

Social Theory

SOCI 101

Fall 2025 Section 01 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/28/2025

Course Information

This course delves into the lives of influential theorists, examining how their personal journeys shaped their contributions to sociology. Together we will engage in an exploration of both classical and contemporary sociological thinkers investigating their views on social and political order, conflict and inequality, social networks and human interaction, as well as the role of agency in our life choices.

Through the use of collaborative case studies, and critical analysis of primary texts, students will learn to apply sociological theory and concepts to real-world problems in search of viable solutions. My hope is that this course emphasizes the relevance of these theories to current social issues, encouraging critical evaluation and practical application.

This is a 3-Unit CORE Class.

Which means by taking it SJSU expects that you will dedicate 2 hours of work outside of lecture per every credit (6 hours total per week). These 6 hours will cover time spent reading, doing written homework, and projects. You will find a breakdown of the time needed for the course in below.

Course Description and Requisites

Comparative analysis of micro and macro sociological theories and their origins, including, but not limited to, conflict theories, consensus theories, structural functionalism, symbolic interaction and recent theoretical developments. Required for majors.

Prerequisite(s): SOCI 1 (or equivalent) and upper division standing. Allowed Declared Majors: Sociology and Behavioral Studies only. All other majors must have instructor consent.

Pre/Corequisite(s): SOCI 100W.

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

This semester we will be engaging in a technology free course. Meaning you will not be taking notes on your computers.

AI Policy

I understand that as people living through the advent of AI there is a temptation to use it for everything – it is a really interesting piece of technology! However, in this classroom your writing process matters as much as your final product. What does this mean for you?

To protect academic integrity and support your development as a writer, **IF** we use online writing the following rules apply to all assignments:

- *Google Docs Requirement*
 - For each new assignment you must start a shared google doc which you will use –from brainstorming to final draft.
 - This Google Doc must be created at the start of your writing process, not at the end.
 - You must share the document with me as an editor by the due date.
- *No Copy-Pasting*
 - Any use of copy and paste from outside sources including but not limited to: your own work, AI tools (ChatGPT, Grammarly, Quillbot, etc.), or third-party drafts is prohibited.
 - Copy-pasting will be treated as evidence of unauthorized assistance. This includes:
 - Pasting in AI-generated drafts
 - Pasting from paraphrasing tools
 - Pasting in large segments revised elsewhere
- *AI Use Is Prohibited*
 - No AI tools of any kind may be used at any stage of the writing process—including for idea generation, outlining, grammar editing, or rewording.
 - The goal is for you to write and revise using your own thinking and voice.
- *Writing History Matters*
 - I will periodically review your Google Doc's **version history**.
 - Documents that show unusual revision patterns, late-stage pasting, or evidence of outside tool use may be investigated.

Please Note:

Any deviation from these requirements is a choice and will result in a failing grade on the assignment (40%).

Any document that shows pasted-in content will receive a failing grade (40%) for the assignment.

Violations may be referred for academic misconduct.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes a range of prohibited behaviors such as plagiarism, cheating on quizzes and exams, working on exams as a group etc. Plagiarism is the most common of these offenses and so I want to take a little time to clarify what plagiarism constitutes.

In the most basic sense, plagiarism is taking the thoughts, ideas, opinions, or work of others and presenting it as your own. It happens in a variety of ways sometimes by accident (like paraphrasing an idea and forgetting to cite), or on purpose (like directly copying or buying a paper), but no matter the context plagiarism is plagiarism.

Please be aware you are responsible for knowing about the various types of Academic Dishonesty located in your student catalogue. Failure to read the catalogue does not excuse academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism also includes copying your own work. You cannot “double dip”, meaning you cannot (1) submit the same paper for two courses, (2) use parts of a paper in one class and insert them into another, or (3) submit any of your work as a “new assignment” which was previously submitted elsewhere (either in this class or in another class).

Consequences of Academic Dishonesty

Academic Dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. If such an act occurs, there are several avenues that I may pursue ranging anywhere from having you redo the assignment or assigning a zero, to assigning an F for the course. In addition to these individual punishments, I will write up an Academic Dishonesty Incident Report beginning with the very first act of plagiarism. These reports are sent to the Academic Affairs Office. Continued plagiarism reports could result in expulsion from the university. If you are having trouble understanding plagiarism it is your responsibility to see me during office hours for further help.

