

 FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY	COURSE CHANGE REQUEST Undergraduate Programs		UUPC Approval <u>4-27-20</u> UFS Approval _____ SCNS Submittal _____ Confirmed _____ Banner Posted _____ Catalog _____
	Department Sociology College Arts and Letters		
Current Course Prefix and Number SYA 4010		Current Course Title Sociological Theory	
<i>Syllabus must be attached for ANY changes to current course details. See Checklist. Please consult and list departments that may be affected by the changes; attach documentation.</i>			
Change title to: Change prefix From: _____ To: _____ Change course number From: 4010 To: 3010 Change credits* From: _____ To: _____ Change grading From: _____ To: _____ Change WAC/Gordon Rule status** Add <input type="checkbox"/> Remove <input type="checkbox"/> Change General Education Requirements*** Add <input type="checkbox"/> Remove <input type="checkbox"/> <small>*Review Provost Memorandum</small> <small>**WAC/Gordon Rule criteria must be indicated in syllabus and approval attached to this form. See WAC Guidelines.</small> <small>***General Education criteria must be indicated in syllabus and approval attached to this form. See GE Guidelines.</small>		Change description to: Change prerequisites/minimum grades to: SYG 1000 or SYD 3792 Change corequisites to: Change registration controls to: Please list existing and new pre/corequisites, specify AND or OR and include minimum passing grade (default is D-).	
Effective Term/Year for Changes: Fall 2021		Terminate course? Effective Term/Year for Termination:	
Faculty Contact/Email/Phone A.Branaman/Branaman@fau.edu/297-0261			
Approved by Department Chair <u>Ann Branaman</u> College Curriculum Chair <u>[Signature]</u> College Dean <u>[Signature]</u> UUPC Chair <u>Jerry Haky (via email confirmation)</u> Undergraduate Studies Dean <u>Edward Pratt (via email confirmation)</u> UFS President _____ Provost _____		Date <u>4/23/2020</u> <u>4.19.20</u> <u>4-30-2020</u> <u>4-30-20</u> <u>4-30-20</u> _____ _____	

Email this form and syllabus to mjenning@fau.edu seven business days before the UUPC meeting.

SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY
SYA 3010 / SCTN 005 / CRN 14449
Florida Atlantic University
Spring 2021

LOCATION:

Campus: Boca Raton

Classroom: General Classroom South (GS), Rm. 111

Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00am — 12:20 pm

Credit Hours: 3.0 credits; this course counts toward the requirements for a major in sociology

Prerequisites: SYG 1000 or SYD 3792

CONTACT:

Instructor: Philip Lewin, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: TR 3:30 to 4:30 pm, W 11:00 to 2:00 pm, and by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Kelly Fraidenburg, B.A.

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COURSE OVERVIEW:

Colloquially, people tend to use the word “theory” to describe an idea or hypothesis that remains unproven. Because the word carries a sense of doubt, people frequently invoke it to discredit a claim that someone has made (e.g., “evolution is only a theory; you can’t prove it!”) or to describe a hunch that someone has developed (“I have a theory, Dad: I think it was actually mom who stole my wallet!”).

We will not use the word theory like that in this class. In science—whether social or natural—the term holds a precise meaning, referring to an interconnected set of propositions that explains something. That something can be just about anything: how people develop an identity, how the universe began, how human life formed, why economic crises occur, or why earthquakes happen. Scientists develop theories about these phenomena by imposing explanations upon patterns of events that are observed over time (induction), or by testing propositions that follow logically from an existing body of thought (deduction). In this sense, every science course you enroll in—and thus every sociology course you take—involves an implicit investigation of theory.

Why, then, study sociological theory *as a field of inquiry unto itself*? The point is not necessarily to become familiar with every distinctive theorem that sociologists have developed over the past 150 years, but to consider what theory is, what assumptions undergird theories, what distinguishes good theories from bad theories, to what extent we can predict, explain, and control the world with theories, how we can most effectively test and validate theories, and how we can

construct new theories by collecting and analyzing data. Curiously, few instructors approach sociological theory courses in this way. Rather, most treat theory as an *area of concentrated knowledge*, much like the specialized knowledge you would glean in a gender, poverty, or race/ethnicity course.

