The purpose of this course is to acquaint students with some of the most important theoretical contributions made to the study of culture and society since the nineteenth century. The first half of the course is devoted largely to reading the great systems builders of the social sciences: Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Freud. All of their ideas have been under attack for decades, but their thinking still pervades the social sciences and must be reckoned with. We then turn to figures influential primarily in the history of anthropology, and finally, to recent and contemporary writers in the social sciences whose ideas fuel ongoing debates in anthropology today. The course is conceived primarily for majors but above all for students who are committed to working with difficult, influential, and fascinating texts.

The course combines both lecture, on Thursdays, and seminar discussion, on Tuesdays. Seminar discussion will be based in most cases on short written assignments submitted before class. Attending lectures and seminar discussion is required, and absences must be explained.

The course integrates an intense and demanding regime of reading and discussion with an equally intense and demanding program of writing. In order to assist students with their writing, a portion of every Tuesday class will be devoted to discussing writing. The aim is to encourage students to develop the habit of writing clear and concise prose, organized in such a way that a reader is aware of the overall structure of each sentence, paragraph, and essay.

Requirements:

Final grades will be based on the following requirements: eight short assignments, two longer essays, plus attendance and participation. The short assignments, no more than one page in length, will be worth five points each, for a total of forty points. (Ten short assignments will be made: students can choose not to submit one before spring break, and one after. If a student submits all ten short assignments, the two lowest grades will be dropped. The extra two submissions will not result in extra credit.) Each of the two longer essays, about five pages in length, will be worth twenty-five points, for a total of fifty points. Attendance and participation will count for ten points. No short assignment will be granted credit unless the student attends class on the day the assignment is discussed. A small amount of extra credit (2 points above the total 100 points available through the regular assignments) will be obtainable by working with the Course Specialist Counselor (see below).

Writing Flag

Note that this course satisfies the criteria of a “Writing Flag” course. I cite the following from the Texas Undergraduate Studies website:

   All Writing Flag classes must meet the following, University-level requirements:

   • Students must write regularly—several times during the semester—and complete writing projects that are substantial.
   • Students must receive feedback from the instructor to help them improve their writing, and be given an opportunity to revise at least one assignment.
   • Students’ writing must make up at least one-third of the course grade.

I’m happy to report that this course has been assigned a Course Specialist Consultant who can help you work on your writing. Here is information from the University Writing Center about arranging to meet with Josh:

This class has been assigned a Course Specialist Consultant (CSC) from the University Writing Center (UWC): Josh Armstrong, joshjwarmstrong@gmail.com.
While the UWC's generalist consultants can help any UT student with any piece of writing at any stage, CSCs are dedicated to particular writing intensive classes. CSCs attend their assigned class meetings, get familiar with their class’s writing assignments, and thus can offer course-specialized writing help in 45-minute consultations in the UWC (PCL 2.330). CSC consultations are scheduled by appointment, and students in this class have scheduling priority over other UT students. The fastest way to schedule a CSC appointment is to register for a UWC account at [uwc.utexas.edu/appointments](http://uwc.utexas.edu/appointments), call the UWC Front Desk at 512-471-6222, and identify your class’s CSC by name. (You may also schedule CSC appointments by emailing your CSC directly, though this method may be slower.) Please schedule CSC consultations only in regard to writing assignments in this class. And note: CSCs are typically available for 7-10 appointments per week (times TBA). For students in this class, CSC appointments will be scheduled on a first-come-first-served basis. If your CSC is not available when you want writing help, or if you need help on assignments outside this class, please schedule consultations with UWC generalist consultants through the UWC’s online scheduling system: [uwc.utexas.edu/appointments](http://uwc.utexas.edu/appointments).

In order to encourage you to take advantage of the help that Josh can give you, you will receive a modest amount of extra credit (0.25 points) for each visit you have with him to discuss an assignment, for a maximum of eight visits (2 points). Josh will keep records of these visits, which will be factored into your final grade.

