

Soc 290: Power and Reflexivity in Pierre Bourdieu

Winter 2012, University of California, San Diego

Wed, 1:00p-3:50p; SSB 414

Instructor: Tom Medvetz

Office hours: Mon & Fri, 12:05p-1:05p, and by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the space of a ten-week quarter, it is impossible to provide anything but a woefully incomplete sketch of Pierre Bourdieu's sociology. The modest aim of this class, then, is simply to *introduce* you to some of the core themes of Bourdieu work: its epistemological foundations, methodological principles, conceptual moorings, theoretical commitments, and political purposes. If we succeed, then the class will supply you with the tools to develop a proper understanding of Bourdieu at some point in the future (and encourage that engagement). On the other hand, the surest route to failure would be to inoculate you against Bourdieu by suggesting that we have "covered" his work in a thorough way. I'll begin each week's meeting with some opening remarks based partly (but not only) on the reading assignments. Then I will open the class up to discussion.

REQUIRED BOOKS

There are five required books for this class:

Pierre Bourdieu (with Jean-Claude Chamboredon and Jean-Claude Passeron). 1991. *The Craft of Sociology: Epistemological Preliminaries*. New York and Berlin: Aldine de Gruyter.

Pierre Bourdieu, 2000. *Pascalian Meditations*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Pierre Bourdieu. 1998. *Practical Reason*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Pierre Bourdieu. 1996. *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Artistic Field*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Pierre Bourdieu. 2004. *Science of Science and Reflexivity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

I will provide all additional readings (denoted by the [*] symbol below) to you in PDF format.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Half of your grade is based on class participation. In addition to doing all of the readings and engaging actively in the discussions, you must circulate four electronic memos (or short reaction papers) by email on the night before four class meetings of your choosing. Please introduce each memo with a quote from the current week's reading that you find especially meaningful. You can devote a small portion of your remarks to a straightforward exegesis of the texts—but you should devote most of your effort to more analytical aims. By that I mean

you should attempt to delve beneath the surface by comparing and contrasting the texts, looking for gaps and tensions among them, assessing their logical, empirical, or methodological rigor, and considering their wider uses.

Finally, you should close each memo with one or more discussion questions for the next day's meeting. Each week, I will choose a few of the most interesting or illuminating questions as starting points for the discussion. All memos must be circulated by midnight on the night before class.

The second half of your grade is based on your term paper. You may select among several formats for the paper, depending on your current status in the program. Here are some possible approaches:

(i) Write a proposal for some future empirical research project. If you choose this option, your paper should focus on how Bourdieu's work might be useful for the methodological or conceptual insights it provides, or, alternately, as a foil for your study.

(ii) Write an empirical reflection paper similar to the one described above, but based on some past or current research. In this case, you may delve into the empirical details of your work. However, you should devote most of your effort to showing how some form of engagement with Bourdieu would extend or improve your study.

(iii) In a more theoretical vein, write a purposeful review paper focusing on a specific theme or aspect of Bourdieu's work (perhaps in preparation for field papers). If you select this option, be crystal clear about your topic and your aims in the paper. In other words, do not write a rambling or aimless "lit review" or engage in needless digressions.

These are only three options. If you have a different idea for a final paper, please discuss it with me by week 7 of the quarter. Please limit your final papers to 15-20 double-spaced pages.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introductory discussion

No reading

Week 2: Overview

[*] Rogers Brubaker. 1985. "Rethinking classical theory: the sociological vision of Pierre Bourdieu." *Theory and Society* 14: 723-44.

[*] Loïc Wacquant. 2001. "Durkheim and Bourdieu: The Common Plinth and its Cracks," *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology* 38(1): 12-27.

[*] Loic Wacquant. 2007. "Pierre Bourdieu," in Rob Stones, ed. *Key Contemporary Thinkers*, 2nd ed. London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 261-277.

[*] Loic Wacquant. 2002. "Toward a Social Praxeology: The Structure and Logic of Bourdieu's Sociology," in *Invitation to a Reflexive Sociology*, p. 1-59

[Start reading *The Craft of Sociology*.]

