

# Classical Sociological Theory

Professor: József Böröcz

Fall 2011, Rutgers University  
Tuesdays, 1:10-3:50pm  
Seminar Room, Dept of Sociology

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A 'classic' is defined as work that cannot be ignored by later generations, for whatever reason. In the history of sociology, the most powerful such reason has been a west(ern Europe)-centric moral geopolitics of knowledge. In this graduate seminar, we shall read and critically engage the seminal works of the classics of sociology (a group of /late/-nineteenth-early-twentieth-century "white" bourgeois, mainly men) and assess their relevance for sociologists whose work will unfold in the context of an early-21st-century, differently configured, global world. We shall also read and discuss some work by scholars, writing outside the 'west', whose work is not conventionally included in the mainstream classical curriculum because of the west-European bias of our discipline.

This is a graduate reading seminar in theory. Class discussion—a scholarly-intellectual give-and-take—is the most important component of this course. You are required to come completely prepared, including a thorough, "quality-time" reading of the assigned texts and a mature, constructive, active and intellectually exciting, forward-looking agenda. If you are not prepared, there is no need for you to bother coming to class.

You are responsible for preparing a one-page, typed outline (a sketch focusing on key concepts, definitions, ideas, a heuristic conceptual comparison table, a set of graphs, etc.) of what you consider to be the "essence" of the work discussed during the given week. It is your responsibility to submit each week's memos to the sakai listserv no later than 7:00am on each Tuesday. They serve as (1) a basis for in-class discussions, (2) a reminder of some of the crucial components of the material, (3) help to prepare for the final exam (see below). There is no formal class presentation or paper assignment for this course.

Final Exam:

Your course grade will come from two components. /1/ Your overall performance in the class and /2/ your final exam. The latter is an **oral** exam scheduled for December 13. (You will be asked to sign up for the time slots well ahead of time.) To facilitate preparation, you will be handed a list of essay questions during the last week of the semester. Using the questions, you are responsible for preparing a short but concise, professional presentation on each of the topics. The exam preparation is of course open-notes, open-books; the exam itself is closed-books, closed-notes.

# Schedule

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Week 1—Sept 6

## **Introduction: Class Organization + Tools for Theory**

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Week 2—Sept 13

## **Historical Context**

### Required readings:

Kant, Immanuel. 1784. "What Is Enlightenment?"  
<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/kant.html>

Hamilton, Peter. 1995. "The Enlightenment and the Birth of Social Science." Pp. 20-54 in Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert and Kenneth Thompson, eds., Modernity. An Introduction to Modern Societies. Oxford: Polity Press.

Böröcz, József. 2009. "Segments to Regions: Structural Transformation of Global Governance." pp. 65-109 (Chapter 2) in The European Union and Global Social Change. A Critical Geopolitical-Economic Analysis. London: Routledge.

### Further reading:

Böröcz, József. 2009. "Global Economic Weight in the Longue-Durée: Nemesis of West European Geopolitics." pp. 15-64 (chapter 1) in The European Union and Global Social Change. A Critical Geopolitical-Economic Analysis. London: Routledge.

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## **Marx between Hegel and Marx**

### Required readings:

Marx, Karl. 1844. "Estranged Labour." Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844.  
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/labour.htm>

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. 1848. Manifesto of the Communist Party.  
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/>

### Further Reading:

Marx, Karl. 1844. The rest of the Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844.  
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/preface.htm>

Engels, Friedrich. 1845. The Condition of the Working Class in England.  
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/condition-working-class/>

### Commentaries:

Giddens, Anthony. 1971. "Marx's Early Writings." Pp. 1-17 in Capitalism and Modern Social Theory. An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Postone, Moishe. 1993. "Labor and Totality: Hegel and Marx." Pp. 71-83 in Time, Labor and Social Domination. A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory. Cambridge, Cambridge UP.

Böröcz, József. 2009. "Geopolitics of Property Relations: State Socialism under Global Capitalism." Pp 110-150 (Chapter 3) in The European Union and Global Social Change. A Critical Geopolitical-Economic Analysis. London: Routledge.

