Course description: Welcome to Soc. 591! This course will be dedicated to introducing you to a variety of social theories that are commonly used in sociology. The goal of this course is to develop your understanding of the most prominent theoretical perspective in sociology. To achieve this goal, you will need to read each of these authors with a critical perspective and engage with your peers in comprehensive discussions. In this class, you can expect to read a lot, write a lot, and talk a lot.

Required Texts

Course Assignments:

**Weekly reading responses (30%)**: Each week, students will be required to write a 500 word (minimum) reading response. The responses will be due at the start of class. Responses should include a brief overview of the week’s readings, followed by a critical assessment of the content. For critical assessments, students may propose a series of questions, critique specific points made in the readings, and/or compare and contrast this week’s readings with other readings. At the beginning of each class, students will be required to share the contents of their reading responses with the class.

**Discussion leading (30%)**: Each student will be required to lead a class discussion twice during the term. Discussion leading will occur either individually or in groups, pending on the number of students in the class. As discussion leader(s), students will be required to give a 10-minute overview of the week’s readings and provide the class with no less than 5 discussion topics. Discussion topics may require the class to apply readings to past or current events, compare and contrast theorists or theories, or ask the class to respond to specific points made in the readings. Discussion leaders will be assessed based on their comprehension of the readings and their ability to facilitate discussions.

**Final paper (40%)**: Each student will be required to hand in an essay (minimum 3,000 words) at the end of the course. The essay must be in reference to at least one of the reading assignments in this class. While there is no official essay prompt, students are encouraged to share their essay topics with me before writing them. Essays will be due in my box by 5 PM December 5th.

**Course schedule**:

Week 1:
Required readings: Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, Preface through Part A “Idealism and Materialism” (D2L); Marcuse “From Philosophy to Social Theory”, "The Negation of Philosophy" (link provided on D2L)

Week 2:
Required readings: Marx, *Capital volume 1*, Part seven “The Process of Accumulation of Capital”; Burawoy “Marxism as Science” (D2L)

Week 3:

Week 4:
Required readings: Durkheim, *Division of Labor in Society*; Emirbayer, “Useful Durkheim” (D2L)
Week 5:
Required reading: Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*; Smith *The Scholar denied* (D2L)

Week 6:

Week 7:
Required reading: Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*; Flyvbjerg, “Habermas and Foucault: Thinkers for Civil Society?” (D2L)

Week 8:

Week 9:
Required reading: Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*; West, “Doing Gender” (D2L)

Week 10:
Required reading: Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*