

**SOC367**

**History of Sociological Theory      Fall 2008**

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Welcome to sociological theory!

This course looks at theory through selected readings of major theorists, commentary on the history, politics and culture of sociological theory, and works of literature that illustrate sociological concepts. We will discuss some of the following questions: What is a theory? What is sociological theory? What are sociological theories' historical origins? What are their philosophical and political assumptions? What are their major ideas about the nature of society, social change, and the individual? What are their practical uses and limits?

The goal of this class is to help you become more fluent in the multiple languages of our discipline, their histories and places in intellectual thought, their major concepts and ideas. In a semester long class, of course, we can't begin to cover everything, and this class will only serve as an introduction to theorists and theories that I hope will inspire you to study social theory further. As a whole, the course is organized around the question of the historical transformation in the West from modern (industrial) to postmodern (information) societies. We will begin with classical sociological statements that formed the grand narratives of modern sociology (Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Freud, de Saussure), and proceed to the plurality of theoretical sociologies that emerged from them. Related to these developments, we will also examine some reasons for the emergence of quantitative vs. qualitative sociologies, the formation of capitalism and industrial society, the emergence of the nation-state, political revolution and class conflict, as well as look at long-standing debates about the relation between the self and society, micro and macro sociologies, and the role of ethical values in sociological analysis. By the end of the semester you should have a good working knowledge of the intellectual history of your discipline, the central problems social theorists think about and debate, and the different kinds of theories they develop around those problems.

**TEXTS:**

Lemert, Charles (ed.). 2004. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings* (Boulder: Westview Press).

DeLillo, Don. 1986. *White Noise*. (New York: Penguin Books).

Be sure to bring all assigned readings with you to class on the days we will be studying them. Occasionally I will also hand out xeroxed readings for certain classes (listed in the schedule below).

## RESOURCES:

**CLEo:** I have gathered together a very wide variety of resources for Soc367, including notes for readings, web resources, videos and audio recordings of theorists, bibliographies, encyclopedias and dictionaries of sociology, and a host of other theory relevant material on the College's CLEo (Collaborative Learning) website. You are strongly encouraged to use these materials as study guides, resources for papers and for providing context for class lectures and discussions. You are welcome to bring computers to the class to link to this site and follow along with its use in class as a gateway for a host of in-class activities. You are also encouraged to contribute resources to the CLEo site via a student dropbox (e.g. URLs to theory relevant sites), as well as send emails to others on the Soc367 CLEo class roster (soc\_367\_a\_f08@cleo.whitman.edu). The use of CLEo is still an experiment in this class. Eventually I hope it will serve as a useful tool for students who seek to connect sociological theories to their theses projects and to applied work they do in other contexts. We will discuss CLEo and its use in teaching and research further in class.

**Reserves:** 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

There are no truly excellent online sociological dictionaries, but you may find the following websites and books helpful for definitions of various sociological concepts and ideas:

Critical Dictionary of Sociology

<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~rmazur/dictionary/a.html>

The Marx-Engels Internet Archive. <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/>  
All of Marx and Engels' translated work. Also on CLEo site.

Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)

A free online encyclopedia. More than just sociology, but pretty good for definitions of sociological concepts and information on sociological theories and authors. If citing Wikipedia, however, remember that its contents are user-generated and not always considered accurate or complete by strict academic standards.

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* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. You are not required to buy this dictionary, but it would be a good addition to your growing sociology library.

You will also have access via the CLEo site to the multi-volume *Encyclopedia of Sociology* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. William F. Borgatta and Rhonda J. V. Montgomery (eds.), 2005.

