Sociology is a field that emerged in the late 19th as an attempt to make sense of the profound social-organizational changes that resulted from the industrial revolution. As such, it is the discipline that studies the institutional structures and problems resulting from the grand historical process known as modernization.

Today, sociology continues to study the historical and cultural changes that impact social organization and the experience of individual lives. In this course you will learn how and why the discipline originated, and how the field’s theoretical and empirical contributions may be used to understand and respond to contemporary social issues. You will also learn how sociology may be mined for insights that inform traditional philosophical questions about the meaning of being - what we call ontological questions. I believe that you will find the use of sociology to study ontological conditions enlightening and directly relevant to your own ontological and educational development.

The course curriculum is separated into four quarters each consisting of an average of 6-7 class meetings. The first quarter is experimental - and because of its experimental nature, you will be evaluated exclusively on your demonstrated preparedness (completing all assigned readings, keeping notes on your reading, and submitting a question for each class discussion) and portfolio. The portfolio will contain 1) notes on your reading, 2) a one paragraph (minimum) answer to the question you developed based on your reading, and 3) observations, insights and comments based on our class discussion. The second quarter focuses on classical contributions to sociological theory and research. At the conclusion of this quarter you will be evaluated on the basis of your knowledge and understanding of the material covered, although it must be emphasized that you are obligated to demonstrate preparedness (completing all assigned readings and submitting a question for each class discussion) throughout all quarters of the semester. A failure to meet these criteria will result in grade reductions. Quarters three and four will be evaluated by the quality of your final essay exam.

**Summary of Evaluation Criteria for each Quarter**

First quarter: Evaluated exclusively on preparation and portfolio

Second Quarter: Evaluated on knowledge and understanding of classical sociology

Third Quarter: Evaluated on knowledge and understanding of our study of the social construction of collective ontological forces

Fourth Quarter: Evaluated on knowledge and understanding of our study of intentional, ontological experience


On the basis of readings and the instructor's feedback, the class schedule is as follows:

**Thursday 1/27**
- **Ontological Implications of Ethnocentric Foregrounding**
- Submit notes taken on reading and one discussion question
- Assigned reading: book excerpt/handout (Gadamer)

**Tuesday 2/1**
- **Lessons from Gadamer’s “Truth and Method”**
- Submit notes taken on reading and one discussion question
- Assigned reading: article/handout (McGowan)

**Thursday 2/3**
- Submit portfolio/Summary discussion

**End First Quarter**

**Tuesday 2/8**
- **Durkheim and the Science of Modernity**
- Submit notes taken on reading and one discussion question
- Assigned reading: book excerpt/handout (Durkheim)

**Thursday 2/10**
- **Durkheim and the Essence of the Sacred**
- Submit notes taken on reading and one discussion question
- Assigned reading: book excerpt/handout (Durkheim)

**Tuesday 2/15**
- **Marx’s Dialectical-Materialist Analysis of Modernization**
- Submit notes taken on reading and one discussion question
- Assigned reading: #7.1 (Marx and Engels)

**Thursday 2/17**
- **Marx and Capitalism’s Ontological Fallout**
- Submit notes taken on readings and one discussion question
- Assigned readings: #51 (Marx) and handout on Marx

**Tuesday 2/22**
- **Instrumental Displacement, Protestantism, and the Ontological Conditions of Capitalism**
- Submit notes taken on reading and one discussion question
- Assigned reading: #6.4 (Weber)

**Thursday 2/24**
- **The Ontological condition of Instrumental Rationality**
- Submit notes taken on reading and one discussion question
- Assigned reading: Handout (Gini and Sullivan)

**Tuesday 3/1**
- Second quarter summary and discussion of midterm essay exam

**Thursday 3/3**
- In-class midterm essay exam

**End Second Quarter Spring Break**

**Tuesday 3/15**
- **The Social Construction of Reality**
- Submit notes taken on readings and one discussion question
- Readings: #7 (Cooley), #3.1 (Mead) and handout (Berger and L.)
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<th>Date</th>
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| 3/17     | Thursday  | Objectivation<br>Submit notes taken on readings and one discussion question
Assigned readings: #14 (Berger and Luck. and #11 (Dunphy) |
| 3/22     | Tuesday   | Internalization<br>Submit notes taken on readings and one discussion question
Assigned readings: #9 (Berger and Luckmann) and #13 (Curry). |
| 3/24     | Thursday  | Easter Break ---- Take home ontological directive                     |
| 3/29     | Tuesday   | An Inductive Taxonomy of Ontological Contexts                         |
| 3/31     | Thursday  | The Social Construction of Ontological Positionings<br>Submit notes taken on reading and one discussion question
Assigned reading: #11.2 (Dowie) |
| 4/5      | Tuesday   | Engendered Ontological Positionings<br>Submit notes taken on readings and one discussion question
Assigned readings: #2.5 (Tannen) and #28 (Howard & Hollander) |
| 4/7      | Thursday  | Ethnocentric Ontological Positionings<br>Submit notes taken on readings and one discussion question
Assigned readings: Handout (Dubois) and handout (McGowan) |
| 4/12     | Tuesday   | Class-centric Ontological Positionings<br>Submit notes taken on readings and one discussion question
Assigned readings # 20 (Coles) and # 21 (Gans) |
| 4/14     | Thursday  | Contexts Conducive to the Reification of Being<br>Submit notes taken on readings and one discussion question
Assigned readings: # 22 (Meyer) and #23 (Kelman and Hamilton) |
| 4/19     | Tuesday   | Contexts Conducive to the Reification of Being (cont.)<br>Submit notes taken on readings and one discussion question
Assigned readings: 3 and 7 in Bell/McGrane & handout (Gracey) |
| 4/21     | Thursday  | Contexts Conducive to Reflexive Insight and Ontological Development<br>Submit notes taken on readings and one discussion question
Assigned readings: Chapters 4, 5 and 6 in Bell/McGrane |
| 4/26     | Tuesday   | Presentation of extra-credit research papers                          |
| 4/28     | Thursday  | Summary and discussion of final essay exam                            |