

Sociology 367: History of Sociological Theory

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Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday 2:30 – 4:00p.m and by appointment.

Course Description

This course provides an in-depth exploration of major theorists in the sociological canon. We will consider personal histories as well the social, historical, and political contexts of writers including Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Sigmund Freud and others. Some of the questions we will consider over the course of the term are the following: What is theory? What is sociological theory? How and why did it begin? What are its philosophical and political assumptions? What are its major ideas about the nature of society and the individual? How can theory be used to explain both everyday life events and changes in the institutional structures of society?

Course Objectives

The principle goal of this class is help you become acquainted with the major concepts and ideas that form the basis of sociological theory. We cannot possibly cover all the relevant reading given the limits imposed by a 14 week semester. Rather, think of the course material as a selective representation of the rich and varied word of sociological theory.

The course is organized around questions emerging from the historical transitions in the West from traditional (agrarian) to modern (industrial) to postmodern (information) societies. For each of these transitions we will read a representative group of social thinkers who attempt to understand the causes and effects of these changes. Themes emerging from these historical transitions include the formation of capitalism and industrial society, the nation-state, political revolution and class conflict, as well as examining long-standing debates about the relation between the individual and society. By the end of the semester you should have a good working knowledge of the intellectual history of the discipline, the central problems confronting social theorists, and the different kinds of theories developed around those problems.

Course Requirements

The class will be conducted as a combined lecture and seminar. I will be responsible for the lectures and leading discussion. It is your responsibility to participate actively in class discussions. You are expected to come to class having read the materials for the day and fully prepared to discuss the readings with your peers. Class participation will factor as 15% of your final course grade. In addition to class participation students will take two exams, write a short term paper, and submit visual renderings of various theories. Below is more information about these requirements.

1) Daily Questions. Each student will be required to submit a set of 2-3 questions based on the day's readings once a week. Daily questions should help you prepare for class and improve the quality of class discussions. Therefore, you should be introducing questions that demonstrate a

thoughtful and engaged approach to the readings. Be sure to include any relevant context for your questions. Please e-mail these questions to me by 12pm on the days that class meets. Questions will be graded based on the quality of thought and insight that goes into the construction of the questions. Occasionally, I will call on you to present your questions. When this is the case, your score on the questions will include your presentation of your question to the class. We will determine whether you submit questions Monday or Wednesday on the first day of class.

2) *Class Exams.* Exams will test you on materials from lecture, discussion, and the readings. Exams will ask you to briefly explain or compare different theories and key concepts. They will also include some standard test items, such as matching theorists to concepts, concepts to their definitions, and true-false statements. Both exams will be identical in format and point value.

3) *Final Paper or Exam.* You will have a choice between a final paper or a final exam. For the paper option you will write a 5 page essay entitled “My theory of _____,” in which you elaborate your own theory using some of the writings we have considered over the course of the term. As an alternative, you may choose to take a final exam which will be cumulative and require that you demonstrate a holistic knowledge of sociological theory. Handouts explaining the paper and exam will be distributed later in the semester. This assignment will constitute 35% of your final grade in the course.

4) *Participation.* I expect you to be engaged in the class proceedings. This includes participation in discussions, asking questions, making observations, and trying to answer questions when called on. This also includes more general things like attentiveness, arriving to class on time, turning in assignments on time, etc. Every student should be actively engaged in these ways during class, and it adds positively for all of us to the overall course experience. Everyone in the classroom is partly responsible for making this an interesting and exciting class.

Course Evaluation

Exams (2):	200 points each
Final Paper or Exam	350 points
Questions:	100 points
Participation	<u>150 points</u>
	1000 points

Grading Scale

930-1000 points= A	900-929 = A-
880-899 = B+	850-879 = B
800-829 = B-	780-799 = C+
730-779 = C	700-729 = C-
600-699 = D	599 and below = F

Absences and Late Work

Be aware that unexcused absences can result in grade penalties or failure of the course. Excused absences include only what the college normally allows: illnesses and emergencies, sports events, etc. This does not include things like workloads in other classes, early departures at the

end of the semester, poor organization of time, etc. I do not grant excuses on the basis of personal emails to me. All excuses must be confirmed through either the Dean of Faculty's office or the Health Center.

Late work will be accepted without penalty only if prior arrangements have been made with me and with a note from either the Dean's office or the Health Center. Late work that does not meet the two preceding criteria will be accepted as follows: for every day an assignment is late, beginning just after the time it is due, I take off 2% (out of 100%). Often, it is worth losing 2 percentage points if it means you will be turning in a more polished paper a day late. You decide what works best for you.

Required Texts

- Lemert, Charles (ed.). 2009. 4th Ed. *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings* (Boulder: Westview Press).

Reserve Readings:

I have placed the following books on 3 hour Reserve in the library to use as secondary resources throughout the semester. Most secondary sources for sociological theory are located under call numbers HM24 and HM51.

