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

Week 1—Sept 6

Introduction: Class Organization + Tools for Theory

Week 2—Sept 13

Historical Context

Required readings:

http://www/english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/kant.html


Further reading:

Week 3—Sept 20

**Marx between Hegel and Marx**

**Required readings:**

[http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/labour.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/labour.htm)

[http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/](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](http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/preface.htm)

[http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/condition-working-class/](http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/condition-working-class/)

**Commentaries:**


Week 4—Sept 27

The Marxist Marx

Required readings:


. 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.”


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
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:**


**Commentaries:**


- Chapter 4: Period IV “Parsonian Structural-Functionalism” (138-56) and
Week 6—Oct 11

**Durkheim of Suicide**

**Main Reading:**


**Further Reading:**

- 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:**

- “Suicide” (191-225) and

Week 7—Oct 18

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


Week 8—Oct 25

**Weber the Proto-Modernizationist**

Main reading:


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

Commentaries:


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

Week 9—Nov 1

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

Main reading:


Connected readings:


“An Introduction to the Theory of Closure” (1-14)
“The Struggle for Scholarly Recognition” (15-42).


Week 10—Nov 8

**Simmel's Modernity**

Main readings:


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

Week 11—Nov 15

“Missed” Categories of Modernity: ‘Race’

Main readings:


Commentaries:


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.
Week 12—Nov 29

“Missed” Categories of Modernity: ‘Gender’

Main readings:


Commentaries:


Week 13—Dec 6

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

Week 14—Dec 13

Final Exams
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.