Does this mean that there are works of “pure theory” in sociology that stand on their own? Not quite. The works that sociologists recognize simply as “theory” tend to represent the discipline’s “classics.” As some of the first publications to address social behavior, they examine sociology’s foundational questions: What is society? How should we study society? What enables society? What causes societies to collapse? How can we improve society? And what determines human behavior? These classic works have set the discipline’s tone and agenda over the past 150 years, establishing *the social* as a legitimate domain of inquiry and knowledge. Because these ideas and texts form the backdrop of almost every sociological study that you have or will read, the course may mark the most important one you take during your major.

We will begin our journey by through sociological theory through meta-reflection. That is, we will begin by reflecting on what sociology is, how it developed, and why it developed. From there, we will discuss the different types of theory that develop, the different criteria they have developed for assessing them, and the limits of sociological theory. After laying this groundwork, we will spend the rest of the semester discussing the three theoretical perspectives of the three scholars who, according to most people, founded sociology: Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim. As will become evident, their theoretical paradigms these thinkers developed examine some of the most foundational questions in human life: what holds societies together? What causes conflict and upheaval? What causes social inequalities? How do people acquire power and authority over others? What role does religion play in society? And have modern conditions of life improved or diminished our happiness and well-being? Given time constraints, this crash course in sociological theory will omit more scholars, concepts, and ideas than it includes.

Though I will periodically lecture to introduce and contextualize the course material, I will not do so often. We will devote the bulk of our time to discussion and reflection. You should come to class prepared to engage with the readings via critical discussion, not to absorb information that I will pour into you. In other words, do not expect for me to tell you what to think or what the readings mean. Expect instead for me to supply you with questions and to help you inform them through your own thought process. We will struggle through the material collectively—all of us teaching and learning from one another.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify, understand, and critique several theories of knowledge
- Name key social theorists in sociology’s history and explain their main contributions to social thought
- Explain the core assumptions and analytic foci of key theoretical perspectives in the discipline of sociology

- Define and demonstrate understanding of a broad range of core concepts in sociological theory
- Juxtapose the assumptions and analytic focus of different social theorists and theoretical perspectives
- Use ideas, concepts, and theoretical frameworks of social theorists to illuminate experiences, events, realities, social structures, and trends
- Demonstrate a working understanding of the relationship between sociological theory and empirical research in sociology
- Articulate “blind spots” of sociological perspectives, i.e., questions that are unlikely to be asked when employing a particular theoretical perspective.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

There is no textbook for this course. All readings will be available to download through our course Canvas page.

CLASSROOM POLICIES and ETIQUETTE:

1. Please arrive to class on time and remain focused until it ends (i.e., you should not disrupt instruction by packing up your belongings early). Although coming late is better than not coming at all, please try not to make a habit of it.
2. Please bring the assigned readings to class.
3. Please do not use your laptop computer during class.
4. Please turn your cellphone off prior to class. If you must keep it on for an emergency, please inform me before class.
5. Please be fully present during class sessions., i.e., refrain from sleeping, doing crosswords, and/or doing work for other courses
6. Please be respectful to both me and your peers during class discussions.
7. If you violate any of the above policies, I will ask you to leave the classroom.
8. Please allow 24 hours for a response to emails. If you have a serious concern regarding your progress in the course, please plan to meet with me in person.

