

Instructor: Eve Spangler

400 McGuinn

Ext. 2-4146

Class Meetings: Tuesday, Thursday: 10:30 – 11:45 a.m.. O'Neill 247

Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.
and by appointment

Sociology 215 is designed to introduce students to three of the major figures in the development of the social sciences: Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim. Together, these writers have established the groundwork for most of our present ideas of how social order, particularly the modern social order, is possible. We are also indebted to them for many of the fundamental strategies we use in studying society. The works of these authors will be examined from both a chronological and a thematic perspective. The bulk of the assigned readings consist of primary sources. Recent research based on the theoretical and methodological insights provided by Marx, Weber, and Durkheim will also be discussed.

SECTION I: *KARL MARX*

January 15 – February 14

Section I is devoted to the work of Karl Marx. The "discovery of society" -- which is the theme of the course as well as the textbook title -- begins with Marx's recognition of the systemic, interrelated character of the major institutions of society. Marx saw, moreover, that while society's institutions formed a system, their "fit" with one another was far from perfect -- and that the internal contradictions of society provided a source of social change. Finally, Marx's analysis provides a moral critique (immiserization, alienation) of capitalist society.

Required Readings

Randall Collins and Michael Makowsky. *The Discovery of Society*. (Random House, 7th edition), Introduction, Chapters 1,2,5 11,15. 16.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The German Ideology, Part I," "The Manifesto of the Communist Party," "Wage Labour and Capital," and "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (Norton, 1978).

Recommended Readings

Robert C. Tucker. *The Marxian Revolutionary Idea* (Norton, 1969), Chapter 1.

Thomas B. Bottomore. *Karl Marx* (Prentice Hall), Introduction.

Peter Worsley. *Marx and the Marxists* (Tavistock, 1981).

Examinations

First take-home exam, drawn from the study questions, will be collected on:
Thursday, February 14

SECTION II: MAX WEBER

February 19 – March 27

This section begins with Weber's comparative study of the major world religions. It is here that Weber's work most closely approximates "an argument with the ghost of Marx." Weber's sociology of religion poses three major problems: to describe the elective affinity which exists between the experiences of a religious community and their belief systems; to identify the social and economic consequences of theological beliefs; and to describe the transmutation of the religion developed by the "adepts" into the daily practice of the lay community. Embedded in Weber's sociology of religion is the notion of the controlled comparison -- a starting point for examining Weber's contribution to the methodology of the social sciences. Weber's methodological concerns, expressed in his development of "ideal types," are traced through his work on social inequality. This section closes with a review of Weber's political and ethical commitments.

Required Reading

Collins and Makowsky, Chapters 4, 7 – 10.

Max Weber. "Introduction," "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," "The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism," "Class, Status, and Party," "Science as a Vocation," "Politics as a Vocation," in Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds). *From Max Weber*. (Oxford).

Recommended Readings

Dennis Wrong (ed.) *Max Weber*. (Prentice Hall, 1970), Selections by Loewith, Leuthy, Antoni, Blau, Roth.

Alvin Gouldner. "Anti-Minotaur: The Myth of Value Free Sociology," (1962), Reserve desk - xerox.

Frank Parkin. *Max Weber*. (Tavistock, 1981).

Henry Adams. *The Education of Henry Adams*. (Houghton Mifflin, 1918), Chapter 25: The Virgin and the Dynamo.

Examinations

The second exam, drawn from the study questions, will be collected on:
Thursday, March 27

SECTION III: *EMILE DURKHEIM*

April 1 – May 1

Emile Durkheim's work completes our discovery of the social system. Like Marx, Durkheim accorded great importance of the division of labor as a source of social development. Like Weber, he assigns crucial importance to religious practices in maintaining social solidarity. Durkheim's work also represents a model of theoretical and methodological procedures that remains current. Lastly, Durkheim's analysis of the political possibilities of mass societies is tinged by both the optimism of Marx and the pessimism of Weber.

Required Readings:

Collins and Makowsky, Chapters 3, 6, 12, 13, 14.

Emile Durkheim. *Suicide*. (Free Press), Introductory materials, Book 3.

Emile Durkheim. *The Division of Labor in Society*. (Free Press) Introductory Materials, Book 1, Chapters 1-3, Conclusion.

Recommended Readings

Robert A. Nisbet. *Emile Durkheim*. (Prentice Hall, 1965), Introductory essay by Nisbet.

John Horton "Order and Conflict Theories of Social Problems," Reserve desk - xerox.

Peter L. Berger. *The Sacred Canopy*. (Doubleday, 1967), Chapter 4.

K. Thompson. *Durkheim*. (Tavistock, 1981).

Examinations

The third exam, will be cumulative and serve as the course final. It, like the previous two exams, is drawn from the study questions. The final exam will be due during the finals period regularly scheduled for this class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is a standard of utmost importance in this class. Guidelines for academic integrity in written work are posted on the BC website at:

www.bc.edu/integrity

If you have any questions pertaining to the academic integrity guidelines, please come and talk with me or with the teaching assistant. If you are caught violating BC policies on academic integrity, you will receive a failing grade for the assignment and the appropriate Dean will be notified in accordance with the rules set forth by the university.

REQUIREMENTS

The course is designed to permit ample time for both lectures and discussions. Students will be expected to participate in classroom discussions and to complete three take-home exams. **NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED UNLESS PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE** -- there will be no after-the-fact extensions. Attendance is **required**. Final grades will be computed to reflect four components: 1/4 for each of the three exams, 1/4 for class participation.

The assigned books are available at the college book store.

Randall Collins and Michael Makowsky. *The Discovery of Society*. 5th edition. Random House, 1993.

Robert C. Tucker (ed). *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Norton, 1978.

Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.) *From Max Weber*. Oxford University Press: 1958.

Emile Durkheim. *Suicide*. Free Press, 1951.

Emile Durkheim. *The Division of Labour in Society*. Free Press, 1933