Contacting the Professor

I prefer you email me via Canvas. That way I have a constant visual reminder that an email is waiting and it won't get lost in my school inbox. I attempt to respond within 24-48 business hours (excluding weekends and holidays).

This means that if you email me after Wednesday, I have until the next week to respond. If something is urgent, like a question about a project, please do not wait until the last minute. I cannot guarantee that I will get back to you immediately.

If I haven't gotten back to you in 48 hours, please send a follow-up email.

Canvas Issues

Canvas does not usually crash for one student only. In the case of a school-wide Canvas issue, the university will send out an announcement. I will then make an announcement about potential assignment extensions.

In the case you are having an individual technical issue that hinders your ability to submit an assignment on Canvas, please email me the assignment ASAP.

If you have general questions about Canvas, please feel free to [click on this link \(https://www.sjsu.edu/learnanywhere/frequently-asked-questions/canvas-frequently-asked-questions.php\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/learnanywhere/frequently-asked-questions/canvas-frequently-asked-questions.php).

Feedback on Assignments

I truly enjoy giving feedback and see it as an essential part of your learning process. Throughout this course, I will use three primary types of feedback, depending on the nature of the assignment:

- **Pass/Fail:** Some assignments will be graded on a pass/fail basis. These are typically lower-stakes tasks and will not receive detailed feedback unless requested.
- **Analytic Rubrics:** For many qualitative assignments, I will use an analytic rubric to assess your work. Rubrics will break down the requirements of the assignment and offer a structured evaluation of each component. Feedback in this format will focus on broader aspects such as organization, clarity, and tone. It provides an overall impression and high-level suggestions for improvement, rather than line-by-line or highly detailed comments.
- **Formative Feedback:** Formative feedback connects your progress to both your personal goals and the broader goals of the course. This type of feedback is meant to help you track your development and ensure you're on a path toward achieving success, based on the quality and direction of your work.

Requesting Additional Feedback:

If you would like more specific or detailed feedback on any assignment, please include a comment with your submission (if online) or attend office hours. I'm happy to follow up and provide more targeted insights to support your growth.

File Corruption or Other Issues with Reading Documents

Students are responsible for ensuring that all assignments are successfully submitted and can be opened and read. Digital submissions must be in accessible file formats with correct links and permissions. Assignments that cannot be accessed (e.g., corrupted files, broken links, or missing permissions) will be marked as missing. In-class submissions, including handwritten work, must be clearly legible. Any resubmission after the deadline will be considered late in accordance with the course late policy.

Grading

I will begin grading assignments in the order in which they are received. My goal is to have assignments graded two weeks after submission at the absolute latest.

Please note: If you turn in your assignment late, I will attempt to grade your assignment in a timely manner, but I cannot make guarantees. New assignments are given priority.

Internet Connectivity Issues

In the event that you are having internet connection issues and need to turn in an assignment, each document on your computer shows when you created the document and when you last modified it. I want you to email me a picture of the date created and date modified on the assignment, whenever your internet services are restored. You will receive proper credit so long as it was completed on time.

In the case where an assignment is to be turned in on paper, and becomes lost, it is your responsibility to contact me 24 hours prior to class in order to secure an additional worksheet.

Late Policy

I completely understand that your lives are busy, and/or you may experience poor health during certain points in the semester. As a professor, we go through this too. To that end, I have created a late policy that considers individual situations and gives you an on-ramp back to the course. Unless otherwise noted, late submissions will be accepted and docked points.

In order to utilize the late policy, you will need to email me indicating you need an extension prior to the due date.

Each day you will get a 5 percent penalty for late work. After 7 days no late assignment will be accepted. All work for this class must be turned in by the final day of class (12/8/25)

If you have further questions about the late policy, please email me.

Please note: You do not need to prove that you have a worthy reason in order to use these policies. If you need them, you need them. No moral judgment is assigned to the use of the late policies, nor does it impact my view of you as a person.

Makeup Exams

Students must request to reschedule a makeup exam no later than **5:00 PM the day before the scheduled exam**. All makeup exams must be completed by the **following Wednesday** of the same week.

