
SOCIAL THEORY

Professor Todd Madigan



Course Description

This course provides an introduction to some of the foundational works of Western social theory and is led by a number of questions: What is the nature of society? How do societies come into being? How do societies change? and Are there specifically *social* phenomena that are not reducible to the sum of individuals' actions? We'll begin by exploring the work of influential social theorists who were writing in the 17th century and trace the attempts to answer these questions up through the early-20th century. Through this course, students will develop an understanding of how contemporary social science has emerged from the various classical approaches to studying social phenomena.

Class Meetings

Tuesdays & Thursdays

9:30AM-10:45AM

Office Hours

By appointment

Office: Graham 324

tmmadiga@uncg.edu

Course Format

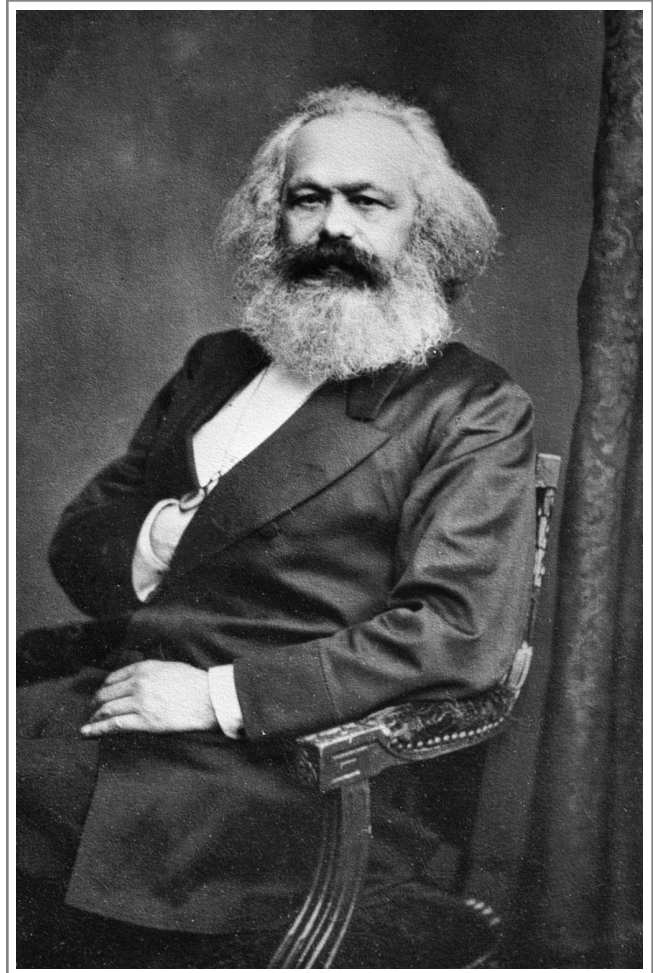
Our class will be conducted face-to-face and will begin promptly at 9:30AM each scheduled Tuesday and Thursday.

Each class meeting will include a combination of lectures and small group discussions. During both the lectures and the discussions, you should actively take notes *on paper*. Anything covered in our discussions (in addition to the readings and lectures) will be potential material for an exam. In-class small group discussions will involve questions to answer about that day's reading. You will want to make sure you have either a printed copy of the text or access to the electronic version accessible during class.

All the readings for the course will be pdfs posted on Canvas (i.e., you will not need to purchase any books for this course).

Readings

This course is *reading intensive*; you should be prepared to complete approximately 50 pages of reading for each class meeting. If you don't think you'll be able to keep up with this schedule, you should reconsider enrollment in the course.



Absences & Late Work

I will not post my slides or lectures online, so it's critical that you take thorough notes throughout each and every class meeting. In the case that you are absent from class, it's your responsibility to reach out to a classmate to request a copy of their class notes. I will accept discussion posts, exams, and projects up to 48 hours after their due date, but 10% will be deducted from the assignment's grade. I will not accept work more than 48 hours late.

COURSEWORK

Attendance

Much of the learning during this course will come through lectures and discussions with your classmates. For this reason, attendance and participation during all class meetings is critical. Graded attendance will be taken during each meeting (if you are present for the full class, you will receive full credit; if you are present for less than the full class—but for at least 45 minutes—you will receive half credit; otherwise, no credit). You may miss one class without losing any points (i.e., you will receive full attendance credit for the first class you miss).

