

Development of Sociological Theory

Rutgers University: Sociology 01:920:313: 01-02; Spring 2017
Tuesday and Thursday, 3:20-4:40PM, Lucy Stone Hall, Room B269

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Course Summary:

It is by no means rare to begrudge or dismiss theoretical texts: often times they use wild and seemingly unintelligible language, provide no context, examples, or applications, and/or reek of real, offensive, and indefensible social prejudices. And yet, theory exists, develops, and continues to be taught. So there must be something to be gained from writing it and learning it, right? In this course, we hope to show you that theory has merit and, what is more, to help you realize that for yourself. To accomplish this, each of us must come to lecture *and* recitation with an open mind, prepared to discuss and think *creatively* through each text, and willing to take risks, be vulnerable, and respect one another.

Toward these goals, we will learn how to read and critically engage with sociological theory. This entails developing good reading practices; i.e. the ability to read with patience, fortitude, and a “say yes to the text” mentality. This entails honing a critical sensibility; i.e. the ability to identify and interpret sociohistorical context, germane “schools” or “conversations,” political stakes, and oversights. And again, this entails rediscovering your imagination. Indeed, most of the texts we will read were written by white men in 19th century Europe. However, this need not imply that their ideas are incoherent, unimportant, and/or unrelated to our present circumstances and your individual experiences as a social being living in a social world. Only by thinking imaginatively, however, can we begin to decipher that which is esoteric, ground that which is abstract, and find relevance therein.

Overall, this course aims to review particular sociological “classics”— prominent 19th century works still considered by today’s standards to be “foundational”—as well as their respective concepts, methodologies, and baggage. But that is not all. As the title suggests, this course also aims to consider how these “classical” theories have been updated, adapted, and/or repudiated by scholars thereafter. Thus we will consider each text on its own and as part of larger intellectual genealogies. Given the challenging writing style of the assigned works and our relative unfamiliarity with their style of abstract thinking, we do *not* expect you to understand every argument, agree with every perspective, or absorb every detail. With that said, we *do* expect you to devote *at least* 10 hours per week outside of class to reading, reckoning, researching, and thinking about the assigned texts. If you do this, and show up to class ready to listen and participate, you will earn a good grade, and hopefully learn a little bit about the social world around you and the academic discipline that has devoted itself to developing the ideas and tools needed to study it.

Grading:

Attendance 10%: Attending lecture and recitation means being present (and on time) for class. It also means completing recitation assignments and homework worksheets.

Additionally, please note: only 2 unexcused absences from lecture are allowed; two points will be deducted from your final grade for each additional unexcused absence.

Quizzes/Responses 10%: Beginning-of-class quizzes or end-of-class responses during lecture will assess the extent to which you have read and grasped the material.

Participation 15%: Involvement in lecture and recitation means actively contributing *and* actively listening. Asking thoughtful questions during presentations, treating your peers and conducting yourself respectfully, and demonstrating effort and improvement over the course of the semester will also count toward this grade.

Presentation 15%: One fifteen-minute presentation on a cultural object of your choice (video, anecdote, commodity, etc.) through the lens of one or two theorists. More specific guidelines for these presentations are posted on Sakai.

Mini-Memos 20%: Weekly responses (two to three paragraphs in length) are due *by 5PM on Friday of that week* (though you may submit them earlier if you wish). Mini-memos should analyze and reflect on that week's assigned film in terms of that week's assigned texts, cohere around a clearly stated and well supported main claim, as well as demonstrate understanding of the material, engagement with the film, and original, critical thinking. These memos will be assigned letter grades. (Note: Those that just repeat what was said in class or the readings will not earn credit.) You are also expected to comment on two of your peers' responses *by 5PM on Sunday of that week*. You may skip two mini-memos.

Final Exam 30%: End-of-semester in-class exam on all course material. Exam will include multiple-choice, short-response, and video-response questions. Note: This exam will cover a lot of material. However, if you keep up with the readings, attend lecture and recitation, and generally do what is expected of you, you should be more than fine.

Recitation:

Each of you is expected to attend and participate in weekly recitation sessions. In recitation, you will discuss the assigned texts and films due that session and the previous session, develop writing skills, think critically about the social world, learn how to "read" cultural media in preparation for your presentations, and review materials for the final exam. To support your processing of the texts, you will complete a worksheet as you read and bring the sheet and your notes to recitation to use in our discussions. Attendance is obligatory and participation will be tracked. We reserve the right to issue additional homework and/or in-class quizzes on that week's readings.

Index Cards:

By the end of each class, you will turn in one index card with your name, the date, and your response to the daily prompt. This daily prompt will take one of three forms: 1) a

beginning-of-class quiz comprised of two or three questions about the readings assigned that day; 2) a beginning-of-class reaction to the readings; or 3) an end-of-class reaction to the readings, lecture, or class discussion. **(Note: if you are late to class and miss the quiz/response, you will earn a zero.)** The response cards in particular are meant to provide an outlet to develop critical thinking and self-reflection. Please *do not* summarize the readings or the lecture in these responses. Quizzes will be assigned a numerical grade and responses will be assigned a grade of check minus, check, or check plus.

Course Materials:

Readings: All assigned readings are available on Sakai, *except* the following texts, which are available for purchase at the Rutgers' bookstore:

Marx, Karl. 1972. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. NY: Norton.

Freud, Sigmund. [1930] 2010. *Civilization and its Discontents*. NY: Norton.

Durkheim, Émile. [1893] 1984. *The Division of Labor in Society*. NY: Simon and Schuster.

Durkheim, Émile. [1897] 1966. *Suicide*. NY: Simon and Schuster.

Films: All assigned films are available through youtube or course reserves, save for the film, "13th". The last page of this syllabus provides a list of each film and where/how to access each. Many of the suggested films are available at the Rutgers' library, though not all of them. If you have trouble procuring a film, please feel free to contact me.

Sensitizing Concepts and Worksheets: Below each reading in italics is a list of concepts. These concepts should guide your reading, your mini-memos, and your studying for the final exam. We have created worksheets for you to complete *as homework while reading*. These worksheets will be discussed in recitation, so please bring them with you.

Extra Credit: In addition to extra credit questions on the final exam, there will be one extra credit opportunity over the course of the semester. Details for this assignment will be announced some time after spring break.

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>

Class Schedule:

Readings are due the day under which they are listed. Films, unless otherwise stated, are due by Thursday's class. (Note: The assigned films are meant to assist your understanding of the material and will be discussed in lecture and recitation. It is therefore advisable to watch the films earlier in the week, rather than later.)

Week 1: Modernity, Humanism, and Sociology

"Philosophy is an age
grasped in thought" –Hegel

Film: Racism: A History (Part 1) (2007)*

Tuesday, 01/17: Introductions

Readings: Read through the syllabus!!
Come to class with top three presentation dates

Thursday, 01/19: Society, Individuals, and (Self-)Knowledge

Readings: Kant, Immanuel. 1784. "What is Enlightenment?"
Enlightenment; intelligence; immaturity; sapere aude; private and public reason; freedom.

Foucault, Michel. 1978. "What is Enlightenment?"
Enlightenment as an event; modern attitude; consciousness of the discontinuity of time; heroization; invention of the self; humanism; Enlightenment philosophical ethos; ontology; practical systems; forms of rationality.

*Reminder: Mini-memo is due by 5PM on Friday, 01/20; peer-responses are due by 5PM on Sunday, 01/22

Suggested Films:

"Racism: A History" (Parts 2 and 3) (2007)
"Heroes of the Enlightenment" (Part 1) (2014)
"Heroes of the Enlightenment" (Part 2) (2014)

Week 2: Society and Capitalism

Film: "Marx Reloaded" (2011)*

Tuesday, 01/24: Karl Marx on Society and History

Readings: Karl, Marx. [1847] 1972. "Theses on Feuerbach." *The Marx-Engles Reader*. New York, Norton. Pages 143-145.

Social change; historical materialism; materialism; idealism; IX thesis on Feuerbach.

Karl, Marx. [1846] 1972. "A Critique of The German Ideology." *The Marx-Engles Reader*. New York, Norton. Pages 148-175.

Social change; ideology; ruling ideas; false consciousness; society; mode of production; mode of life; progress; division of labor; estrangement; capitalism; communism; private property; property relations.

Thursday, 01/26: Karl Marx on Commodities

Readings: Karl, Marx. [1847] 1972. "Commodities and Money." *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York, Norton. Pages 302-329

Use value; exchange value; the fetishism of commodities; alienation; commodity; useful thing.

*Reminder: Mini-memo is due by 5PM on Friday, 01/27;
peer-responses are due by 5PM on Sunday, 01/29

Suggested Films:

"Roger and Me" (1989)

"Modern Times" (1936)

Week 3: Capitalism and the Revolution

Film: "The Global Assembly Line" (1986)

Tuesday, 01/31: Karl Marx on Capitalism and Class Inequalities

Readings: Karl, Marx. [1847] 1972. "Manifesto of the Communist Party." *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York, Norton. Pages 473-500

History; class conflict; social inequality; class-consciousness; class in itself/for itself; division of labor; the proletariat; the bourgeoisie; grave-diggers.

Thursday, 02/02: Presentations on Kant, Foucault, and Marx

NO READINGS*

*Note next week's workload

Suggested Films:

"Soy Cuba" (1964)

Week 4: Social Integration and Social Consciousness/Conscience

Film: "The Century of the Self" (Parts 1 and 2) (2005)*

*Films Due Tuesday

Tuesday, 02/07: Sigmund Freud on Society

Readings: Freud, Sigmund. [1930] 2010. *Civilization and its Discontents*. New York: Norton.

Ego, Id, Super-ego; pleasure-principle; the death drive; libido; the reality principle; displacement; sublimation; intoxication; conscience; guilt; the unconscious; repression; the oceanic experience; civilization; Eros and Thanatos.

Thursday, 02/09: Émile Durkheim on Social Integration

Readings: Durkheim, Émile. [1893] 1984. Selections* from *The Division of Labor in Society*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Social/moral; mechanical and organic solidarity; collective consciousness; the division of labor; cooperation and inadequacy; organs; social integration and disintegration.

**Please read pages: 1 – 7; 11 – 12 (stop before section, I); 16 (start with section II) – 17 (stop before the third full paragraph, which begins, "The history of marital relationships"); 21 (start with the first full paragraph, which begins, "In all of these examples") – 24 (stop before section III); 38 (start with the second paragraph, which begins, "We are now in a position") – 39 (stop before the last paragraph, which begins, "This proposition, taken literally"); 60 (start with section IV) – 61 (stop before the first/last full paragraph, which begins, "It is this solidarity"); 83 (start with section IV) – 86; 122 (start with the last paragraph, which begins, "This law alone") – 123; 132 (start with Section II) – 133 (stop before the second full paragraph, which begins, "Among the Iroquois ").*

Suggested Films:

"The Devil's Playground" (2002)
"The Century of the Self" (Parts 3 and 4) (2005)
"Clockwork Orange" (1971)
"Metropolis" (1927)
"Lord of The Flies" (1990)
"Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (1931)
"The Gods Must Be Crazy" (1980)
"Barbershop: The Last Cut" (2016)

Week 5: Social Disintegration and Social Facts

Film: "Bowling for Columbine" (2002)

Tuesday, 02/14: Émile Durkheim on Contracts and Anomic Division of Labor

Readings: Durkheim, Émile. [1893] 1984. Selections* from *The Division of Labor in Society*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Contract; anomie/the anomic division of labor; abnormal.

**Please read pages: 149 – 155 (stop before the first full paragraph, which begins, "Let us first examine"); 162 (start with the second paragraph, which begins, "Summing up") – 163 (stop before the last paragraph, which begins, "We need not demonstrate"); 172 – 174; 217 (start with section IV) – 221 (stop before the last paragraph, which begins, "The argument concerning"); 291 – 308.*

Thursday, 02/16: Émile Durkheim's Sociological Method and on Suicide

Readings: Durkheim Émile. [1895] 1982. "What is A Social Fact?" in *Rules of Sociological Method*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Social facts; social abnormality.

Durkheim, Émile. [1897] 1966. Selections from *Suicide*. New York: Simon and Schuster.*

Egoistic suicide; anomic suicide; knowledge; social regulation; excessive individualism.

* *Please read:* Chapters 2, 3 (skip section III), 5 from Part I, and Chapter 1 from Part II. This is a large selection, but do not fear! There are lots of tables and boring explanations of these tables. I want you to concentrate on grasping the main arguments and his methodology, so skim the specific nitty-gritty results sections if they are unhelpful.

Suggested Films:

"The Lost Children of Rockdale County" (1999)

"New Freakonomics Radio Podcast: "The Suicide Paradox"" (2011)

"Children of Men" (2006)

"Harold and Maude" (1971)

"Heathers" (1988)

Week 6: Social Groups and Affiliations

Film: "The Breakfast Club" (1985)

Tuesday, 02/21: Presentations on Freud and Durkheim

NO READINGS

Thursday, 02/23: Georg Simmel on Formal Sociology and Social Groups

Readings: Zerubavel, Eviatar. 2007. "Generally Speaking: The Logic and Mechanics of Social Pattern Analysis." *Sociological Forum*.