- Ritzer, George. 1983. *Sociological Theory* (New York: Knopf). HM24.R4938
- Turner, Jonathan H. 1986. *The Structure of Sociological Theory* (Chicago: Dorsey). HM24.T24
- Kinloch, Graham C. 1977. *Sociological Theory: Its Development and Major Paradigms* (New York: McGraw-Hill). HM24/K54
- Collins, Randall. 1985. *Three Sociological Traditions* (New York: Oxford). HM24.C652
- Anderson, R.J. J.A. Hughes and W.W. Sharrock (eds.). 1987. *Classic Disputes in Sociology* (London: Allen and Unwin). HM51.C54

Other resources

There are no truly excellent online sociological dictionaries, but you may find Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page helpful for definitions of various sociological concepts and ideas. Wikipedia is a free online encyclopedia that covers a wide range of topics, not only sociology. It's pretty good pretty for definitions of sociological concepts and information on sociological theories and authors.

If you are looking for a dictionary of sociology to buy, probably the best popular one around is: Johnson, Allan G. 2005. *The Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology* 2nd ed. You are not required to buy this dictionary, but it would be a good addition to your sociology library.

Weekly Schedule

· Please note: Course assignments are subject to change. I will alert you in class and via e-mail to any such changes. Please be attentive to these modifications.

Week 1

Wednesday 8/31 Introduction

Week 2 The Emergence of Modern Social Theory

Monday 9/4

Lemert, pp. 1-29

Wednesday 9/5

Ashley and Orenstein, pp. 1-42. **CLEo**

Week 3 Classical Liberal Theory: Society as a Free Market

Monday 9/12

- Adam Smith. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* in *The Essential Adam Smith*. Pp. 65-77, 100-104 (see <http://www.econlib.org/library/Smith/smMS3.html> and read III.I.1-III.I.11), 133-147. **CLEo**

Wednesday 9/14

- Adam Smith. *The Wealth of Nations* excerpts found at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/adamsmith-summary.html>
- Giridharadas, Anand. *Selling Short a Humanistic Economist*, NYTimes 10 Jan 10. **CLEo**

Week 4 The French Revolution and Issues that Framed the Modern Age

Monday 9/19

- Edmund Burke. Selections from *Reflections on the Revolution in France* excerpts found at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1791burke.html>

Wednesday 9/21 *Republican Virtue Theory in the Egalitarian Era*

- Alexis deTocqueville. *Democracy in America*. Pp. 9-20, 246-253, 305-308, 417-418, 509-517, 555-558. **CLEo**

Week 5 Early Feminism

Monday 9/26

- Mary Wollstonecraft. *A vindication of the Rights of Women* Excerpts. Pp. 1-19. **CLEo**

Wednesday 9/28

- Mary Wollstonecraft. *A vindication of the Rights of Women* Excerpts. Pp. 19-52. **CLEo**

Week 6 A Sociological Approach to Modern Society

Monday 10/3

****Midterm #1****

Wednesday 10/5

- Ashley and Orenstein, pp. 77-111 (Durkheim) **CLEo**

Week 7

Monday 10/10 No class

Wednesday 10/12

- Lemert, pp. 72-103 (Durkheim)

Week 8 Class and Capitalism

Monday 10/17

- George R. Boyer. *The Historical Background of the Communist Manifesto*. Journal of Economic Perspectives. **CLEo**

Wednesday 10/19

- Lemert, pp. 31-51 (Marx)

Week 9

Monday 10/24

- Lemert, pp. 51-72 (Marx, Adams), 215-217 (Lenin), 263-265 (Gramsci)

Wednesday 10/26 **Institutions and Individuals in Society**

- Ashley and Orenstein, pp. 220-257 (Weber) **CLEo**

Week 10

Monday 10/31

- Lemert, pp. 103-125 (Weber)

Wednesday 11/2

- Lemert, pp. 129-141, 145-148 (Freud)

Week 11

Monday 11/7

****Midterm #2****

Wednesday 11/9 **The Sociological Gaze**

- Ashley and Orenstein, pp. 258-287 (Simmel) **CLEo**
- Lemert, pp. 184-188 (Simmel)

Week 12

Monday 10/14

- Ashley and Orenstein, pp. 400-409, 412-420 (Mead) **CLEo**
- Lemert, pp. 188-189 (Cooley), 224-229 (Mead)

Wednesday 10/16

- Lemert, pp. pp. 161-178 (James, Dubois, Gilman), 338-342 (Goffman), 389-384 (Berger and Luckmann)

Thanksgiving Break

Week 13 Cultural Perspectives

Monday 11/28

- Lemert, pp. 259-262 (Benjamin, Woolf), 320-324 (Althusser), 345-347 (de Beauvoir), 364-369 (Fanon),

Wednesday 11/30

- Lemert pp. 449-451 (Lorde), 536-558 (Chakravorty, Spikak, Hill Collins, and Anzaldua)

Week 14 The “Future” of Society and Theory

Monday 12/5

- Lemert pp. 597-615 (Wallerstein, Hoffman, Hall), 623-630 (Sen), 636-640 (Beck)

Wednesday 12/7

- Lemert pp. 465-468 (Lyotard), 473-484 (Foucault, Baudrillard)