

Sociological Theory
Soc 335, Spring 2010
Fridays, 10:20-12:55; PPHAC 338

Professor Daniel Jasper

PPHAC 316

Office Hours: T, R, F 9:00-10:00; 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
- Further develop their ability to debate intellectual and contemporary issues

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. It is expected that students regularly consult outside resources to assist them in these tasks. A number of texts have been placed on reserve in Reeves library for this purpose. I will be happy to suggest additional texts on particular topics of interest to any student. **NB:** Not all websites are of equal value. If you are consulting a website, make sure that it is a reputable one, such as the site established by Jim Spickard (<http://www.socialtheory.info/index.htm>). If you are unsure how to evaluate the scholarly *bona fides* of a website consult with a reference librarian.

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. Students will be assessed on formal and informal written work; presentations; and contributions to the collective work of the class (participation). 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. 2008. *The New Social Theory Reader* 2E. London: Routledge.

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 (January 22nd): An Introduction to the Course, and to Social Theory

Read: Classical, General Introduction

Skim: Both Texts

Week 2 (January 29th): Karl Marx

Read: Classical, Part II

Week 3 (February 5th): Emile Durkheim

Read: Classical, Part III

Due: (Integrative) Essay 1 – Identifying Themes

Week 4 (February 12th): Max Weber

Read: Classical, Part IV

Week 5 (February 19th): The Self

Read: Classical, Part V

Week 6 (February 26th): Making Sense of Classical Social Thought

Due: (Formal) Essay 2 – Explicating the Classics

Week 7 (March 5th): The Legacy of the Classics

Read: Classical, Select one chapter (26-30) and one chapter (31-36).

Week 8 (March 12th): **No Class, Spring Break**

Week 9 (March 19th): Student Selected Contemporary Theory

Read: TBA

Week 10 (March 26th): Student Selected Contemporary Theory

Read: TBA

Week 11 (April 2nd): **No Class, Good Friday**

Week 12 (April 9th): Student Selected Contemporary Theory

Read: TBA

Due: Essay 3 – Connecting Classical and Contemporary Theory

Week 13 (April 16th): Student Selected Contemporary Theory

Read: TBA

Week 14 (April 23rd): Student Selected Contemporary Theory

Read: TBA

Week 15 (April 30th): Course Conclusion

Scheduled Final Exam: Thursday May 6th at 8:30am

Due: Final Essay

Grading Sheet

Reading Essays: $\frac{\quad}{4} \quad \frac{\quad}{4} \quad \frac{\quad}{4} \quad \frac{\quad}{4} \quad \frac{\quad}{4} \quad \frac{\quad}{4} = \frac{\quad}{24}$

Essays: (1) $\frac{\quad}{7}$ (2) $\frac{\quad}{7}$ (3) $\frac{\quad}{7} = \frac{\quad}{21}$

Final Essay: $= \frac{\quad}{20}$

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

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

Total: $\frac{\quad}{\text{Possible points = 100}}$

Final Grades

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