

**Contemporary Sociological Theory**  
(Lectures posted no later than Monday and Wednesday each week)

Professor Guhin

[guhin@soc.ucla.edu](mailto:guhin@soc.ucla.edu)

**Office Hours: Monday 1-3 pm and Wednesday 1-3 pm (and by appointment)**

### **Welcome and Overview**

Hello students! This is going to be a great class. I'm really excited to be talking theory with all of you! A few things to emphasize:

1. First and most importantly, the coronavirus has affected all of us in profound ways. And because of the real need for physical distancing, we'll be doing this entire course over zoom and with asynchronous (previously recorded) lectures and synchronous (over zoom) sections. There'll be more on this below, but I want to make clear that just because the class is online doesn't mean I'll be any less committed to it. And we should all expect the same from each other!
2. This course is intended to teach you as much how to *theorize* as is to familiarize you with classic works of theory. What it means to theorize is something we'll be talking about a lot this quarter.
3. There is obviously a lot more that could have been in this course, which is true for any quarter-length course. Please do ask me about other readings if there's something you'd like to learn more about!
4. Because there's so much I could assign, I've emphasized the theme of "socialization" to which we will return throughout the quarter.
5. It's a lot of reading, but I cut a lot too. You'll generally have between 30 and 50 pages a session, which should be about two to at most three hours per class of outside work. If it's much more than that, please talk to your TA or academic counselor about strategies to make the reading easier for you.

### **Policy on Screens in the Classroom**

Remember classrooms? This obviously doesn't matter for our Zoom meetings, but it's worth repeating that it's important to keep yourself from being distracted by the screen in front of you and also worth considering taking notes by long-hand, as some evidence does indicate writing out your notes is better for retention and understanding than typing them out.

### **Lectures: Attendance, Absences, and Podcasts**

I considered giving live lectures but, with 300 students, I finally decided against it. Instead, I'll be posting Zoom lectures usually either the day of or the day before our meetings, but sometimes earlier than that. I will then host some office hours during our standard lecture times, at which you're free to ask questions.

### **Contacting Me and Office Hours.**

My office hours are Monday, 1-3 pm and Wednesday 1-3 pm. Normally these office hours would be in my, well, office, but they will now be on Zoom. You can reserve a 15 minute spot here:

<https://appoint.ly/s/guhinsociology/winter2021meetings>. The sign-up for the office hours is at the course's CCLE site. We can also set something up via appointment.

## Section Attendance

Teaching Assistants will take attendance at section. If you miss one section, it's not a big deal, but after two it will affect your grade. Your two section attendance absences should not be used at random: they are intended only for emergencies. In other words, all things being equal, you will not miss any section. If you are sick or experience a family tragedy, that is when you should miss section, and we have provided two possible absences in which you can do so. Your section grades each day will be from 0 to 1: 0: absent.; .5: present, doesn't speak.; 1: actively involved. If you anticipate some reason you will attend fewer sections than this, please let your TA and me know. Section will be conducted via Zoom. Because of this quarter's unique situation, we will be pretty generous about missing section. We know that a lot of you might be responsible for siblings, working jobs, or in unusual time zones. Just let us know if something's come up.

## Academic Honesty

If you're caught plagiarizing, you get an automatic 0 on the item in question. I'll also report you to the Dean, virtually without exception. If you are caught cheating or working with someone else on the final, we will also report you to the Dean. (Co-creating study guides does not count as cheating; co-writing essays does.) For more on academic honesty at UCLA, please see the following website: <http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Academic-Integrity>. Any "cut and paste" without attribution is plagiarism and I will report it. I'm willing to be flexible and understanding about a lot this quarter. But not this.

## Papers and Final

*I've changed the nature of these assignments significantly to work better in our online situation. Please note the difference if you've looked at any earlier version of the syllabus.*

### *Papers*

You will have two papers. The first, due in week three of the quarter, will ask you to use a theorist to *theorize* a social problem or situation, large or small. You can use an example from your own life or from the news. This paper should be between 1000 and 1200 words. Grading will be based on how well you have shown your knowledge of the theorist in question and the plausibility of the application, in addition to standard concerns about style, grammar, and form (see rubric below).

