

University of Toronto
Department of Sociology
SOC6001H: Classical Sociological Theory – Fall 2018
Thursdays, 11am – 2 PM, Room 240

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Office hours: Thursdays 2-3pm or by appointment

Course Description

This course is an investigation in the history, nature and role of the discipline of Sociology through an engagement of some of the most influential classical theorists. The course examines the key theoretical and methodological insights and contributions of Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Georg Simmel, W.E.B. Du Bois, Harriet Martineau, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and others. For each, we will discuss the biographical, social, institutional, and epistemological contexts in which their work emerged, and we will highlight their on-going relevance towards understanding our own contemporary world. The goal of the course is to foster an appreciation for ‘theory’ generally, and classical theory specifically, and the key role it plays in not only the discipline of Sociology, including all facets of empirical research, but in our very understanding of the world around us.

I strongly believe we do not learn alone, we learn in conversation with others. We learn by listening, by asking questions, by explaining. The seminar will be organized in such a way as to foster this collaborative learning environment. Learning is also a process and you should receive continual feedback on your thoughts and application of the material in assignments in order to know where you are doing well, where you are falling a little short and most importantly have the opportunity to make changes and improve.

The course is organized in such a way that it privileges the development and deployment of various skills, namely critical reading, critical writing and effective and inquisitive discussion and their relationship with one another. Writing notes while reading, organizing and synthesizing the material and one’s own thoughts, communicating this effectively to colleagues, and asking probing questions are all part of this course’s teaching approach, and as such, assignments are designed to foster those skills. The goal is to foster a community of learners who will help each other make their way through the material, topics and issues, in collaboration with one another.

Evaluation

Reading & Reflection Journal – 25%

There are two components to this journal. The first is a series of short entries on two readings you’ve signed up for (about 300-350 words for each reading), highlighting one to two key takeaways (about 150 words), as well as raising one to two annotated questions about each reading (about 150 words). All those reading entries must be submitted on Quercus no later than 24h before the seminar for which the reading was assigned. The purpose of these reading entries is to foster active reading and help get you prepared for seminar. Students are expected to share from those entries on their signed-up readings during seminar.

For the second component, students will write ten entries (about 350 words each) made up of reflections following seminar participation and discussion. These are a chance for you to reflect on the theme of the week, the connections between different ideas, and what you've learned during the past week. All those reflection entries must be submitted on Quercus no later than 72h after seminar on which these reflections are based. The purpose of these reflection entries is to monitor your own learning throughout the semester, and potentially link this to your term paper.

Seminar Participation – 25%

Students will engage in weekly in-class participation, through interactive discussion, through small collaborative write-up based on discussion questions, and through feedback on colleagues' presentations.

Research Paper and Presentation – 50%

The research paper presents you with an opportunity to place class material in dialogue with your existing and/or potential research interests. The culmination of your project should be a research paper that reflects a synthesis of appropriate course readings and select a few other sources to discuss a specific question. To assist in the task of writing this term paper, you will need to complete a series of stages/steps designed to progressively get you closer to a finished product. At the core of this approach is the view that the most important step is identifying and defining as sharply as possible a question for you to organize your paper around. At each stage, you will get feedback from me to help you bring your project to completion. I invite you to schedule time with me to discuss any aspect of your project as often as you feel the need to. Finally, note that I am more interested in the quality of the arguments that you advance in your review essay than in the comprehensive coverage of a body of scholarship.

Keep one computer file for this exercise. At each stage, retain or revise each of the previous stages and hand in as hard copy on their respective due date. Please note that you can change your mind at any stage; simply repeat each of the steps described below.

The first step is a selection of a **topic and research question**. Your topic and research question should be related directly to one of the themes or authors covered in the course readings. This first step is due on October 4th.

The second step is an **outline of your paper**: identify the main components that you will need in order to develop your topic and address your research questions. Write an outline for various sections, highlighting authors and ideas you will building your paper around. Outlines are due on October 25th.

The third step is a **draft of your paper**: Provide a full draft of your paper with citations. Drafts are due on November 22nd.

The fourth step is a **presentation**: Your presentation should place cover the objectives of your paper, including the research question, the main arguments you raised, the conclusion you have reached, and possible future avenues. You will discuss what you have so far and have an opportunity to receive feedback and questions from me and your colleagues. Presentations will be scheduled for Nov 29th and Dec 6th.

The fifth and last step is the submission of your **final term paper**. The paper should normally be between around 5000-6000 words or between 7500-9000 words for pairs if you choose to work in collaboration with a colleague. Papers should be word-processed and printed, with title page, paginated and with footnotes as the bottom of the page, and list of works cited at the end. Please submit both a paper copy (deposited in the Departmental Drop-Off Box) and an electronic version of **both** your final paper and work-in-progress by Dec 13th.

Late policy: There will be a 5% per day penalty if you miss the deadline without proper documentation.

Academic Integrity Clause

Copying, plagiarizing, falsifying medical certificates, or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Any student caught engaging in such activities will be referred to the Dean's office for adjudication. Any student abetting or otherwise assisting in such misconduct will also be subject to academic penalties. Students are expected to cite sources in all written work and presentations. See this link for tips for how to use sources well:

(<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>).