ASSESSMENT and GRADING:

1. **ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION:** You are expected to prepare for, attend and participate in each class session. This does not mean simply showing up to class; it means completing the required course readings prior to the session, dutifully taking notes, contributing to class discussions, and visiting my office hours to review course material. If you fail to prepare for class, neglect to participate in class discussions, loaf when I assign group work, zone out during lecture, or disrupt the class, I will dock points from your daily attendance grade or mark you absent altogether. Attendance and participation will count 10 points toward your final grade.
2. **THEORY JOURNAL:** During the semester, I expect you to maintain a journal that catalogues your reflections about the sociological theories we discuss. The purpose is to give you an opportunity to critically reflect on the reading, lecture, and discussion material; prepare notes and questions for class discussion; and compose a permanent

record of your thoughts related to the course. I expect 2-3 pages of journal entries per week.

Entries in your journal should take a variety of forms. Sometimes I will give you prompts to write about. Apart from my prompts, entries should consist of reflections on key passages from the readings; comparisons of concepts, theories, and ideas; reflections on class discussions; notes in preparation for class sessions; comments on personal experiences related to the course content; questions about the readings and concepts; thoughts on current events of relevance to the course content; thoughts about how the course material relates to your other classes; personal anecdotes or experiences; ideas for research studies; and so on.

I will grade the journals on the quantity and quality of reflections, with particular attention to: 1) evidence of close reading and reflection on the texts; 2) demonstrated capacity to build on class discussions; 3) critical thinking and imagination; 4) the emergence of a coherent perspective, reflected in the journal as a whole; and 5) the capacity to relate the materials to your own experience or contemporary events. Although you are not required to comment on every reading, I will deduct points from journals that are narrow in focus. I will also deduct points if you simply turn in your notes from class or mere collections of extracts from the texts.

You should record your journal entries in an 8 ½ X 11” spiral-bound notebook (please write legibly in blue or black ink). If you would like to type the entries, you may do so, but you must print them and insert them in a 1” binder (1” margins, 12-point Times New Roman font). Please mark the cover of your notebook with your name and course title but exclude this information on the inside pages. You should date your journal entries at the top of the page and specify the readings/topics they address.

You will hand your journals in for grading four times during the semester: **September 5th** (Thursday); **October 1st** (Tuesday); **October 31st** (Thursday); and **November 26th** (Tuesday). Overall, the journals will count 16 points toward your final grade (four points per submission).

3. **IN-CLASS DEBATE:** During the semester, I will moderate several in-class debates between groups of students. Participating in the debates will help you learn the course material, and they will help to stimulate in-class discussion around the readings. I have listed the debate resolutions in the timetable. Every student must sign-up to participate in one debate. This will require you to partner with another student, give a short speech affirming or negating the resolution, briefly cross-examine your opponents, and field some questions from the class at the end of the debate. I will provide further detail about the structure of this activity during class.

You will not be graded on whether or not you win the debate. I will grade you on how well you prepare for your speech, how topical your comments are to the resolution, and how well you ground your arguments in sociological theory and supporting evidence. Your debate performance will count 10 points toward your final grade.

Please sign-up by for this on Canvas (through the “People” tab) by the beginning of class on Tuesday, 8/27.

4. **CLASS HANDOUT DUTY:** At some point in the semester, every student must partner with another student to produce a 1-2 page handout that will help classmates understand the reading material for a class session of their choosing. The handouts should: summarize key points from the assigned readings; define key terms that appear in it; address the study prompts I have listed on the syllabus; explain how the material relates to other theories and concepts we have discussed; and raise a few questions to stimulate class discussion. This activity will help everyone in the class learn from each other.

The handouts will be due at 5 pm the night before we cover the readings to which they pertain. You should upload them to Canvas *and* email a copy to Kelly and I so that we can print them for the class. The handout will count 10 points toward your final grade.

Please sign-up by for this on Canvas (through the “People” tab) by the beginning of class on Tuesday, 8/27.

5. **RESPONSE ESSAYS:** You will write three five page response papers during the semester. I will announce each response topic two weeks prior to its due date. The response papers will ask you to explore and reflect upon the issues raised by the course material, and to work out your thoughts on them through writing. They should demonstrate that you have *read the required materials*, mulled over them, and developed the capacity to apply the concepts and theories they advance. The first response paper is worth 10 points toward your final grade. The second is worth 14 points. The third is worth 15 points.

