

## SOURCES OF SOCIAL THEORY

Sociology 300  
Spring 2007  
Tues/Thur: 11-12:15  
Building/room: S Sci 411

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Office Hrs: Thur 3:30-5:30

### Course Overview

In this course we will read and discuss multiple theorists whose writings have served as foundational texts for sociology as it is practiced today. The first half of the course will be dedicated to the three “founding figures” of contemporary sociology: Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. Each lived and worked during the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a period of major social change often referred to as the emergence of “modernity.” As traditional patterns of life eroded around them, they wrote about the emergence of new forms of social organization such as capitalism, rationalized bureaucracies, and the division of labor. Each theorist also had a distinctive—if not always optimistic—vision of the future. The breadth and depth of their theories keep them vibrant and important today.

The second half of the course will focus on three theorists who lived and wrote during the twentieth century. Each has carried on the legacy of Marx, Durkheim and Weber; but each has also strove to bring these theories into the twentieth century. Simone de Beauvoir extends Marx’s theory of class exploitation to the situation of women in society. Erving Goffman brings Durkheim’s theory of solidarity to America. Pierre Bourdieu elaborates Weber’s theory of individuals and structure.

### Readings

There are three required books for this course, all available at the University book store:

Tucker, Robert C. (ed.). 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. NY: W.W. Norton and Co.  
Durkheim, Emile. 1997 [1933] *The Division of Labor in Society*. NY: Free Press.  
Weber, Max. 2001 [1930] *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. NY: Routledge.

All other readings will be posted on the online POLIS site (password: theory)

### **Requirements and Grading**

My philosophy is that social theory is not some dry relic which we pull out, polish and gaze upon. Au contraire, it is a living organism which we can and should put it to use in our daily lives. This active approach to theory involves you: *absorbing* theory through close reading and attendance at lecture; *applying* theory to the contemporary world through regular writing assignments; and *achieving* fluency in theory through verbal discussion. Course requirements and grades are designed accordingly:

40% - Four papers (10 points each).

These assignments will be handed out on Thursdays and due the following Tuesday.

20% - Midterm Exam.

This will take place during class time.

20% - Oral Final Exam.

These will take place during finals week.

20% - Attendance, participation.

This portion of your grade will be calculated through various means: attendance taken during random classes; participation in group activities; pop quizzes; etc. Please note too that you will be evaluated on “good citizenship.” This includes but is not limited to: listening (not talking) when someone is speaking; refraining from answering cell phones; using courteous and respectful language when speaking.

**100% TOTAL**

### **Academic Integrity, Absences, and Disability Issues**

See attached sheet.

**(Updated) Schedule**

- 1/11 **Introduction.** What social theory is and how we should read it.
- 1/16 **Adam Smith.** What is the division of labor? Where are its consequences for individuals and society? (*The Wealth of Nations*: bk 1, ch. 1—see handout).
- 1/18 **Adam Smith.** How does the division of labor come about? (*Wealth of Nations*: bk 1, ch 2)

**MARX**

- 1/23 **Karl Marx.** Why materialism trumps idealism. What drives history? What is a mode of production? (*The German Ideology*, pp. 146-57)  
PAPER ONE DUE
- 1/25 **Karl Marx.** What is the capitalist mode of production? What is exploitation? Where does profit come from? (*Wage Labor and Capital*, pp. 203-217)
- 1/30 **Karl Marx.** Why does capitalism generate repeated crises? (*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, pp. 700-17).
- 2/1 **Karl Marx.** What would communism look like? Is there a division of labor in communism? What are the realms of freedom and necessity? (*The German Ideology*, p. 160-5; *Capital*, pp. 441)
- 2/6 **Karl Marx.** How does class struggle develop? What holds it back? (*Communist Manifesto*, pp. 469-83)  
PAPER TWO DUE

