

SYA 5018- Classical Social Theory

Sociology SYA 5018 Section 1
Classical Social Theory
Bellamy 519 (Monday 9:00-12:00 AM)
Spring (Second Semester) 2009

Instructor: Dr. Brian Starks
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or by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is a graduate requirement that must simply be endured. Because it is boring and the intellectual equivalent of hazing, I fully expect some of you to not survive it. NEVER! This course will be a valiant attempt to engage your creativity and imagination by expanding your sociological horizons. This course will empower you to take charge of your intellectual journey, by forcing you to ask the big question of “How shall I do Sociology?” It will do so by exploring how others have gone about the task. We will explore and discuss the key questions at the heart of classic sociological research and examine how various theorists went about answering them. We will consider the way their questions arose within the historical circumstances of these researchers own lives and times. That is, we will see how their study of “society” was shaped by the one in which they lived, and we will also consider how their theories and research have shaped our own society and imagination. Finally, we will reflect on and challenge various ideas concerning order, form, domination, struggle, agency and understanding.

Readings for the Course:

The following are required books and may be bought online for cheapest prices:

DuBois, W.E.B. The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998

Durkheim, Emile. Elementary Forms Of The Religious Life : Newly Translated By Karen E. Fields Free Press, 1995

Mead, George Herbert. On Social Psychology University Of Chicago Press, 1964

Simmel, Georg. On Individuality and Social Forms University of Chicago Press, 1972

Tucker, Robert C. (Editor) The Marx-Engels Reader (2nd edition) W. W. Norton & Company, 1978

Weber, Max. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (2nd edition) Routledge, 2001

Additional Supplemental Readings will be available on Blackboard

OFFICE HOURS:

My office is on the Fifth Floor of Bellamy in room 513. My office hours are Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 1:00-2:00. If the listed hours are inconvenient, we can set up another time to meet. I am most easily reached by e-mail at bstarks@fsu.edu.

Grading Scale:

A+	97-100	D+	67-69
A	93-96	D	63-66
A-	90-92	D-	60-62
B+	87-89	F	59 OR BELOW
B	83-86		
B-	80-82		
C+	77-79		
C	73-76		
C-	70-72		

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

Because each person in a class contributes to its ultimate success or failure, I expect everyone to attend our class meetings, read and think about the day's readings beforehand, provide written responses to these readings, participate fully in group projects, and contribute to the give and take of class discussion. Not meeting these expectations is grounds for a lowered grade.

Over the course of the semester, each student will complete (a) 7 type-written reaction papers over the weeks' readings, (b) weekly participation in an online discussion board, (c) one group presentation on a social theorist, (d) one oral exam during the section of the class when you present, and (e) two take-home exams covering the substantive topics and readings in the two sections of the course in which you are not presenting. Reaction papers will each count 3% toward your final grade (21% total), participation in the online discussion board will be worth 9%, the oral exam will count for 10%, your group presentation will count for 20%, and the two take-home exams will count 20% each.

21% Reaction Papers (3% each)

9% Online Discussion Board Participation

10% Oral Exam (in place of take-home exam for the section of the class when your group presents)

20% Group Presentation on social theorist

40% 2 Take-Home Exams (20% each)

100% Total

COURSE OUTLINE:

The outline below will give you an idea of how the course will unfold. The semester is divided into *three units*. During each unit, you will participate in a discussion board that I will set up on Blackboard. You are required to add at least one question and provide at least one response to the online discussion board each week. At the end of each unit, I will give an exam (two take-home exams and one oral exam).

During the unit of the class when you present, you will participate in a group presentation and conduct a single class (with my supervision). For this unit only, you will end with an oral exam at an agreed upon destination in place of the written exam (note: I like coffee houses but am open to suggestions).

Throughout the semester, it is important that you complete the readings before the day that they are listed in the syllabus.

Below is a tentative outline. It is subject to revision at any time during the semester.

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Topic:</u>	<u>Readings Due:</u>
Jan 12	Introduction	Stinchcombe on BB Warner on BB
Jan 19	MLK Jr. Day- No Classes	

Section I: The Question of Social Order

Jan 26	Hobbes and Comte; Begin Durkheim	Hobbes and Comte on BB Durkheim on BB
Feb 2	Durkheim (Week 2) Place: TBA	Durkheim, Introduction and Books One and Two (p. 1-299)
Feb 9	Finish Durkheim	Durkheim, Book Three and Conclusion (p 303-448)
Feb 16	Simmel	Simmel (p. 6-35, 43-149, 227-34, 251-93, and 324-39)

*Take Home Exam 1 handed out and due Feb 20th (Groups 3-6)
In-Person Discussion/Oral Exam (Groups 1 and 2) Place and Time: TBA*

