Social Theory and Structure

Course prefix: HTS

Course number: 3102

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
91150

Instructor First Name: Kate Pride

Instructor Last Name: Brown

Semester: Fall

Academic year: 2025

Course description:

In this class, we will be reading "classical" social theory. These are the thinkers who, in attempting to answer societal questions without recourse to metaphysical or moral explanation, launched the academic conversation that eventually became the discipline of sociology. The texts we are reading formed the foundation of sociological thought. These ideas have been enormously generative and extremely influential. In this course, we will read the original works of the central classical sociological theorists to better train our minds, to think through their distinct perspectives, not only so we may better understand society as we encounter it, but also so that we can place contemporary conversations and public debates in a genealogical lineage of ideas. We all stand on the shoulders of giants, and it is worth getting to know them before you presume to ascend to that summit.

Course learning outcomes:

 By the end of the semester students should be able to:

•   Identify major theorists in the classical sociology cannon and describe the theoretical perspective associated with each.

•   Position social thinkers in an intellectual lineage and explain how these lineages form a scholarly conversation, one with another.

•   Assess the logical integrity, underlying assumptions, and inherent implications of different theoretical positions.

•   Apply social theories to explain contemporary phenomena and postulate future trajectories.

•   Evaluate contemporary political, economic, and social claims relative to established theoretical traditions.

Required course materials:

The Marx-Engels Reader, 2nd Edition, Edited by Robert C. Tucker

The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, Max Weber

The Division of Labor, by Emile Durkheim

The Souls of Black Folk, W.E.B. Du Bois

Grading policy:

Grading Policy

10%   Participation

15%   Canvas Responses

25%   Mid-Term Exam 1

25%   Mid-Term Exam 2

25%   Final Exam

Grade Point Breakdown

A: 100-90

B: 89-80

C: 79-70

D: 69-60

F: 59-0

*If taking this course as pass/fail, the threshold for passing the course is 70.

Grade Explanation for Qualitative Assessment

A: Receiving an A demonstrates full mastery of the material. It marks exceptional work that goes beyond the basic requirements of the assignment. Such work displays full comprehension, excellent execution, and offers high-order analysis of the implications of

the theory or case at hand. Receipt of an A on an assignment suggests that, if the student were to teach the material to another student, the second student would come away with a thorough comprehension of the subject.

B: Receiving a B suggests that the student adequately completed the assignment with no major errors. Arguments may be more basic, but they are well executed.

C: Receiving a C suggests a need for improvement. This work falls short of adequacy. There are significant errors in knowledge, comprehension or execution.

D: Receiving a D means that, while something was turned in, it shows only a minimal understanding of the subject at hand or largely fails to fulfill the stated requirements of the assignment.

F: A student receiving an F either did not turn in an assignment, did not do the assignment themselves, or did it so poorly as to display no valid knowledge of the subject matter.

+/- : Receiving a plus or minus on any letter grade indicates a little more or a little less of the same.

Attendance policy:

Students are expected to attend class, and attendance will be taken. Students may miss two class periods without excuse or penalty. A third absence will lower the participation grade by 2 points. Each subsequent absence will lower the grade by an *exponentially increasing number* of points. Absences excused by the institute do not count toward the tally and students with institute-excused absences will be allowed to make up missed work after I receive appropriate notification. For more information on the Georgia Tech attendance policy, please visit: http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/. Forms for requesting institutional approval for absences may be found here: https://registrar.gatech.edu/info/institute-approved-absence-form-for-students

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Georgia Tech expects all students to act according to the highest ethical standards. For more information on Georgia Tech's academic Honor Code, visit: www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code. Students should approach their work with integrity and uphold the student code of conduct. https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-life/student-code-conduct. Plagiarism is prohibited. Using the words or ideas of another scholar or student without attribution is plagiarism. Using Chat GPT or another AI tool to write part or all of an assignment is not permitted in this class. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity for investigation. But regardless of any potential penalty imparted by that body, always bear in mind the

underlying premise on which this system stands: you are called upon to conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the knowledge and capabilities that you are striving to attain in the pursuit of higher education.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcomes:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social or geographic relationships develop, persist or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion