OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES: Sociology courses collectively contribute to major goals of the sociology program, namely: to help students communicate effectively; to help students think critically, analytically, and reason logically about social issues and/or social problems; to help students understand and use sociological principles, concepts and theories to examine social behavior and issues; and to help students understand and evaluate the application of sociological methods to social behavior and issues. This particular course is called contemporary sociological theory. Contemporary means ideas that are currently being used by sociologists today. Theory refers to a collection of statements of relationship that are propositional in nature which suggest why events occur the way they do. In this sociology course, class activities, presentations, and reading materials are organized around the following specific objectives:

1. GAINING FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE
   1a. To present a sociological way of thinking about the issues and problems of life in society.

2. LEARNING FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES, GENERALIZATIONS, OR THEORIES
   2a. To show what scientific sociological theory is and how it relates to research and the "real" world.

3. LEARNING TO ANALYZE AND CRITICALLY EVALUATE IDEAS, ARGUMENTS, AND POINTS OF VIEW
   3a. To document the wide diversity of theoretical ideas currently used by sociologists to interpret human relationships and social order in a multidimensional world.

TEXTBOOK: Electronic readings compiled by your instructor. To access, go to CANVAS for this class. Click on Files. Click on eReserves. The readings appear in alphabetical order.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS: You are expected to keep current on all readings, maintain regular attendance, and keep a complete set of class notes. Students who miss class tend to have difficulty with sociological theory. You are expected to be in your seat ready for class at the scheduled starting time. Although the readings will correspond with the topics covered in class, much of what will be presented in class provides greater detail than what is presented in the electronic readings. A complete set of notes and a careful reading of all assigned electronic readings is essential for doing well in this course!

CLASS NOTES: I DO NOT provide copies of my notes for students who miss class. You must make arrangements to obtain missed notes from other students.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR: Due to numerous complaints from students in previous classes, no activated cell phones, text messaging devices, ipods, or other such devices will be allowed in class
unless I grant special permission for unusual circumstances. Be sure to turn off all electronic devices prior to the beginning of class.

DISABILITIES: Any student with a disability who requires accommodation should let me know so that appropriate arrangements may be made; however, the disability must be documented by the Disability Resource Center.

ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING: To assess progress in mastering course objectives, you will be required to participate in a group presentation, take four examinations, and be prepared to take periodic pop quizzes (5 points each) on assigned reading for a particular class period. You are allowed to miss or drop one quiz without a penalty. The exams will focus on the electronic readings and information presented in class. The precise question makeup of each exam will be indicated on the exam review day (the last class session prior to the exam).

GRADING: Grades will be based on the total points earned during the term from the following:

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Quizzes on Readings</td>
<td>50-75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
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Grades will be determined by the percent of total points earned using the following breakdown:
90% = A, 80% = B, 65% = C, 60% = C-; 50% = D, Below 50% = F.

GROUP PRESENTATIONS: Each of you will be assigned to an unusual group in American history. All members assigned to a particular group will be responsible for presenting a live 10-minute dramatization to the class portraying some key feature or historical incident in the life of the group. You can role play key characters, re-enact some dramatic event or celebrated occasion, present a newscast, a mock trial, a talk show, etc. but the materials covered must be informative and factual. The method and style of the presentation will be entirely up to the members assigned to a particular group; however, points will be deducted for groups choosing to give individual reports or videotaped presentations. Groups will be assigned on Thursday, September 1. The first presentations will be given on Thursday, September 15.

MAKEUP EXAMS: A makeup exam will be given on Thursday, October 6 at 3:30 for the first exam, on Thursday, November 10 at 3:30 for the second exam, and on Tuesday, November 29 for the third exam. All makeup exams will be given in Main 224 (Suite 216G - my office), not in our classroom. Makeup exams are for students with unusual circumstances who notify me in advance.

INCOMPLETE GRADES: Incompletes will only be given under unusual circumstances such as prolonged illness or an emergency in the immediate family. They will not be given because you are falling the course or have fallen behind due to other commitments. Students granted incompletes must complete work within one year from when the incomplete grade is received.
EXTRA CREDIT: There is NO EXTRA CREDIT, so do the readings, do your part in your group, and study for the exams.