You will have a second paper, due in the ninth week of class, that will be a comparison of two theorists we read in class. This paper should be between 1500 and 2000 words. Students are strenuously discouraged (but not prevented) from using secondary sources. The paper should have a clear argument that uses evidence from the theorists to prove the argument. For help with writing, please see the undergraduate writing centers. You can learn more about the writing centers and make an appointment here: <https://wp.ucla.edu/wc/>

You will be required to turn in a rough draft of the second paper in week six. The rough draft should consist of at least the following: (1) an abstract with an overall summary of your argument, (2) an outline of your main points, and (3) at least one sample body paragraph. More is obviously better, even if not required, though if you would like a "shadow grade" for your final paper (that is, the grade you would get if you turned it in like this), you should have it in by this time. Even if you simply turn in the minimum (which is all you need for an A), you can then work with your TA or others who might help you (though your TA will be your grader) to get you started thinking about your paper and whether or not you have an argument and are supporting it well.

***There will be a 12-hour grace period for all late papers to account for all the assorted emergencies that seem to occur immediately before a paper is due. This is a grace period and not an extension. Any paper turned in more than 12 hours after the deadline will immediately have its final grade deducted by 10 percentage points per day.***

The first papers will be graded as follows:

A +/- (100/95/90 percent): A coherent, well-organized presentation of the data and application of the theorist's argument to explain the data. Expands significantly beyond lecture and session discussion. Superior use of primary sources to make arguments. No errors, minor or major.

Excellent (though not necessarily perfect) style, grammar, and form.

B +/- (89/85/80): A good though imperfect presentation of the data and application of the theorist's argument to explain the data. Expands beyond lecture and section discussion. Good style, grammar, and form.

C +/- (79/75/70): Presentation of the data is superficial and cursory and the application of the theorist's argument is plausible though ill-fitting. Expands at least slightly from discussion in lecture and section. Inconsistent use of primary sources to make arguments. No major errors though more minor. Adequate style, grammar, and form.

D +/- (69/65/60): A superficial presentation of the data with a nonsensical or utterly cursory application of the theorist's argument. Inadequate use of primary source citations. Major errors. Poor style, grammar, and form.

F (59): An inadequate description with no argument. Very poor style, grammar, and form. No primary sources.

The second papers will be graded as follows (Essays in the final will be graded similarly)

A +/- (100/95/90 percent): A coherent, well-organized argument with original insights into meaningful differences and similarities between the authors and texts. Expands significantly beyond lecture and session discussion. Superior use of primary sources to make arguments. No errors, minor or major. Excellent (though not necessarily perfect) style, grammar, and form.

B +/- (89/85/80): A good though imperfect argument with a capable description of similarities and differences between the authors and texts. Expands beyond lecture and section discussion. Good style, grammar, and form.

C +/- (79/75/70): A simple comparison that might not necessarily be an argument, but nonetheless adequately describes the similarities and differences between the texts. Expands at least slightly from discussion in lecture and section. Inconsistent use of primary sources to make arguments. No major errors though more minor. Adequate style, grammar, and form.

D +/- (69/65/60): An adequate description of similarities and differences that does not significantly advance beyond what was discussed in lecture and section. Inadequate use of primary source citations. Major errors. Poor style, grammar, and form.

F (59): An inadequate description with no argument. Very poor style, grammar, and form. No primary sources.

Incomplete: (0 percent): Not turned in or plagiarized.

## **Regrades**

Your TA will be doing all the grading. I will regrade any paper or the final exam if you don't like the grade you received from your TA, but bear in mind it's a gamble. I will grade the paper entirely new, and so you might well get a lower grade from me than you did from your TA, and my grade is final. As such, you should only come to me for a regrade if you are completely convinced there is no way the grade is fair and you absolutely deserve a higher grade.

## **Final and Midterms**

I much prefer giving in-class midterms and a standard final during finals week but obviously we can't do that now. You will have a take-home final consisting of two essays. The final questions will be pulled from six essay questions that I will provide you two weeks before the final. You will then be randomly given three of those six questions, of which you must choose two. You will have 72 hours to complete the final. The final will be graded with a similar rubric to that of the second paper.

