

Sociological Theory
Soc 335, Fall 2009
Mondays, 6:30-9:30 pm; Comenius 218

Professor Daniel Jasper
PPHAC 316

Office Hours: M 4:30-6:00; T 1:00-2:1 & 3:45-5:00; other times by appointment
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Course Overview: This course is designed to introduce students to the dynamic field of social theory. On one hand, theory is a distinct subfield of sociology. On the other hand, theory is a mode of inquiry, analysis, thinking and debate that spans all sociological subfields. Through this course, students will engage both of these traditions of sociological theory. To this end, we will trace the historical development of social theoretic thought and identify some of the current issues and debates that shape the field.

Course Goals: By the end of the course students will:

- Develop a familiarity with theoretical logic and argumentation in sociology
- Read and become familiar with key social thinkers from both the classical and contemporary periods.
- Understand and be able to analyze key issues in the field.
- Cultivate their sociological imaginations as they learn to apply the theories.
- Develop their own theoretical contributions.
- Improve their ability to construct and analyze academic arguments
- Further develop their writing and oral presentation skills
- Further develop their ability to read closely

Course Requirements and Expectations (and Repressive Policies): It is expected that all students will participate in this course as theorists. This means that the focus will be on *reading* texts closely, *analyzing* these texts and the arguments made in them, and *writing* theoretic arguments. A number of supplementary texts have been placed on Reserve in Reeves Library to assist in these tasks. Students are expected to consult these, and other outside texts, regularly. I will be happy to suggest additional texts on particular topics of interest to any student.

As a professional and collective endeavor, there should be no need for repressive policies. That is, we all share the responsibility for the success of this course. Therefore, we should plan on attending all class sessions. We shall arrive on time, having completed the shared readings, and be prepared to collectively explicate, interrogate, and expand the arguments. We should arrive with the texts, our notes on the texts, and the necessary tools of scholarship. We should leave unnecessary distractions, such as cell phones, in our private 'backstage' regions.

The most important part of conducting oneself as a professional scholar involves following the conventions of scholarly citation. All members of this course should read, re-read, and familiarize themselves with the college policy on Academic Honesty included in the student handbook. All written work must include full and proper

citations. There are **no exceptions**, including ignorance. Cheating and plagiarism will result in failing this course.

There is a blackboard site for this course. Assignment guidelines, supplemental readings, and course announcements will be posted to the site. Students are expected to check the site regularly.

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

Student Assessment: This course is a collective exercise in textual explication and theoretical argumentation. Assessment mechanisms are designed to measure (1) how well students are able to read, comprehend, and engage with theoretic arguments; (2) the contributions of each student to the collective work of the class; (3) how well students develop their own theoretic arguments. Written work will include: the preparation of discussion questions; reading quizzes, and informal and formal essays. Students will also be assessed on their contributions to the seminar discussions, including leading the seminar. It is within the instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for an assignment or for the course. A detailed grading sheet is appended to this syllabus.

Students should expect to spend approximately 10 hours per week on this course.

Required Texts: The following texts are required and available in the bookstore.

Calhoun, Craig, Joseph Gerteis, James Moody, Steven Pfaff, and Indermohan Virk, Eds. 2007. *Classical Sociological Theory* 2E. Malden, MA: Blackwell. (Referred to in course schedule as *Classical*.)

Alexander, Jeffrey and Stephen Seidman, Eds. 200.

Supporting Texts: The following are on reserve in the library. (This list will probably grow as the semester progresses.) These resources will prove useful by providing different analyses and perspectives on the theorists we cover. All students are highly encouraged to consult these resources regularly.

- Adams, Bert. 2002. *Contemporary Sociological Theory*. Pine Forge.
- Coser, Lewis. 1997. *Masters of Sociological Thought*. HBJ.
- Farganis, James. 2007. *Readings in Social Theory*, 5E. McGraw Hill.
- Giddens, Anthony. 1971. *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*. Cambridge
- Hughes, J.A. 2003. *Understanding Classical Sociology*. Sage.
- Lemert, Charles. 1993. *Social Theory: the Multicultural and Classic Readings*. Westview.
- Mommsen, Wolfgang. 1989. *The Political and Social Theory of Max Weber*. Chicago.
- Ritzer, George. 1990. *Frontiers of Social Theory*. Columbia.

Seidman, Steven. 2004. *Contested Knowledge: Social Theory Today*. Blackwell.

Course Schedule

Please note, the outline below is merely a guide. Changes are possible as the semester progresses.

Week 1 (August 31st): An Introduction to the Course, and to Social Theory

Skim: Classical, General Introduction.

Week 2 (September 7th): No Class For Labor Day

Week 3 (September 14th): Karl Marx

Read: Classical, Part II

Due: Informal Essay 1

Week 4 (September 21st): Emile Durkheim

Read: Classical, Part III

Week 5 (September 27th): Max Weber

Read: Classical, Part IV

Week 6 (October 5th): The Legacy of the Classics

Read: Classical, Ch. 21; Select one chapter (26-36).

Due: Formal Essay 1

Week 7 (October 12th): **No Class, Fall Break**

Week 8 (October 19th): Student Selected Contemporary Theory

Read: TBA

Due: Informal Essay 2

Week 9 (October 26th): Student Selected Contemporary Theory

Read: TBA

Week 10 (November 2nd): Student Selected Contemporary Theory

Read: TBA

Due: Informal Essay 3

Week 11 (November 9th): Student Selected Contemporary Theory

Read: TBA

Week 12 (November 16th): Student Selected Contemporary Theory

Read: TBA

Due: Formal Essay 2

Week 13 (November 23rd): Student Selected Contemporary Theory

Read: TBA

Week 14 (November 30th): Student Selected Contemporary Theory

Read: TBA

Week 15 (December 7th): Course Conclusion

Formal Essay 3 due before 6:30 pm on December 14th.

Grading Sheet

Weekly Reading Questions: $\frac{\quad}{1} \quad \frac{\quad}{1} \quad \frac{\quad}{1} \quad \frac{\quad}{1} \quad \frac{\quad}{1} \quad \frac{\quad}{1} \quad \frac{\quad}{1} \quad \frac{\quad}{1} = \frac{\quad}{8}$

Quizzes: (1) $\frac{\quad}{4}$ (2) $\frac{\quad}{4}$ (3) $\frac{\quad}{4} = \frac{\quad}{12}$

Informal Essays: (1) $\frac{\quad}{5}$ (2) $\frac{\quad}{5}$ (3) $\frac{\quad}{5} = \frac{\quad}{15}$

Formal Essays: (1) $\frac{\quad}{10}$ (2) $\frac{\quad}{10}$ (3) $\frac{\quad}{10} = \frac{\quad}{30}$

Seminar Leadership: $\frac{\quad}{10}$

Participation : $\frac{\quad}{\text{Midterm (10)}} + \frac{\quad}{\text{End-term (15)}} = \frac{\quad}{25}$

Total: **Possible points = 100**

Final Grades

87-89.9 = B+	77-79.9 = C+	67-69.9 = D+
94-100 = A	83-86.9 = B	73-76.9 = C
90-93.9 = A-	80-82.9 = B-	70-72.9 = C-
Below 60 points = F		63-66.9 = D
		60-62.9 = D-