Social interaction; formal sociology; social geometry; social pattern analysis.

Simmel, Georg. [1908] 1964. "The Web of Group Affiliations" in *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations*. New York: Free Press.

Group affiliations; web of group affiliations; proximity and circumstance; interest; social groups; freedom; individuality; conflict; pre-modern and modern webs of group affiliation.

Suggested Films:

TED Talk: "The Paradox of Choice" (2007)
"Girl, Interrupted" (1999)
"Fight Club" (1996)
"Kids" (1995)

Week 7: "Modern" Types and Dispositions

Film: "Brazil" (1985)

Tuesday, 02/28: Georg Simmel on The City and The Stranger

Readings: Simmel, Georg. [1908] 1950. "The Stranger." Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

The stranger; objectivity; impersonality; nearness and remoteness; mobility; freedom.

Simmel, Georg. [1903] 1950. "The Metropolis and Mental Life." Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Impersonality; blasé outlook; intellectual reaction; reserve; metropolis; individuality; objective culture.

Thursday, 03/02: Max Weber on Capitalism and Bureaucracy

Readings: Weber, Max. [1905.] 1992. "Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism" in *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Routledge.

Protestant ethic; asceticism; predestination; state of grace; calling; wealth; iron cage; disenchantment; spirit of capitalism.

Weber, Max. [1922] 1978. "'Bureaucracy" in *Economy and Society*. California: University of California Press.

Bureaucracy; impersonality; office.

Suggested Films:

"Farmingville" (2004)
"The Man with the Movie Camera" (1929)
"The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (1920)
"The Hudsucker Proxy" (1994)
"Office Space" (1999)
"Modern Times" (1936)
"Food Inc." (2008)

Week 8: Society and Politics

"Race: A Floating Signifier" (1997) (youtube clip)
"Ways of Seeing" (4 Parts) (1972)
"Goodbye, Lenin!" (2003)
"The History of the Devil" (2012)

Week 10: Sociology of Knowledge: Thinking, Interacting, and Common Sense

Film: "13th" (2016)*

Tuesday, 03/28: Sociology of Knowledge with Ludwik Fleck, Peter Berger, and Thomas Luckmann

Readings: Fleck, Ludwik. [1935]. 1981. Selections from *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cognition; thought community/collective; thought style; scientific fact; truth.

Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckmann. 1966. Selections from *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Anchor Books.

Everyday reality; intersubjective meaning; subjective meaning; objective meaning; commonsense; typificatory schemes;; face-to-face interaction; objectivation; externalization; internalization; socialization; reification; logic; institutional order; social structure; social construction.

Thursday, 03/30: Sociology of Knowledge with Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser

Readings: Gramsci, Antonio. [1926] 1990. "Culture and Ideological Hegemony" (Selection from *Prison Notebooks*) in *Culture and Society* edited by Jeffery Alexander and Steven Seidman. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gramsci, Antonio. [1926] 1990. "Intellectuals and Hegemony" (Selection from *Prison Notebooks*) in *Social Theory* edited by Charles Lemert. Bolder: Westview Press.

Hegemony; intellectual; organic intellectual; intellectual moral bloc; commonsense; conformity; philosophy of praxis.

Althusser, Louis. [1968] 1971. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" in *Lenin and Philosophy* translated by Ben Brewster. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Know-how; ideology; state apparatus; repressive state apparatus; ideological state apparatus; interpellation; subject.

*See film list for details

Suggested Films:

"The Pervert's Guide to Ideology" (2012)
"Race: The Power of An Illusion" (Parts 1, 2, and 3) (2003)
"Mean Girls" (2004)
"The Matrix" (1999)
"Do The Right Thing" (1989)
Pink Floyd's "Another Brick in the Wall" (1979)

Week 11: Colonization, Colonialism, and Society

Film: "Concerning Violence" (2014)

Tuesday, 04/04: Presentations on Saussure, Barthes, Fleck, Berger and Luckmann, Gramsci, and Althusser

NO READINGS*

*Note Thursday's workload

Thursday, 04/06: Aimé Césaire on Colonization and Colonialism

Readings: Césaire, Aimé: [1950] 2000. "Discourse on Colonialism." New York: NYU Press.