## **Questionnaires**

Throughout the quarter I'll be checking in with you just to see how things are going. You get five percent of your grade simply by answering them. There are no right answers. I just want to know how you're doing.

## **Grading**

See the paper rubric above for how percentages turn into letter grades.

Paper 1: 15%

Paper 2 Rough Draft: 15%

Paper 2 Final Draft: 30%

Final Exam: 25%

Questionnaires: 5%

Section Attendance and Participation: 10%

## **Difficult Material**

Some material in this class might be hard for some students in terms of its emotional content or triggering materials. This is especially the case for the two days related to Foucault, which have some discussion of child molestation, as well as the discussion of Goffman's *Asylum*, which discusses imprisonment and significant mental illness, and much that is discussed in Mary Crow Dog's *Lakota Woman*, about racial marginalization, childhood abuse, and alcoholism. If you're worried about being triggered, please contact me or your TA.

If you're worried about material that is difficult in terms of understanding, please talk with your TA or set up an appointment at one of many resources for study skills at UCLA, including via residential life and campus libraries.

## **Food or Shelter Insecurity**

If you are having trouble finding a safe, long-term place to live and/or if you are having trouble finding enough food, please know there are resources at UCLA. If this is affecting your ability to be a student in this class, let your TA or me know as well. You are not alone. For UCLA resources for food and shelter insecurity, see UCLA's basic needs website: <https://www.basicneeds.ucla.edu>

## Children and Animals

This is normally the part of the syllabus where I talk about having children and animals in class. Because we'll be online all quarter, and I will be teaching with my own child who might or might not be making noise, I can assure you that we're all in the same boat. Let's all just do our best to ensure we're there for our adorable dependents and do our best to keep them from distracting us or our fellow learners.

## Other Things

Life can be very hard, and even more so in our crazy coronavirus era. If something is going on in your life that is making it hard for you to go about your day, please know there are resources at UCLA. There are more important things in your life than this class! I want you to take this class seriously, but I want even more for you to have a rich, flourishing life. Please be kind to yourself.

First, if you are experience anxiety, depression, or any other challenge to your mental health, please do see UCLA's Counseling and Psychological Services: <https://www.counseling.ucla.edu>

If you believe you might have a learning disability or need help accommodating your learning disability, please contact the Center for Accessible Education: <https://www.cae.ucla.edu/learning-disabilities-brochure>.

It's also important to stay healthy! Be sure to check in with the Student Health and Wellness Center. <http://www.studenthealth.ucla.edu/CustPages/Insurance.aspx>

Also, a few notes on gender discrimination, sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, all of which UCLA prohibits. . If you have experienced any of these, there are a variety of campus resources to assist you, including a confidential hotline where you can talk to someone 24/7: (310) 825-0768. Title IX is a federal civil rights law in the United States that was passed as part of the Education Amendments of 1972. Therefore **international students have access to the same services** at the Title IX office as non-international students. Please note that **faculty and TAs are responsible employees**, which means faculty, TAs, and other UC employees are required under the UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment to inform the Title IX Coordinator—a non-confidential resource —should they become aware that you or any other student has experienced sexual violence or gender discrimination. You can make an appointment with a **CARE** Advocate ([careprogram.ucla.edu](http://careprogram.ucla.edu)) or call their 24/7 hotline: (888) 200-6665. CARE offers free and confidential services for students, staff and faculty impacted by sexual assault, relationship violence and stalking. Counseling and Psychological Services (**CAPS**) ([counseling.ucla.edu](http://counseling.ucla.edu)) also offers confidential crisis counseling and 24/7 support at (310) 825-0768. You can also receive confidential off-campus emergency medical services, advocacy, and counseling at the **Rape Treatment Center UCLA Medical Center Santa Monica**. Their 24/7 hotline is (424) 259-7208. You can report sexual violence or sexual harassment directly to the University's Title IX Office, 2255 Murphy Hall, [titleix@conet.ucla.edu](mailto:titleix@conet.ucla.edu), (310) 206-3417. Reports to law enforcement can be made to UCPD at (310) 825-1491. Please note that any appointment you make with a Title IX counselor is NOT confidential.

