This seminar is intended as a graduate level introduction to the practice of contemporary social theory. It concerns the historical production and consumption of interpretive perspectives used by twentieth and twenty-first century sociological writers to make sense of the multiple social worlds in which "we" live and die. It also concerns the ways in which social theories are themselves sociologically constructed. This occurs within complex and contradictory fields of social power and knowledge. As such, this course asks you to imagine theory as a ritual social construction of selective sense-making frameworks within and/or in resistance to the material ideological demands and institutional constraints of sex/gender, political/economic, and racial/ethnic/national hierarchies.

Seminar participants are expected to develop a working knowledge and critical evaluation of the central concepts, methodological implications, and practical-political consequences of theorizing in certain ways, but not others. What is included and what is sacrificed or silenced in the construction of particular theoretical worldviews? In exploring such issues, seminar participants are asked to reflexively analyze the advantages and limitations of their own theoretical perspectives. This course is not simply about the theories of others. It is also about how "we" as sociologists might make critical use of the conceptual tools and methods of social theorizing itself.

1. **January 14** Introduction

January 21 **No class** (BC Holiday for MLK day)

2. **January 28** Why Theory? Power/Knowledge and the Sociological Narrative

**Readings**


3. February 4 Functionalism, Cybernetics, and the Middle American Range

Readings
   o “Hierarchy of Control” from Theories of Society (1961: The Free Press.)
   o “Evolutionary universals in society” (1964 American Sociological Review)
   o “Illness and the role of the physical: with Rene Fox“ (1951 American Journal of Orthopsychiatry)

Related References

4. Feb. 11 Social and Behavioral Exchange: Control, Power and Structure

Readings

Related References
5. February 18 Theories of Conflict, Power, and Hauntings

Readings


Related References


**Readings**

8. Kenneth Allan, Chapter 4, “Performing the Self,” in *Contemporary Social and Sociological Theory*, pp. 73-93.

**Related References**

March 3 No Class (BC Spring Break)

7. March 10 Phenomenology, Ethnomethodology, Interpretive Sociology

Readings


**Related References**


**8. March 17 Traces of Marxism: Theory and Practice**

**Readings**


**Related References**

March 24 no class (BC Easter Holiday)

9. March 31 Social Psychoanalysis: Ritual Structures and the Unconscious

Readings
   - “The Psychical Apparatus and the Theory of Instincts” pp. 125-130
   - “Dream-Work and Interpretation” pp. 130-134
   - “Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through” pp.138-142
   - “The Return of the Repressed in Social Life” pp. 142-145

Related References
10. April 7  **Subjects of Power and Knowledge:**
**Genealogy, History, Discourse**

**Readings**
7. Steven Seidman, Chapter 12 “Michel Foucault’s Disciplinary Society,” in *Contested Knowledge*, pp. 178-191.

**Related References**

11. April 14  **Structuralism, Semiotics, Cultural Critique**

**Readings**


**Related References**


April 21 **No Class** (BC Holiday: Patriot’s Day)

**12. April 28  Poststructuralism and Sociological Deconstruction**

**Readings**


**Related References**

13. May 5 Feminist Perspectives and Sex/Gendered Epistemologies

Readings

Related References
➢ Chris Weedon, Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory, pp. 72-103*
14. Postmodernity, Postmodernism, and the Coloniality of Power

Readings

**Related References**