CHEATING: Falsification, cheating, and plagiarism are discussed in the USU Student Handbook and will be handled according to university guidelines. Normally this means an "F" grade in the course, but in severe cases, such as hiring a student to take an exam, additional action is possible.

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday and Wednesday 3:00-4:15 in Main 216G (Located inside Main 224) or other times by appointment. You can email me at reed.geertsen@usu.edu or phone 797-1246.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>COURSE TOPICS</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 30</td>
<td>TYPES OF THEORY IN SOCIOLOGY</td>
<td>Why theorize</td>
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<td>Sept 1</td>
<td>DISCOVERY AND EXPLANATION</td>
<td>Propositions and Explanations</td>
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<td>Group Assignments</td>
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<td>Scientific View of Theory</td>
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<td>Sept 6</td>
<td>SYMBOLIC INTERACTION THEORY</td>
<td>Blumer’s Symbolic Interaction</td>
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<td>Freedom vs. Determinism and Approaches</td>
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<td>to Self Identity (Two readings)</td>
<td>Goffman’s Mask and Beyond</td>
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<td>Sept 8</td>
<td>THE FOCUS OF EVERYDAY LIFE</td>
<td>Illustration Ethnomethodology</td>
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<td>Experiments with Assumptions</td>
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<td>Sept 13</td>
<td>SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY</td>
<td>The Self-fulfilling Prophecy</td>
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<td>The Thomas Theorem and Relativity</td>
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<td>in Social Life (Two readings)</td>
<td>American Soldier</td>
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<td>Sept 15</td>
<td>ONEIDA GROUP PRESENTATIONS</td>
<td>Oneida</td>
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<td>Oneida’s Approach to Commitment</td>
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<td>Sept 20</td>
<td>USING PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION TO STUDY GROUP LIFE</td>
<td>Hutterites</td>
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<td>Study Guide for Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 22</td>
<td>FIRST EXAM</td>
<td>Readings and Class Notes</td>
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Sept 27  FUNCTIONS
Latent Functions and Merton's Law
Merton's Structural Functionalism

Sept 29  SOCIAL SYSTEMS
Illustration The Human Group

Oct 4  SHAKER GROUP PRESENTATIONS
Shaker Organization and Functionalism
The Shakers

Oct 6  FUNCTIONAL EXPLANATION
The Logic of Functionalism
Principles of Stratification

Oct 11  DIALECTICAL CONFLICT THEORY
The Functions & Dysfunctions of Conflict
Coser's Structure Through Conflict

Oct 13  GYPSY PRESENTATIONS
The Gypsies

Oct 18  POWER ELITES vs. PLURALISM
Self-Interest, Scarcity, and Power
A Summary of Conflict Theory
Study Guide for Exam

Oct 20  No Class - Attend Friday Classes

Oct 25  SECOND EXAM
Information since first exam

Oct 27  SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY
Homans' Exchange & Reductionism

Nov 1  EXCHANGE, POWER & EQUITY
Functional Exp. Reconsidered

Nov 3  EXCHANGE PARADOXES
Limitations to Rational Choice
Social Exchanges are Different

Nov 8  DIRECT AND INDIRECT NETWORKS
Milgram's Experiments
Nov 10  SOCIAL TIES AND CRITICAL THINKING  Groupthink

Nov 15  EXPERIMENTAL INSIGHTS INTO SOCIAL THEORY (Two readings)  Illustration: Some Classic Experiments
  Attachments and Converts

Study Guide for Exam

Nov 17  THIRD EXAM

Nov 22  SOCIAL NETWORKS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL (Online: Nicholas Christakis: The Sociological Science Behind Social Networks and Social Influence)

Nov 24  Thanksgiving Recess

Nov 29  MACROSTRUCTURAL THEORY  Illustration: Weak Ties
  Intersection and Macro-integration

Dec 1  STRUCTURES OF OPPORTUNITY  Structures of Social Association
  Determinism Sociology Through Rates

Dec 6  CRITICAL THINKING IN SOCIOLOGY  Collin’s Paradoxes of Power
  Multidimensional Sociology

Dec 8  SOCIOLOGY IN A POSTMODERN AGE  The Surveillance Society
  An Assessment of Postmodern Power

Study Guide and Review for Final Exam

Dec 13  FINAL EXAM  Tuesday 4:30  Regular classroom
   Absolutely no finals will be given prior to this date and time!