on the final exam.

***Grade Calculation***:

Your course grade will be decided by your performance on the various requirements as

follows:

SOC 4715 SOC 5715

Quizzes – 7 @ 50 points each Quizzes – 7 @ 50 points each

Seminar Paper – 100 points

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Total Points = 350 points Total Points = 450 points

***Grade Scale****:*

Final grades will be determined using the following scale:

A = 90 – 100%

B = 80 – 89.9

C = 70 – 79.9

D = 60 – 69.9

F = < 60

***Course Schedule:***

**Date Topics and Assigned Readings**

8/24 Introduction to course

8/26 – 8/28 European roots of classical theory – Ch. 1

8/31 – 9/2 The Enlightenment & Comte – Ch. 2 pp. 19-24, 34-36; Ch. 3

9/4 Quiz 1

9/7 – 9/11 Herbert Spencer’s scientific vision – Ch. 4; Ch. 5 pp. 67-88,

102-104

9/14 Quiz 2

9/16 – 9/28 Marx’s critique of early capitalism – Ch. 6 pp. 111-118, 127-140;

Ch. 7

9/30 Quiz 3

10/2 – 10/14 Weber’s analysis of rationalization in society – Ch. 8 pp. 181-190;

Ch. 9

10/16 Quiz 4

10/18 – 10/30 Durkheim’s functional analysis of society – Ch. 12 pp. 297-

302, 313-325;

Ch. 13

11/2 Quiz 5

11/4 – 11/16 Mead on human interaction and social order – Ch. 14 pp. 369-379,

386-393; Ch. 15 pp. 395-423

11/18 Quiz 6

11/20 – 11/23 Varieties of contemporary theory – Ritzer & Stepnisky, Ch. 2 (WyoCourses file)

**11/25 – 11/27 Thanksgiving Break**

11/4 – 12/2 Varieties of contemporary theory – continued

12/4 Quiz 7

***Deadlines, requirements, and course structure are subject to change if deemed necessary by the instructor. Students will be notified on WyoCourses and via email of any changes. You are required to regularly check WyoCourses and your UW email.***

***Classroom Behavior Policy:***

This course will be conducted and governed in accordance with all applicable University of Wyoming regulations. Please be as respectful, courteous, and professional while in Zoom meetings as you would be in a physical classroom. I ask that you all keep your videos on throughout our meetings (unless we experience technical issues), but please keep yourselves muted if you are not speaking, as outside noise can be distracting. Please also have your textbook with you during our Zoom meetings. I know that Zoom can be anxiety inducing for a number of reasons. That being said, my goal is to create a space where we can be social, engage with one another, and build community as we discuss and tackle challenging issues in sociological theory.

Be sure to arrive on time, pay attention, and treat all deadlines seriously. You will be respectful towards you classmates and instructor. Spirited debate and disagreement are to be expected in any classroom and all views will be heard, but at all times we will behave civilly and with respect towards one another. Personal attacks, offensive language, name calling, and dismissive gestures are not warranted in a learning atmosphere. As the instructor, I have the right to dismiss you from the Zoom classroom. Repeat offenders will be referred to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.

***Academic Policy:***

The University of Wyoming is built upon a strong foundation of integrity, respect and trust. All members of the university community have a responsibility to be honest and the right to expect honesty from others. Any form of academic dishonesty is unacceptable to our community and will not be tolerated. Suspected violations of standards of academic honesty should be reported to the instructor, department head, or dean. Cases of academic dishonesty will be treated in accordance with UW Regulation 2-114 (<https://www.uwyo.edu/regs-policies/_files/docs/section-2-regulations-july-2018/uw_reg_2-114_format_effective_7-1-18.pdf>). ***Students will, at a minimum, receive a grade of zero (0) on any assignment in which academic dishonesty has occurred.***

***Diversity Policy:***

The University of Wyoming values an educational environment that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. The diversity that students and faculty bring to class, including age, country of origin, culture, disability, economic class, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, linguistic, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, worldview, and other social and cultural diversity is valued, respected, and considered a resource for learning.

***Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination Policy – Duty to Report:***

UW faculty are committed to supporting students and upholding the University’s non-discrimination policy. Under Title IX, discrimination based upon sex and gender is prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex- or gender-based discrimination, we encourage you to report it. While you may talk to a faculty member, understand that as a "Responsible Employee" of the University, the faculty member MUST report information you share about the incident to the university’s Title IX Coordinator (you may choose whether you or anyone involved is identified by name). If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you privacy or confidentiality, there are people who can meet with you. Faculty can help direct you or you may find info about UW policy and resources at <http://www.uwyo.edu/reportit>.

***Disability Support Policy:***

The University of Wyoming is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you have a disability, including but not limited to physical, learning, sensory or psychological disabilities, and would like to request accommodations in this course due to your disability, please register with and provide documentation of your disability as soon as possible to Disability Support Services (DSS), Room 128 Knight Hall. You may also contact DSS at (307) 766-3073 or [udss@uwyo.edu.](mailto:udss@uwyo.edu) It is in the student’s best interest to request accommodations within the first week of classes, given that accommodations are not retroactive. Visit the DSS website for more information at: [www.uwyo.edu/udss](http://www.uwyo.edu/udss).

***COVID-19 Policies –***

During this pandemic, you must abide by all UW policies and public health rules put forward by the City of Laramie, the University of Wyoming and the State of Wyoming to promote the health and well-being of fellow students and your own personal self-care. Wear face coverings when you are with others, stay the required physical distance apart from others, take required COVID tests for campus presence and travel, and report your health status daily. For the health of our UW community, you should limit unnecessary personal travel. The current policy is provided for review at: <https://www.uwyo.edu/alerts/campus-return/index.html>. If you fail to abide by these COVID-19 policies, you will be referred to the Dean of Students Office using the UWYO Cares Reporting Form for Student Code of Conduct processes (https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofWyoming&amp;layout\_id=5)

***Student Resources -***

Disability Support Services: [udss@uwyo.edu](mailto:udss@uwyo.edu), 766-3073, 128 Knight Hall, [www.uwyo.edu/udss](http://www.uwyo.edu/udss)

Counseling Center: [uccstaff@uwyo.edu](mailto:uccstaff@uwyo.edu), 766-2187, 766-8989 (after hours), 341 Knight Hall, [www.uwyo.edu/ucc](http://www.uwyo.edu/ucc)

Academic Affairs: 766-4286, 312 Old Main, [www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs](http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs)

Dean of Students Office: [dos@uwyo.edu](mailto:dos@uwyo.edu), 766-3296, 128 Knight Hall, [www.uwyo.edu/dos](http://www.uwyo.edu/dos)

UW Police Department: [uwpd@uwyo.edu](mailto:uwpd@uwyo.edu), 766-5179, 1426 E Flint St, [www.uwyo.edu/uwpd](http://www.uwyo.edu/uwpd)

Student Code of Conduct Website: [www.uwyo.edu/dos/conduct](http://www.uwyo.edu/dos/conduct)