

Social Theory
SC 215 – Fall 2006
Tuesday, Thursday 3:00

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Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 1:30-2:30. You may also schedule an appointment via email or in person and I'll be happy to meet with you at a different time.

Course Overview:

In this course we'll tour 6 major sociological theorists from the classical to the contemporary. Lecture and reading from Adams and Sydie's secondary text will provide you with background on the theorists' major concepts and will situate them in their broader theoretical perspective. You will engage with reading selections from one of each theorist's major works for the heart of the course material. Your careful and timely reading of the selections will be very important, as will your participation in class discussion about these reading selections.

Contemporary articles, one read along side each primary text, take you on side trips to a variety of locations (and issues). You will "visit" an underground coal mine, social workers in the British welfare state, media representations of AIDS, the Log Cabin Republicans, McDonald's and even a strip club. Each article takes some concepts from one of our theorist's primary texts and employs them in making sense of a sociological phenomenon. These side trips will illustrate one way to use the theory in understanding the contemporary world.

Also on the tour—3 medium-length papers on class reading and a midterm and final exam.

A note: the reading is a very important part of the course. I've worked hard to isolate the key material to read and to do well in the course, you will need -- and I will expect -- that you do *all* of the reading.

Required Texts:

Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.

Durkheim, Emile. *The Division of Labor in Society*.

Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*.

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought*.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, vol. 1*.

Adams, Bert N. and R.A. Sydie. 2001. *Sociological Theory*.

All of the above books are on reserve in the library. You can also pick up used copies of these online at a significantly lower cost.

Required Article Reading:

Coursepack of articles is **not** available at the bookstore. All of the articles are available electronically on electronic reserve. When logged on to your library account, you can print the full text of the articles from any computer (for free). You may also check out a paper version of each article from the reserve desk.

Reading Schedule

*Note that dates are estimates that may change depending upon our progress!

Introduction—Why Theory? September 7

Secondary Text: *Sociological Theory*, Chapter 1.

The Classical I—Karl Marx September 12-21

Primary Text: The following sections from *Philosophic & Economic Manuscripts*:

- Wages of Labor
- Profit of Capital, Sections 1-4
- Estranged Labor
- Private Property and Communism...
- The Meaning of Human Requirements...
- The Power of Money in Bourgeois Society

Article: Ferguson, Iain and Michael Lavalette. 2004. "Beyond Power Discourse: Alienation and Social Work." From *The British Journal of Social Work* 34(3): 297-312.

Secondary Text: *Sociological Theory*, Chapter 5.

The Classical II—Emile Durkheim September 26-October 5

Primary Text: The following sections of *The Division of Labor*:

- Book I, Chapter I
- Book I, Chapter II
- Book I, Chapter III
- Book I, Chapter VII, Section I (Skip rest of chapter)
- Book III, Chapter I
- Book III, Chapter III
- Conclusion

Article: Vaught, Charles & David L. Smith. "Incorporation & Mechanical Solidarity in an Underground Coal Mine." From *Sociology of Work and Occupations* 7(2): 159-187.

Secondary Text: *Sociological Theory*, Chapter 4.

The Classical III—Max Weber October 10-19

Primary Text: The following sections of *The Protestant Ethic*:

- Chapter 1
- Chapter 2
- The last page of Chapter 3
- Chapter 4, through Section A. Calvinism, (skip rest of chapter)
- Chapter 5

Article: Ritzer, George. "The 'McDonaldization' of Society." From *The Journal of American Culture* 6 (1): 101-107.

Secondary Text: *Sociological Theory*, Chapter 7.

The Contemporary I—Symbolic Interactionism/Erving Goffman October 24-November 2

Primary Text: The following sections from *The Presentation of Self*:

- Introduction
- Chapter 1
- Chapter 5
- Conclusion, Section ‘Role of Expression in Conveying Impressions of Self’ (Skip rest of chapter.)

Article: Wood, Elizabeth Anne. “Working in the Fantasy Factory.” From *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 29(1): 5-31.

Secondary Text: *Sociological Theory*, Chapter 20.