Due Dates:

Response #1 is due **Sunday, 10/6 by 11:59 pm via Canvas**

Response #2 is due **Sunday, 11/10 by 11:59 pm via Canvas**

Response #3 is due **Tuesday, 12/10 by 10:30 am in class (hard copy)**

SUMMARY of GRADING and ASSESSMENT:

Assessment Component	Relative Weight
Attendance and participation	10 points
Theory journal	16 points
Response #1	10 points
Response #2	14 points
Response #3	15 points
In-class debate	10 points
Class handout duty	10 points
Total	85 points

Letter Grade	Points
A	93 – 100
A-	90 - 92
B+	87 - 89
B	83 - 86
B-	80 - 82
C+	77 - 79
C	73 – 76
C-	70 - 72
D	60 - 69
F	0 – 59

ABSENCES, LATE WORK, MISSED ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Absences are considered excused if they result from religious observance, military duty, a medical or childcare emergency, a funeral, jury duty, or participation in an officially sanctioned university event (e.g. a sports meet). If you have missed or suspect you will miss class for one of these reasons, it is your responsibility to notify me ASAP in order to arrange for accommodations.
2. If you miss class for a reason that is not listed above (e.g., oversleeping, going on a vacation, going to work, broken down vehicle, etc.), accommodations will be made only at my discretion.
3. Your assignments are due at the times I have specified, in the form I have specified. If you do not follow the directions, I will mark the assignment late.
4. Late work will be penalized 10% per day late. I will not except work that is more than three days late. Please also note that I will not make exceptions for printer issues, internet outages, work, lacking money for printing on your FAU card, etc.

ATTENDANCE POLICY STATEMENT

Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled University classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor. The effect of absences upon grades is determined by the instructor, and the University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of non-attendance.

Students are responsible for arranging to make up work missed because of legitimate class absence, such as illness, family emergencies, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations, or participation in University-approved activities. Examples of University-approved reasons for absences include participating on an athletic or scholastic team, musical and theatrical performances, and debate activities. It is the student's responsibility to give the instructor notice prior to any anticipated absences and within a reasonable amount of time after an unanticipated absence, ordinarily by the next scheduled class meeting. Instructors must allow each student who is absent for a University-approved reason the opportunity to make up work missed without any reduction in the student's final course grade as a direct result of such absence.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the University mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the University community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see the Code of Academic Integrity in the University Regulations: http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS)—in Boca Raton, SU 133 (561-297-3880); in Davie, LA 203 (954-236-1222); or in Jupiter, SR 110 (561-799-8585) —and follow all SAS procedures. For more information, go to <http://fau.edu/sas/>

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS) CENTER

Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services – individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few – offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more information, go to <http://www.fau.edu/counseling/>

TIMETABLE

Depending on how the course develops, modifications to the syllabus might be needed. I will announce any deviations in class and/or through email. You should complete the reading listed in each box before that particular meeting.

Getting Started: What is Sociological Theory?

8/20: Welcome! Introduction to the course and the discipline of sociology

- What is sociology?
- When and why did sociology arise as a field of scientific study?

8/22: What is the point of sociology?

- **Read:** the class syllabus and “The Promise” from C. Wright Mills’ *Sociological Imagination*.
- What does it mean to have a sociological imagination?
- In the essay, Mills distinguishes between personal troubles and public issues as well as between milieux and institutions. What do these terms mean? How do they relate to each other?

- Mills identifies four “moods” we can employ to classify the zeitgeist of an era: well-being, panic, indifference, and uneasiness. What conditions provoke these moods? What mood characterized his time? What mood characterizes our time?
- What public issues defined Mills’ age? What issues define our age? What is the spirit of our time?
- What role can and should sociology play in public life? How can cultivation of the sociological imagination enrich our personal lives?
- What topics and problems do good social scientific studies address? What do they have the potential to accomplish?
- Be familiar with the three levels of social analysis (micro-, meso-, and macro-) and the three “tendencies” of social theory that Mills identifies.

