

CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY
Sociology 475
6240 Social Science Building
11-12:15 Tuesdays and Thursdays

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Office Hours

10-11am Tuesdays and Thursdays; or by appointment.

Please do not hesitate to come by my office hours. This is your chance to talk to me in person if you are having trouble with some of the material, or if you want to talk about your future educational and career decisions.

Overview

In this class, we will carefully review the writings of six of the most influential original theorists in sociology: Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Georg Simmel, and George Herbert Mead. In this regard, we will read the original (often translated) texts of these founders and discuss the relevance of their ideas about society and individuals for the development of the discipline; the strengths, weaknesses, and underlying assumptions of their ideas; and the relevance of their ideas for the discipline today.

Caveat One: Any course on classical sociological theory is by its very nature selective and incomplete because there are a many thinkers who many consider key founders of the discipline. Thus, the thinkers that we will cover are selective and based on what I think it is important for you to know, what other scholars and teachers in the discipline believe is important for you to know, and my own personal predilections. If you were hoping to read different thinkers (e.g., Adam Smith, Alex Tocqueville, Jacques Rousseau, Sigmund Freud, W.E.B. Dubois, Jane Addams etc.), then you might want to register for another section of this course.

Caveat Two: Given that we will be reading directly from original works and not a secondary textbook, this course in by nature **reading-intensive**. In fact, this might be one of the most reading-intensive courses that you'll take in sociology. I expect you to do *all* the readings for this course. You should do the assigned readings *before* each class session. The average amount of reading for each session will be about 30 pages, some days more, some days less. Because I will test you on your knowledge of the readings, you will do poorly in this class if you do not do the readings. If you do not feel that you can do the readings for this course for this term, it might be in your best interest to drop the course and take it in another term.

Prerequisites

Junior status and introduction to sociology course (180, 210, or 211); or instructors consent.

Class Format

The class format will be a mixture of lecture and discussion. I will lecture on important points, and I will often ask you questions about the material. We will also discuss together the strengths and weaknesses of their thought. Do not feel afraid to express your opinion in this class. If you don't like a theorist (or vice versa), say so, but also tell the class why. This is a great way to get discussion going.

Also, during lectures I will often quote citations from the texts that we are reading for the week. Please make sure to bring these texts with you to class. It will allow you to follow what I'm saying better, and it will also sensitize you to what I think is important to know.

Course Requirements

The requirements for the course include 12 pop quizzes, participation, and a cumulative take-home final exam. The following is the breakdown of the grade:

Quizzes: 60%

Participation: 20%

Final Exam: 20%

Quizzes will be both open book and open note. I will drop the lowest two quiz grades. If you miss a quiz, then that will count as a zero and I will drop it from your final quiz grade. There are no make-up quizzes unless there is a *really* good excuse (I'm talking death in the family or serious illness here, not because you overslept or had a small cold).

Attendance and Participation Policy

I will not take official attendance in this course. However, it is in your best interest to come to every class because you cannot participate if you are not here.

As for participation, do not think that just showing up will result in a high participation grade; it will not. I expect each of you to ask questions of the material and contribute to the discussion. At the end of the course, I will assign you a participation grade based on my perception of how much you contributed to the discussion. If you asked no questions and expressed no opinions, you will receive a *zero* for participation.

Required Texts

There are several required books, but luckily most of them are relatively inexpensive and used copies abound. These books are also on reserve at the College Library:

Emile Durkheim: *Rules of Sociological Method*. (W.D. Halls, translator)

Emile Durkheim: *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. (K. Swain, translator)

Karl Marx: *Selected Writings* [2nd edition]. (D. McLellan, editor)

Max Weber: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (T. Parsons, translator)

Georg Simmel: *On Individuality and Social Forms*. (D. Levine, editor)

George Herbert Mead: *On Social Psychology* (A. Strauss, editor)

Books are available for purchase at the various bookstores around campus. PLEASE purchase the versions and translations listed above. I will cite directly from these editions during class.

