

CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY
Sociology 920:515:01
Paul McLean
Department of Sociology
Rutgers University
Fall 2015

Location and time: Davison Seminar room, Wednesdays, 1:00-3:40
Office hours: M 12:00-2:00; W 4:00-5:30, Davison 101C, and by appointment
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This course provides a detailed examination of a handful of writings which have come to be seen as the most important works from the classical period of sociological theorizing about social organization, social processes, and personhood. To examine social organization is to see society not as an assemblage of individuals, but as a coherent (and/or emergent) entity with formal properties or organizing principles of its own. It is to understand the seeming turmoil of social life in an abstract and elegant, and one might even say 'reduced', way. To study social processes is to acknowledge that societies constantly change, but also to see that how they change may be shaped by governing logics or tendencies. To see the person as 'social' is to recognize the extent to which the human individual is constituted through social interaction and by positions occupied in a social structure.

Learning Goals

The learning goals of this course are fourfold. First, the course will provide you with a richer understanding of some of the most fundamental arguments and texts in sociology than you may have developed previously. To be conversant in sociology as a field of inquiry demands an acquaintance with this material. Second, it should help you devise questions and a critical framework for your *own* analysis of the social world. These texts serve as prompts for thinking about the human condition in general (if such a thing exists), they helped to establish the principal agenda for sociological inquiry in the twentieth century, and the questions they pose and the arguments they offer continue to inform contemporary empirical research, whether directly or as foils for our own theorizing. Third, by reading materials of a previous century, we get a sense of what most concerned scholars of an earlier time and different historical place, which in turn will help us develop a sociology of social theory itself. Fourth, this course is meant to help you develop your ability to formulate a theoretical question and propose an empirical application of it in a succinct written format, through a set of short paper assignments.

In addition, the Graduate Program in the Department of Sociology has identified program-wide learning goals towards which your performance in this course will contribute. Those learning goals may be found at: <http://sociology.rutgers.edu/graduate/53-program-information/220-phd-learning-goals-and-assessment>.

Readings

I have ordered a number of books through the University bookstore, as listed below. Some of these you may already have; others you can acquire through amazon or other sources at a fraction of the bookstore price. You **MUST** own copies of these readings, however, to thrive in this course. Some additional readings I have placed on the course sakai site. You must come to class having done the reading and fully prepared to participate in a discussion of the material.

- 1) Robert C. Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd edition (Norton)
- 2) Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, ed. Coser/Lukes (Simon & Schuster)
- 3) Emile Durkheim, *Suicide*, trans. Spaulding (S&S)
- 4) Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Fields (S&S)
- 5) Georg Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed. Wolff (S&S)
- 6) Georg Simmel, *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations* (S&S)
- 7) Georg Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Levine (Chicago) (**recom**)
- 8) Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Kalberg (Oxford)
- 9) W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Dover)
- 10) G.H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist* (Chicago)

Grading

Your grade in this course will be based on five elements: participation in class (20%), three short papers (20% each), and a final oral exam based on a set of discussion questions we will develop in advance (20%). I encourage you to prepare a succinct summary of the main arguments and issues for each class session. I will not grade these, but they will be important as you prepare for the final exam. The basic idea of the exam is for you to demonstrate that you are ‘conversant’ in the material presented in this class, without recourse to your notes or to the texts themselves.

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances. In addition, the University maintains a Code of Conduct which may be consulted at: <http://polcomp.rutgers.edu/judaff/docs/UCSC.pdf>

Schedule of Classes

Week 1 (9/2) Introduction: What is Classical Theory, and Why Read It?

- Readings:
- 1) Donald N. Levine, *Visions of the Sociological Tradition*, selections [sakai]
 - 2) W. G. Runciman, "Forgetting the Founders." *The Sociological Review* 56, 3 (2008): 358-69 [sakai]
 - 3) Marinus Ossewaarde, "Forgetting the founders? A Reply to Runciman." *The Sociological Review*, 57, 2 (2009): 353-6 [sakai]
 - 4) R. W. Connell, "Why is Classical Theory Classical?" *American Journal of Sociology* 102, 6 (1997): 1511-57 [sakai]

Week 2 (9/9) Pre-Sociological Social Theory: Hobbes on the Problem of Social Order, and Smith on the Natural Foundations of the Social Order

- Readings:
- 1) Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, frontispiece, Introduction, pp. 105-6, and parts of chs. 6, 11, 13, and 14 [sakai]
 - 2) Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (Chicago), pp. 7-20, 358-65; 62-79, 88-97, 275-8; 477 [sakai]
 - 3) Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Liberty), pp. 9-26, 43-5, 50-7, 61-4, 77-8 (par. 10 only), 179-87 [sakai]