8/27: Introduction to theory

- **Read:** Read “On Sociological Theories of the Middle Range” by Robert Merton and “The Behavior of Law” by Donald Black.
- **Make sure you have signed up for handout duty and a debate by this date.**
- What is the definition of theory?
- What is the objective of theory?
- Be able to differentiate grand theory, middle-range theory, and abstract empiricism.
- Be able to differentiate propositions, explanations, and understanding.

Friday 8/23 – Last day to drop/add

8/29: Epistemology and the evaluation of theories

- **Read:** “The Epistemology of Pure Sociology” by Donald Black
- What is epistemology?
- What can we know? How do we know what we know?
- According to Black, what five criteria should we use to evaluate the quality of sociological theories?
- What is a paradigm?
- According to Black, what are the five paradigmatic strengths of “pure sociology?”

Friday 8/30 – Last day to drop without receiving a “W”

9/3: Positivism versus critical theory

- **Read** “Order and Progress” and “Law of Three Stages” by August Comte and “Critical Theory” by Max Horkheimer
- According to Comte, what three stages do human societies evolve through?
- What are the paradigmatic assumptions of positivism?

- What is critical theory? How does it differ from positivism?

9/5: Black swans and the problem of induction: assessing the limits of theory

- **Read** the excerpts from Nassim Taleb's *The Black Swan*
- **I will collect journals in class**
- **Debate topic:** We can use science to predict and control the future.
- How do inductive theories differ from deductive theories?
- What is a black swan? According to Taleb, what significance do they hold in human history?
- What does Taleb mean by "fragility" and "anti-fragility?"
- What critiques does Taleb make against social science?

The Marxist Theoretical Perspective

9/10: Introduction to Karl Marx's life and work. Introduction to historical materialism.

- **Read** "Karl Marx, Yesterday and Today" by Luis Menand and the excerpts from Karl Marx's *The German Ideology*
- Be familiar with the basic biographical details of Marx's life. What problems in society was he most concerned about? Who were his main intellectual influences?
- What is historical materialism? Be familiar with the following terms: mode of production, social relations of production, forces of production, base, superstructure, and dialectic.

9/12: Marx's theory of work, alienation, and religion

- **Read** "Estranged Labor" by Karl Marx and the excerpts from Marx's *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*.
- **Debate topic:** capitalism alienates people from their inner selves and from other people.
- What is alienation? According to Marx, what four conditions cause it?
- How did Marx feel about the division of labor in society?
- Why does Marx refer to religion as "the opium of the people?"

9/17: Marx's theory of class conflict and crisis

- **Read** the excerpts from Karl Marx and Frederic Engels' *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and Kim Kelly's "What Capitalism Is and How It Affects People"
- **Debate topic:** the collapse of capitalism is inevitable.
- How do capitalist economies work?
- According to Marx, how does capitalism differ from previous modes of production?
- How has capitalism changed the world we live in?

- What is a social class?
- How are the bourgeoisie and proletariat related to each other?
- Why does Marx argue that capitalism will eventually collapse?

9/19: Marx's labor theory of value

- **Read:** Marx's "Wage Labor and Capital"
- What is the difference between "labor" and "labor power?"
- According to Marx, how do capitalists make profits?
- What determines wage rates for workers?
- What causes wages rates to rise and fall?
- In your opinion, how much *should* capitalists pay workers?

9/24: Marx's labor theory of value continued

- **Read:** the excerpts from *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* by Karl Marx
- What is commodity fetishism?
- What does Marx mean by commodity fetishism?
- What are commodities?
- What is the difference between use value, and exchange value?
- Where does value come from?
- How do capitalists generate surplus value? What is difference between absolute and relative surplus value?
- Why do the cycles of capital (M-C-M) and labor (C-M-C) lead to the reproduction of existing class relations?

9/26: What has changed since Marx's time?

