CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

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Fall 2011

SOC2040

Wednesday, 2-4:50PM

Maxcy Hall #108

Office hours: Wednesday, 12-1PM

Maxcy Hall #408

**SYLLABUS**

This is a review of some of the most influential social thinkers of the 19th and early 20th centuries, who have introduced what have largely remained foundational concepts and theories for sociological thinking. We will thematically discuss the works that are the macro and micro foundations of sociological analyses, including Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, Georg Simmel and others. Through their writings, we will explore the most fundamental questions of sociology, including on structure and agency, culture, social order and the possibility of change, and much more.

This is a seminar that will require your active participation. You are therefore expected to carefully read all the required materials ahead of each class. In addition, we will conduct a student-led on-line discussion ahead of each class. Using Brown’s Canvas, I will assign one or two students to launch a discussion prior to each meeting. Students can choose various ways of how to conduct the discussion but possibly most useful would be to raise a number of questions regarding the readings. The other students are expected to participate in the discussion during the course of the day. The discussion should be active from 12pm Tuesday till 12pm Wednesday.

In addition, you will write a final paper. In this paper, you are asked to do one of two things. (1) Apply one of the theories discussed in class to a case study of your choice. The paper should demonstrate a thorough understanding of the theory examined as well as a relatively detailed analysis of the case study. (2) Review contemporary social theories of a particular sub-discipline that follows one of the classical social theorists. In the paper you should summarize current developments and discuss them in comparison to the original social theory. The paper should be not longer than 15 pages. Please submit it by December 16.

Your grade depends on your participation in class (25%), your participation in the on-line discussions (25%) and final paper (50%).

Most readings are available online and/or in our shared “dropbox” folder. The books are marked with [\*] and can be bought (often used) on-line.

***Books to buy***

Tucker, Robert, ed. 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Weber, Max. 2001. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Third edition. Roxbury Publishing.

Durkheim, Emile. 1984. *Division of Labor in Society.* Free Press.

Durkheim, Emile. 2001. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Berger, Peter and Thomas Luckmann. 1966. *The Social Construction of Reality*. Garden City: Doubleday.

**SEPT 3**

**1 Introduction**

Stinchcombe, Arthur L. 1978. *Theoretical Methods in Social History*. New York: Academic Press. Introduction. [I will email]

Connell, R.W. 1997. “Why is Classical Theory Classical?” *American Journal of Sociology* 102: 1511-57. [I will email]

Collins, Randall. 1997. “A Sociological Guilt Trip: Comment on Connell.” *American Journal of Sociology* 102: 1558-64. [I will email]

**SEPT 10**

**2 Marx’s economic analysis**

[\*] Engels, Friedrich. 1978 [1844] “Working-Class Manchester,” pp. 579-585, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert Tucker. New York: W. W. Norton.

[\*] Marx, Karl. 1978 [1844]. “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 (Estranged Labor),”, pp. 70-81 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert Tucker. New York: W. W. Norton.

[\*] Marx, Karl. 1978 [1849]. “Wage Labor and Capital,” pp. 203-217, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert Tucker. New York: W. W. Norton.

**SEPT 17**

**3 Marx’s theoretical foundations**

[\*] Marx, Karl. 1978 [1859]. “Marx on the History of His Opinions (Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*),pp. 3-6 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert Tucker. New York: W. W. Norton.

[\*] Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. 1848 [1978]. “Manifesto of the Communist Party,” pp. 473-491 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert Tucker. New York: W. W. Norton.

[\*] Marx, Karl. 1978 [1845-46]. “The German Ideology: Part I,” pp. 146-175, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert Tucker. New York: W. W. Norton.

[\*] Marx, Karl (1963) [1869] “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,” pp. 594-617 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert Tucker. New York: W. W. Norton.

**SEPT 24**

**4 Marx: Capital, Volume I**

[\*] Marx, Karl. 1978. “Selections from *Capital, Volume I*,” pp. 294-364; 373-384; 404-407 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert Tucker. New York: W. W. Norton.

**OCT 1**

**5 Weber: The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (Oct 1)**

[\*] Weber, Max. 2001. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Third edition. Roxbury Publishing.

**OCT 8**

**6 Weber’s rationality**

Weber, Max. 1994. “Social Action and Social Relationships” (pp. 1-13), “Domination and Stratification” (pp. 28-46), “Sociology and Science” (pp. 228, 262-303) in *Sociological Writings,* edited by Wolf Heydebrand. New York: Continuum. [Dropbox].

Weber, Max. 1968. “Bureaucracy,” pp. 956-958, 973-975, 987-989, 998-1001, 1002-1003, in *Economy and Society,* edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. New York: Bedminster Press [Dropbox].

**OCT 15**

**7 Durkheim**

[\*] Durkheim, Emile. 1984. *Division of Labor in Society.* Free Press. Free Press. Book I, chapters 1-3; Book III, chapter 1.

Durkheim, Emile. 1964. *The Rules of Sociological Method.* New York: Free Press. Chapter 1; Chapter IV, section I, II. [Dropbox]

**OCT 22**

**8 Durkheim: culture**

[\*] Durkheim, Emile. 2001. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. Introduction; Book I: chapters 1 &  4, Book II: chapters 6, 7, Book III, Conclusion

**OCT 29**

**9 Simmel: geometric sociology**

Simmel, Georg. 1971 [1903]. “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” pp. 324-339 in *Georg Simmel On Individuality And Social Forms*, edited by Donald N. Levine. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. [Dropbox]

Simmel, Georg. 1964. “The Isolated Individual and the Dyad,” pp. 118-144, in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel,* edited by Kurt H. Wolff. Glencoe: The Free Press. [Dropbox]

**NOV 5**

**10 Structural-Functional Analysis**

Parsons, Talcott. 1951. “Structural Components of the Social System,” pp. 58-67 in *The Social System*. New York: Macmillan Publishing. [Dropbox / possibly a different version]

Merton, Robert K. “Manifest and Latent Functions,” pp. 114-15, 117-22, 124-6 in *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York: Simon & Schuster. [Dropbox / possibly a different version]

Merton, Robert K. “On Sociological Theories of the Middle Range,” pp. 39-53 in *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York: Simon & Schuster. [Dropbox / possibly a different version]

**NOV 12**

**11 Constructivism / symbolic interaction / ethnomethodology**

[\*] Berger, Peter and Thomas Luckmann. 1966. *The Social Construction of Reality*. Garden City: Doubleday. Part 1, chapter 3; part 2, chapter 1.

[\*] Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, pp. 17-76.

New York: Anchor.

Garfinkel, Harold, 1967. “Commence Sense Knowledge of Social Structures,” in *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. [Dropbox]

**NOV 19**

**12 Critical Theory**

Horkheimer, Max. 1972. “Traditional and Critical Theory,” pp. 188-243 in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*. New York: Herder & Herder. [Dropbox / possibly a different version]

Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno. 1997 (1944). “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Self-Deception.” New York: Continuum Publishing. Pages TBA. [Dropbox / possibly a different version]

***NOV 26 = NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK***

**DEC 3**

**13 Conclusion**