There is also a required reader of supplementary readings available from the Social Science Copy Center.

Re-grading Procedure

For the most part, I will do all of the grading for this course. Therefore, I want to discuss my re-grading procedure with you up front, since it will inevitably come up during the course of the semester.

I generally do not like to re-grade assignments, and even if I do 99% of the time the grade does not change. I take great care when grading an assignment and I will also provide you with grading criteria before each assignment is due. When I return an assignment to you and you are unsatisfied with the grade, please read the comments and review the grading criteria before you see me about re-grading. I *will not* review papers until *24 hours after* I have returned the assignment. I feel that this gives you a chance to cool down and read the comments that I wrote. If you still are unsatisfied, you can set up an appointment with me and we can discuss your assignment. If you come the appointment unprepared (i.e., you did not review the grading criteria and/or you did not read the comments I made) I will not re-grade your assignment. In other words, come to the meeting with a good argument why I should re-grade your paper. You have within one week to adequately contest a grade after the 24 hour period discussed above. However, if I do re-grade an assignment, I reserve the right to *lower* the initial grade.

Email List

I have set up email lists for the section at soc475-4-s11@lists.wisc.edu. I will use the list to communicate with all of you and you may also use it to communicate with your colleagues about matters relating to the course. Also, you should use the email address to email your discussion questions to the rest of the class.

Religious Observances

If you anticipate missing any important class sessions this semester because of a religious observance, please inform me within the first two weeks of class. Please be aware that I have the right to set reasonable limits on the total number of days claimed by any one student.

Athletes, Band Members, Etc.

Please give me the letters indicating when you will be absent as soon as possible.

Special Accommodations

The policy of the Board of Regents of the UW System is to ensure that no qualified person shall, solely by reason of disability, be denied access to, participation, or the benefits of, any program or activity operated in the UW System. Each qualified person shall receive reasonable accommodations needed to ensure access to educational opportunities, programs and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate.

Please inform me within the first two weeks of class if you have needs that may require special accommodations. For more information about accommodations for students with disabilities, please contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center at 263-2742.

Also, feel free to discuss with me any issues that may affect how well you do in the course. While I cannot guarantee any special accommodations for issues that are not technically disabilities, I will try my best to come up with a way in which you can get the most out of this course.

Academic Misconduct

Hopefully this issue will never come up, but I want to let you know my philosophy concerning academic misconduct. Personally, I will show no mercy to a person who is caught cheating and/or plagiarizing. If I believe that I have evidence of either, I will give you failing grade for the course. I will also report the incidence to the Chair of the Sociology Department as well as the Office of the Dean of Students. For more information about academic misconduct, please see me or visit <http://www.wisc.edu/students/conduct.htm>.

COURSE SCHEDULE

(Subject to Change at Discretion of Instructor or for Unforeseen Circumstances)

INTRODUCTION

I. Course Overview, Introductions, the Two Revolutions, and the Problem of Order [January 18th]

KARL MARX

I. The Method of Historical Materialism [January 20th]

From Selected Writings:

Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts: [Alienated Labor (pg. 85-middle –pg. 86-3rd)]

Theses on Feuerbach (pg. 171-3)

The Germany Ideology [Preface; The Premises of the Materialist Method; Communism and History (pg. 175-84; 187-95)]

Preface to a Critique of Political Economy (pg. 424-7)

II. The Systematic Study of Capitalism [January 25th]

From Selected Writings:

Capital: [Commodities: Use-Value and Exchange Value; Exchange and Money; The General Formula of Capital (pg. 458-72; 481-88)]

III. The Systematic Study of Capitalism, cont... [January 27th]

From Selected Writings:

Capital: [The Sale of Labor Power; The Production of Surplus Value; Constant and Variable Capital; The Rate of Surplus Value; Primitive Accumulation (pg. 488-512; 521-23)]

