CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY
Sociology 920:516:01
Department of Sociology
Rutgers University
Spring 2022

Professor, Zakia Salime
Place, Davison Hall
Day and Time, Wednesday (5-8)
Email, zsalime@sociology.rutgers.edu
Office Hours. Wednesday 4pm , or by appointment

Books
Gurminder Bhambra, Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and Sociological Imagination (Palgrave, 2007)
Moallem, Minoo, Persian Carpet as a Transnational Commodity (Routledge, 2018)
Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, Volume 1
bell hooks and Stuart Hall. Uncut Funk, A Contemplative Dialogue (Routledge, 2017)

All articles are on Canvas
Links to other reading provided in the syllabus

Course Description

This course provides a broad overview of contemporary debates in social theory. It offers an extensive introduction to different schools of thought that have deeply impacted the debates in social theory. We will explore contemporary social debates through the influence of Semiotics, Symbolic Interaction, Structuralism, Functionalism, Structural-Functionalism, Critical Theory, Critical Race theory, Governmentality Studies, Poststructuralism, Postmodernism, Postcolonial and Subaltern Studies, as well as Feminist Theory and Public Sociology. We will explore texts that tackle questions of structure and agency, culture and politics, knowledge and power, systems, the psychological and emotional bases of domination, subjects and subjectivities, and gender, race and diasporic identities. This course is not designed to help you “apply” a particular framework or a theory, but rather to think critically about all theories and find your own.

Course objectives

- become familiar with the main conceptual and theoretical frameworks that have influenced social research broadly defined
- improve your critical thinking through cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary analyses of the social forces that work to produce structures of domination, subjects, policies and institutions
- locate your own work and interests within/and in relation to these perspectives
Class Format

The class is organized as a seminar with students taking an active role in the discussions. This entails reflecting on the readings, participating in the class discussions and bringing provocative thoughts and questions to the class on a weekly basis.

Course Requirements

1) A weekly reaction paper. Students must do ALL of the assigned readings and post a memo/reaction piece. I encourage you to include the questions that you would want to raise during the class discussion. Briefs must be posted to the course’s website on Canvas by 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday. Fifty percent of your final grade will be based on your class participation and the quality of these memos. Your attendance is required every week.

2) A Final Paper, due on the Mai 15. I suggest the following:

   1) A 20-page research paper, in which you explicitly utilize one or more of the theoretical frameworks discussed in this class to animate your analysis;

   2) A 20-page literature review in which you go beyond the syllabus to explore more richly debates in a particular vein of theorizing or applications of concepts in that theoretical vein;

   3) A 20-page critical essay reviewing and explicitly juxtaposing different theoretical frameworks we have explored during the semester and placing them in constructive dialogue with each other;

Class policy and Academic Integrity

We all have earned membership in this class thus we must be respectful of all the voices and different opinions and point of views. We must use this forum in a way that reflects our respect to the ethics of academic debate.

My policy about plagiarism is to award an F to the student.

Academic Integrity

I follow the Rutgers University’s policy on academic integrity. Please explore the website indicated below to become more familiar with this policy:

Violations include: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying others access to information or material, and facilitating violations of academic integrity.

Diversity Statement
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.
Class Schedule
(Subject to revision)

January 19  Introduction/Syllabus

Film, The Century of the Self
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnPmg0R1M04  (part 1)

January 26  Problematizing Modernity and the Enlightenment Project

Edward Said, Orientalism, (Excerpts) (Pantheon, 1978)
Questions of Modernity (Minnesota, 2000)
Lila Abu-Lughod, Zones of Theory in the Anthropology of the Arab World
Gurminder Bhambra, Rethinking Modernity. Part 1 (two first chapters)

Chimamanda ngozi adichie
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kWgJvHU0PY