Your TA's and I are not the most qualified people to help you with these other elements of your life, but we do want to support you and help you to have the best experience possible. Please let us know if something in your life is affecting your ability to do this class and we'll see what we can do to help you. You are not alone.

### **How to Read and Reading Questions**

It is somewhat ironic that I am writing about how to read with the expectation that you will, in fact, read it. But there's a difference between reading some of the material you might have read in other classes and reading dense theoretical texts. Theory can be stressful and intimidating! I get it. I feel that way too, quite often. But I also think that theory can be thrilling, and my goal is to help you to see how the difficulty is often part of the thrill. We'll talk over the course of the quarter about how to read texts like those you'll read in this class, but there are other resources on campus, including those in the residence halls and libraries that can help you with study skills and reading for comprehension.

However, more relevantly, I'll give reading questions for each reading that should help you get through the text. I will post these questions the weekend before each week. *These reading questions are not required, and they are not to be turned in.* They are simply to help you with the reading.

### **How to Write**

Similarly, writing an argument about theoretical texts can be tricky, especially when you have to make a real argument about them and not simply summarize what you read. We'll talk about this during the quarter, but please take advantage of the resources here at UCLA. For help with writing, please contact the Undergraduate Writing Center at (310) 206-1320 or [wcenter@g.ucla.edu](mailto:wcenter@g.ucla.edu). Their website is here: [uwc.ucla.edu](http://uwc.ucla.edu). They now offer all their appointments via zoom.

**Week One: Introduction, and Calarco**

Monday, January 4

Introduction

Wednesday, January 6

Jessica Calarco, *Negotiating Opportunity*, chapter 1.

**Week Two: Talcott Parsons**

Monday, January 11: “The Learning of Social Role-Expectation and the Mechanisms of Socialization of Motivation” (pp. 201-226) *The Social System*

Wednesday, January 13: “The Learning of Social Role-Expectation and the Mechanisms of Socialization of Motivation” (pp. 227-248) *The Social System*

**Week Three: Hannah Arendt**

Monday, January 18: *The Human Condition*, pp. 1-21

Wednesday, January 20 “What is Authority?” (pp. 91-141) *Between Past and Future*

**Friday January 22: First Paper is due at 11:59 pm via turnitin at CCLE**

**Week Four: Erving Goffman**

Monday, January 25: “The Moral Career of a Mental Patient” (pp. 127-169) *Asylums*

Wednesday, January 27: “Stigma and Social Identity” (pp. 1-40) *Stigma*

**Week Five: Pierre Bourdieu**

Monday, February 1: “Social Space and Symbolic Power” *In Other Words* pp. 123-139

Wednesday, February 3: *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, pp. 66-97 (chapters 4-5)

**Week Six: Michel Foucault**

Monday, February 8: *The History of Sexuality, vol. 1*, pp. 3-35

Wednesday, February 10: *The History of Sexuality, vol. 1*, pp. 36-73

**Friday February 12: Rough Draft of Second Paper is due at 11:59 pm via turnitin at CCLE. Last point at which you can receive a shadow grade.**

**Week Seven: Edward Said**

Monday, February 15: *Orientalism*, pp. 1-28

Wednesday, February 17: *Orientalism*, pp. 31-49

**Week Eight: Ann Swidler**

Monday, February 22: *Talk of Love*, pp. 1-40

Wednesday, February 24: *Talk of Love*, pp. 181-213

**Week Nine: Freedom Blume Oeur**

**Monday March 1: Six questions for final are posted on CCLE at 6 pm.**

Monday, March 1: *Black Boys Apart*, introduction, chapter 1

Wednesday, March 3: *Black Boys Apart*, chapter 2, chapter 3

**Friday March 5: Second Paper is due at 11:59 pm via turnitin at CCLE**

**Week Ten: Mary Crow Dog**

Monday, March 8: *Lakota Woman*, pp. 1-41

Wednesday, March 10: *Lakota Woman*, pp. 42-91

Honors Seminar: “Brownies”

**FINAL:**

**Monday, March 15 at 6 pm:** each student is sent a random set of three of the six questions. They choose two of these three and type approximately 800-1000 word essays which they post to Turnitin on the CCLE by **Thursday March 18, at 6 pm. Starting at 6:01 pm, each hour the final is late will lose 10 percentage points.**