Extensions beyond this deadline will only be considered in cases of documented emergencies (e.g., medical emergencies, accidents). Same-day emergencies will also require appropriate documentation.

No other makeup exams will be permitted.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Technology

Technology in the classroom, especially in the advent of AI, is a topic of great debate. This semester we will be taking a research backed approach and avoiding the use of laptops in the classroom with exceptions for those who have accommodations requiring them.

Research has found that technology actually leads to worse outcomes for students:

1. *Devices lead to multitasking.* With computers or tablets, the distractibility of multitasking results in poorer focus and attention, negatively affecting the quality of their notes (Fried, 2008; Fisher, 2015; May, 2017). Even when students know they are being monitored, they use the internet for non-learning-related activities (Ravizza, Uitvlugt, & Fenn, 2017).
2. *Devices distract students' neighbors.* When students are seated close to another student's laptop, their potential to be distracted by their fellow classmates significantly increases (Sana, Weston, & Cepeda, 2013).
3. *Notetaking on laptops is less effective for student learning compared to handwritten notes.* Although students can take more notes on a laptop, the "tendency to transcribe lectures verbatim rather than processing information and reframing it in their own words is detrimental to learning" (Mueller and Oppenheimer, 2014).

Phones, laptops, smartwatches, and other devices should stay put away unless I specifically invite you to use them. Students with AEC-approved accommodations may use the tools outlined in their accommodations. If you need to take an emergency phone call (for example you have children and get a call from school), please step out into the hall to take it. This policy helps keep our learning fair, distraction-free, and focused on building your own skills.

Program Information

Program Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to think sociologically about the relationship between social structure, interaction, identities, and inequalities.
2. Students will be able to identify and explain major sociological theories and apply them to everyday life.
3. Students will be proficient in qualitative and quantitative research design, data collection and data analysis.
4. Students will be proficient in oral and written communication skills appropriate to the discipline.
5. Students will be able to practice sociology as educated and civically engaged persons.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

1. Summarize the core arguments of at least 10 assigned theorists in writing and oral discussion without distortion.
2. Apply at least two distinct theoretical frameworks to analyze a contemporary social problem, producing a coherent evidence-based argument.
3. Evaluate the relevance and usefulness of at least three different theories for interpreting personal experience or current events, producing written reflections that make reasoned judgments.
4. Students will create a presentation aimed at non-sociologists featuring the application of sociological concepts learned in class to an assigned social problem.

Course Materials

All readings will be provided in your Canvas. I suggest you print these readings out.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Reading Quizzes

At the start of each Monday class, students will complete a brief pre-assessment designed to evaluate their comprehension of the assigned weekly readings (all of them). These reading quizzes will consist of five multiple-choice questions, each valued at two points, for a total of 10 points per quiz. The results will not only contribute to your overall course grade but will also inform and shape the weekly lecture by highlighting areas that may require further clarification or discussion.

You will each be given time and a half (8 minutes). A total of eleven quizzes will be administered throughout the semester; the lowest quiz score will be automatically dropped from your final grade calculation.

Addendums:

1. I understand that unforeseen circumstances may arise. However, if you arrive late, I will not be able to extend the allotted time for the quiz.
2. In the event that you miss class, there will be one opportunity to take a makeup during Monday's office hours. If you require a makeup beyond that day, appropriate documentation will be necessary. Thank you for your understanding.
3. No outside resources will be used for these quizzes including notes.

Participation: Learning Checks

Throughout the week, students will participate in learning checks. Learning checks measure your progress toward both your individual learning goals and the overall goals of the course. They may take written or verbal form and will occur at random.

You will have multiple opportunities throughout the semester to demonstrate growth and understanding of the material. Written assessments will be assigned and explained during class and completed in that setting. They will be turned in via folders provided by the instructor. Folders will be collected every Wednesday for grading. If you forget to bring the folder back you will lose out on participation points for Wednesday.

Each learning check will be evaluated on the basis of thoughtfulness, conceptual understanding, and the ability to apply key ideas, with up to 10 points awarded per entry. There are 27 total learning checks minimum. To account for absences, your five lowest scores will be dropped.

