

DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Sociology 920:313:01-02

Tillett Hall 204; MW 1:40-3:00

Department of Sociology

Rutgers University

Fall 2011

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This course, designed specifically with sociology majors (and minors) in mind, provides a detailed examination of the most important works from the classical period of sociological theorizing about personhood, social organization, and social processes. 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. To examine social organization is to see society not as an assemblage of individuals, but as a coherent 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 change, but also to see that how they change may be shaped by governing laws or logics.

The aims of the course are fourfold. First, it will provide you with an understanding of some of the most fundamental arguments and texts in sociology—to be conversant in sociology 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 are excellent prompts for thinking about the human condition in general, they established the agenda for sociological inquiry in the twentieth century, and the questions they pose and the arguments they offer continue to inform contemporary empirical research. 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 oral and written communication skills, insofar as I highly value thoughtful discussion in the classroom and clear, trenchant writing in written work.

Readings

I have made an effort to keep the number of required pages of reading down, but much of what remains will be DIFFICULT. You must read the material carefully before class and if possible, re-read it after class, to ensure you are achieving an adequate understanding. This year I have placed all of the required primary materials (i.e., materials WRITTEN BY classical authors) on **sakai**. In addition you are required to purchase the following book available at the Livingston Campus Bookstore:

Jonathan H. Turner, Leonard Beeghley, and Charles H. Powers, eds., *The Emergence of Sociological Theory* (Thomson, 6th edition, 2007)

Requirements and Evaluation

Your grade in this 4-credit course will be based on the following factors:

- 1) attendance and *participation* at lectures *and*, especially, in recitations (20%);
- 2) one midterm test in class (20%);
- 3) two short papers, each about 5 pages in length (20% each);
- 4) a final exam (20%).

Attendance will be taken regularly at both lectures and recitations. You are expected to show up on time and stay for the duration, and you will be assessed on the quantity and quality of your classroom participation. I will sometimes call upon people to ensure such participation. The midterm test will be a combination of multiple choice questions, short definitions, and quotation identifications. The two papers will be written on a topic proposed by the instructors, although you may seek permission to write on a topic of your own choosing if the professor and the TA approve. The basic idea in each paper will be to articulate and illustrate the value of some important concept or argument in one or more of the texts we have read for understanding some social phenomenon. The final exam will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions covering material largely from the second half of the semester, but also requiring some use of first half materials. I would also like to draw your attention to the following statement:

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, and discourteous remarks.** 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, then your instructor, in compliance with the University Code of Student Conduct, is entitled to direct that student to leave class for the remainder of the class period. Serious verbal assaults, harassment, or defamation of the instructor or other students can lead to university disciplinary proceedings. The University Code of Student Conduct may be consulted at: <http://polcomp.rutgers.edu/judaff/docs/UCSC.pdf>

Lecture Schedule and Weekly Reading Schedule

Week 1

September 7: Syllabus distribution, special permission number requests, overview, etc.

Reading: none assigned

September 8: A Brief Pre-history of Sociological Theory I: Thomas Hobbes, plus the French Enlightenment

Read: 1) Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, **author's introduction only** [hobbes.pdf on sakai]
2) Turner et al., chapter 1

Week 2

September 12: NO CLASS—INSTRUCTOR OUT OF TOWN

September 14: A Brief Pre-history of Sociological Theory II: Adam Smith and the Scottish Enlightenment

Read: Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, selections [smith_wn.pdf on sakai]

Week 3

September 19: The Scottish Enlightenment and Social Interaction

Read: 1) Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, selections [smith_moral.pdf on sakai]
2) Thomas Schelling, *Micromotives and Macrobehavior*, selections
[schelling.pdf on sakai]

September 21: The Beginnings of “Sociology”: Auguste Comte

Read : Turner et al., chapter 2-3

Week 4

September 26: The Beginnings of Sociology II: Herbert Spencer

Read: Turner et al., chapters 4-5

September 28: Marx's Critique of Capitalism, Through the Lenses of Exploitation and Alienation

