

SOC 6010: DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY



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Meeting times:

4:30 pm - 7:00 pm Tuesday Old Main 227

Office hours: Tuesday 1:00-2:30 pm or by appointment

This course is designed as a pro-seminar introducing graduate students to the breadth and depth of the classical and contemporary theory within sociology. As a pro-seminar, it covers the diversity of social theories in a relatively shallow manner, rather than going deeply into any one theory and theorist. Students are invited to explore theories of their liking more deeply in a research paper to be presented at the end of the semester.

“Theory” comes from a Greek word meaning “to look” or “to see”. As Parson’s suggests, sociology is driven not simply by empirical findings but by the theoretical lens through which we discover and make sense of these findings. Our interpretation of what is important, what questions should be asked, why certain phenomena occur, and how social problems can be addressed, are all theoretical issues. This course provides an introduction to key perspectives in contemporary sociological theory, including the canon of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim as well as Structural Functionalism, Critical and post-Marxist theory, Symbolic Interactionism, Feminist theory and synthetic approaches of Pierre Bourdieu.

Course requirements and grading

The emphasis in evaluation will be on the weekly readings and a high level of engagement in the seminar meetings. The writing component for this class reflects this emphasis.

Students will write two short “reaction papers” of around 1000 words each, in reaction to and elaboration of two week’s readings. The students will sign up for this paper at the beginning of the semester, and come prepared to lead discussion on the day they have written the reaction paper. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the readings, whether or not they have written a paper on the weekly readings. Late papers will not be accepted.

To help facilitate class discussion, students should email three questions based on that week's readings to me and the discussion leader. Questions should be submitted no later than Sunday to allow ample time for the discussant to organize them thematically and prepare the discussion outline.

Students will be also required to participate in a simulated conference at the end of the semester by submitting (for peer review) a research paper on a current issue analyzed through the lens of two sociological theories – one classical and one contemporary – of no more than 8000 words. This paper will be subjected to peer review by two anonymous reviewers in the class in addition to the instructor. Performing this review will be a part of the student's overall grade.

At the end of the semester, students will give short (20 min) presentations on their research papers. These presentations will be organized as two sessions of a conference, where peer-reviewed papers will be delivered to an appreciative and attentive audience.

Your final grade will reflect your performance in class, the weekly papers, the final paper and presentation. The breakdown of your grade will be:

- 1) Weekly engagement: completion of reading assignments, in-class participation at a high level, and quality of reaction paper: 30%
- 2) Reaction Papers: 20%
- 3) Peer review of research papers: 10%
- 4) Final paper: 30%
- 5) Presentation: 10%

The grading distribution is as follows:

94 and up	=	A
90 to 93	=	A-
87 to 89	=	B+
84 to 86	=	B
80 to 83	=	B-
77 to 79	=	C+
74 to 76	=	C
70 to 73	=	C-
67 to 69	=	D+
60 to 66	=	D
59 <	=	F

Paper Topics Due: February 14

Draft Papers Due to reviewers: April 14

Review comments due: April 25

Final Papers Due: May 2

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE:

January 10	Welcome	No readings
January 17	Karl Marx	Calhoun et al. excerpts from: "The German Ideology" (Ch. 5) "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844" (Ch. 6) "Wage Labor and Capital" (Ch. 9) "Classes" (Ch. 10)
January 24	Emile Durkheim	"The Division of Labor in Society" pp. 1-2; 11-29; 31-64; 68-86; 118-123; 149-165; 172-174; 200-205; 217-223. 226-244; 310-322. Calhoun et al. excerpts from: "The Rules of Sociological Method" and "Suicide"
January 31	Max Weber	"The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" pp. Xviii-xlii, 3-124. Calhoun et al. excerpts from: "Objectivity in Social Science" (Ch. 15) "Class, Status, Party (Ch.18) "The Types of Legitimate Domination" (Ch. 19).
February 7	Alternative voices	Consider: Du Bois, Martineau, Perkins Gilman, Simmel, Mead, Cooley. Student assigned readings. Please distribute them by Feb. 3.
February 14	Structural functionalism	Parsons "Sex Roles in the American Kinship System" Kingsley and More "Some Principles of Stratification" Merton "Social Structure and Anomie" Parsons "The System of Modern Societies", pp. 1-28
February 21	The Frankfurt School	Excerpt from Marcuse's "One-dimensional man" Horkheimer and Adorno "The Dialectic of Enlightenment", pp.120-124, 126-145, 161-167.
February 28	Neo-Marxist theory: Gramsci	"Selections from Prison Notebooks": The State and the Society pp. 206-221, 242-246, 257-266, 269-270, 275-276. American Fordism: pp. 277-287, 292-297, 298-312. Language: pp. 348-350, 375-377. The problems of Marxism: pp. 419-430, 444-448.
March 7	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS	
March 14	Symbolic Interactionism	Excerpt from Goffman "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life" pp. 16-27 Blumer "Symbolic Interactionism"
March 21	Postmodern Theory: Foucault	"Discipline and Punish"
March 28	Postmodern Theory: Bourdieu	"An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology" pp. vii-59, 94-100, 120-122 "The Forms of Capital"
April 4	Contemporary feminist thought: Patricia Hill-Collins	"Black Feminist Thought"

April 11	Micro-macro integration: Giddens	"The Consequences of Modernity" pp. 1-54. "Structuration Theory" pp. 112-126, 165-171.
April 18		Student presentations I
April 25		Student presentations II