## EVALUATION:

**1) Two midterm papers (20 points each)**, 6-7 pages in length. All papers must include page citations from the Lemert book where appropriate, and a properly formatted bibliography of any outside sources used (encyclopedias, books, articles, websites, etc.). See ASA guidelines for formatting and an explanation of how I grade papers at the end of this syllabus.

a) **Write a paper that compares the work of two of the following “grand” theorists:** Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Sigmund Freud, and Ferdinand de Saussure. Your paper should 1) clearly articulate how you see these theorists’ work as different or similar in a *general* way (examples: Marx is interested in social conflict, while Durkheim is more concerned with social cohesion; both Weber and Saussure are interested in the meaning of social action), 2) explain and support your thesis with analyses of *specific* concepts or propositions used by each theorist, as given in the readings and discussed in class (e.g. show the differences between Marx’s concept of alienation and Durkheim’s concept of anomie; analyze the similarities between Weber’s analysis of power and Saussure’s analysis of language). This paper is due on 10/7.

b) **Write a paper that synthesizes the ideas of the theorists we read for one class period between 10/8 and 12/1** (examples: a paper that brings together, in a single discussion about the nature of the social self, the different ideas of Cooley, Mead, James and Lacan we read on 10/15; a paper that examines the concept of women’s power in the works of Woolf, Gilman, Smith and de Beauvoir as discussed on 10/22. Synthetic papers look for commonalities in different perspectives or draw attention to larger

organizing themes or assumptions in the work of different authors, and they do so by articulating and analyzing the *specific* arguments or claims made by each theorist. The date you turn in this paper can vary given your choice of theorists, but I can accept no papers later than 12/1.

**2) A final paper entitled “My theory of \_\_\_\_\_,” (25 points)** 7-8 pages in length with appropriate formatting. The topic is your choice, but it should not be so wide that it cannot adequately be addressed in a relatively short assignment like this (e.g., “My theory of race relations,” “My theory of gender relations,” etc.), nor so narrow that it underemphasizes theory or overemphasizes individual rather than social phenomena (e.g., “My theory of why my roommate likes Chinese food”). You should try to formulate your problem at a midrange level that allows you to apply one or more of the theories we have studied to a carefully limited context of patterned behavior. Here are some possible examples of good topics drawn right from campus (although your topic does not have to be limited to campus issues):

My theory of patterns of fashion at Whitman using Baudrillard’s concept of simulation.

My theory of alienation of working class students at Whitman using Marx class theory.

My theory of gender discrimination in the Whitman classroom using Patricia Hill Collins’ idea of a “matrix of domination.”

My theory of differences in the drinking patterns of first and last year students using Goffman and Cooley’s theories of self-formation.

My theory of how social control operates on students on campus using Foucault’s theories of panoptics and “docile” bodies.

These topics should not demand any outside reading on theory, but some, depending on what topic you choose, may require a small amount of outside empirical research (e.g., finding statistics on student drinking patterns). I will discuss more how to select a suitable topic in class, as well as address questions about the style and organization of the paper. Normally, papers should be formatted in ASA style. Sociology, however, recognizes a wide range of theoretical writing, from formal and traditional approaches to more experimental and personal styles (e.g., autoethnography, artistic compositions, video/audio projects, etc.). All traditionally organized papers do require a clear summary of the theory or theories they use to frame the analysis of their topic. If you choose to do a more experimental or personal project, you must clear and discuss it with me before beginning. For a more traditional paper, I also strongly encourage you stop by my office and let me know what your topic is to insure that it works within the framework given above.

A note on my standards for grading papers, and how to interpret letter grades on your papers, is provided at the end of this syllabus. **This paper is due at the end of the time scheduled for the final exam in this class.**

3) **Daily questions (21 points total, 1 point each).** There are daily questions or passages for interpretation assigned for each of the daily collection of readings in the class schedule below. Daily questions help you prepare for class and improve the quality of class discussions. Occasionally, I will send out alternative questions or passages from the texts over the CLEo listserv. Please bring your responses or reflections to these items to class on signed 3x5 cards, **which I will collect at the beginning of each class period.** Please use only 3x5 cards, which are available at the bookstore, and not other kinds of paper. You may use both sides of your card for your response (although leave me a little room for comments). I grade responses 1, .5 and 0 for a) general accuracy and coherency and, b) consistent timely submission (in other words, don't miss or be late turning them in). I may call upon you to share your response verbally with the rest of the class. Overall, daily questions count for a significant proportion of your final grade, so you should take them seriously.