The Contemporary II—Feminism/Standpoint Epistemology/Patricia Hill Collins November 7-21

Primary Text: The following sections from *Black Feminist Thought*:

- Chapter 2
- Chapter 4
- Chapter 5
- Chapter 10
- Chapter 11
- Chapter 12

Article: Rogers, Mary F. & Philip B. Lott. “BackLash, The Matrix of Domination & Log Cabin Republicans.” From *The Sociological Quarterly* 38(3):497-512.

Secondary Text: *Sociological Theory*, Chapter 22.

The Contemporary III—Poststructuralism/Constructionism/Michel Foucault November 28-December 7

Primary Text: The following sections from *The History of Sexuality*:

- Part 1
- Part 2
- Part 4
- Part 5

Article: Sacks, Valerie. “Women & AIDS: An analysis of Media Misrepresentations.” From *Social Science Medicine* 42(1): 59-73.

Secondary Text: *Sociological Theory*, Chapter 23.

Course Requirements

Attendance & Participation

12%

Theory can be a fun, engaging and interesting class or it can be dull and lecture-based. The shape of the course partially depends upon me—your instructor, and partially depends upon you—the students. I try to hold up my end by bringing in contemporary examples, fresh ways to think about how to apply classical theory and designing the course to include discussion and student involvement. You have to hold up your end by coming to class, doing the reading and participating in discussion.

I will take attendance daily and expect that you will miss no more than 2 classes during the semester due to illness or personal emergency. There is no need to talk to me to “be excused” for missing one or two classes. Please do talk to me about your situation if you miss more than 2 classes for any reason.

You will be required to lead and participate in discussions on specific discussion-based class days throughout the semester as part of your attendance and participation grade.

Papers

22% (each)

Guidelines for the papers will be distributed in a few weeks. These papers are formal reaction papers of medium length (5-8 pages) where you will make use of course reading, discussion & lecture on the section you choose.

Paper 1 on Marx or Durkheim due October 12

Paper 2 on Weber or Goffman due November 9

Paper 3 on Foucault or Patricia Hill Collins due December 12

Final **Scheduled date is December 19, 9 a.m.**

22%

In class exam; the format is to be announced. The final will cover material from the entire semester.

Paper Policies

Turning in Papers

Please make every effort to turn in papers on time and in class. It is your responsibility to ensure that I receive your paper. The following are unacceptable excuses for a late paper: I gave it to my friend/roommate to turn in and s/he didn't do it. I left it under your door/in your mailbox, I don't know why you don't have it. I emailed it to you, there must be something wrong with my email. You may have a friend turn in your paper, you may leave a paper in my mailbox and you may email me a paper, but any problems you have in doing so are not adequate excuses.

If you intend to use the writing tutors available at B.C., I may give you an extra class period to turn in your paper, particularly if you can show that you will significantly benefit from writing help and if, when you turn in your paper, you can show that you have been to the ADC.

Please type your papers.

Late Papers

No extensions.

A paper is late if I do not receive it in class on the day it is due.

Late penalties will be assessed as followed: You lose 2/3 letter grade for each *class period* (not each day) that the paper is late. For example, if the paper is due on a Thursday and you turn it in Tuesday, the best possible grade you will earn is a B+. Please turn in the papers to me in class to avoid any mix-ups.

Academic Integrity

Please review the entire university policy on academic integrity. Of particular importance is plagiarism, which the university defines as follows:

Plagiarism is the act of taking the words, ideas, data, illustrations, or statements of another person or source, and presenting them as one's own. Each student is responsible for learning and using proper methods of paraphrasing and footnoting, quotation, and other forms of citation, to ensure that the original author, speaker, illustrator, or source of the material used is clearly acknowledged.

(<http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/resources/policy/#integrity>).

Plagiarism is very serious and will not be tolerated. Please do not present ideas and words from websites as your own. If you do, I will report you to the dean and you will face a sanction determined by an academic integrity committee which can include failing the course.

In order to help you avoid academic integrity issues, it is my strong recommendation that you **do not use websites in studying, preparing or otherwise fulfilling the requirements of this course**. As a general rule, websites found through Google searches (or other world wide web search engines) are not valid sources for your papers and you should not use them at all. Use of the library website to access the full text of material originally published in print (material such as newspaper articles, academic journal articles, etc.) is permissible and if you use these sources, be sure to clearly cite them when you use them. If you have any questions about whether material you are consulting is appropriate, ask me!!