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## **The Marxist Marx**

### Required readings:

Marx, Karl. 1977 (1867). Capital, A Critique of the Political Economy. Follow the appropriate links from <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/>

- . Part I: “Commodities and Money.” Includes the following chapters:
  - 1, “Commodities”
  - 2, “Exchange”
  - 3, “Money or the Circulation of Commodities” and
- . Part II: “The transformation of Money into Capital.” Includes the following chapters:
  - 4, “The General Formula for Capital”
  - 5, “Contradictions in the General Formula for Capital” &
  - 6, “The Buying and Selling of Labour-Power.”

Marx, Karl. 1845. The German Ideology. ONLY Chapter I: “Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlooks”  
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01.htm>

### Commentaries:

Giddens, Anthony. 1971. Capitalism and Modern Social Theory. An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. ONLY pp. 18-64, i.e., the following chapters:

- . Chapter 2: “Historical materialism”
- . Chapter 3: “The relations of production and class structure,”
- . Chapter 4: “The Theory of Capitalist Development.”

Dahrendorf, Ralf. 1959 (1957). “Karl Marx’s Model of the Class Society.” Pp. 123-265 (Chapter I.) in Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society. Stanford: Stanford UP.

Postone, Moishe. 1993. Time, Labor and Social Domination. A Reinterpretation of Marx’s Critical Theory. Cambridge, Cambridge UP. ONLY the following chapters:

- . Chapter 4: “Abstract Labor” and
- . Chapter 5: “Abstract Time.”

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Week 5—Oct 4 ← THIS CLASS WILL NEED TO BE RE-SCHEDULED!

**Durkheim's *Division of Labor***

Durkheim, Emile. 1933 (1893). Division of Labor in Society. Translated by George Simpson. New York: The Free Press. ONLY the following excerpts:

- . Introduction—The Problem (39-46)
- . BOOK ONE, THE FUNCTION OF THE DIVISION OF LABOR (49-232)
- . Conclusion (396-410).

**Further reading:**

Parsons, Talcott. 1964. "Evolutionary Universals in Society." American Sociological Review, XXIX,3(June):339-57.

**Commentaries:**

Lukes, Steven. 1985 (1973). "Social Solidarity and the Division of Labor." Chapter 7 (pp. 137-78) in Emile Durkheim. His Life and Work: A Historical and Critical Study. Stanford: Stanford UP.

Giddens, Anthony. 1971. "Durkheim's Early Works." Chapter 5 (pp. 65-81) in Capitalism and Modern Social Theory. An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gouldner, Alvin. 1970. The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology. New York: Basic Books. ONLY the following excerpts:

- . Chapter 4: Period IV "Parsonsian Structural-Functionalism" (138-56) and
- . Chapter 9: ONLY "Aspects of Parsons' Change Analysis," "The Drift toward Marxism," Differentiation: The Forces versus the Relations of Production," and "The Parsons-Marx Convergence in Evolutionism" (pp. 351-68).

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Week 6—Oct 11

**Durkheim of *Suicide***

Main Reading:

Durkheim, Emile. 1977 (1897). Suicide: A Study in Sociology. Translated by John A. Spaulding and George Simpson. Edited, with an Introduction by George Simpson. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press.

Further Reading:

Durkheim, Emile. 1957 (1915). Elementary Forms of the Religious Life. Translated by Joseph Ward Swain. London: Allen & Unwin. ONLY the following sections:

- . Introduction / Subject of Our Study: Religious Sociology and the Theory of Knowledge (13-36)
- . Book 1 / Preliminary Questions (37-117), and
- . Conclusion (462-96).

Commentaries:

Lukes, Steven. 1985 (1973). Emile Durkheim. His Life and Work: A Historical and Critical Study. Stanford: Stanford UP. ONLY the following excerpts:

- . "Suicide" (191-225) and
- . "The Sociology of Religion and Knowledge" (506-19).