IV. The Social, Moral, and Individual Consequences of Capitalism [February 1st]

From Selected Writings:

Capital: [The Working Day; The Division of Labor; The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation (pg. 512-21)]

Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts: [Alienated Labor; On Money (pg. 86-4th-95; 118-20)]

Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction (pg. 71-72-4th)

V. The Necessity and Inevitability of Communist Revolution [February 3rd]

From *Selected Writings*:

Capital [The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation (pg. 523-5)]

Communist Manifesto [Parts I and II (pg. 245-62)]

The German Ideology [Egoism and Communism; The Free Development of Individuals in Communist Society (pg. 198-200; 207-8)]

VI: Marx Catch-up and Review [February 8th]

MAX WEBER

I. The Methods of Sociology: *Verstehen* and Ideal Types [February 10th]

From Reader:

Selections from *Economy and Society*

II. The Religious Impulse behind the Rise of Capitalism [February 15th]

From *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

Author's Introduction (pg. xxviii-xxxix only), Chapters 1-3

III. The Religious Impulse behind the Rise of Capitalism, cont... [February 17th]

From *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

Chapter 4 (pg. 51-80 only), Chapter 5

IV. The Religious Impulses Inhibiting the Rise of Capitalism [February 22nd]

From Reader:

Religious Rejections of the World and their Directions (all, but *really* focus on pgs. 323-33)

V. The Sociology of Power and Authority [February 24th]

From Reader:

The Types of Legitimate Domination

The Sociology of Charismatic Authority

Class, Status, and Party

VI. The Rationalization and Disenchantment of the World [March 1st]

From Reader:

Bureaucracy

Science as a Vocation

VII: Max Weber Catch-up and Review [March 3rd]

EMILE DURKHEIM

I. Sociological Positivism and Social Facts [March 8th]

From *Rules of the Sociological Method*:

1st Preface, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2, 2nd Preface [Please read in this order]

II. Sociological Positivism and Social Facts, cont... [March 10th]

From *Rules of the Sociological Method*:

Chapters 5 and 6

III. Functionalism Case Studies: The Division of Labor and Crime [March 22nd]

From *Rules of the Sociological Method*:

Chapter 3

From Reader:

Organic and Mechanical Solidarity

V. The Social Origins and Functions of Religion [March 24th]

From *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*:

Introduction (pgs. 1-8 only)

Book 1: Chapter 1

Book 2: Chapter 1

VI. The Social Origins and Functions of Religion, cont... [March 29th]

From *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*:

Book 2: Chapters 6-7

VI. The Social and Religious Origins of Cognition [March 31st]

From *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*:

Introduction (pgs. 8-18 only)

From Reader:

Primitive Classification

VII. The Future of Religion [April 5th]

From *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*:

Conclusion

VIII. Durkheim Catch-up and Review [April 7th]

GEORG SIMMEL

I. Sociology as the Study of Forms of Social Interaction [April 12th]

From *On Individuality and Social Forms*

Chapter 3 and 19 (pgs. 294-312 only)

II. Conflict [April 14th]

From *On Individuality and Social Forms*

Chapter 6

III. Money and Exchange [April 19th]

From *On Individuality and Social Forms*

Chapters 5 and 8

From Reader:

The Philosophy of Money

IV. Socializing with Strangers in the Metropolis [April 21st]

From *On Individuality and Social Forms*

Chapters 9-10, 20

V. Simmel Catch-up and Review [April 26th]

GEORGE HERBERT MEAD

I. The Human Mind in Social Context [April 28th]

From *On Social Psychology*:

Chapter 6 (pgs. 115-132; 154-187 only)

II. The Social Origins of the Self [May 3rd]

From *On Social Psychology*:

Chapter 7 (pgs. 199-228)

III. Self and Society in Interaction [May 5th]

From *On Social Psychology*:

Chapter 7 (pgs. 228-41)

*****Final exam due on May 13th at Noon*****