GRADING

Attendance Points

25 classes @ 8 points each = 200

Examination Points

4 exams @ 100 points each = 400

Group Project Points

1 project @ 100 points = 100

Final Paper Points

1 paper @ 200 points = 200

Final Paper

You will write an 10-12 page (double-spaced) final paper in which you adopt the theoretical perspective of a classical social theorist of your choosing. From this perspective you will analyze and critique a contemporary social problem.

Examinations

You will take four examinations throughout the semester, each falling on a regularly scheduled day of class. The subject of these exams will be the material that has been covered during their respective sections (i.e., the exams will not be cumulative). The material will be drawn from the course readings, lectures, and discussions. Each exam will be administered through Canvas and may be taken at anytime on its assigned day. However, once you begin, you will have a limited time to complete it. Because the exams are online, we will not meet as a class on those days, and no attendance will be taken.

Group Project

You will join with two or three other classmates in preparing and giving a fifteen-minute multimedia presentation to the class, and each group member should speak for roughly the same length of time. The presentation will require you to do the following: taking either a Natural Law or historicist perspective, use the insights of one or more of our theorists to address a contemporary social problem, including an exploration of solutions to that problem.

Electronics Policy

You may not have electronics out during class. Phones, tablets, laptops, earbuds, etc. must be stowed and silenced. (Exceptions: during our small group discussions you may access the reading electronically. However, at the start of class and in between these discussions, electronics must be stowed. And needless to say, if you have written permission from OARS, it is permissible to use assistive technology.)

University Public Health

As we return for fall 2022, all students, faculty, staff, and visitors to campus are required to uphold UNCG's culture of care by actively engaging in behaviors that limit the spread of COVID-19. While face-coverings are optional in most areas on campus, individuals are encouraged to wear masks. All individuals and visitors to campus are asked to follow the following guidelines:

COVID-19 GUIDELINES

- **Engage in proper hand-washing hygiene**
- **Self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19**
- **Stay home when ill**
- **Comply with directions from health care providers or public health officials to quarantine or isolate if ill or exposed to someone who is ill**
- **Complete a self-report when experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, testing positive for COVID-19, or being identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive**
- **Stay informed about the university's policies and announcements via the COVID-19 website**

Students who are ill, quarantining, or isolating should not attend in-person class meetings, but should instead contact their instructor(s) so alternative arrangements for learning and the submission of assignments can be made where possible.



As we continue to manage COVID-19 on our campus, we are following the lead of the local health department, and we will adjust our plans to balance student success, instructional requirements, and the hallmarks of the collegiate experience with the safety and wellbeing of our campus community.

New Midterm Grade Policy

In keeping with UNCG policy, I will post a midterm grade for you in UNCGenie by the end of the sixth week of the term (9/23/22). That grade will not appear on your transcript or in your GPA calculations. Instead, it is intended to help you and your academic advisor understand how you are doing in the course up to that point. If you review your midterm grade and find it to be lower than you hoped, I encourage you to talk to me so we can make a plan together for your success.

PLEASE NOTE: The readings for each class are to be completed *before* the start of the class for which they are listed.

WEEK 1	TUES. 8/16	<p>Thomas Hobbes <i>Leviathan</i> (1651)</p> <p>Chapter XI: "Of the Difference of Manners"</p> <p>Chapter XIII: "On the Natural Condition of Mankind"</p> <p>Chapter XIV: "Of the First and Second Natural Laws, and of Contracts"</p> <p>Chapter XV: "Of Other Laws of Nature" (paragraphs 1-3)</p> <p>Chapter XVII: "On the Causes, Generation, and Definition of a Commonwealth"</p>
	THURS. 8/18	<p>John Locke <i>The Second Treatise of Government</i> (1690)</p> <p>Chapter I: "Introduction" (final paragraph)</p> <p>Chapter II: "The State of Nature"</p> <p>Chapter III: "Of the State of War"</p> <p>Chapter IV: "Of Slavery"</p> <p>Chapter V: "Of Property"</p> <p>Chapter VII: "Of Political or Civil Society"</p> <p>Chapter VIII: "Of the Beginning of Political Societies"</p> <p>Chapter IX: "Of the Ends of Political Society"</p>
WEEK 2	TUES. 8/23	<p>John Locke <i>The Second Treatise of Government</i> (1690) (cont.)</p> <p>Chapter I: "Introduction" (final paragraph)</p> <p>Chapter II: "The State of Nature"</p> <p>Chapter III: "Of the State of War"</p> <p>Chapter IV: "Of Slavery"</p> <p>Chapter V: "Of Property"</p> <p>Chapter VII: "Of Political or Civil Society"</p> <p>Chapter VIII: "Of the Beginning of Political Societies"</p> <p>Chapter IX: "Of the Ends of Political Society"</p>
	THURS. 8/25	<p>Jean-Jacques Rousseau <i>Discourse on the Origin of Inequality</i> (1754)</p>
WEEK 3	TUES. 8/30	<p>Jean-Jacques Rousseau <i>Discourse on the Origin of Inequality</i> (1754) (cont.)</p> <p>Auguste Comte <i>Introduction to Positive Philosophy</i> (1830)</p> <p>"The Nature and Importance of the Positive Philosophy"</p>

