

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES IN SOCIOLOGY - Soc 261

Dr. Don Luidens - Instructor

Fall 2009

Office Hours: MW 9:30-11 or TR 3-4:30 or by appointment

Office: Van Zoeren 264; x7554; email: luidens@hope.edu



The School of Athens, by Raphael. Plato and Aristotle chatting about big thoughts in Athens' marketplace of ideas.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course will challenge you to draw together the frequently dissociated observations that you have been making about the social world in which you live and which you study. It is expected that you will begin to arrange those sociological observations using a coherent, unified theoretical perspective.

["What in the world does that mean?"]

In order for you to accomplish that objective, you will be introduced to a variety of the leading "ways to interpret the social landscape" which have found currency among sociologists. You will be given a "Cook's Tour" (Google it!) of the major thinkers in the field. Many of the thinkers will be grounded in the nineteenth century world of "DWMs" (dead, white males). Nevertheless, we will bring that grounding up to contemporary perspectives, as well.

It is my hope that you will find from among these approaches a "sociological perspective" which is congenial to your own thinking so that you can begin to exercise that theoretical perspective in your future social relationships and scholarly endeavors.

["Does that mean I have to come up with something for myself?"]

COURSE FORMAT

This class requires considerable effort on your part to internalize the concepts and paradigms of the discipline of sociology. Accordingly, it will be conducted largely in the manner of a graduate school seminar. Your classroom participation will be essential.

['I knew it'd hit the fan, some time!']

If the course "flies," it will be largely because you have done your homework and contributed to your classmates' experience. **(I know this from years and years and years of practice; the best classes are always the ones in which YOU have done your homework.)** While I will have responsibility for encouraging and enhancing discussions and for periodic presentations (especially at the beginning), student leadership will be stressed throughout the semester. **Each of you will be responsible for leading a class discussion with one of your classmates.**

COURSE GRADES



Your grade will be based on two exams (20% each), the final term paper and presentation (15% each), your team's class leadership (15%), and your overall class participation (15%). Your classmates will assist me in the evaluation of your class presentations and participation.

We'll talk about each of these assignments as the semester goes along.



REQUIRED READINGS

Berger, Peter. Invitation to Sociology. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1963. [Listed as "Berger" below]

Farganis, James. Readings in Social Theory: The Classic Tradition to Post-Modernism. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2008. [Listed as "Farganis" below]



READING AND LEADERSHIP SCHEDULES

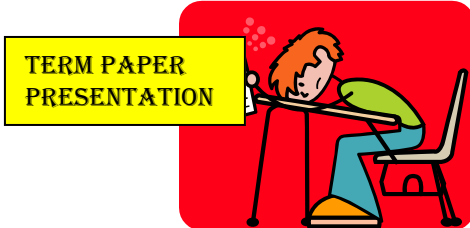
Student Leaders	Questions Due Date	Readings
	[WE'LL FILL THIS IN LATER]	Sept. 3 Berger: Chaps 1-3
		Sept. 8 Berger: Chaps 4-5
		Sept. 10 Berger: Chaps 6-8 PROFILE AND TIMELINE DUE
		Sept. 15 Farganis: 1-20
		Sept. 17 Farganis: 21-43 MARX
		Sept. 22 Farganis: 55-58, 64-80 DURKHEIM
		Sept. 24 Farganis: 81-99 WEBER
		Sept. 29 Farganis: 117-132 SIMMEL
		Oct. 1 Farganis: 133-144 plus Handout MEAD and COOLEY
		Oct. 6 Farganis: 145-160 W.E.B. DuBOIS
		Oct. 8 Debrief on CIS presentation on Water
		Oct. 13 EXAMINATION #1
		Oct. 15 Farganis: 161-163, 171-180
		PARSONS
		Oct. 20 BREAK
		Oct. 22 Farganis: 180-196 Functionalism II MERTON

Functionalism

WEEK OF OCTOBER 19-23: SIGN UP TO MEET WITH LUIDENS TO DISCUSS TERM PAPERS

Oct. 27	Farganis: 197-222 Conflict Theory DAHRENDORF and MILLS
Oct. 29	Farganis: 241-265 Exchange Theory HOMANS and BLAU

Student Leaders	Questions Due Date	Readings
		Nov. 3 Farganis: 281-283, 312-330 Ethnomethodology GARFINKLE
		Nov. 5 Farganis: 331-350 Symbolic Interactionism BLUMER and GOFFMAN
		Nov. 10 Farganis: 363-386 Feminist Theory SMITH and COLLINS
		Nov. 12 Farganis: 387-404 Critical Theory MARCUSE
		Nov. 17 Farganis: 415-426 Post-Modernism FOUCAULT
		Nov. 19 Handout: World Systems Analysis WALLERSTEIN
		Nov. 24 EXAMINATION #2
		Dec. 1, 3 8, and 10 Term Paper Presentations
		Dec 14 TERM PAPERS DUE AT NOON



Hope College expects all students to assess each course in an effort to continuously improve student learning. At the end of the semester, you will be asked to assess how well this course met its stated goals. Your responses will be kept anonymous, but I will take the collective results seriously in thinking about how to provide Hope students the best possible education. Your responses matter. You are urged to participate in this important process.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT: Any student whose disability falls within ADA guidelines should inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester of any special accommodations or equipment needs necessary to complete the requirements for this course. Students must register documentation with the Office of Disability Services and/or Academic Support Center. If you have questions, call Student Development at extension 7800.