**Other useful information:**

**Students with disabilities:** The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic adjustments for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY. Please make known to me, in a timely manner, any special needs you might have so that reasonable accommodation can be made. I cannot make these arrangements immediately before an assignment is due.

**Counseling and Mental Health (CMHC)** SSB 4th floor, 512-471-3515 [emhc.utexas.edu](http://emhc.utexas.edu) The Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) helps students with their personal concerns so they can meet the daily challenges of student life. The CMHC is staffed by psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and other licensed mental health professionals. CMHC’s 24-hour phone counseling line is 512-471-CALL (2255).

**Gender and Sexuality Center** (SAC 2.112), Phone: (512) 232-1831 Email: gsc@austin.utexas.edu, [http://diversity.utexas.edu/genderandsexuality/](http://diversity.utexas.edu/genderandsexuality/) The mission of the Gender and Sexuality Center (GSC) is to provide opportunities for all members of the UT Austin community to explore, organize, and promote learning around issues of gender and sexuality. The center also facilitates a greater responsiveness to the needs of women and the LGBTQ communities through education, outreach, and advocacy.

I have completed two Ally Toolkit Workshops and, in the words, of the GSC’s website, “have pledged a commitment to learning and advocating for affirmation of LGBTQA+ people.”

**Readings:**

All readings are available on reserve at the Perry-Castañeda Library. They are also available for purchase. The following books are or will soon be made available at the University Coop Bookstore:

Durkheim, Emile. 2008 [1912]. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Tr. C. Cosman. New York: Free Press. (Other translations are acceptable, but the new translation is preferable.)
**Week 1 January 17 - 20**


The first short assignment will be assigned on Thursday, January 19, and will be due on Tuesday, January 24.

**Week 2 January 23 - 27**


The second short assignment will be assigned on Thursday, January 26, and will be due on Tuesday, January 31.

**Week 3 January 30 - February 3**

Durkheim, Emile. Introduction; Book 1, Ch. 1 Definition of religious phenomena and of religion; Bk 2, Ch. 7 Origins of these beliefs; Bk 3, Ch. 5 Piacular Rites and the ambiguity of the notions of sacredness; Conclusion. The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life. (Since different editions of this book are in circulation, providing page numbers would only cause confusion.)

The third short assignment will be assigned on Thursday, February 2, and will be due on Tuesday, February 7. In this single case, in order to receive credit for this assignment, you will be required to sign up for a 20-minute appointment with me in my office at some point during the week of February 6 – 10. We will go through one paragraph of your submission together in lieu of my writing comments on the file you submit.

**Week 4 February 6 - 10**


The fourth short assignment will be assigned on Thursday, February 9, and will be due on Tuesday, February 14.

**Week 5 February 13 - 17**


The first essay (a longer writing assignment) will be assigned on Tuesday, February 14. A draft will be due on Tuesday, February 21. Final versions will be due on Tuesday, March 7.

**Week 6 February 20 - 24**


The fifth short assignment will be assigned on Thursday, February 23, and will be due on Tuesday, February 28.

**Week 7 February 27 - March 3**


**Week 8 March 6 - 10**


The sixth short assignment will be assigned on Thursday, March 9, and will be due on Tuesday, March 21.

**Spring Break**

**Week 9 March 20 - 24**


Note: Bourdieu's writing is notoriously difficult. Be sure to allow yourself a good deal of time to do this reading.

The seventh short assignment will be assigned on Thursday, March 23, and will be due on Tuesday, March 28.

**Week 10 March 27 - 31**


The eighth short assignment will be assigned on Thursday, March 30, and will be due on Tuesday, April 4.
Week 11 April 3 - 7


The ninth short assignment will be assigned on Thursday, April 6, and will be due on Tuesday, April 11.

Week 12 April 10 - 14


The tenth short assignment will be assigned on Thursday, April 13, and will be on Tuesday, April 18.

Week 13 April 17 - 21


Week 14 April 24 - 28


The second longer essay will be assigned on Thursday, April 27. It will be due on Friday, May 12 by 5 p.m.

Week 15 May 1 - 5

No additional reading.

The final assignment is due on Friday, May 12, at 5 p.m.