	THURS. 9/1	Herbert Spencer (Selections) “Evolution Defined” (1862) “The Factors of Social Evolution” (1876) “Population and Progress” (1852) “The Organic Analogy Reconsidered” (1876) “The Need for Sociology” (1873)
WEEK 4	TUES. 9/6	EXAM 1 – NO READING ASSIGNMENT, NO CLASS MEETING
	THURS. 9/8	Karl Marx <i>Capital</i> (1867) (Selections)
WEEK 5	TUES. 9/13	Karl Marx <i>Capital</i> (1867) (Selections)
	THURS. 9/15	Karl Marx <i>Capital</i> (1867) (Selections)
WEEK 6	TUES. 9/20	Karl Marx (1867) (Selections)
	THURS. 9/22	Karl Marx (1867) (Selections)
WEEK 7	TUES. 9/27	Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> (1848) (Selections)
	THURS. 9/29	Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> (1848) (Selections)
WEEK 8	TUES. 10/4	Excursus: A Look Forward to Capitalism After the Factory Arlie Russell Hochschild <i>The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling</i> (1983) Chapter 1: “Exploring the Managed Heart” Chapter 2: “Feeling as Clue”
	THURS. 10/6	Excursus: A Look Forward to After Capitalism Neal Meyer “What Is Socialism?” (2018) Aaron Bastani <i>Fully Automated Luxury Communism: A Manifesto</i> (2020) (Selections)

WEEK 9	TUES. 10/11	FALL BREAK—NO CLASS
	THURS. 10/13	EXAM 2—NO READING ASSIGNMENT, NO CLASS MEETING
WEEK 10	TUES. 10/18	Max Weber <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> (1904-1905) “Author’s Introduction” Chapter I: “Religious Affiliation and Social Stratification”
	THURS. 10/20	Max Weber <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> (1904-1905) Chapter II: “The Spirit of Capitalism” Chapter III: “Luther’s Conception of the Calling: Task of the Investigation”
WEEK 11	TUES. 10/25	Max Weber <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> (1904-1905) Chapter V: “Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism”
	THURS. 10/27	Max Weber “Science as a Vocation” (1919)
WEEK 12	TUES. 11/1	EXAM 3—NO READING ASSIGNMENT, NO CLASS MEETING
	TUES. 11/3	GROUP PRESENTATIONS—NO READING ASSIGNMENT
WEEK 13	TUES. 11/8	GROUP PRESENTATIONS—NO READING ASSIGNMENT
	THURS. 11/10	Emile Durkheim <i>The Division of Labor In Society</i> (1893) (Selections)
WEEK 14	TUES. 11/15	Emile Durkheim <i>The Rules of Sociological Method</i> (1895) (Selections)
	THURS. 11/17	Emile Durkheim <i>The Elementary Forms of Religious Life</i> (1911) “Introduction”

WEEK 15	TUES. 11/22	Emile Durkheim <i>The Elementary Forms of Religious Life</i> (1911) Book II: Chapter VI: “The Origins of These Beliefs (Continued)” Book II: Chapter VII: “The Origins of These Beliefs (Conclusion)”
	THURS. 11/24	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY – NO CLASS
WEEK 16	TUES. 11/29	EXAM 4 – NO READING ASSIGNMENT, NO CLASS MEETING