According to Section B.I.1.(e) of the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters it is an offence "*to submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.*"

By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the university's rules regarding academic conduct, as outlined in the Calendar. You are expected to be familiar with the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/The-rules/code/the-code-of-behaviour-on-academic-matters>) and *Code of Student Conduct*

(<http://www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/publicationsandpolicies/codeofstudentconduct.htm>)

which spell out your rights, your duties and provide all the details on grading regulations and academic offences at the University of Toronto.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Accessibility Services

It is the University of Toronto's goal to create a community that is inclusive of all persons and treats all members of the community in an equitable manner. In creating such a community, the University aims to foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of all persons. Please see the University of Toronto Governing Council "Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities" at

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppnov012004.pdf>.

Equity and Diversity Statement

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the

learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated.

Additional information and reports on Equity and Diversity at the University of Toronto is available at <http://equity.hrandequity.utoronto.ca>.

Topics/Reading Schedule

Week 1 – Sept 13th – Introduction

Abend, G. 2008. "The meaning of 'theory'." *Sociological Theory*, 26(2), 173-199.

Week 2 – Sept 20th - What is "Classical" Sociological Theory and Why Does It Matter?

Alexander, Jeffrey C. 1987. The Centrality of the Classics. Pp. 11-57 in Anthony Giddens & Jonathan H. Turner (eds.), *Social Theory Today*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Camic, Charles, and Gross, Neil. 1998. "Contemporary developments in sociological theory: current projects and conditions of possibility." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24(1), 453-476.

Connell, R. W. 1997. "Why is Classical Theory Classical?" *American Journal of Sociology*, 102 (6): 1511-57.

Week 3 – Sept 27th - Karl Marx I

"Estranged Labour" (pp. 70-81 in Robert C. Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*)

Theses on Feuerbach (pp143-145 in Robert C. Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*).

The German Ideology (excerpt, pp. 146-200 in Robert C. Tucker, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*).

Manifesto of the Communist Party (excerpt, pp. 469-500 in Robert C. Tucker, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*).

Week 4 – Oct 4th - Karl Marx II

Capital (vol. 1) (excerpts, pp. 294-361 and 436-438 in Robert C. Tucker, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*).

The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State, selection (excerpt, pp. 734-759 in Robert C. Tucker, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*).

Manza, Jeff and M.A. McCarthy. 2011. "The Neo-Marxist Legacy in American Sociology." *Annual Review of Sociology* 37:155-183.

Week 5 – Oct 11th - Emile Durkheim I

Division of Labor in Society (read Intro., Book I: Chs. 2-3, Book II: Chs. 1-2, Book III: Ch. 2, Conclusion)

The Rules of Sociological Method and Selected Texts on Sociology and its Method (read Intro, Chs. 1-3)

Week 6 – Oct 18th - Emile Durkheim II

The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (read Intro., Ch. 1, Ch. 5, Ch. 7, Conclusion)

Crow, Graham. 2010. "Social Solidarities." *Sociology Compass*. 4, 1: 52-60.

Week 7 – Oct 25th - Max Weber I

From Max Weber (1946) H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills, eds. New York: Oxford University Press

- "Politics as a Vocation" (pp. 77-128)
- "Science as a Vocation" (pp. 129-156)

'Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy." Pp. 49-112 in *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*.

From Max Weber (1946) H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills, eds. New York: Oxford University Press

- "Class, Status, Party" (pp. 180-195).
- Selections from "Bureaucracy" (pp 196-204; 214-216; 224-232)

Week 8 – Nov 1st - Max Weber II

The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

Swedberg, Richard. 2003. "The changing picture of Max Weber's sociology." *Annual Review of Sociology*: 283-306.

Week 9 – Nov 15th – Georg Simmel

From *On Individuality and Social Forms*, Donald N. Levine, ed. University of Chicago Press:

- "How is Society Possible" (pp. 6-22)
- "The Problem of Sociology" (pp. 23-35)
- "Conflict" (pp. 70-95)
- "Sociability" (pp. 127-140)
- "Group Expansion and the Development of Individuality" (pp. 251-293)
- "The Stranger" (pp. 143-149)
- "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (pp. 324-339)

Week 10 - Nov 22nd – W.E.B. Du Bois

Du Bois, William E.B. 1994 [1903]. Chaps. 1- 4 (pp. 1-45), chap. 6 (pp. 55-67), chap. 8 (pp. 83-98), Chap . 10-11 (115-131) in *The Souls of Black Folk*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.

Du Bois, William E.B. 1910. "Reconstruction and its Benefits." *The American Historical Review* 15(4): 781-799.

Itzigsohn, Josee, and Karida Brown. 2015. "Sociology and the Theory of Double Consciousness." *Du Bois Review* 12(2): 231-48.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2005. "Black Public Intellectuals: From Du Bois to the Present," *Contexts*, 4: 22-27.

Week 11 – Nov 29th - Early Women Sociologists & Presentations I

Ritzer, George. 2018. "Early Women Sociologists," (pp. 306-340) in *Classical Sociological Theory*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Week 12 – Dec 6th – Presentations II and Conclusion

No new readings