Miyazaki International College

Course Syllabus

Spring 2021

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| Course Title ( Credits ) | SOC 302: Sociological Theory |
| Course Designation for TC | N/A |
| Content Teacher |
| Instructor | Prof. Erik Bond |
| E-mail address | ebond@sky.miyazaki-mic.ac.jp |
| Office/Ext | MIC 1-212 / ext. 3720 |
| Office hours | TTh 14.30-16.00 |

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| Course Description: |
| In this course, we will explore the major theories in contemporary sociology, including symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, conflict theory, neo-Marxism, and feminist theory. |
| Course Objectives: |
| Sociology allows us to approach aspects of everyday life in human society from many analytical orientations; by examining various theories we can come to understand these perspectives’ utility and limitations. Students will be exposed to the foundational theories of the discipline of Sociology, as well as to a variety of theoretical frameworks that are relevant to the contemporary state of the discipline. The class encourages students to develop and synthesize their own perspectives. A mix of projects, readings, discussions, writings, and quizzes will require students’ active participation, with the end goal that they be able to form and communicate their own critical thoughts using sociological perspectives.Critical thinking skills:* Be able to identify the core theories of sociology.
* Be able to articulate what makes each theory unique.
* Be able to apply theories to real-world situations or events.
* Be able to identify flaws or criticisms of sociological theories.

Communication-related skills:* Be able to consume (read/watch/listen to) sociological material and express its content.
* Be able to form and articulate examples or ideas related to sociological topics.
* Be able to express ideas on sociological topics clearly in speech and writing.
* Be able to identify proper questions to ask to improve their own understanding.
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| Tentative Course Schedule |
| Day | Topic | Content/Activities |
| 1 | **Introductions & Syllabus**What is sociology?Thinking TheoreticallyThe Industrial Revolution | Syllabus; Moodle enrollment; Developing good explanations; Learning to think theoretically. What is a good theory?;Soc. vocab; Sociological Imagination; Perspectival thinking; **Quiz**; The importance of the Industrial Revolution  |
| 2 |
| 3 |
| 4 |
| 5 | **Symbolic Interactionism**The Socialization Process | What is socialization? How do we learn to be social? How do we construct meaning? How does meaning (re-)create society? |
| 6 |
| 7 | **Structural Functionalism**Emile DurkheimAnomie & Suicide | Introduction to Structural Functionalism and SuicideEmile Durkheim, Positivism, and Structural Functionalism;Anomie & Suicide, the first sociological research;Anomie in the modern world; Hikikomori; **Quiz** |
| 8 |
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| 10 |
| 11 | **Conflict Theory pt. 1**Karl MarxAlienation & Consciousness | Theory Review & Discussion of Inequality‘Getting Ahead’ Discussion; Conflict & Monkeys;Historical Materialism; Stages of History;The working poor and homeless: theoretical explanations;Poverty and Inequality Note-taking discussion |
| 12 |
| 13 |
| 14 |
| 15 |
| 16 | MidtermWeek | **Midterm****Project** |
| 17 |
| 18 | Midterm Reflection | Turn in midterm reflection + discuss results; alienation;Second chance at midterm |
| 19 |
| 20 | **Conflict Theory pt. 2**Social Class; WPP ModelRationalization | Marx/Weber differences; social construction & WPP model;Work, Overwork, and The Protestant Ethic;Rationalization, Disenchantment, and the Iron Cage; **Quiz** |
| 21 |
| 22 |
| 23 | **Contemporary Theory**FeminismsQueer TheoryIntersectionality | Classical/Contemporary Distinctions; Feminist TheoryFour waves of FeminismSocial Construction and Deconstruction; Identity**Quiz**; Intersectional perspectives: how to apply them |
| 24 |
| 25 |
| 26 |
| 27 | Final ProjectPreparation | Final Assignment WorkPreparation + Review Period |
| 28 |
| 29 | Final ProjectWeek | **FinalProjects** |
| 30 |
| Final Period | Final Exam | **Final Exam** |
| Notes: N/A |

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| Required Materials: |
| Pen/pencil, paper, **tablet\*\*\***, binder, access to Moodle, and assigned readings.**\*\*\*Important Note\*\*\*:** * It is *extremely important* that you bring a tablet or laptop to *every class*.
* This class will use mobile devices often, including to type assignments.
* Each class period will begin with a writing prompt that you must answer on Moodle
* If you do not have a device that is charged, connected to the internet, and allows you to type, you may be unable to complete some assignments, affecting your grade.
* If you do not have access to a tablet, please talk to me in the *first week* of class so we can find a solution.
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| Course Policies (Attendance, etc.) |
| You should plan to attend ALL class meetings and complete ALL readings and assignments by the due date given. **Students are allowed a maximum of 5 absences before they must withdraw.** I will not accept late assignments, quizzes, and exams except in cases of extraordinary excused absences. I will evaluate exceptions on a case by case basis. When you miss class, you should be sure to check Moodle for new assignments. If you are aware ahead of an upcoming assignment due date that you will be absent, you should submit the assignment early, either in person or by email.Your professors will not tolerate academic dishonesty (i.e., plagiarism, cheating, etc.) in this course. Anyone caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive an F in the course. Please see pages 9-12 of the College Bulletin for a description of college expectations and pages 203-206 for actions considered unacceptable with reasonable cause.Your professors retain the right to alter the course schedule as necessary. Students will be given adequate notice of these changes. |
| Class Preparation and Review |
| Students are expected to spend at least one hour reviewing and doing homework and one hour preparing for every hour of lesson time. |
| Grades and Grading Standards |
| You will be evaluated upon your performance in (1) Participation, (2) Quizzes and Homework, (3) a Midterm Project, (4) a Final Presentation, and (5) a Final Exam.

