

DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY: Spring 2018
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY: 01:920:313:07/08

Instructor: Dr. Eleanor LaPointe

Meets: Tuesday and Thursday from 1:40 until 3:00 pm., Lucy Stone Hall (Livingston), B115

Office: Tuesday and Thursday from 12:00-1:00 pm, 049 Davison Hall (26 Nichol Ave., DGLS)

Also by appointment. See me before or after class or send me a note to schedule:
eleanor@sociology.rutgers.edu

Recitation: 3:35 – 4:30 pm. Note: Tuesday session (section 07) meets in TIL 207.
Thursday session (section 08) meets in BE 253.

Instructor: Jessica Poling Office: Tues. and Thurs. from 11:00-12:00 pm, 44 Davison Hall

Description: This class covers classical sociological theory, which means that we will be focusing on the founding ideas as presented by theorists who were writing in the 1800's and early 1900's. The course is, above all, about analysis and ideas as much as it is about sociology per se. Each chapter or essay is due on the date listed and should be read before coming to class. All thought questions should be considered before class; they may be used to prompt discussion and may show up on exams.

Required Readings:

1. Laura Desfor Edles and Scot Appelrouth, Sociological Theory in the Classical Era: Text and Readings, edition 3. (Sage Publications)
2. Articles placed in our Sakai course site.

Grading Scale:

| | | |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 90-100 = A | 77-79 = C + | |
| 87-89 = B + | 70-76 = C | |
| 80-86 = B | 60-69 = D | 59 or below = F |

EVALUATION

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Attendance and Participation in main lectures..... | 10% (*see below) |
| Recitation participation, including required quizzes..... | 14% |
| Examination 1..... | 18% |
| Examination 2..... | 18% |
| Final Examination..... | 22% |
| Groups Projects/Presentations..... | 18% |
| Theory Notebook..... | 36% (** see below) |

*The fact that you show up and exhibit engaged interest matters in this class, so attendance is officially counted. Three points will be deducted for each absence beyond **one** missed lecture and **one** missed recitation. If you must miss a class, be sure to find out from someone in class what you missed.

As a member of this class, it is your responsibility to keep up with the material. Please be prepared for each session by having completed and reviewed the assigned readings for that week. Constructive participation in class and section discussions can benefit your final grade, especially if your average is border line.

WARNING: Sleeping, texting, and Facebook surfing do NOT count as classroom engagement and will negatively impact your grade.

**The Theory Notebook is optional. If you choose to keep a notebook, you may opt out of any TWO of the following assessments that are worth 36% combined: the group presentation or the first or second examination. (You will be expected to complete all other course work.)

Please note that if you decide to keep a notebook, you must follow through with it for the entire semester. Otherwise, it will not be counted at all toward your final grade.

If you are VERY motivated, you can choose to complete all of the assessments listed above. Your final grade for the semester will be weighted accordingly.

See the instructions for the notebook at the end of this document.

Academic Integrity

Wondering about academic dishonesty? Please see the following RU site for guidelines on academic integrity expected at RU: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

Students are expected to write complete, grammatically correct, sentences during ALL correspondence, including emails sent to me, the instructor. Minor typing errors are acceptable, but the abbreviated words and run-on sentences sometimes used in casual chats with friends online are NOT acceptable.

Grading Criteria for written essays:

Points:

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Clear and logical statements; explanation and/or examples provided to support ideas; shows insight; provides complete bibliography; submitted on time | 100 |
| Clear statements with appropriate explanations or examples | 90 |
| Clear statements with some explanation or examples | 80 |
| Some unclear statements or incorrect explanations or examples | 70 |
| Confusing, lacks explanation or reasoning. Has not been proofed for wording, punctuation and other grammatical errors. | 60 or lower |

COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK 1 (January 16 and 18)

Welcome Spring semester!

WEEK 2 (January 23 and 25)

Auguste Comte

Read: Text Ch.1 "Introduction" AND in Sakai "August Comte"

Questions: How were Comte's ideas influenced by society, that is, by specific historical changes taking place during his time? What was Comte's *positive philosophy*?

WEEK 3 (January 30 and Feb. 1)

Harriet Martineau

Read: Sakai on Martineau by S. Hoecker-Drysdale

Questions: What were Martineau's contributions to early sociology? Summarize the main differences and similarities between Comte and Martineau in terms of biographical achievements and intellectual concerns. Even though Martineau was a prolific writer and advocate for social investigation, speculate why she was rarely included in earlier books on theory. One of Martineau's studies involved a trip to America. List and give your opinion on two (or more) of her ideas on American culture at the time.