Civilization; colonization; colonialism; de-civilize; boomerang effect; fascism/Nazism; humanism; thingification; man; nation.

Suggested Films:

"The Battle of Algiers" (1966)
"Lumumba" (2000)
"Lagaan" (2001)

Week 12: Race, Society, and Recognition

Film: "The Color of Fear" (1992)

Tuesday, 04/11: W.E.B. Du Bois and Frantz Fanon on Race

Readings: Du Bois, W.E.B. [1903] 1999. "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" in *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Double Consciousness; race; veil; gift; second sight.

Fanon, Frantz. [1952] 2008. "The Lived Experience of The Black Man" in *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press.

Lived experience (vs. ontology); third person; existing in triple; epidermal racial schema; Other; body vs. appearance; white gaze and fixedness; reification; Nothingness and Infinity; rationality and irrationality; existentialism.

Thursday, 04/13: Presentations on Césaire, Du Bois, and Fanon

NO READINGS

Suggested Films:

"Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Masks" (1995)
"W.E.B. Du Bois: A Biography in Four Voices" (1996)
"The New Black" (2013)
"The Black Power Mix Tape" (2010)
"500 Years Later" (2005)

Week 13: Gender, Intersectionality, and Society

Film: "The Watermelon Woman" (1996)

Tuesday, 04/18: Simone de Beauvoir and Sojourner Truth on womanhood

Readings: de Beauvoir, Simone. [1949] 1953. "Introduction" in *The Second Sex*. New York: Random House.

Woman; femininity; mysterious; situation; imprisoned subjectivity; Other; lack of reciprocity; "to be" versus "to become"; myth of woman; drama of woman; immanence and transcendence; "woman" versus "women."

Truth, Sojourner. [1851] 1997. "Ain't I a woman?" (Speech delivered at Women's Convention, Akron, Ohio)

Woman; "woman" versus "women."

Thursday, 04/20: Patricia Hill Collins on Black Feminism and the Matrix of Domination

Readings: Collins, Patricia Hill. 1990. "Black Feminist Thought in The Matrix of Domination" in *Black Feminist Thought*, first edition. Boston: Unwin Hyman.

Black feminist thought; intersectionality; agents of knowledge; paradigm shift; "either/or" versus "both/and;" humanism; Eurocentric masculinist epistemology; matrix of domination; levels of domination; axes of oppression; standpoint epistemology; subjugated knowledge; situated knowledge; partial perspective; dialogue and empathy; unfinished knowledge.

Suggested Films:

"Transamerica" (2005)

"Killing Us Softly (IV)" (2010)

"The Color Purple" (1985)

"Iron Jawed Angels" (2004)

"Daughters of the Dust" (1991)

"Eve's Bayou" (1997)

"Double Indemnity" (1944)

Week 14: Review

Film: TBA

Tuesday, 04/25: Presentations on de Beauvoir, Truth, and Collins

NO READINGS

Thursday, 04/27: Review and Closing Remarks

NO READINGS

Friday, 05/05, 12:00-3:00PM: Final Exam!!!!

Films

| Week | Film Title | On reserve? | (Additional) Link |
|------|---|-------------|---|
| 1 | "Racism: A History" (Part 1) | No | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efl6T8lovqY |
| 2 | "Marx Reloaded" | Yes | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9uYjQgpjOx0 |
| 3 | "The Global Assembly Line" | Yes | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6XgtvRN6Nc |
| 4 | "The Century of the Self" (Part 1 of 4) | No | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DotBVZ26asI |
| | "The Century of the Self" (Part 2 of 4) | No | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NlqVuQZv9Qs |
| 5 | "Bowling for Columbine" | No | http://digitalcampus.swankmp.net.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers313400/watch?token=d30942854a5debac67fe571ba38bb110827b0f325094219276d37991e39fb51f |
| 6 | "The Breakfast Club" | Yes | |
| 7 | "Brazil" | Yes | |
| 8 | "The Architect" | No | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goVGsDPHcY4 |
| 9 | "Paris is Burning" | Yes | |
| 10 | "13 th " | No | Available through Netflix. If you are unable to gain access to Netflix, email me. |
| 11 | "Concerning Violence" | Coming... | |
| 12 | "The Color of Fear" | Yes | |
| 13 | "The Watermelon Woman" | Yes | |
| 14 | TBA | | |