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| **Grades** | **Grading Scheme** |
| Participation (see Memo) | 20% | A | 90-100% | Greatly exceeds minimum requirements |
| Quizzes & Homework | 20% | B | 80-89% | Exceeds minimum learning requirements |
| Midterm Project | 20% | C | 70-79% | Meets minimum learning requirements |
| Final Presentation | 20% | D | 60-69% | Almost meets minimum requirements |
| Final Exam | 20% | F | 0-59% | Fails to meet minimum requirements |
| **Total** | **100%** | \*I will provide specific assignment rubrics as assigned. |
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| Methods of Feedback: |
| In principle, graded work will be returned within one week of submission with appropriate feedback (i.e., grade, comments, etc.). In practice and due to the nature of course material, some feedback will be given via discussion in-class and (where necessary) during office hours. |
| Diploma Policy Objectives: |
| Work completed in this course helps students achieve the following Diploma Policy objective(s):1. Advanced thinking skills (comparison, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) based on critical thinking (critical and analytical thought).
2. The ability to understand and accept different cultures developed through acquisition of a broad knowledge and comparison of the cultures of Japan and other nations.
3. The ability to identify and solve problems.
4. Advanced communicative proficiency in both Japanese and English.
5. Proficiency in the use of information technology.
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| Notes: |
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|  | Advanced | Proficient | Developing | Emerging | No Attempt |
| Critical Thinking | Ability to Identify & Solve Problems | Insightful comments in class discussionsStudent shows proven ability to analyze data, gather and assess resources, and disseminate opinions in a scholarly manner. | Able to contribute to class discussions, and to perform a basic analysis of data, gather and assess resources, and express opinions in an adequate manner. | Beginning to visualize the ways in which information can be combined and applied to solving a given problem, but struggles with complex and relationships | Student shows motivation but must learn the concepts and mechanisms that apply to critical thinking, such as information gathering, assessment and synthesis | Insufficient effort or evidence of achievement |
| Information Gathering |
| Assessment of Credibility |
| Advanced Communication Proficiency | Public Speaking | Speaking is clear, using a broad range of vocabulary and relative jargon. Student uses appropriate social cues and nuance. | Able to create a relevant response when asked to express an opinion or respond to a complicated situation, but pronunciation and grammar can often make responses and explanations unclear to a listener and must be interpreted. | Able to answer questions and give basic information. However, inconsistent pronunciation, intonation and stress may sometimes make their responses difficult o understand or interpret. | Student is unsuccessful or finds it very difficult when attempting to explain an opinion or respond to a complicated scenario. The response may be limited to a single sentence or part of a sentence. |
| Social Skills |
| Professional Skills |
| Global Perspectives | Cultural Relevancy | Fully engaged in current events and shows and understanding of social inequalities and cultural differences. | Student is aware of current events and world cultures, but is unable to apply macro-level situations to her/his own life. | Exhibits interest and intrigue in current events and world culture, but has difficulty understanding relevancy. | Student expresses one-sided ideals from an ethnocentric point of view. Completely lacks awareness of world issues or events. |
| Awareness of Current Events & Global Issues |
| English Language Ability | Reading | Exhibits fluency/near fluency in speaking and writing. Grammar and reading ability similar to native English speaker. Able to use context clues when faced with unfamiliar vocabulary. | Proficient English ability; relies mainly on familiar vocabulary. Should be encouraged to advance beyond comfort zone. | Adequate English ability; must reference dictionary often | Student has some English ability, but lacks confidence in using and understanding. Very limited vocabulary knowledge, struggles with grammar and pronunciation Unable to form questions |
| Writing |
| Oral Communication |
| Japanese Language Ability | Reading | Able to express one’s self clearly and succinctly both in writing and orally. Able to use context clues when faced with unfamiliar vocabulary. | Proficient oral and written communication; relies mainly on familiar vocabulary. Should be encouraged to advance beyond comfort zone. | Adequate oral and written communication; tends to have difficulty clearly expressing ideas. | Student shows a lack of confidence in writing, reading, and oral communication. Very limited vocabulary knowledge, struggles with grammar Unable to form questions |
| Writing |
| Oral Communication |