



Classical Sociological Theory

SYA 4010

Fall 2007

Professor: Marc Dixon
Office: 423 Bellamy Building
Phone: 645-2439
E-mail: mdixon@fsu.edu

Class Information: Bellamy 023
TR 12:30 – 1:45
Office Hours: TR 2:00-4:00, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides an introduction to some of the major themes and thinkers in the history of social thought. We begin with a discussion of the enlightenment and some important forerunners of sociological theory. A substantial portion of the course is then devoted to the ideas and works of three founding authors in sociology: Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim. We conclude by examining the development of sociological theory in the United States during the early twentieth century. Throughout the class we will turn to original works to assess how theorists grappled with diverse topics such as social and political order, the economy and work, and processes of human interaction. In addition to evaluating the place of these writings in history, special attention will be given to the relevance of classical theory for contemporary thought and social problems.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Students will gain a familiarity with foundational writings in sociology. Students will also develop a set of skills that will enable them to evaluate, compare and contrast, and draw out the logical implications of individual theories. These objectives will be assessed through in-class writing and quizzes, and with a series of short essays.

REQUIRED READING:

1. *Classical Sociological Theory* (2007, 2nd Edition) edited by Craig Calhoun, Joseph Gerteis, James Moody, Steven Pfaff and Indermohan Virk.
listed as "TEXT" in the course schedule.

2. Selected excerpts posted on the course blackboard site.

Supplemental text: Classical Sociological Theory (2004, Fourth Edition) by George Ritzer and Douglas J. Goodman. New York: McGraw Hill.

The required reader edited by Calhoun and colleagues is available at the FSU bookstore. A copy of this as well as the supplemental Ritzer and Goodman text will also be on two-hour reserve at Strozier library. Readings posted on the course Blackboard site require Adobe reader, which is a free download:

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

A note on the readings:

The readings for this course are excerpts from original works and will be difficult to get through on the first try. This is to be expected. To facilitate this process I will post discussion questions for the readings on the course blackboard site. You should use these discussion questions, before coming to class, to help you read the material. Try to take a stab at figuring out the answers as you read. We will generally use the study questions to guide discussion. They also capture *what I want you to know about the material* and will therefore be useful in your exam preparation. The supplemental text by Ritzer and Goodman also provides background and clarification on many of the theorists that we discuss in class.

ALL STUDENTS NEED TO BRING THEIR ASSIGNED READING TO CLASS EVERY TIME.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

<i>Requirements</i>	<i>% of Final Grade</i>
In-class writing & quizzes	10%
Three short essays (best 2 of 3)	30%
Three Exams (20% Each)	60%

<i>Grading Scale</i>	
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	60-66
F	<60

1. In-class writing and quizzes: I will give a quiz or short in-class writing assignment 8 times during the semester. Quizzes/assignments are *not* announced in advance and are

usually given at the beginning of class. They will cover material from the day's assigned readings and are scored from 0 to 2. A grade of "0" means "not done." You didn't turn it in (were not in class) OR you did turn it in but I can't tell from what you wrote that you actually read the material. A grade of "1" means "done minimally." I can tell that you made a real attempt to read the assignment. A grade of "2" means "done well." I can tell that you read the entire assignment, carefully, at least once. I will count your top five scores. This means that you should 1) keep up on your reading, 2) be careful in how you use your absences and 3) always show up to class on time. There are no make-ups on quizzes.

2. Short Essays: There will be a total of three critical essays in which you evaluate a particular author's work. You are only required to complete two of them. If you complete all three, I will drop the one with the lowest grade. Details of the assignments will be handed out in class and posted on Blackboard well in advance, but the essays will be approximately 3 pages in length and should (1) clearly identify the problem that the author is addressing, (2) lay out the main themes of the author's argument and (3) identify areas of contention or problems with either the argument or the evidence that the theorist provides.

3. Exams: Each of the three exams will consist of several multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. Exams are not cumulative. Time will be allotted for review in the class session prior to each exam.

Course Policies

Classroom Etiquette:

I expect everyone to show up to class on time. During class, cell phones must be turned off and put away. Laptops are to be used for class purposes only (taking notes). It is crucial for our class sessions to be comfortable and conducive to learning for all participants. This means listening while other people are talking and taking their ideas seriously. Personal attacks, yelling, or other threatening behaviors are not acceptable. Anyone who violates these guidelines may be asked to leave the classroom and/or drop the course.