WEEK 4 (February 6 and 8)

Karl Marx: the Class Struggle

Read: Text Ch. 2 (pp.20-47) "The German Ideology" for Monday.

Read: Text Ch.2 (pp.47-57) "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844" for Wednesday.

Questions: Why did Marx emphasize the economy as the infrastructure or foundation for all other social institutions? Do you agree or disagree with this emphasis? Give contemporary examples to support your answer.

To what extent do people's basic beliefs and values change as a result of change in their economic position? Cite examples or research findings to support your point.

Should we continue to take the ideas of this old dead guy seriously? Why or why not?

WEEK 5 (February 13 and 15)

Marx (continued)

Read: Text Ch. 2 (pp.57-87) "The Communist Manifesto" and "Capital" for Monday

Read: "Working Longer, Living Less" by Walsh and Walsh for Wednesday (Sakai)

Questions: What is alienated labor? Does the concept of alienated labor apply today? Explain.

Also: See Discussion Question #1 on the last page of "Working Longer, Living Less"

Other key concepts: Labor theory of value and Surplus value.
What the heck is a fetish and how does it relate to commodities?

WEEK 6 (February 20 and 22)

Monday: Presentations on Martineau, Comte or Marx if applicable.

Wednesday: Exam 1 essays due.

Optional Theory Notebook due. You may hand in your notebook for an initial assessment of your progress. My feedback will include a tentative grade. Note that this initial assessment is not required but suggested.

WEEK 7 (February 27 and March 1)

Durkheim: Contemplating Suicide and other moral problems

Read: Text Ch. 3 (omit pp.145-162)

Question: Before reading the sections on suicide (p. 129), jot down the reasons why you think people commit suicide. After reading the sections on suicide, discuss your original ideas in relationship to those of Durkheim. Were yours similar or different? Why? Be clear about each type of suicide and how Durkheim came to define each.

WEEK 8 (March 6 and 8)

Max Weber: The Iron Cage and Other Dilemmas

Read: Text Ch. 4 the following pages only: pp.164-192, 204-233

Questions: According to Weber, which form of domination has the most relevance these days? Is rationalization really rational; what are some problems with bureaucratization? Is (was) the Protestant Ethic really ethical? How do Weber's ideas on the distribution of power differ from Marx's?

Question: Considering Weber's three types of legitimate domination (p.214), how might we explain the current presidency in the U.S.?

Due: Part 1 of the optional notebooks. Please be sure that you have included responses for each of the following weeks: 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 You may also wish to include week 8 questions on Weber, but you can also hold off on this until the end if you wish. Be sure to indicate at the end of your notebook that you have chosen to take this option!

WEEK 9 SPRING BREAK!

WEEK 10 (March 20 and 22)

Max Weber (continued)

Presentations if applicable.

WEEK 11 (March 27 and 29)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Read: Text Ch. 5

Question: Does including the woman question change some of the fundamental ideas presented by Marx and other theorists we have dealt with so far? How so?

One of Gilman's main points is that women cannot be equal to men unless they are economically independent. Do you agree or disagree? Use concrete examples to explain and support your point of view.

For Gilman, "women's work" is lonely and demeaning. Do you think "parent-work" and housework has to be this way? Why or why not? What specific measures, institutions, or practices might help prevent or combat these tendencies?

WEEK 12 (April 3 and 5)

Monday: Exam 2 essays due.

Georg Simmel: Dyads, Triads, and other forms of Social Geometry

Read: Text Ch. pp.286-298 and 308-313 and 321-325

Question: Is conflict inevitable in social life, even in close relationships? Can conflict have positive consequences? How are Simmel's ideas similar to and different from those of Marx and Weber? For example, how does Simmel's view of conflict differ from Marx's?

Suggested: the film Lord of the Flies (old and new versions are available on YouTube)

How might Simmel and Durkheim discuss this movie? What would they emphasize? On what aspects would they agree or disagree? Your reactions?

WEEK 13 (April 10 and 12)

W.E.B. DuBois

Read: Text Ch.7

Read: For a personal account of the historical context of DuBois's life read "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow" by Richard Wright

URL: <http://newdeal.feri.org/fwp/fwp03.htm>

Note: This is in our Sakai site.

Questions: What were some of DuBois's main contributions to sociology? In contrast to other founding figures in sociology, DuBois often wrote in the first person, using himself as a reference. He also wrote subjectively, using poetry, song, and other means to evoke emotion. Evaluate his style. Should it be considered science? Why or why not?