Giddens, Anthony. 1971. "Religion and Moral Discipline." Chapter 8 (pp. 105-18) in Capitalism and Modern Social Theory. An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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**Taking Off from Durkheim**

Saussure, Ferdinand de. 1986 (1916). Course in General Linguistics. Edited by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye with the collaboration of Albert Riedlinger. Translated and annotated by Roy Harris. La Salle, IL: Open Court Classics. ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE. ONLY the following excerpts:

. “Nature of the Linguistic Sign.” (65-70) and

. “Linguistic Value” (110-120).

Mauss, Marcel. 1990 (1923). The Gift. The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies. Translated by W. D. Halls. Foreword by Mary Douglas. New York: W.W. Norton.

Polányi, Karl. 1992 (1957). “The Economy as Instituted Process.” Pp. 29-51. in Richard Swedberg and Mark Granovetter (eds.) The Sociology of Economic Life. Boulder, CO: Westview Press; OR: in Karl Polanyi, Conrad M. Arensberg and Harry W. Pearson (eds.) 1957. Trade and Market in the Early Empires. Economies in History and Theory. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press. ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE.

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Week 8—Oct 25

## **Weber the Proto-Modernizationist**

### Main reading:

Weber, Max. 2011 (1904-5). The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Third Oxford Edition. New Translation and Introduction by Stephen Kalberg. New York: Oxford University Press. ONLY the following parts:

- . 1 The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (67-179)
- . “Prefatory Remarks to Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion” (233-50)

### Commentaries:

Kalberg, Stephen. 2011. “Introduction to The Protestant Ethic” pp. 8-63 in The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Third Oxford Edition. New Translation and Introduction by Stephen Kalberg. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bendix, Reinhard. 1962. Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books. ONLY the following parts:

- . “The Spirit of Capitalism” (50-55)
- . “The Protestant Ethic” (55-64)
- . “Ideas as Causes and as Consequences” (64-69)

Ray, Larry. 1987. “The Protestant Ethic Debate.” Chapter 4 (97-125) in Andersen, R. J., J.A. Hughes and W. W. Sharrock (eds.) Classic Disputes in Sociology. London: Unwin Hyman.



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Week 9—Nov 1

**Weber's Class, Status and Estate:  
Historical Sociology of German Bourgeois Society**

Main reading:

Weber, Max. 1978 (1920) "Status Groups and Classes." Pp. 302-7 in Economy and Society, Volume 1. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Connected readings:

Böröcz, József. 1997. "Stand Reconstructed: Contingent Closure and Institutional Change." Sociological Theory, 15, 3(Nov):215-48.  
[http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1082463](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1082463)

Dahrendorf, Rolf. 1959 (1957) "A Sociological Critique of Marx." Pp. 117-56 (Chapter IV) in Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society. Stanford: Stanford UP.

Murphy, Raymond. 1988. Social Closure. The Theory of Monopolization and Exclusion. Oxford: Clarendon Press. ONLY the following chapters:  
"An Introduction to the Theory of Closure" (1-14)  
"The Struggle for Scholarly Recognition" (15-42).

Cox, Oliver C. 1945. "Estates, Social Classes, and Political Classes." American Sociological Review, X:464-9.

Wenger, Morton G. 1980. "The Transmutation of Weber's Stand in American Sociology and Its Social Roots." Current Perspectives in Social Theory, 1: 357-78.

Kozyr-Kowalski, Stanisław. 1983. "Max Weber's Theories of Social Estates." The Polish Sociological Bulletin, 1-4: 85-102.

Kocka, Jürgen. 1985. "Marxist Social Analysis and the Problem of White-Collar Employees." State, Culture and Society, 1,2(Winter):137-51.