Read: 1) Karl Marx_Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844_selections.doc [sakai]
2) Karl Marx_Commodity Fetishism.doc [sakai]
3) Turner et al., chapter 6, plus pp. 138-147

Week 5

October 3: Marx's Philosophy of History

- Read: 1) Marx_The German Ideology_selections.doc [sakai]
2) Turner et al., pp. 117-124

October 5: Marx's View of Classes and Political Action

- Read: 1) Marx_The Communist Manifesto_selections [sakai]
2) Turner et al., pp. 124-138, 147-151

Week 6

October 10: Emile Durkheim and the Sociological Method

- Read: 1) Turner et al., chapter 12, plus pp. 292-297
2) Durkheim_The Rules of Sociological Method_selections.doc [sakai]

October 12: Durkheim on Suicide

- Read: 1) Durkheim_Suicide_selections.pdf [sakai]
2) Turner et al., pp. 297-302

Week 7

October 17: **Midterm Examination (Bring a #2 Pencil and a Pen)**

October 19: Durkheim on Mechanical Solidarity

- Read: 1) Turner et al., pp. 279-292
2) Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, selection #1 = durkheim_divlabor1.pdf [sakai]

FIRST PAPER TOPICS DISTRIBUTED

Week 8

October 24: Durkheim: More on the Division of Labor

- Read: Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, selection #2 = durkheim_divlabor2.pdf [sakai]

October 26: Durkheim on Religion and Social Organization

- Read: 1) Durkheim_The Elementary Forms of Religious Life_selections.pdf [sakai]
2) Turner et al., pp. 302-316

Week 9

October 31: Georg Simmel and the Formal Properties of Social Life

- Read: 1) Simmel_The Metropolis and Mental Life.pdf [sakai]
2) Simmel_The Stranger.pdf [sakai]
3) Turner et al., chapter 10 and chapter 11, except pp. 230-235

FIRST PAPERS DUE!

November 2: The Structuralist Simmel

- Read: 1) Simmel_Treatise on the Triad_selections.pdf [sakai]
2) Turner et al., pp. 230-235

Week 10

November 7: Some Other Cool Stuff by Simmel, and his Significance Today

- Read: 1) Simmel_Fashion.doc [sakai]
2) Ronald Breiger, "The Duality of Persons and Groups" in *Social Forces* 53,2 (December 1974): 181-190 [sakai]
3) Eviatar Zerubavel, "Generally Speaking: The Logic and Mechanics of Social Pattern Analysis," *Sociological Forum* 22, 2 (June 2007): 131-145 [sakai]

November 9: Max Weber on Social Science Methodology

- Read: 1) Weber_Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy_selections.pdf [sakai]
2) Turner et al., chapter 8, plus pp. 170-176

Week 11

November 14: Weber on Social Status, versus Class

- Read: 1) Turner et al., pp. 180-194
2) Weber_Class, Status, Party.pdf [sakai]

SECOND PAPER TOPICS DISTRIBUTED

November 16: Weber on Domination and Bureaucracy as the Definitive Form of Legitimate Domination in Modernity

- Read: 1) Weber_on Bureaucracy_selections.pdf [sakai]

Week 12

November 21: Weber on the Protestant Ethic

- Read: Weber_The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism_selections.doc [sakai]

November 23: **NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

Week 13

November 28: Weber on Politics (and Science)

Read: Weber, “Politics as a Vocation” [**weber_voc in the Weber folder on sakai**]

November 30: Early American Sociology and Pragmatism

Read: 1) Turner et al., chapter 14
2) Charles H. Cooley, selections from *Human Nature and the Social Order, Social Organization, and Social Process* [**sakai**]

SECOND PAPERS DUE!

Week 14

December 5: George Herbert Mead and Symbolic Interaction

Read: 1) Mead_Mind, Self, and Society_selections.pdf [**sakai**]
2) Turner et al., chapter 15

December 7: W. E. B. Dubois on the Double Consciousness, and Empirical Sociology

Read: Du Bois_selections.pdf [**sakai**]

Week 15

December 12: Review and question period

FINAL EXAM:
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 8:00-11:00 a.m., TILLET HALL 204