Exams and Late Materials:

Exam dates are firm. If you miss an exam, you can make it up *only* if you contact me before the time of the exam *and* have a legitimate excuse (a serious medical illness for example) supported by written documentation.

Quizzes and in-class writing assignments cannot be made up (remember, I only count your *top five quizzes*). I only count your top two essay scores, any late essays will be assessed a penalty of 15% off per day.

Academic Honor Code & Academic Dishonesty:

I expect you to do your own work. Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code published in The Florida State University Bulletin and the Student Handbook, and available online at:

<http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/forms/honorpolicy.pdf>

The Academic Honor System of The Florida State University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in a "zero" for that particular assignment or an "F" for the course, at the instructor's discretion. Any student who plagiarizes, cheats on exams, or otherwise behaves in a dishonest way will be reported to the University Judicial Office.

Americans with Disabilities Act: Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact:

Student Disability Resource Center, 108 Student Services Building
97 Woodward Ave, South
Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-4400, (850) 644-9566 (voice),
(850) 644-8504 (TDD), SDRC@admin.fsu.edu,
<http://www.fsu.edu/~staffair/dean/StudentDisability/>

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

Religious Holidays

Students will be allowed to miss class due to observance of religious holidays but they are still responsible for all materials assigned outside and covered in class on the day(s) missed. You must inform me *in advance* of missing a class for the observance of a religious holiday.

Daily Schedule

Week 1 – Introduction

8/28 – Course overview, no readings

8/30 – Characteristics of Scientific Theories (TEXT, Pp.1-10)

Week 2 – The Enlightenment and Social Thought

9/4 – Begin Rousseau (TEXT, Pp. 19-27; Chapter 1) & Montesquieu (Blackboard)

9/6 – Finish Rousseau & Montesquieu excerpts

Week 3 – Early Sociological Perspectives

9/11 – The Conservative Reaction to the Enlightenment, Burke excerpt (Blackboard)

9/13 – Introduction to Marx, “The German Ideology” (TEXT, Pp.75-81; Chapter 5)

Week 4 – Karl Marx

9/18 – Marx, “Estranged Labour” (TEXT, Chapter 6)

9/20 – Marx and Engels, “Communist Manifesto” (TEXT, Chapter 7)

*****Essay #1 Due*****

Week 5 – Review and Exam #1

9/25 – Exam study session (no readings)

9/27 – Exam #1

Week 6 – Max Weber

10/2 – Introduction to Weber (TEXT, Pp.205-210; Chapter 15)

10/4 – Weber, “The Protestant Ethic” (TEXT, Chapter 17)

Week 7 – Max Weber and Emile Durkheim

10/9 – Weber excerpts on Bureaucracy and Authority (TEXT, Chapters 19 & 20)

10/11 – Introduction to Durkheim (TEXT, Pp.133-138; 139 - 147)

Week 8 – Emile Durkheim

10/16 – Durkheim, “The Division of Labor in Society” (TEXT, Chapter 12)

10/18 – Durkheim, “Suicide” (TEXT, Chapter 14)

Week 9 – Georg Simmel

10/23 – Begin Simmel, “Group Expansion and the Development of Individuality” (TEXT, Chapter 23)

10/25 – Finish “Group Expansion”

*****Essay #2 Due*****

Week 10 – Review and Exam #2

10/30 – Exam study session (no readings)

11/1 – Exam #2

Week 11 – Early American Sociology and the Chicago School

11/6 – Introduction, “Pragmatism, Progress, Ethnicity ...” (Blackboard)

11/8 – Robert Park, “The Concept of Social Distance” (Blackboard)

Week 12 – W. E. B. Du Bois & Thorstein Veblen

11/13 – W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Souls of Black Folk” (TEXT, Chapter 25)

11/15 – Begin Veblen “Conspicuous Consumption” (Blackboard)

Week 13 – Veblen, continued

11/20 – Finish Veblen excerpt; NYT article on consumption (Blackboard)

11/22 – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY – NO CLASS

Week 14 – George Herbert Mead & Charles Horton Cooley

11/27 – Introduction to Mead and Cooley (Blackboard)

11/29 – Mead, “The Self” (TEXT, Chapter 21)

Week 15 – Developments in Twentieth Century Sociological Theory

12/4 -- Robert Merton, “On Theories of the Middle Range” (TEXT, Chapter 35)

*****Essay #3 Due*****

12/6 – Exam study session

Final Exam: Wednesday, December 12, 7:30AM