Compare and contrast DuBois's theory on the oppression of African Americans with Gilman's theory on the oppression of women. What similarities do you see in their ideas? What are the differences in these theories of oppression? How about Simmel?

Can you find any organizations on the Web that are in some way related to DuBois? What different kinds of work are associated with his name?

WEEK 14 (April 17 and 19)

Presentations continued.

George Herbert Mead and Micro Sociology

Read: Text Ch. 8 (pp.392-401 and each of the brief introductions to his readings: p.402, 411-415, 428)

Questions: If everything is interaction, as G.H. Mead contends, what is society? Can Mead account for broad patterns? How? How might an interactionist explain the phenomenon of suicide? How or why are these explanations different from those of Durkheim?

When Mead was writing, mass media influences, as we know them today, were unknown. How does television and other forms of technological communication affect the development of the self?

Jane Addams: Sociology in action at Hull House

Read: article on Jane Addams in Sakai

Question: In the early 1900's, Addams and other pioneering female sociologists commonly combined intellectual inquiry, social service work, and political activism—all with the goal of assisting the underprivileged and creating a more egalitarian society. Evaluate this early trend in how theory was applied. What might sociologists, like Weber who advocated “value free” sociology, have said about this?

Although Jane Addams was an activist in the conflict tradition, she did not advocate Marxism. Speculate how her pragmatic ideals differ from those of Marx.

What was happening in Chicago when Addams was alive? (Search the Web or use other outside sources.)

WEEK 15 (April 24 and 26)

Presentations.

Due: Part 2 of optional Notebooks. Please be sure that you have included responses for each of the following weeks: 8 (unless you included it the first time), 11, 12, 13, 14

WEEK 16

Final exam is due no later than our officially-designated final exam time. You will not need to come to campus for this. Your exam essays will be handed in online. For our Rutgers-designated exam date see <http://finalexams.rutgers.edu>

Continue scrolling to the next page for the Theory Notebook instructions. (This is an optional assignment.)

DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Dr. E. LaPointe

Instructions for theory notebooks:

Each week you will write about materials related to the readings and questions on the syllabus.

Each week you must include all 3 sections listed below. Each separate section must be clearly marked—1, 2, 3:

- 1) A list with definitions of 3 to 5 new concepts presented in the readings that week. (When applicable, including examples and your own reflections on the concepts.)
- 2) Answers to the questions on the course syllabus for that week. They do not have to be right, but must be your own!
- 3) Other possible inclusions:
 - a) Informal reflections on ideas discussed in the readings or in class.
 - b) Entries based on related items found by searching the internet.
 - c) Entries that attempt to analyze current events using classical theory
 - d) Entries that include the best and worst passages from the theorists original writings. Include your reasoning.

Note on section 3: You do not need to include a, b, c, *and* d. These are just suggestions. You may pick ONE and write in a bit more depth. You can be as creative as you want. Follow your interests!

The notebook should either be very light weight OR it can be kept on loose-leaf paper and stapled together when you hand it in. Typing is not a requirement, but it must be neat and demonstrative of some effort on your part to do a thorough job.

A final note: The more thought/reflection on your part, and the greater your effort, the more credit you will be given when graded!

This assignment is OPTIONAL. It will be collected twice during the semester for a formal grade: March 8 and at the end of the semester. (See the schedule on the syllabus.)

You may also hand it in on February 22 for an initial assessment and tentative grade so that you know where you stand.

This is what I am looking for:

- ➔ All weeks and all required weekly sections are clearly marked.
- ➔ The writing is edited for errors in grammar, punctuation, and form. (This is not a formal essay, so minor mistakes are okay. But too much sloppiness will result in lost credit.)

- ➔ Clarity and accuracy of concepts.
- ➔ When citing our course readings, do you include page numbers? (This is essential, especially when quoting directly!) Do you include lecture dates, when citing something from main lecture or recitation?
- ➔ Application of concepts. Are the examples thoughtful and useful?
- ➔ Did you put some effort into this? Does it reflect thoughtfulness and interest on your part?
- ➔ Do you include any outside sources demonstrating your desire to explore the topics on your own a bit. (Newspaper articles, online scholarly essays, etc.) Be sure to either include these sources as attached items or include the source in bibliography form.
- ➔ Do you attempt to provide credible evidence for your assertions? (For example, when remarking on Gilman's ideas, if you claim that men and women should share the division of labor in the home, can you find some outside information to support (or refute) your ideas about shared housework.

Above all, I am looking for creativity and interest on your part. Follow your whims and do not let the above laundry list scare you off from this project. What you learn in this class will be greatly enhanced if you take this option 😊 and I encourage you to do so!