**DURKHEIM**

- 2/8 **Emile Durkheim.** What are the functions of the division of labor? How does it produce solidarity? (*The Division of Labor in Society*: Book I, Introduction and Ch 1: pp. 1-29)
- 2/13 **Emile Durkheim.** What is mechanical solidarity? What role do crime and punishment play in maintaining it? (*The Division of Labor in Society*: Book 1, Ch 2: pp. 31-67)
- 2/15 **Emile Durkheim.** What is organic solidarity? What role does restitutive law play in it? (*The Division of Labor in Society*: Book 1, Ch 3: pp. 68-72; and Ch 7: pp. 149-75).
- 2/20 **Emile Durkheim.** What are the causes of the division of labor? (*The Division of Labor in Society*: Book 2, Ch. 2: pp. 200-23).
- 2/22 **Emile Durkheim.** What are the abnormal forms of the division of labor, and how can they be fixed? (*The Division of Labor in Society*: Book III, Ch. 1, 2, & 3: pp. 291-328)

**WEBER**

- 2/27 **Max Weber.** What are the forms of legitimate authority? Of rationalities? (*Economy and Society*, selections).
- 3/1 **Max Weber.** What is the historical trajectory of rationalization? (*Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*: Author's Introduction: pp. xxviii - 1).

3/6 **Max Weber.** What is the spirit of Modern Western Bourgeois Capitalism? (*Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*: Ch. 2: 13-38).

3/8 MIDTERM

3/13 & 3/15 NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK

3/20 **Max Weber.** What is the Protestant Ethic? (*Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*: pp. 39-80)

3/22 **Max Weber.** How did the Protestant Ethic link up to the spirit of capitalism? Why is the future an iron cage? (*Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*: pp. 102-25)

3/27 FILM

#### FROM MARX TO FEMINISM

3/29 **Marxist Feminism:** What is the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy? (*The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State* [738-40 in Tucker])

4/3 **Simone de Beauvoir.** (*The Second Sex*: Introduction: xix-xxxvi)  
PAPER THREE DUE

4/5 **Simone de Beauvoir.** What are the conditions and possibilities for equality between the sexes? (*The Second Sex*: Conclusion: pp. 716-32).

#### FROM DURKHEIM TO GOFFMAN

4/10 **Erving Goffman.** Microsociology and the dramaturgical model of social life. (*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, pp. 1-16).

4/12 **Erving Goffman.** How do ceremonies and rituals establish solidarity? (*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*: pp. 17-76).

4/17 **Erving Goffman.** How are in-groups and out-groups maintained? How do outsiders manage their stigmas? (*Stigma*: pp. 1-40)

#### FROM WEBER TO PIERRE BOURDIEU

4/19 **Pierre Bourdieu.** What is the dangerous binary of objectivism-subjectivism? What is the “full truth” of the gift? (*Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, pp. 7-11; *Outline of a Theory of Practice*: pp. 3-9).

4/24 **Pierre Bourdieu.** Symbolic violence and television. (*On Television*, pp. 1-18; 39-59)

4/26 **Pierre Bourdieu.** How do lifestyles legitimate inequality? What is “cultural capital”? What is a taste for luxury versus a taste for necessity? (*Distinction*, pp. 1-9; 171; 183-93)

5/1 Conclusion and Catch-Up.  
PAPER FOUR DUE

## **University and Departmental Policies**

### **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to observe the University's Code of Academic Integrity. The Code can be found at: <http://web.arizona.edu/uapolicies>.

### **Behavior in the Classroom**

Students are expected to observe the University's Student Code of Conduct as it pertains to classroom behavior (see <http://web.arizona.edu/uapolicies>), and should be familiar with University policies against threatening behavior by students (see <http://policy.web.arizona.edu/~policy/threaten.shtml>).

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you anticipate the need for reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, you must register with the Disability Resource Center and request that the DRC send me official notification of your accommodation needs as soon as possible. Please plan to meet with me to discuss accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may affect your ability to fully participate.

### **Officially Excused Absences**

1. All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion.
2. Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean's designee) will be honored.