

Rutgers University
Syllabus
Contemporary Sociological Theory
920:314:01 and 02

Main lecture: M/W Period 4 – 1:40 until 3:00 (Tillett Room 264, Livingston Campus)

Recitation: M (section 01 in Beck Hall 111) or W (section 02 Tillett 116) after main lecture

Instructor: Dr. Eleanor LaPointe (email: elan40@juno.com, phone: 732-278-9576)

Office: 049 Davison Hall (DGLS) Time: Monday and Wednesday 12:00-1:00 PM

Mailbox: Davison Hall (DGLS campus), Sociology Department

Recitation leader: Brandon Kramer (email: bkramer.ru@gmail.com)

Office: 011 Davison Hall (DGLS) Time: TBA

Main sakai portal: <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>

Required texts:

1. Introduction to Sociological Theory: Theorists, Concepts, and Their Applicability to the Twenty-First Century by Michele Dillon (Edition 2). 2014. Wiley-Blackwell. ISBN: 978-1-118-47192-0
2. All other readings are available within our course Sakai site.

Grading

Attendance, Quizzes and Participation (including recitation participation)....	12%
Written assignment.....	4%
First 2 Exams	28% each
Last Exams.....	26%
Total.....	100%

It is your responsibility to keep up with the material. Please be prepared for each session by having completed and reviewed the assigned readings for that day/week. From time to time, an in-class quiz will be given to allow those who do the readings to prove it. These quizzes may be announced or unannounced. (If the class seems to be doing the readings properly, then we may skip the quizzes.)

Constructive participation in class and section discussions can benefit your final grade, especially if your average is border line.

In this class, you get credit for attending. Points will be deducted for absences beyond **two** missed classes and **two** missed recitations. If you must miss a class, be sure to find out from someone in class what you missed.

Classroom environment

The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a productive, courteous environment. To facilitate such an environment, we all must act with mutual respect and common interests. Please be mindful that distracting behaviors will not be tolerated. These include: cell phone use, internet surfing, checking email or other activities that divert attention from our brief time together. You may use laptop computers in the classroom, but **USE OF THE INTERNET IS PROHIBITED UNLESS SPECIFICALLY REQUIRED BY THE PROFESSOR.**

Testing

Make-up tests are strongly discouraged!! Plan on taking exams when they are due. A make-up may be given only at the discretion of the instructor. Written proof (from a physician, mortician, clergy member...) of an illness or other crisis is required for a make-up to be considered.

Please be forewarned that, to ensure fairness, make-up tests *may* be more difficult compared to tests taken on due dates. (You have longer to prepare for them!) The format may also be different.

Examinations include a combination of multiple choice, true/false, short answer (a paragraph), or essay questions.

Academic Integrity

Wondering about academic dishonesty? Please see the following RU site for guidelines on academic integrity expected at RU: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

Grading Scale:

90-100 = A	78-79 = C +	
88-89 = B +	70-77=C	
80-87=B	60-69 = D	59 or below = F

Students are expected to write complete, grammatically correct, sentences during **ALL** correspondence, including emails sent to me, the instructor. Minor typing errors are acceptable, but the abbreviated words and run-on sentences sometimes used in casual chats with friends online are **NOT** acceptable.

Grading Criteria for written essays:

Points:

Clear and logical statements; explanation and/or examples provided to support ideas; shows insight; provides complete bibliography; submitted on time	100
Clear statements with appropriate explanations or examples	90
Clear statements with some explanation or examples	80
Some unclear statements or incorrect explanations or examples	70
Confusing, lacks explanation or reasoning. Has not been proofed for wording, punctuation and other grammatical errors.	60 or lower

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1

1/20

Read: Introduction chapter (Dillon textbook)

I strongly suggest reviewing chapters 1, 2, 3 as well. These deal with the foundations of sociological theory and many of the ideas provided building blocks for more recent theories. You will not be tested on these chapters unless I specify otherwise in class.

Week 2

1/25

Structural-Functional analysis: **Talcott Parsons, Kinsley Davis and Wilbert Moore, and Robert Merton.**

Read: Chapter 4 (Dillon textbook)

1/27

Read: Library Reserve article by **Davis and Moore:** Some Principles of Stratification

Week 3

2/1

Conflict analysis: **C. Wright Mills and Ralf Dahrendorf**

Read: Chapter 6 (Dillon text) You will not be responsible for pp.234-239.
Suggested: Review Chapter 1 on Karl Marx

2/3

Read: "Theoretical Perspectives in Sociology" by Hunter and McClelland
(Listed in Sakai)

Week 4

2/8 and 2/10

Read: C.Wright Mills (Listed in Sakai)

Also: Web-based slide show on **C.Wright Mills** by Dr. Frank Elwell
Slide show Link:

<http://www.faculty.rsu.edu/~felwell/Theorists/Mills/Presentation/Mills.ppt#256>

Week 5

2/15

Review prior readings in preparation for exam. (In class review if time permits.)

