

Instructor: Dr. Mike Haffey
Office hrs.: M-TH after class

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Welcome. I consider this course one of the most important courses that you will take during your sociology undergraduate career. Sociological theory - a logical explanation of how a given empirical phenomenon works - serves as the ideational foundation for all sociological investigation past, present, future, and across all areas of substantive interest. As sociologists, theories provide us the necessary interpretive schema's by which to make sense of the empirical world. Theory stands at the center of our discipline - it's what we do!

Social theory encourages us to look beyond individual psychology and unique events to the predictable, broad patterns and regular occurrences of social life that influence individual destinies. It frames our understanding and conceptualization of human nature, human behavior, and human organization. Social theory enables us to see. It is an unusual form of vision.

I hope to encourage you to see the evolution of ideas, questions, and explanations that stand at the center of our discipline. What is society? What are its constituent parts and how are they related? How is the individual and society linked? How do societies retain their unity and continuity while undergoing change? What is the cause of social change? Why and how do vast social, political, and economic inequalities endure? In what ways do class, gender, and race intersect? How and where is culture created? To what ends? Such grand questions are the essence of classical sociological theory.

What is so exciting about these types of questions is that they are the very ones we need to grasp and interpret the complex and dynamic features of contemporary social life. Looking across the social landscape today - capitalism and its many human consequences; inequality in many forms, the process of globalization / development, technological change / mediated communication, consumerism, and matters of concern regarding race and gender - it seems most appropriate that we pursue our discipline's most fundamental concerns. The many sociological concepts and theories that we will study this semester provide us explanatory frameworks and powerful thinking tools to comprehend these most vital, contemporary concerns.

The textbook I have chosen for this course was written and designed to facilitate your understanding of a broad range of classical social thought. I think you will find this text quite engaging. The author has worked hard to make a number of complex ideas as understandable as possible. You must do a little work as well. You will be expected to have read and assimilated the required readings each class meeting. The reading assignments should be done before the topic is discussed in class. The one required text for this course is:

Classical Social Theory by Alex Law

Exams and Grading. Your final grade for this course will be based on the following criteria:

- **Four (4) Exams: 20% each / 80% total** - Each of these multi-format, examinations will cover material from our text and my classroom lectures. I do use the "+ -" grading system. **Exam dates:** 7/19; 7/26; 8/2; 8/9. If you are going to miss an exam, it is vital that you notify me **prior** to that exam. Each of these seven exams will consist of both objective (multiple-choice, listing, diagramming, etc.) and short answer essay questions. These questions will require you to develop a strong grasp of key concepts, to see the similarities and differences among sociological theories, and display some of the higher levels of thinking: synthesis, analysis, criticism, and creative
- **Two (2) Concept Application Papers: 10% each / 20% total** - Twice this semester, you will be required to apply a classical concept to contemporary social life. In each of these two-page (typed, double-spaced) papers you will use a classical concept to elucidate some aspect of today's world. Paper #1 -Durkheim or Marx concept due 7/26; Paper #2 - Weber or Simmel concept due 8/9.

Accommodation for Disabilities If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

Religious Holidays: Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, please speak with me to arrange alternative date and time. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Classroom Behavior: Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation: The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. CU's Sexual Misconduct Policy prohibits sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking or related retaliation. CU Boulder's Discrimination and Harassment Policy prohibits discrimination, harassment or related retaliation based on race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct under either policy should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127. Information about the OIEC, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation can be found at the [OIEC website](#).

Honor Code: All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to [the academic integrity policy](#). Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, resubmission, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code Council as well as a failing grade on that assignment. Additional information regarding the academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#)

Text: Classical Social Theory by Alex Law

July 9 Course Introduction

July 10 Durkheim Biography (handout); Social facts; Positivism

July 11 Mechanical and organic solidarity; Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft

July 12 Normal and Pathological; Anomie

July 15 Suicide; Social Morphology

July 16 Conscious Collective; Collective Representations

July 17 Totemism; Sacred and Profane; Collective Effervescence

July 18 (optional) Review

July 19 Exam 1 – The Classical Theory of Emile Durkheim

July 22 Marx Biography (handout) Primitive Accumulation; Historical Materialism; Mode of Production

July 23 Capital; Class; Division of Labor

July 24 Base-Superstructure; Ideology

July 25 Alienation; Commodity Fetish

July 26 Exam 2 – The Classical Theory of Karl Marx

July 29 Weber Biography (handout); The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

July 30 Rationality; Bureaucracy

July 31 Ideal-Types; Verstehen; Value Freedom

Aug. 1 Legitimate Domination; Social Action

Aug. 2 Exam 3 – The Classical Theory of Max Weber

Aug. 5 Simmel Biography (handout); Social Forms and Associations

Aug. 6 Fashion; Modernity

Aug. 7 Social Space; Metropolis

Aug. 8 Money

Aug. 9 Exam 4 – The Classical Theory of Georg Simmel