4) **Attendance (6 points at least).** I expect regular on-time attendance and, given the size of the class, I will pass around attendance sheets. Any unexcused absences will result in the loss of this portion of your final grade. Multiple unexcused absences could result in higher grade penalties or even failure of the course. Excused absences only include what the college normally allows for: illnesses and emergencies, sports and other school-sponsored events, etc., but not things like heavy workloads or tests in other classes (which are also not excuses for late papers or rationales for paper extensions), early departures at the end of the semester, poor organization of time, etc. Sorry, 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 (the confirmation can come anytime as long as it eventually reaches me). Thanks for understanding.

5) **Engagement (8 points).** Engagement includes but is not limited to arriving to class on time, attentiveness in class, participation in discussions, raising questions, making observations, answering questions when called upon, explaining answers to daily questions, arriving to class on time, and turning in all assignments on time. Every student should be actively engaged in these ways during class, and it adds positively for all of us to the overall course experience. This can't be a great class without your help.

### **Grading summary:**

Midterm Papers (2)	20 points each (40 points)
Final Paper or Project	25 points
Daily Questions:	21 points (1 point each)
Attendance:	6 points
Engagement:	8 points

90-100 points A, 80-89 B, 70-79 C, 60-69 D

**Schedule of topics and readings: all readings in *Charles Lemert, Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings* unless otherwise noted.**

9/3 Introduction

**The Grand Narratives of Sociology**

Key concepts: social class, ideology, collective representations, private property, industrialism, capitalism, commodity, political economy, nationalism and internationalism, social evolution and revolution, social institutions, bourgeoisie and proletariat, alienation, exploitation, anomie, individualism, bureaucracy, social fact, social meaning and interpretation, disenchantment, rationalization, fragmentation, social structure and function, power and authority, rational action, status, instincts, the unconscious, id/ego/superego, Oedipus complex, repression, neurosis, modernity, semiotics and signs

9/8 Lemert, *Social Theory: Its Uses and Pleasures* 1-27  
Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*: 348-352

9/10 Marx - *Estranged Labor*; *Camera Obscura*; *Class Struggle*; *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*: 29-48

Daily question: Briefly describe what Marx means by the concept of “estranged labor.”

9/15 Marx - *On Imperialism in India*; *The Values of Commodities*; *The Fetishism of Commodities*; *Labour-Power and Capital*: 48-65

Daily question: Briefly describe, for Marx, how the value of a commodity is determined.

9/17 Durkheim - *Anomie and the Modern Division of Labor*; *Sociology and Social Facts*, *Suicide and Modernity*: 70-83

Daily question: What, for Durkheim, is “anomie” and how is it a cause of suicide?

9/22 Durkheim - *Primitive Classifications and Social Knowledge*; *The Cultural Logic of Collective Representations*: 83-99

Daily question: What is a “collective representation”? Give two concrete examples.

- 9/24 Weber - The Spirit of Capitalism and the Iron Cage; The Bureaucratic Machine: 99-110
- Daily question: List four or five ideal type characteristics of bureaucracy, according to Weber. Alternate question: What does Weber mean by “the iron cage”?
- 9/29 Weber - What is Politics; The Types of Legitimate Domination; Class, Status, Party: 110-125
- Daily question: What, for Weber, are the 3 types of legitimate domination? Give an example of each type.
- 10/1 Freud - The Psychic Apparatus and the Theory of Instincts; Dream-Work and Interpretation; Oedipus, the Child; Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through; The Return of the Repressed in Social Life; Civilization and the Individual: 125-148
- Daily question: What, for Freud, is the difference between the ego and the superego?
- 10/6 Saussure – Arbitrary Social Values and the Linguistic Sign: 148-156  
Barthes – Semiological Prospects: 303-309
- Daily question: What are the two poles of the sign, according to Saussure, and how does he define them?
- 10/7 T **First paper assignment due by 4 pm in my drop box outside Maxey 228**

### **Modernity**

Key concepts: the self, multiple selves, reflexivity, strangeness, social roles, social constructionism, feminism, sex/gender and power, race/ethnicity and power, the individual in society, social action, structural functionalism, symbolic interaction, social criticism, otherness, matrices of domination, inner vs. other-directedness, emancipatory knowledge, communicative competence, the state apparatus, critical sociology

- 10/8 Simmel - The Stranger: 180-184  
Riesman – Character and Society: The Other-Directed Personality: 323-328

Erikson – Youth and American Identity 328-331

Daily Question: Are Erikson's American youths "other-directed personalities" in Reisman's sense? Why or why not?

