

Instructor: Eve Spangler

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Class Meetings: Tuesday, 3:00 – 5:30 p.m., 307 Carney

Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday: 10:30 – 11:45 a.m., and by appointment

Introduction:

In this course we will examine the contemporary theory conversations that derive from the classical works of Marx, Weber and Durkheim. Because all competent scholarship today echoes with the insights and frameworks of all three writers and many others, it is, at least in part, an arbitrary exercise to classify contemporary theorists as neo-Marxist, neo-Weberian, or neo-Durkheimian. Nevertheless, most contemporary writers can usefully be read as being in conversation with either the substantive concerns or the methodological or epistemological challenges raised by a particular classical theorist - using one as foundational and the others as ancillary in their work. Hence, this course is organized to appreciate both the unique contributions and the points of convergence among contemporary theorists in conversation with their classical forbearers.

A course in contemporary theory faces a number of challenges.

There are many writers to be considered and thus the course runs the risk of deteriorating into a Long March through fragments and excerpts from a blur of names (“if this is Tuesday, this must be world systems theory/post-modernism/critical culture studies, etc.”). To offset this tendency, we will address at least two common questions to each group of writers. First: how does this particular body of work describe the dialectic between *agency* (the capacity of people to take meaningful, creative, resistive, or, more often, routine actions) and *structure* (the sum total of others’ agency over time, which feels, at any particular moment, like a given environment to which we must respond). Second: how does this body of work attend to the question of *alterity* – differences in gender, race, sexuality and other factors that shape human experience in communities.

Another challenge for theory is the tendency of people to under- or over-use it in their intellectual work. Under-use involves a perfunctory, ritualistic use of theory: it appears in the opening pages of a study only to disappear under an avalanche of data, never to be seen again. Or, conversely, theory serves as a source of such certainty that the data barely need to be examined at all – for example, when a Marxist view allows us to “know” that all corporate behavior is equally exploitative and therefore we need look to the data only for anecdotes to illustrate what we already know.

Lastly, theory is often segregated from practice – the question “What should we do, now that we know what we know” is, all too often, left unasked. Many of the suggested readings on this syllabus illustrate the application of theoretical perspectives to empirical research problems, and are designed to illustrate theory-in-use.

Requirements

The latter two challenges – of the misuse and marginalization of theory - are addressed not only in the choice of readings, but also in the writing and class participation requirements of the course. In order to help students to appropriate theory as a real, unpretentious, sensitizing and valued part of their work, students will be asked to

*to bring written questions to class each week for each of the assigned readings. Questions may pertain to the logic, content, history, or significance of the reading in and of itself, or to the connections among readings, or to the application of the readings to on-going work of interest to the student. But, in any case, a good question is one that is genuinely of interest to you, can be answered better with reference to the text than without, and probably is answerable in more than one way.

*to write a series of 3 essays (one for each major section of the course) exploring sub-topics within the main groupings of theorists (usually by reading extensively in the suggested readings section), applying this body of theory to their own work, with equally serious attention to the substantive and methodological implications of the theory.

*finally, to be very active in class participation. This should include attendance, preparation for each class meeting, and oral reports on each of the three papers prepared for the course.

Course materials are available through WebCT, on-line reserves and at the reserve desk. The main anthology used in this course, Charles Lemert (ed.) *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classical Readings*, Westview Press, 1999, is also available at the bookstore.

In general, the readings for this course are of two sorts: original sources and statements (required/common) and empirical works illustrating the strengths and weaknesses of particular theoretical positions (recommended). In addition, although I have not assigned specific readings, students wanting to use summative textbooks might wish to consult Anthony Giddens' *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge University Press) or Randall Collins and Michael Makowsky's *The Discovery of Society* (MacGraw Hill).

University academic integrity standards will apply to all work. More information about these standards can be found at:

bc.edu/bc_org/avp/enmgt/stserv/acd/univ.html#integrity*

Schedule:

January 17/24: Introduction – The History and Utility of Theory, Student self-introductions

Readings:

- *C. Wright Mills, “The Promise” Spell(Chapter 1 of *The Sociological Imagination*), also in Lemert, 348-352.
- *Michael Burawoy, “For Public Sociology” (ASA Presidential Address, 2004)
- *Elizabeth Spellman, “Introduction,” *The Inessential Woman*
- *Peter Berger “Sociology: A Disinvitation” (*Society*, Nov/Dec, 1992, 12-18)
- *Lisa Ruddick “The Near Enemy of the Humanities is Professionalism,” (*Chronicle of Higher Education: The Chronicle Review*, Nov. 23, 2001)

January 31 – February 28: Conversations Rooted in Questions Raised by Karl Marx

January 31/February 7: Contemporary labor studies and class analyses:

Common Readings: Class Analysis

- *Eric Olin Wright “What is Analytic Marxism?” (*Socialist Review*)
- *Eric Olin Wright and J. Singelmann “Proletarianization and the Changing American Class Structure” (*AJS*, 88 supplement)
- *Eric Olin Wright and W. Martin, “The Transformation of the American Class Structure,” (*AJS*, 1987, 93(1):1-29)
- *Stolzman and Gamberg, “Marxist Class Analysis,” (*Berkeley Journal of Sociology*)

Common Readings: Labor Studies

- *Heidi Hartmann: Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job Segregation by Sex,” (*Signs*, 1976 1(3)159-168)
- *Myra Marx Ferree “Between Two Worlds,” (*Signs* 1985 10(3):517-536).
- *Richard Edwards, Chapters 1, 9-11 from *Contested Terrain*, (Basic Books, 1979)
- *Stanley Aronowitz, et. al. “The Post Work Manifesto,” in Lemert, 635-641.
- *William Julius Wilson “What to do When Work Disappears,” in Lemert. 641- 645

Suggested Readings

- Leslie Salzinger, *Genders in Production* (UCalPress, 2003)
- Sharon Collins *The Black Executive* (excerpts)
- Ellis Cose *Rage of a Privileged Class* (excerpts)
- Thomas Oliver and Melvin Shapiro *Black Wealth, White Wealth* (excerpts)

Charles Mills *From Class to Race: Essays in White Marxism and Black Radicalism* (Rowan and Littlefield: 2003)

Erik Olin Wright *Class Counts*, Cambridge UP: 1997.

February 14: World Systems Theory/Globalization

Common Readings:

*V.I. Lenin "What is to be Done?" In Lemert, 215-217

*Andre Gunder Frank "The Development of Underdevelopment,"
(*Monthly Review*, 1966)

*Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Modern World System" in Lemert, 390-397.

*Theda Skocpol "The State as a Janus Faced Structure," in Lemert, 397 – 400.

*Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony* (Oxford, 1989),
Introduction and Conclusion

*Walter D. Mignolo *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton), Introduction, Conclusion

*Peter Berger and Samuel Huntington. Eds. *Many Globalizations*, (Oxford, 2002) Introduction.

Suggested Readings:

Chandra Talpade Mohanty *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, Duke University Press, 2003

Peggy Levitt, *The Transnational Villagers*

Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital*

Saskia Sassen *Globalization and its Discontents*, Free Press, 1998

Ellen Meiksins Wood *Empire of Capital*, Verso: 2003

Nancy Naples and Manisha Desai (eds.) *Women's Activism and Globalization*, Routledge, 2002.

February 21: Critical Culture Studies

Common Readings:

*Max Horkheimer, "Notes on Science in Crisis," in Lemert, 208-212

* Antonio Gramsci "Intellectuals and Hegemony," in Lemert, 259-261

*Jurgen Habermas, "Emancipatory Knowledge," in Lemert, 380-381

*Jurgen Habermas, "Social Analysis, and Communicative Competence,"
In Lemert, 381-383

*Stuart Hall, "The Global, the Local and the Return of Ethnicity," in
Lemert, 626-633.

*Stuart Hall "Cultural Identity and Diaspora,"

*Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Lemert, 548-553.

*Herbert Marcuse "Repressive Desublimation," in Lemert, 433-436.

Suggested Readings:

Martin Jay *The Dialectical Imagination*, Little, Brown: 1973

Dick Hebdige *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. Methuen, 1979

Simon Frith *Sound Effects* Pantheon Books, 1981

Tricia Rose. *Black Noise*

Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford, 1977

March 14 to April 4: Conversations rooted in Questions raised by Max Weber

March 14: Comparative and Cross-National Studies

Common Readings:

*Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*
Harvard UP, 1982, Introduction and Conclusion

*Barrington Moore *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*

*Edward Said *Orientalism* Vintage, 1978. Preface, Introduction,
Afterword

*Lawrence Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington (eds), *Culture Matters*,
Forward and Introduction

Suggested Readings:

Michael Burawoy et. al. (eds.) *Global Ethnography*, UcalPress, 2000

Steven Kellman "Bureaucracy and the Regulation of Health and Safety at
Work: A comparison of the United States and Sweden," in Fisher and
Siriani, 356-374.

March 21/28: Subjectivity/Social Psychology/Sociology of Knowledge

Common Readings:

*George Herbert Mead, "The Self, the I and the Me," in Lemert, 224-229

*Charles Horton Cooley, "The Looking Glass Self," in Lemert, 188-191

*Trinh T. Min-ha "Infinte Layers/Third World?" in Lemert, 543-548.

*Herbert Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction," in Arnold Rose (ed.),
Human Behavior and Social Processes (Houghton, Mifflin, 1962)

*Pierre Bourdieu, "Structures, Habitus, Practices," in Lemert, 441-446.

*Dorothy Smith, "Knowing a Society from Within: A Woman's
Standpoint," in Lemert, 388-390.

Suggested Readings: *of especial importance

Berger and Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality*, Chapter 1

Harrison and Huntington (eds). *Op. Cit.* Case studies,

*Charles Lemert *Post Modernism Is Not What you Think* Paradigm:2005

*Steven Seidman (ed). *The Post-Modern Turn*, Cambridge UP, 1994.

Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont *Fashionable Nonsense* Picador, 1998

April 4: State and Bureaucratic Theory

Common Readings,

*Robert Michels, "Oligarchy," in Fisher and Siriani, 48-63

*Joan Acker, "Feminist Goals and Organizing Processes," in Myra Marx Ferree and Patricia Yancey Martin *Feminist Organizations* Temple University Press, 1995, p137-144.

*Carmen Siriani "Participation, Opportunity and Equality: Toward a Pluralist Organizational Model," in Fisher and Siriani 482ff.

*Wolf Heydebrand, "The Technocratic Administration of Justice," *Research in Law and Sociology* 2:29-64.

Suggested Readings:

March and Oleson, *Ambiguity and Choice in Organizations*

Kathy Ferguson, *The Feminist Case against Bureaucracy*

Frank Fisher and Carmen Siriani (eds) *Critical Studies in Organization and Bureaucracy* Temple University Press, 1984.

April 11: Social Movement Theory

Common Readings:

*Herbert Blumer, "Elementary Collective Groupings," in Steven Buechler and Kurt Cylke, jr. (eds.) *Social Movements: Perspectives and Issues*. Mayfield Publishing, 1997, 72-90.

*Doug McAdam "the Political Process Model, in Buechler and Cylke, 172-192.

*Steven Buechler "Beyond Resource Mobilization," in Buechler and Cylke, 193-210

*Sidney Tarrow "Cycles of Protest," in Buechler and Cylke, 456-472.

*Sharon Kurtz, "Introduction," to *Workplace Justice*, UMin Press, 2002

*Islah Jad "the NGOisation of the Palestinian Women's Movement," Birzeit University Gender Studies Program.

*Maureen Scully and Douglas Creed, "Restructured Families: The Issue of Equality and Needs," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 562, No. 1, 47-65 (1999)

Suggested Readings:

Aldon Morris *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* Free Press, 1986.

Benjamin Barber *Jihad vs. McWorld*, Ballantine Books, 1996

Sara Diamond *Roads to Dominion: Right Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States*, Guilford Press, 1995.

Philip Shabecoff *A Fierce Green Fire* HillWang/Harper, 1993.

Jim Schwab *Deeper Shades of Green: The Rise of Blue Collar and Minority Environmentalism in America* Sierra Club Books, 1994.

Amanda Udis-Kessler *Lines in the Sand*, BC PhD dissertation, 2002.

April 18 to May 2: Conversations rooted in questions raised by Emile Durkheim

April 18: Structural Functionalism – Theory and Applications

Common Readings:

- * Talcott Parsons, "Action Systems and Social Systems," "Sex Roles in the American Kinship System," in Lemert, 297-304
- * Robert Merton "Manifest and Latent Functions," in Lemert, 304-309
- Jeffrey Alexander, "Postpositivist Case for the Classics," in Lemert, 507-510.

Suggested Readings:

- Lewis Coser, *The Functions of Conflict* Free Press, 1956
- * Robert Merton, "Social Structure and Anomie," in *Social Theory and Social Structure* Free Press, 1968, 185-215.
- * Michel Foucault "Discourse on the West," and "Power as Knowledge," in Lemert, 415-519, 475-48
- * Erving Goffman, "On Facework" in Lemert, 329-334

Suggested Readings:

- Ian Taylor, Paul Walton and Jock Young, *The New Criminology*, Routledge, 1973.
- Richard Quinney *Class, State and Crime* McKay, 1977.

April 25/ May 2: Structure of Choice, Structure of Oppression
(internal and external determinisms)

Common Readings:

- * Patricia Hill-Collins, "Black Feminist Thought in the Matrix of Domination," in Lemert, 552-564
- * A. Lourde "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in Lemert, 446-451.
- * Pierre Bourdieu, "Structures, Habitus, Practices," in Lemert, 441-446.
- * Edward Sapir "The Status of Linguistics as a Science," in *Culture, Language and Personality* UCal Press, 1949, pp. 65-77
- * E. O. Wilson, "Mind," Chapter 6, "From Genes to Culture," Chapter 7 in *Consilience*
- * Peter Berger, "Sociology and Freedom," *American Sociologist* (Feb, 1971).
- * Michael Omni and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (2nd ed), Routledge, 1994, 9-50, 53- 76.
- * Henry Lewis Gates, Jr. "'Race' as the Trope of the World," in Lemert, 532-539.
- * J. Butler "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," in Lemert, 575-585
- * Jeffrey Weeks, "Sexual Identification is a Strange Thing," in Lemert 571-575.
- * Stephen Seidman, "The Productivity of the Closet," in Lemert, 571-575

Specialized Readings:

Stephen Jay Gould on the Bell-Curve, (*NYReview of Books*)

May 9: Conclusion/Integration/Reflection:

Common Reading:

Zine Magubane, *Bringing the Empire Home*.