- **Read** the following newspaper articles and watch *Capitalism a Love Story*
 - <https://nyti.ms/2YZmiZX>
 - <https://nyti.ms/31PcW01>
 - <https://amzn.to/2NdMzwx>
- To what extent does the working class that Marx wrote about resemble today's working class?
- To what extent have jobs and working conditions changed since Marx's time?
- Has the proletariat sunk deeper and deeper into poverty and misery like Marx predicted?

10/1: Will capitalism collapse?

- **Read:** the following newspaper articles and **listen** to the podcast.
 - <http://bit.ly/2MpwhRR>
 - <https://nyti.ms/2Z9mDo9>
 - <http://bit.ly/2Hd7r3w>

o <https://brook.gs/2THsEYd>

- **Debate topic:** we can fix the problems associated with capitalism.
- **I will collect journals in class today**
- What problems are associated with capitalism today?
- Can we fix capitalism?
- What would communism look like?

10/3: The power elite

- **Read:** “The Ruling Class” by Gaetano Mosca and the excerpts from C. Wright Mills’ *The Power Elite*
- What gives a person or group power?
- According to Mills, who makes up the power elite?
- To what extent do Mills’ observations hold up today?

10/8: Ideology, false consciousness, and hegemony in Marxist theory

- **Read:** Marx’s “Ruling Class and Ruling Ideas” and the excerpts from Herbert Marcuse’s *One Dimensional Man*.
- According to Marx, where do our cultural ideas come from?
- What does Marx mean when he writes that “the rulings ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as idea?”
- According to Marcuse, what are false needs?
- Why does Marx argue that our ideas about freedom have become outdated?

10/10: Testing power elite theory today: U.S. energy and environmental policy

- **Read** “Reaching the Boiling Point: Energy and Climate Policy under the Trump Administration” by Philip Lewin and **watch** *PBS Frontline’s* [“War on the EPA”](#)
- **Debate topic:** The United States government is “a committee for managing the affairs of the bourgeoisie.”
- What is agency capture?
- Based on the evidence presented, to what extent is the U.S. government “a committee for managing the affairs of the bourgeoisie class?”
- Be able to apply Marx and Marcuse’s ideas from Tuesday to the material in this piece

The Interpretivist Theoretical Perspective of Max Weber

10/15: Introduction to Max Weber’s life and ideas

- **Read** Weber’s “Basic Sociological Terms”

- How does Weber define sociology?
- What factors, in his view, shape our behavior?
- Be familiar with the types of action (i.e., behavior) that he identifies: instrumental-rational action, value-rational action, traditional action, and affective action

10/17: Interpretivism. Weber vs. Marx on capitalism

- **Read** Weber's "The Spirit of Capitalism"
- According to Weber, how did capitalism arise?
- What role did Protestant ideas (e.g., "the calling" and "predestination") play in the formation of capitalism?
- How does Weber's account of capitalism differ from Marx's?
- Be familiar with the following terms: verstehen, elective affinity, and switchman.

10/22: Weber's critique of rationalization.

- **Read** Weber's "The Rationalism of Western Civilization" Trevino (6p) and Ritzer's "The McDonaldization of Society."
- What does Weber mean by rationalization? Why, in his view, has it led to disenchantment?
- In what areas of modern life do we see rationalization?
- What four processes are associated with Ritzer's related concept of McDonaldization?
- Why does Ritzer argue that rationality has become irrational in the modern world?

10/24: Weber's multi-dimensional theory of conflict and stratification.

- **Read** Weber's "Class, Status, and Party"
- **Debate topic:** the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle.
- What is status? What are examples of major status groups in the U.S. today? In what ways do these groups maintain distinct styles of life?
- Compare Weber's theory of conflict and stratification compare to Marx's. How do their views result in distinct understandings of social change?

10/29: Weber's theory of power and domination

- **Read** Weber's "Types of Authority" Trevino and "Power Dependence Relations" by Emerson
- What is power? How does power differ from authority?
- In what three ways can people acquire authority?
- What are the promises and pitfalls of charismatic leaders?