Section II: The Question of Social Dominance

Feb 23	Marx (Week 1) Evening: Meet with Group 3	Marx (p. 3-6, 70-81, 149-200)
March 2	Marx (Week 2) Evening: Reading/Study Session (All students) Place: TBA	Marx (p. 203-17, 302-14, 319-61, 376-88, 392-403, 411-15, 417-38, 473-500, 542-48, 594-617).
March 9	Spring Break (No Class)	
March 16	Intro W. E. B. Dubois Evening: Meet with Group 4	DuBois, Preface, Intro, and Chapters 1-10 (p. iii-163)
March 23	W. E. B. Dubois (Week 2)	DuBois, Chapters 11-18 (p. 164-397)

*Take Home Exam 2 handed out and due March 27th (Groups 1-2 and 5-6)
In-Person Discussion/Oral Exam (for Groups 3 and 4) Place and Time: TBA*

Section III: The Question of Understanding

March 30	George Herbert Mead (Week 1) Evening: Meet with Group 5	Mead (p. 19-42, 45-62, 66-82, 85-111, 319-27, and 328-41)
April 6	Mead and Symbolic Interactionism (Week 2) Evening: Reading/Study Session (All students) Place: TBA	Mead (p. 115-282) Becker and McCall on BB
April 13	Weber (Week 1) Evening: Meet with Group 6	Weber on BB
April 20	Weber (Week 2)	Weber, Protestant Ethic
<i>Take Home Exam 3 handed out and due April 24th (Groups 1-4)</i> <i>In-Person Discussion/Oral Exam (for Groups 5 and 6) Place and Time: TBA</i>		
April 27	Ancestor Worship? (Concluding Lecture)	Rodney Stark on BB

If you are having trouble with material in this course, the readings below may be of use.

Suggested Background Reading:

- George Ritzer, *Sociological Theory*, New York: Knopf.
- Lewis Coser, *The Masters of Sociological Thought*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich
- Robert Nisbet, 1966, *The Sociological Tradition*, New York: Basic Books.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

Students must abide by the highest standards of academic integrity. 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 may be reported to the University Judicial Office for official adjudication.

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE:

Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code published in [The Florida State University Bulletin](#) and the [Student Handbook](#). 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. Please see the following web site for a complete explanation of the Academic Honor Code. <http://www.fsu.edu/Books/Student-Handbook/>
<http://www.fsu.edu/Books/Student-Handbook/codes/honor.html>

CLASSROOM COURTESY

Classroom courtesy is necessary to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn without distractions. This means no cell phones, talking during lectures (unless recognized by the professor or discussion leader), reading newspapers, etc. during class. If you must have a cell phone to receive emergency calls about kids or other family members, keep it on vibrate. Entering and leaving is distracting to your instructor and other students. Therefore, you need to be on time for class and stay until the end. If you must enter late or leave early, please inform me before class begins and take the seat nearest an exit and enter or leave as quietly as possible. Repeated disruption of class may lead to penalties that reduce your final grade (see below). Class discussions of the issues we study can stimulate strong feelings and heated debate. Because this is a college classroom, all discussions must be scholarly. **Failure to abide by these principles can result in academic penalties ranging from a lowered grade, to dismissal, to failing the course.**

Scholarly comments are:

Respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow up questions and/or disagreement; related to the class and course material; advance the discussion about issues related to the course and/or course material rather than personal beliefs; are delivered in normal tones and a non-aggressive manner.

Unacceptable behaviors are:

(a) Personal attacks. This includes attacks on a person's appearance, demeanor, or political beliefs. (b) Interrupting your instructor or other students. Raise your hand and wait to be called on by the discussion leader or myself to prevent this problem. (c) Using the discussion to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions arise, they must be discussed as scholarly endeavors (see above). (d) Using raised tones, yelling, engaging in arguments with other students, and being physically aggressive. (e) Ignoring your instructor's authority to protect the integrity of the classroom. Anyone who violates these guidelines will be asked to cease and desist and may be asked to leave the classroom and/or drop the course.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Class attendance is required. Three or more unexcused ones will result in an F grade for the course. The following and only the following absences are eligible to be excused: Religious holidays, as specified in FSU policy (see elsewhere in syllabus); absences due to representing FSU at official functions, including intercollegiate debating or varsity sports events; verified emergencies and/or medical illness. Medical illnesses are serious in nature and require continued treatment by medical professionals and/or surgical or other treatments. Colds, the flu, fatigue, and stress do not qualify as medical illnesses. If you have a chronic illness that could affect your attendance, it is imperative that you alert me to this at the beginning of class. Documentation for an absence to be excused is required. You must provide a copy of any documentation to your professor (but maintain a copy for your records). While one is not penalized for excused absences, he or she remains responsible for all content missed, including assignments, knowledge, or skills covered in missed class(es).

INCOMPLETE GRADES

Missing work is insufficient reason for a grade of Incomplete (I). An I will not be given except under extenuating circumstances at the instructor's discretion. Note that College of Social Science guidelines require that students seeking an "I" must be passing the course.

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 talk with your instructor in advance of missing a class for religious holiday observance reasons.

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 me 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, Dean of Students, 08 Kellum Hall
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/>

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY: This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.