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## **Simmel's Modernity**

### Main readings:

Simmel, Georg. 1971 (1908) "The Stranger." Pp. 143-9 in Donald N. Levine (ed and transl.) On Individuality and Social Forms. University of Chicago Press. OR:  
<http://rci.rutgers.edu/~contemp/Simmel.pdf>

Simmel, Georg. 1971 (1917). "The Metropolis and Mental Life." Pp. 324-339. in Donald N. Levine (ed.) On Individuality and Social Forms. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, The Heritage of Sociology Series. OR:  
[http://WWW.BLACKWELLPUBLISHING.COM/CONTENT/BPL\\_IMAGES/CONTENT\\_STORE/SAMPLE\\_CHAPTER/0631225137/BRIDGE.PDF](http://WWW.BLACKWELLPUBLISHING.COM/CONTENT/BPL_IMAGES/CONTENT_STORE/SAMPLE_CHAPTER/0631225137/BRIDGE.PDF)

Simmel, Georg. 1994 (1909) "Door and Bridge." Translated by Mark Ritter. Theory, Culture & Society, 11,1:5-10.  
[http://www2.latech.edu/~wtwillou/A320\\_420images\\_w02/GSimmel.pdf](http://www2.latech.edu/~wtwillou/A320_420images_w02/GSimmel.pdf)

Simmel, Georg. 1994 (1902). "The Picture Frame: An Aesthetic Study." Translated by Mark Ritter. Theory, Culture & Society, 11,1: 11-7.

Simmel, Georg. 1971 (1907) "Exchange." Pp. 43-69 in Donald N. Levine (ed and transl.) On Individuality and Social Forms. University of Chicago Press.

Simmel, Georg. 1971 (1907) "Prostitution." Pp. 121-6 in Donald N. Levine (ed and transl.) On Individuality and Social Forms. University of Chicago Press.

### Commentaries:

Frisby, David. 1992. Simmel and Since. Essays on Georg Simmel's Social Theory. London: Routledge. ONLY the following chapters:  
. "The Study of Society" (5-19)  
. "Some Economic Aspects of The Philosophy of Money" (80-97) and  
. "The Aesthetics of Modern Life" (135-52).

Fisby, David. 1994. "Introduction to the Simmel Texts." Theory, Culture & Society, 11,1:1-3.

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Week 11—Nov 15

**“Missed” Categories of Modernity: ‘Race’**

Main readings:

Dubois, W.E.B. 2007 (1903) Souls of Black Folk. Oxford: Oxford UP.

Fanon, Frantz. 1967. Black Skin, White Masks. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Press.

Césaire, Aimé. 2000 (1955) Discourse on Colonialism. Translated by Joan Pinkham. New York: Monthly Review Press. Pp 29-78.

Commentaries:

Robinson, Cedric J. 1983. Black Marxism. The Making of the Black Radical Tradition. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Kelley, Robin D. G. 2000. “A Poetics of Anticolonialism.” Pp 7-29 in Discourse on Colonialism. Translated by Joan Pinkham. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Film:

Frantz Fanon: Black Skin White Mask. Dir.: Isaac Julien. BBC, 1995 (50 min). On reserve at the MEDIA Center in Douglass Library. Make sure you watch it before class.

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Week 12—Nov 29

**“Missed” Categories of Modernity: ‘Gender’**

Main readings:

Wollstonecraft, Mary. 2010 (1892). A Vindication of the Right of Woman. New York: Verso. OR: <http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/WolVind.html> .

Sakhawat Hossain, Rokeya. 1988 (1905). Sultana’s Dream. New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York.

Commentaries:

Scott, Joan. 1986. “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis.” The American Historical Review, 91,5 (Dec): 1053-1075. OR: <http://ascweb.unl.edu/majors/joan%20Scott%20article.pdf>

Sarkar, Mahua. 2004. “Looking for Feminism.” Gender and History, 16,2(Aug): 318-33. OR: <http://bingweb.binghamton.edu/~msarkar/looking.for.feminism.published.pdf>

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Week 13—Dec 6

Recap, final contextualization, extra discussion, uncovered agenda items, tying of loose ends

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Week 14—Dec 13

Final Exams

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**Disclaimer:**

**The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Thus, behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, discourteous remarks, and other behaviors specified by individual instructors. Courteous and lawful expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, permitted.**

**If a student engages in disruptive behavior, the instructor, following the University Code of Student Conduct, may direct the student to leave class for the remainder of the class period. Instructors may specify other consequences in their syllabi. Serious verbal assaults, harassment, or defamation of the instructor or other students can lead to university disciplinary proceedings. The University Code of Student Conduct is at <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/judaff/ucsc.shtml>.**