10/15 James, The Self and its Selves: 157-162  
Cooley – The Looking-Glass Self: 184-186  
Mead – The Self, The I, and the Me: 220-223  
Lacan – The Mirror Stage: 336-338

Daily question: How many selves does a person have? Explain.

10/20 Goffman – On Face-Work: 332-336  
Goffman – Stigma (xeroxed class handout)

Daily question: What does Goffman mean by 'face'?

10/22 Woolf – A Room of One's Own: 257-259  
Gilman – The Yellow Wallpaper; Women and Economics: 168-173  
Cooper – The Colored Woman's Office: 175-180  
de Beauvoir – Woman as Other 339-342

Daily question: What is the symbolism of the 'yellow wallpaper' in Gilman's piece? Alternate question: What, for Woolf, is the significance of having a room of one's own?

10/27 Parsons, The Unit Act of Action Systems (208-211)  
Merton, Social Structure and Anomie (225-237)  
Parsons, Action Systems and Social Systems (296-299)

Daily Question: Is Merton's concept of anomie the same as Durkheim's? Why or why not? Alternate question: How does Parson's define "action"?

10/29 Gates – Race as Trope of the World: 515-522  
West – The New Cultural Politics of Difference: 505-515  
Collins – Black Feminist Thought in the Matrix of Domination, 535 – 547  
Asante – The Afrocentric Idea, 494-497

Daily question: What does Collins mean by 'pivoting the center'? Alternate question: What does Collins mean by the 'matrix of domination'?

11/3 Althusser – Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatus: 317-322

Habermas – Emancipatory Knowledge; Communicative Competence: 380-383

Marcuse – Repressive Desublimation: 427-430

Lukacs – The Irrational Chasm Between Subject and Object: 202-204

Daily question: What does Marcuse mean by the concept of "repressive desublimation"? Alternate question: What does Habermas mean by the concept "communicative competence"?

### **Postmodernity**

Key concepts: postmodernity, simulation, the body in society, social identity, habitus, everyday life sociology, panopticism, power, social control, distributed networks, risk society, information society, race/class/gender, rhizomes, cyborgs, gendered time, globalization, fractured identities

11/5 Foucault - Docile Bodies (xeroxed class handout)

Daily question: How does Foucault define a "docile body"? Give two examples of docile bodies.

11/10 Foucault – Panopticism (xeroxed class handout)  
Foucault – Power as Knowledge, 465-471

Daily Question: In a few sentences, explain how a panopticon works.

11/12 Lyotard – The Postmodern Condition: 457-460  
Baudrillard – Simulacra and Simulations, Disneyland: 471-476  
Giddens – Postmodernity or Radicalized Modernity?: 477-484  
Bourdieu – Structure, Habitus, Practices: 435-440

Daily Question: How does Baudrillard define a simulation? Can you give an example?

11/17 Anzaldua – The New Mestiza: 547-553  
Haraway – The Cyborg Manifesto and Fractured Identities: 522-526  
Butler – Imitation and Gender Insubordination: 557-568  
Weeks – Sexual Identification is a Strange Thing: 553-557

Daily Question: Why, for Weeks, is sexual identification a "strange thing"? Alternate question: How does Haraway define a "cyborg"? Can you give an example?

11/19 Said – Intellectual Exile: Expatriates and Marginals: 640-644  
Spivak – Can the Subaltern Speak?: 531-535  
Kristeva – Women's Time: 647-651

Sen – Asian Values and the West's Claim to Uniqueness: 623-630

Daily question: What does Said mean by the concept of "intellectual exile"?