Week 3: Epistemological foundations

Pierre Bourdieu (w/ Chamboredon and Passeron), *The Craft of Sociology* (entire)

Pierre Bourdieu. "The Historicity of Reason," ch. 3 in *Pascalian Meditations*, p. 93-127

Week 4: Conceptual anchors & tools: habitus, field, and capital

[*] Pierre Bourdieu. 1964. "The Attitude of the Algerian Peasant toward Time," in Jesse Pitt-Rivers, ed. *Mediterranean Countrymen*. Paris: Mouton, p. 55-72.

[*] Pierre Bourdieu. 1985. "The Genesis of the Concepts of *Habitus* and *Field*." *Sociocriticism* 2(2): 11-24.

[*] Pierre Bourdieu. 1986. "The Forms of Capital," in J.G. Richardson, ed., *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood Press, p. 241-258.

[*] Loic Wacquant, [1989] 1996. "Foreword," in *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. ix-xxii.

[*] Loic Wacquant. 2004. "Habitus," in Jens Beckert and Milan Zafirovski, eds. *International Encyclopedia of Economic Sociology*. London: Routledge, p. 315-319.

Week 5: The logic of practice

Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason* (entire).

Pierre Bourdieu. "Bodily Knowledge," ch. 4 in *Pascalian Meditations*, p. 128-163.

[*] Pierre Bourdieu. "From Rules to Strategies," *In Other Words*, p. 59-75.

Week 6: Symbolic power, classes, & the fabrication of groups

[*] Pierre Bourdieu. [1984] 1985. "Social Space and the Genesis of 'Classes'." *Theory and Society* 14: 723-74.

[*] Pierre Bourdieu. 1990. "Codification," in *In Other Words: Essays Toward a Reflexive Sociology*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 76-86.

[*] Pierre Bourdieu. 1991. "Symbolic Power," in John B. Thompson, ed. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 163-170.

[*] John B. Thompson. 1991. "Editor's Introduction," *Language and Symbolic Power*, p. 1-31.

[*] Loic Wacquant. 1993. "From Ruling Class to Field of Power: An Interview with Pierre Bourdieu on *La Noblesse d'État*." *Theory, Culture & Society* 10: 19-44.

Week 7: The emergence of the field of cultural production

Pierre Bourdieu. *The Rules of Art* (entire)

Week 8: Fields & the "meta-field" of power

[*] Pierre Bourdieu. 1991. "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field." *Comparative Social Research* 13: 1-44.

[*] Pierre Bourdieu. 1983. "The Field of Cultural Production, or the Economic World Reversed." *Poetics* 12: 311-356.

[*] [Selections from] Pierre Bourdieu. 1996. "Outline of the Field of Power: Differentiation, Reconversion, Legitimation." *The State Nobility*, p. 261-278, 382-389)

[*] Gil Eyal. "The Spaces Between Fields" (unpublished manuscript.)

Week 9: Bourdieu & democratic politics

Pierre Bourdieu. "Symbolic Violence and Political Struggles," chapter 5 in *Pascalian Meditations*, p. 164-205.

[*] Pierre Bourdieu. [1993] 1994. "Rethinking the State: On the Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field." *Sociological Theory* 12: 1-19

[*] Loic Wacquant. 2003. "Pointers on Pierre Bourdieu and Democratic Politics." *Constellations* 11(1): 1-15.

[*] Pierre Bourdieu. 1990. "Political Representation: Elements for a Theory of the Political Field," ch. 8 in *Language and Symbolic Power*, p. 171-202

Week 10: Reflexivity & the civic mission of intellectuals

Pierre Bourdieu, *Science of Science and Reflexivity* (entire)

Pierre Bourdieu, "Introduction" and "Critique of Scholastic Reason," *Pascalian Meditations*, p. 1-43

[*] Pierre Bourdieu. 1989. "The Corporatism of the Universal: The Role of Intellectuals in the Modern World." *Telos* 81 (Fall): 99-110

[*] Pierre Bourdieu. "A Lecture on the Lecture," *In Other Words*, p. 177-198