Week 3 (9/16) (Mostly) the Early Marx

Note: All Marx readings are taken from *The Marx-Engels Reader* with appropriate pages listed

- Readings:
- 1) Marx, excerpts from *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, pp. 67, 70-81, 93-105
 - 2) Marx, "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof," pp. 319-28
 - 3) Marx, excerpts from *The German Ideology*, pp. 148-75

Week 4 (9/23) Marx II

- Readings:
- 1) Marx, "Wage Labor and Capital," 203-19
 - 2) Marx, "Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*," p. 3-6

3) Marx, parts of *Capital*, pp. 302-8, 329-61, 376-88, 397-415, 419-31 [much of this is a longer treatment of what he wrote in “Wage Labour and Capital”]

4) Marx and Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party,” pp. 469-91

5) Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,” pp. 594-617

FIRST PAPERS DUE MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 AT NOON ON SAKAI

Week 5 (9/30) Durkheim on the Division of Labor

Readings: Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, pp. xxv-xxx, 1-7; Book I, chs. 1-3, 5, 7; Book II, chs. 2, 3; Book III, chs. 1-2; pp. xxxi-lvii

Week 6 (10/7) Durkheim on Suicide and Empirical Method

Readings: 1) Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, pp. 50-72 [sakai]
 2) Durkheim, *Suicide*, pp. 152-89, 197-216, 241-276, 297-325

Week 7 (10/14) Durkheim on Religion and the Interpretive Method

Readings: Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, pp. 1-18, 33-44, 99-133, 141-9, 207-8, 216-41, 265-72, 303-29, 348-54, 392-417, 433-48

SECOND PAPERS DUE MONDAY, OCTOBER 19 AT NOON ON SAKAI

Week 8 (10/21) Weber on the Types of Motivation and the Types of Legitimate Domination

Readings: 1) Weber, *Economy and Society*, ch. 1, pp. 4-30 only [sakai]
 2) Weber, *Economy and Society*, ch. 3 “The Types of Legitimate Domination,” pp. 212-31, 241-54 [sakai]

Week 9 (10/28) Weber on the Protestant Ethic

Readings: 1) Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, chs. 1, 2, 4, 5

2) Weber, "Prefatory Remarks to Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion," pp. in the Kalberg edition (published as the Introduction to PESC in earlier editions)

[n.b. We will need to check page numbers and formats in different editions for this week's readings]

Week 10 (11/4) Weber on Status, Social Science Methodology, and Politics

Readings: 1) Weber, "Class, Status, Party," from *Economy and Society*, pp. 926-39 [the same reading can be found in a different translation in Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber*, pp. 180-195] [sakai]

2) Weber, "'Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy," in *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, pp. 72-84 [sakai]

3) Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," selection (pp. 352-69 in *Weber: Political Writings*, ed. Lassman and Speirs, Cambridge University Press) [sakai]

Week 11 (11/11) Simmel I: Basic Principles and the Idea of Forms

Readings: 1) Simmel, "The Problem of Sociology," in Levine, ed., pp. 23-35 [sakai]

2) Simmel, "The Stranger," in Wolff, ed., pp. 402-8 (also in Levine, pp. 143-9)

3) Simmel, "Fashion," in Levine, ed., pp. 294-308 [sakai]

4) Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in Wolff, pp. 409-24 (also found in Levine, pp. 324-39)

5) Simmel, "Sociability," in Wolff, ed., pp. 40-57

6) Simmel, "Faithfulness and Gratitude," in Wolff, ed., pp. 379-87

Week 12(11/18) The Structuralist Simmel

Readings: 1) Simmel, excerpts from Part Two, "Quantitative Aspects of the Group," in Wolff, ed., pp. 87, 90-98, 109-17, 122-36, 145-69

2) Simmel, "The Web of Group Affiliations," in *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations*

3) Simmel, "Conflict," in *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations*, chs. 1 and 4, plus pp. 57-64

THIRD PAPERS DUE MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23 AT NOON ON SAKAI

NO CLASS WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25; RU ON FRIDAY SCHEDULE

Week 13 (12/2) Freud

Readings: 1) Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, sections 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 [in two chunks on sakai]

Week 14 (12/9) Cooley, Dubois, Mead

Readings: 1) Charles Horton Cooley, selections from *On Self and Social Organization*, ed. H.-J. Schubert, pp. 93-6, 161-73, 215-25, 230-1, 234-40 [sakai]

2) W.E.B. Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, read the first three chapters and skim thereafter

3) George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self and Society from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist*, pp. 42-51, 117-25, 135-78, 200-4(?), 209-13(?), 222-6

**FINAL ORAL EXAMS TO BE SCHEDULED ON
MONDAY AND TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15-16**