February 2  Function and Structure

Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings [Excerpt from The System of
Modern Societies]
Richard M. Emerson, Power-Dependence Relations. American Sociological Review
(27)1:31-41
Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings [Excerpt from Social Theory and
Social Structure]
Herbert Blumer. “Race Prejudice as Sense of Group Position.” Pacific Sociological
in James Farganis, ed., Readings in Social Theory: The Classic Tradition to Post-
Classic Readings in Sociology (Thomson, 200x)
Ferdinand de Saussure, “Signs and Language,” pp. 55-63 in Jeffrey Alexander and
Steven Seidman, eds., Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates (Cambridge,
1990)

Film, The Century of the Self (Part 2)
February 9  Phenomenology, Ethnomethodology, Symbolic Interaction

Gurminder, k. Bhambra, Rethinking Modernity (Part 2)

Film, The Century of the Self (part 3)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VouaAz5mQAs

February 16  Feminist Critique

Judith Butler, Frames of War When is Life Grievable (2009, Verso) (excerpts)
Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Context (Routlegde, 1996) (Excerpts)

Lecture, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “The Trajectory of the Subaltern in My Work”
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZH4ALRFHw

Lecture: Judith Butler, “Why Bodies Matter”?  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rD6vifFTDLY

February 23  Critical Theory
Jurgen Habermas, “Further Reflections in the Public Sphere,” pp 421-440 in Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (MIT, 1992)
https://fdocuments.in/document/further-reflections-on-the-public-sphere.html
Marcuse Herbert, *One Dimensional Man* (excerpts)

**Students Presentations** (Idea of final paper)

**Film**, The Century of the Self (part 4)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ub2LB2MaGoM

**March 2**

**Postmodernism and Poststructuralism**


**Film**, *The Piano*. 1992. Directed by Jane Campion

**March 9**

**Structure /Agency**

Pierre Bourdieu and Loic J. D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, pp. 7-19, 36-41
Anthony King. The Odd Couple: Margaret Archer, Anthony Giddens and British Social Theory. The British Journal of Sociology (2010): 253-260

**SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS MARCH 12-20**
March 23  Michel Foucault / Poststructuralism

Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality.
Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish, pp. 3-7, 195-230 (“The body of the condemned,” and “Panopticism”) (Vintage, 1979)

Conversation, Justice vs. Power - Noam Chomsky vs. Michel Foucault
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mj2VJ7oexKc&feature=related

Lecture, Sociology is a martial art, Bourdieu
https://vimeo.com/92709274

March 30  Foucault/Poststructuralism

Michel Foucault, “Docile Bodies,” pp. 179-204 in The Foucault Reader
Achille Mbembe, Necropolitics, Public Culture 15(1):11-40

Lecture, The Culture of the Self
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CaXb8c6jw0k

Film, Deleuze and Guttari, The Rhizome, A Thousand Plateaus
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQ2rJWwXilw

April 6  Postcolonial Encounters

Moallem Minoo, Persian Carpet as a Transnational Commodity (Routledge, 2018)

April 13  Hegemony

Antonio Gramsci, “Culture and Ideological Hegemony,” pp. 47-54 in Jeffrey Alexander and Steven Seidman, eds., Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates
Antonio Gramsci, “State and Civil Society,” from Prison Notebooks (Sakai)
bell hooks and Stuart Hall. Uncut Funk, A Contemplative Dialogue (Routledge, 2017)
Outline of paper due

April 20    Students presentations/reaction to the content of the course

Film, The color of fear

April 27    Race, Critical Race Theory

Kimberly Crenshaw, Critical Race Theory: Introduction + Chapter 1
https://books.google.co.ma/books?id=1LXTyrlM59MC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false
Michael Omi and Howard Winant, Racial formations in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s (Routledge & Kegan Paul Inc) (excerpts, 53-76)
Frantz Fanon, Black Skins White Masks, p10-62 (Grove Press)

Lecture, Race the Floating Signifier, Stuart Hall

Film, My Beautiful Laundrette
drette (1985), directed by Stephen Frears, (94 min) OR: Sammie and Rosie Get Laid (1992), directed by Stephen Frears (97 min)

Film, Wings of Desire (1987), directed by Wim Wenders (128 min)