Thanksgiving Break

12/1 Beck – World Risk Society: 630-635  
Harvey – The City in a Globalizing World: 609-614  
Castells – The Global Network: 614-618  
Connel – Masculinities and Globalization: 659

Daily question: How do you define “globalization”? Alternate question: How does Castells define the concept of a "network"?

**Paper #2 due in my drop box Maxey 228 by 4 pm**

12/3 DeLillo, White Noise, Part I  
Deleuze and Guattari – The Rhizome/A Thousand Plateaus: 665-669

12/8 DeLillo, Part II to Chapter 28

12/10 DeLillo, Chapter 28 to end

**Final Paper due 12/17 in my drop box Maxey 228 by 11 am**

**A note on how I grade papers:** I love to give A's, but I believe that grade has to mean something, and I award them only for deserving papers. I evaluate papers on both their form and their content; good ideas, in my estimation, cannot be expressed in bad or boring prose. **An "A" paper, in addition to addressing a significant problem and presenting a sophisticated argument, must also possess virtually flawless spelling, grammar, and style (when in doubt about style, use a style manual like Diana Hacker's, available in the bookstore. Please take formal writing style seriously and avoid colloquial uses of language in papers). It must also demonstrate a close reading and correct understanding of the authors we study in class.** A "B" paper is generally strong overall but has minor, correctable problems in one or more of these areas. You can interpret a "B" as my judgment that your paper is adequate and that with a little work could be superior. Please note: I will not give an "A" to any paper that contains typos, grammatical errors, or style problems (including referencing problems). A "C" on your paper indicates inconsistent quality in both form and content, and should be cause for some concern on your part. Anything below a C- on your papers is, in my opinion, inadequate, and you should see me immediately. Sorry, I do not allow rewrites. I will, however, consider drafts of papers provided that they are given to me at least 72 hours in advance of the due date. In general, I grade papers on the sociological

importance of the problem selected, theoretical sophistication (argument, analysis, critique, etc.), and quality of writing and expression.

**The following are styles taken from the ASA Style Guide that you must use for your bibliography section and to cite sources within your papers.**

### **Book**

Berlin, Gordon and Andrew Sum. 1988. *Toward a More Perfect Union: Basic Skills, Poor Families, and Our Economic Future*. New York: Ford Foundation.

Mason, Karen O. 1994. *Women's Labor Force Participation and Fertility*. Research Triangle Park, NC: National Institutes of Health.

Citation example: (Berlin and Sum 1988: p. 55)

### **Chapters in Edited Books**

Alba, Richard and Victor Nee. 1999. "Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration." Pp. 202-226 in *The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience*, edited by C. Hirschman, P. Kasinitz, and J. DeWind. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Citation example (Marx in Lemert 2004: p. 73-5)

### **Articles in Academic Journals**

Horton, Hayward D., Beverly Lundy Allen, Cedric Herring, and Melvin Thomas. 2000. "Lost in the Storm: The Sociology of the Black Working Class, 1850 to 1990." *American Sociological Review* 65:128-37.

Citation example: (Horton et. al 2000: p. 129)

### **Articles from Newspapers and Magazines**

Pan, Esther with Lynette Clemetson. 2000. "Why Asian Guys Are on a Roll." *Newsweek*, February 21, pp. 12-13.

Citation example: (Pan and Clemenston 2000: p. 12)

### **Articles from the Internet**

Author's Name. Year the site created. "Title of the page in quotes." *Title of the web site in italics*. <URL of the page in brackets> (Date that you accessed/first read the page in

parentheses).

For example: Le, C.N. 2001. "Multiracial and Adopted Asians." *Asian-Nation*.  
<<http://www.asian-nation.org/issues9.html>> (September 4, 2002).

Citation example: (Le 2001)

### **CLEo**

CLEo, Class, Folder, link title

For example: CLEo, History of Sociological Theory, Ferdinand De Saussure Folder,  
lemert—saussure.pdf

Citation example (CLEo, lemert – saussure.pdf)

### **Class Notes (e.g.)**

Bogard, William. 2008. History of Sociological Theory lecture notes.

Citation example: (Bogard 2008, 11/3)