10/31: Case study of Weber: power and corruption in government

- **Read** Lewin's "Legitimizing Rural Corruption"
- **I will collect journals today.**

- What forms of corruption in government does the article document?
- How did the political leaders the article discusses gain authority over constituents?
- Which theory better explains why residents of Shale County supported their leaders: Marx's or Weber's?

The Functionalist Theoretical Perspective of Emile Durkheim

11/5: Values in sociological research. Durkheim's positivism versus Weber's interpretivism.

- **Read** "Whose Side Are We On" by Howard Becker and "Social Facts" by Emile Durkheim
- **Debate topic:** social scientists should keep their values out of their research.
- What is value-free research? Why did Max Weber advocate it? What critiques does Becker levy against this paradigm?
- Be familiar with the basic details of Durkheim's life and work.
- How, in Durkheim's view, does sociology compare to natural sciences like physics and chemistry? What did he think researchers should focus their investigations on? Be familiar with his notion of social facts and be able to identify examples of them.

11/7: Durkheim's functionalist paradigm and organism metaphor / conflict versus cooperation

- **Read:** Durkheim's "The Functions of Crime," Merton's "Manifest and Latent Functions," and Gans, "The Uses of Poverty"
- **Debate topic:** Poverty serves a beneficial function in society.
- According to the readings, what positive functions do might things like crime and poverty play in society?
- What is functionalism?

11/12: The division of labor and Durkheim's theory of social order

- **Read** Hobbes's "The Problem of Order," Rousseau's "The Social Contract," Tonnies' "Gemeinschaft and Gessellschaft," and Durkheim's "Mechanical and Organic Solidarity"
- What is the problem of order? According to the readers, how societies establish order?
- How have modern conditions of life affected the process of establishing order?
- According to Durkheim, what holds societies together?
- Be familiar with the following terms: social solidarity, mechanical solidarity, organic solidarity, collective conscience, gemeinschaft, and gessellschaft.

11/14: Anomie and the problem of social integration

- **Read** Durkheim's "Types of Suicide" and Nisbet's "The Quest for Community"
- What is anomie? Under what conditions do people experience it?
- Has modern life increased or diminished the prevalence of anomie? Why?

- What four types of suicide does Durkheim identify? How does his theory of suicide compare to conventional explanations of it? According to his theory, what types of people are most at risk for it?

Friday 10/25 – Last day to drop without receiving an “F”

11/19: Contemporary case study of Durkheim’s theory of suicide and anomie

- **Read** the excerpts from *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging* by Sebastian Junger, p.1-103
- Do modern conditions of life increase our susceptibility to suicide? Why or why not?
- According to Junger, why do many soldiers experience depression, PTSD, and suicide after returning from combat?
- Why does he argue that modern society is often un conducive to human happiness and well-being?
- In what ways does his book draw from Durkheim’s theoretical paradigm?

11/21: Durkheim’s theory of religion and moral order

- **Read** the excerpts from Durkheim’s *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*
- **Debate topic:** religion serves a beneficial function in society.
- How does Durkheim define religion? What qualifies as a religion according to this definition?
- What function, in his view, do all religions play in group life?
- What distinguishes the sacred from the profane? What role do collective representations, like symbols and rituals, play in our lives?
- How does Durkheim’s theory of religion compare to Marx’s

11/26: Contemporary case study of Durkheim’s theory of religion and moral order

- **Read** Bellah’s “Civil Religion in America”
- **Debate topic:** just as Durkheim’s theories predict, civil religion and the division of labor have produced social solidarity among people living in the United States today.
- **I will collect journals today.**
- According to Bellah, what “civil religion” do Americans share?
- To what extent do Americans practice this religion today? To what extent do shared moral ideas integrate contemporary Americans?

Wrapping Up

Thursday 11/28 to Sunday 12/1: **Thanksgiving Break**

Monday 12/2 to Wednesday 12/4: **Readings Days**

Tuesday, December 10, 10:30am – 1:00pm: **Final meeting session**