2/17

Exam 1

Week 6

2/22 and 2/24

Social and Cultural Reproduction of Inequality: **Pierre Bourdieu**

Read: Chapter 13

Read: "Who Rules America" by **G.William Domhoff**. (Listed in Sakai.)

Note: An earlier, slightly different, version of this article is also
available online at the following link:

http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Ruling_Elites/Amer_UpperClass_WRAN.html

Suggested Film: "Two American Families" (PBS Frontline) View online.

Week 7

2/29

Rational Choice and Network Theory: **George Homans, Peter Blau,**
Karen Cook, Mark Granovetter, James Coleman

Read: Chapter 7

Read: "Power in Exchange Networks" by **Karen Cook**
(Listed in Sakai)

Link:

http://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/13295_Chapter_6_Web_Byte_Karen_S_Cook.pdf

Suggested for thought/discussion: Google Stanley Milgram's Small World Experiment.
How might we find out if there are six degrees of separation at Rutgers?

The idea of an exchange network seems straightforward, but real-life exchange networks can be very complex and tricky to map. For some network visuals see the following:

1. <http://www.mpi-fg-koeln.mpg.de/~lk/netvis/substanz.html>

3/2 Read: "Still Bowling Alone? The Post-9/11 Split" by Sander and Putnam in Journal of Democracy (Listed in Sakai)

Film: "Lost Children of Rockdale County"...How does this documentary demonstrate the impact of social networks?

Week 8

3/7 Symbolic Interaction Perspectives: **Erving Goffman, Arlie Hochschild**

Read: Chapter 8 and Chapter 10 (pp. 355-362 only)

Read: "The Effect of Smiling on Helping Behavior" by Gueguen and De Gail (Listed in Sakai)

3/9 Read: "Working at Bazooms" by Meika Loe (Listed in Sakai)

Read: "Protecting One's Self from a Stigmatized Disease" by Lee and Craft

Week 9

SPRING BREAK !!

Week 10

3/21 Read: "Asylums" by **Goffman** (Listed in Sakai)

Film: "Titicut Follies" In what specific ways does this documentary demonstrate Goffman's perspective on total institutions?

Suggested but not required: "The Jail as Degradation" by John Irwin (Listed in Sakai)

3/23 Phenomenology: **Alfred Schutz, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann**

Read: Chapter 9 (pp.302 through the top of 313 only)

Read: "Moral Panics: The Case of Satanic Day Care Centers" (Listed in Sakai)

Week 11

3/28 Written assignment essay due. (See instructions in our Sakai site.)

3/30 Phenomenology continued

Week 12

4/4 Prep for Exam 2

4/6 **Exam 2**

Week 13

4/11 Postmodern Perspectives: Michel Foucault and Jean Baudrillard

Read: "Poststructural and Postmodern Theories" (Listed in Sakai)

Suggested for thought/discussion: Baudrillard might enjoy this website on the Museum of Weird Consumer Culture: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wanthro/museum.htm>

See also: The Dove Evolution Ad (Enter this in a search engine, like Google)

See also: www.transparencynow.com/overview/viewtable.htm

See “Wag the Dog,” “The Matrix,” or “Blade Runner” (films). How can we discuss these films using Baudrillard’s ideas on simulacra, etc.? Do an internet search on relevant essays. I found the following: www.geocities.com/licuria/wagthedog.html

4/13 Read: “From Panopticon to Disneyland” by Shearing and Stenning
(Listed in Sakai)

Film: “The Persuaders”

Week 14

4/18 and 4/20

Read: “Globalization” by P. Callero from The Myth of Individualism
(Listed in Sakai)

Read: Textbook chapter 14 (pp.452-463 and 508-510)

Review: Parsons on Modernization theory (Textbook pp. 171-172)

Week 15

4/25 and 4/27

Read: “Nearest Neighbors” by Sherry Turkle (excerpt from Alone Together) (Listed in Sakai)

Other readings TBA?

Week 16

5/2 Exam 3 (Part 1: In-Class portion worth 13% out of 26%)

Week 17

Exam 3 (Part 2: Take-Home essays. Worth 13% out of 26%. Due on the date scheduled by Rutgers.)

Here is the official final exam schedule for your information:

<http://finalexams.rutgers.edu>