Addendum:

- Learning Checks are considered classwork by definition. They are started and completed during class time, and therefore, the late submission policy does not apply to them.
- To receive credit for the day's learning check, you need to be present for the activity unless you have a University-approved excuse. I recognize that many of you juggle jobs and other responsibilities, and I encourage you to choose class times that fit your schedule so you can fully participate

Homework

In addition to learning checks which reflect lecture, you will also be asked to complete homework assignments which explore your understandings of the reading. Homework can come in many forms depending on the week, some may require you to complete a worksheet focused on selecting important quotes, others may require you to fill out a matrix comparing authors. These assignments will be assigned and explained in class.

There will be eleven assignments total worth 20 points a piece. Your lowest score (1) will be dropped at the end of the course. Total points that can be earned via homework are 200 points

Please Note:

- The late policy applies to this assignment. You are required to request an extension prior to assignment due date. Please see the late policy as outlined above.
- Assignments will generally be completed and turned in during class by the end of Wednesday. However, if extra time is needed, you may be required to take the assignment home. In that case, the assignment must be finished and turned in by the end of class on Monday.

Project: Oral Presentations

At the start of the semester, Week 3, each student will be assigned a specific social problem or movement. Throughout the term, you are expected to actively consider how the sociological theories, concepts, and frameworks introduced in class relate to your assigned topic.

During the last four weeks in the semester, you will develop and deliver a 9-minute presentation in the form of a mini-lecture. This presentation should demonstrate your ability to apply course material in a meaningful and analytical way. Specifically, your presentation must include the following components:

1. **Brief Background:** Provide a concise overview of your assigned social problem or movement, including relevant historical or contextual details. All background information should be appropriately sourced in APA format.
2. **Conceptual Framing:** Clearly define the sociological concept or theory you have chosen to apply. Be sure to draw on class readings and discussions to ground your definition. Specific quotes from the readings and lectures will be necessary.
3. **Application and Analysis:** Offer concrete examples illustrating how the selected sociological concept helps to illuminate or explain key dynamics of your assigned topic. Emphasis should be placed on critical thinking and analytical depth.

This assignment is designed to assess your ability to synthesize course content and demonstrate sociological thinking in practice. No AI is to be used in this assignment. 12 minutes will be reserved at the end of class for a brief question and answer period. Further details and expectations will be presented in a separate document on Canvas.

This project is worth 100 points.

Exams: Midterm

A closed-book, in-class midterm examination will be administered during the semester. The exam will consist of 50 multiple-choice questions and will assess your understanding of key concepts covered in the first half of the course. To ensure accessibility for all students, a universal time accommodation will be applied: you will have 75 minutes (time-and-a-half) to complete the exam. No additional materials or resources will be permitted during the examination.

This midterm is worth 100 points.

Exam: Final

The final exam will be cumulative and administered online. It will consist of 50 multiple-choice questions covering material from both the assigned readings and lecture content. Students will have 50 minutes to complete the exam, with an additional 25 minutes provided as a universal time accommodation (totaling 75 minutes) to ensure accessibility for all learners. No external resources or assistance are permitted during the exam.

This exam is worth 100 points.

✓ Grading Information

I will round up if your grade is .5 or above only. Meaning if you have 93.5%, I will round that number up. If you have a 93.4%, however, your grade will be rounded down to 93%.

Criteria

Assignment	Total Points
Reading Quizzes	100
Learning Checks	220
Homework	200
Exams	200
Project	100
Total Points	820

Breakdown

The final class letter grade will be assigned as follows.

- A plus: 97 - 100%
- A: 94 - 96%
- A minus: 90 - 93%
- B plus: 87 - 89%
- B: 83 - 86%
- B minus: 80 - 82%
- C plus: 77 - 79%
- C: 73 - 76%
- C minus: 70 - 72%
- D plus: 67 - 69%
- D: 63 - 66%
- D minus: 60 - 62%
- F: 59% and Below

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance,

counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

This syllabus is a living document and may be revised during the semester to best support our learning together. While adjustments may be made to improve the course, please note that assignment and exam deadlines will never be moved to an earlier date.

When	Topic	Notes
Lecture First Day Sweeney Hall 311	Introductions and Expectations	Topic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Course Expectations • Class Design Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Syllabus Learning Check <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete First Day Assignment Homework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept Class T.O.C.
Week 1 8/25 -8/27	What Should Sociologists Study?	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1: Outside Influences* (25 pgs) • Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination* (4 pgs) Learning Check: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz 1 • Learning Check 1: 3 minute paper • Learning Check 2 Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework 1: Theorist Thread Worksheet

When	Topic	Notes
Week 2 Sweeney Hall 311	Understanding the Self	Announcement: No Class Monday (Labor Day) Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooley, The Looking-Glass Self* (2 pgs) • Mead, Mind, Self, & Society (3 pgs) • Goffman, Presentation of Everyday Self* (23 pgs) Learning Checks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz 2 • Learning Check 3 • Learning Check 4 Homework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework 2
Week 3 Sweeney Hall 311	Types of Capital and Reproduction	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bourdieu, Habitus* (7 pgs) • Bourdieu, Distinctions (11 pgs) • Coleman, Social Capital (17 pgs) Learning Checks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz 3 • Learning Check 5 • Learning Check 6 Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework 3
Lecture Week 4 9/15 - 9/17	Race and Racial Construction	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.B. Dubois, The Souls of Black Folk (22 pgs) • Omi and Winant, Racial Formation in the US (28 pgs)* • Bonilla-Silva Excerpt, Ch. 4 (25 pgs) Learning Checks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz 4 • Learning Check 7 • Learning Check 8 Homework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework 4

When	Topic	Notes
Lecture Week 5 9/22 - 9/24	Gender and the Construction of Womanhood	<p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De Beauvoir, Woman as Other (3 pgs) • Friedan, The Problem that Has No Name (4 pgs) • Walby Excerpt* (4 pgs) • West & Zimmerman, Doing Gender* (23 pgs) • Lorde, The Master's Tools will Never Dismantle the Master's House (3 pgs) <p>Learning Checks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz 5 • Learning Check 9 • Learning Check 10 <p>Homework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework 5
Lecture Week 6 9/29 - 10/1	Social Class: Construction and Reproduction	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weber, Class* (5 pgs) • Weber, Bureaucracy (2 pgs) • Gouldner, The New Class as a Cultural Bourgeoisie* (3 pgs) <p>Learning Checks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz • Learning Check • Learning Check <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework
Lecture Week 7 10/6 - 10/8	Exam Prep	Review Monday Exam Wednesday

When	Topic	Notes
Lecture Week 8 10/13 -10/15	Immigration and Colonization	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simmel, The Stranger* (5 pgs) • Mbembe, Necropower and he late Modern Colonial Occupation* (3 pgs) • Césaire, Between Colonizer and Colonized (2 pgs) Learning Checks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz • Learning Check • Learning Check Homework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework
Lecture Week 9 10/20-10/22	Intersectionality and Representation	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crenshaw, Dimensions of Intersectional Oppression* (4 pgs) • Harstock • Hill Collins, Black Feminist Thought in the Matrix of Domination* (9 pgs) Learning Checks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz • Learning Check • Learning Check Homework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework
Lecture Week 10 10/27 - 10/29	How Capital Works	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marx, Capital (16 pgs) • Weber, The Protestant Ethic* (4 pgs) Learning Checks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz • Learning Check • Learning Check Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework

When	Topic	Notes
Lecture Week 11 11/3 - 11/5	The Culture Industry	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horkheimer and Adorno, The Culture Industry as Deception* (4 pgs) • Adorno, The Culture Industry Reconsidered* (8 pgs) • Simmel, Metropolis and Mental Life (11 pgs) Learning Checks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz • Learning Check • Learning Check Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework
Lecture Week 12 11/10 - 11/12	Resisting Systems of Oppression	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marx, Communist Manifesto (19 pgs) (optional) • Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man* (13 pgs) Learning Checks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz • Learning Check • Learning Check Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework
Lecture Week 13 11/17 - 11/19	Oral Presentations	Learning Check <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Check 23 • Learning Check 24
Presentations Week 14 11/24	Oral Presentations	No Class Wednesday (Thanksgiving) Learning Check <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Check 25
Presentations Week 15 12/1 - 12/3	Oral Presentations	Learning Check <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Check 26 • Learning Check 27

When	Topic	Notes
Discussion Last Day of Class 12/8	Future of the Class	Learning Check <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student Reflections• Exam Review Exam Opens