Classical Sociological Theory
Department of Sociology & Anthropology / Rutgers University, Newark
Spring 2014  21:920:409 Q1

Wednesday 6 to 9 pm
Life Sciences Center 103

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Office Hours: Monday 11:30 - 12:30

Course Description

Welcome to Classical Social Theory. This course provides an introduction to the works of major social theorists from the modern world until the early twentieth century. During the semester, we will explore the contexts, methods, and intellectual frameworks of these thinkers whose writings and theories continue to contribute greatly to contemporary social theory.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, students will have an overview of the major theorists who contributed to the foundation of Sociology as an academic discipline. Students will be expected to think critically about the theories and methods of these sociologists; and, by the end of this course, students will be able to apply the methods and theories of these thinkers towards understanding contemporary social issues and problems.

Course Requirements

This is a writing intensive seminar, which places great emphasis on engaging classical texts. The professor will not lecture, but will instead lead seminar discussions.

Your grade will be determined by:

✔ 20% — Presentation
✔ 80% — 4 Formal Essays (2,000 to 2,500 words, about 10 to 11 pages).

DUE DATES
Week 5  W 2/19 ***FIRST PAPER DUE on TOQUEVILLE***
Week 8  W 3/12 ***SECOND PAPER DUE on MARX***
Week 11 W 4/9 ***THIRD PAPER DUE on DURKHEIM***
Week 13 W 4/23 ***FOURTH PAPER DUE on WEBER***
Formal Essays

• The formal essays must be between 2,000 to 2,500 words or, about 10 to 11 pages long.

• Papers must apply the theorist’s theory to empirical phenomena.
  ▪ You can do this by confirming, disconfirming, or partially confirming a theory. Or, you can do this by showing how a theorist’s theory allows us to understand sociological phenomena. Or, you can look at empirical phenomena through the lens of the theory.
  ▪ In order to do this assignment well, students will have to understanding the theorists main arguments. Don’t get distracted by confusing a minor piece of the theory for the whole theory.

• Papers must support their claims with empirical evidence. This evidence may come from academic journal articles, reputable studies and data, or from reputable journalistic sources.
  ▪ Data can be collected from the websites of organizations, whether commercial, governmental, nongovernmental, nonprofit, or academic. Just be aware of your source. Take global warming, for example. You’ll get different data from a think tank funded by oil companies than you would from a peer-reviewed paper.
  ▪ You can find these sources from the Rutgers University Library webpage, in the “database” page of the website.

• The papers cannot be summary papers. Papers that summarize the course readings, without advancing and defending an original thesis, will not earn more than a D.
  ▪ To avoid excessive summary, indicate in your introduction 1) what theorist and theory you are writing about and 2) what variables of your case are most relevant to your thesis. Then, focus your essay on this theory and these variables.
  ▪ Make sure your essay is driven by analysis of the main text, and analysis of your data. Strong topic sentences that relate to your thesis on the main text will help you sustain your analysis without falling into endless summary.

• Paper 1 is on Tocqueville
• Paper 2 is on Marx
• Paper 3 is on Durkheim
• Paper 4 is on Weber

Grading scale – 100 possible points

_____ 40 points Does the essay contain an argumentative, synthetic, and original thesis in the first paragraph?

_____ 20 points Is the essay synthetic?

_____ 20 points Does the essay defend the thesis, using direct quotations, textual evidence, and empirical evidence? This includes outside research.

_____ 20 points Is the essay well-written, formatted according to MLA, APA, ASA, or Chicago style, and free of any major grammatical errors? And, does the essay contain a bibliography and work cited page.
Blackboard

We will be using the web-based Blackboard course software. I will post the syllabus and syllabus updates there, and I’ll also post course documents and assignments. Be sure that you have created a Net ID; you’ll need it to access the site.

Attendance policy:

Rutgers students are expected to attend all scheduled course meetings. University policy excuses absences due to religious observance or participation in Rutgers-approved activities, and permits students to make up work missed for these circumstances.

If you will be absent from a class or exam for any reason, please report your absence using the Rutgers Self-Reporting Absence application. Please note that it is up to me to determine how to handle your absence from classes, lab sessions, or exams. Reporting your absence does not “excuse” you. In addition to reporting your absence using the Self Reporting Absence application, I encourage you to contact me in advance (in person or by e-mail).

Students will sign an attendance sheet every class. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late or do not sign the attendance sheet, you will be marked absent.

Absences not excused in advance will lower your final grade by half a grade (A to B+, B+ to B, and so on) for each unexcused absence.

Academic Integrity

The Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “the use of another person’s words, ideas, or results without giving that person appropriate credit.” Intentionally committing plagiarism is a serious offense that results in severe consequences. All university instructors are required to report students who intentionally violate this policy to the Department Chair and to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs.

The Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy establishes levels of violations and recommends sanctions. Depending upon the severity of the case and the level of the violation, the sanctions for these violations include: failure in the course, mandatory participation in a series of noncredit academic integrity workshops, and/or suspension.

If you are in doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism or are concerned that you are misappropriating someone’s words or ideas, speak immediately with your instructor. You can also consult the Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found at http://judicialaffairs.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_Effective_9_01_2011.pdf.

Students with Disabilities

Students with Disabilities Take note of the Manual for Students and Coordinators of Services for Students with Disabilities (http://ada.rutgers.edu/docs/studentmanual-uw.pdf). If you have any accommodation requests or inquiries, please contact the Robeson Campus Center Office of Student Life and Leadership. You can access the center’s website at http://robeson.rutgers.edu/studentlife/disability.html.
Required Readings:

These books are available used from NJ Books. They are also at B&N Campus bookstore


Additional readings will be posted to blackboard, including Tocqueville *Democracy in America*
Course Schedule
Part 1: Sociological Theories of Race

Week 1      W 1/22

**Introduction: Where did social theory come from?**
The first part of class will be an introduction to the course and a short reading of
Kant, "What is Enlightenment?"

Week 2      W 1/29

**Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan** (on blackboard)
The lecture will address the following questions:
1. What is the state of nature, according to Hobbes?
2. Are all men equal?
3. What is a social contract?
4. Why is a unitary, strong sovereign a good thing?
5. What is a legitimate state, and how should that state govern?

**John Locke, First Treatise on Government** (on blackboard)
The lecture will address the following questions:
1. What is the state of nature, according to Locke?
2. Are all men equal?
3. What is the "separation of powers" and why is this good?
4. What is a legitimate state, and how should that state govern?

**Charles de Montesquieu, "The Division of Powers"** (on blackboard)
Be prepared to discuss key questions:
1. What is a "general will" and why is it different than the will of an individual?
2. Why does Montesquieu focus on the law of a state rather than the leader of a state?
3. Does Montesquieu's idea of the separation of the executive, legislative and judicial powers seem familiar?
4. What do you think about his belief that the environment affects societies and individuals?

**Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract** (on blackboard)
Be prepared to discuss key questions:
1. What is the state of nature, according to Rousseau?
2. What is a social contract?
3. What is the general will?
Week 3  W 2/5

Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations & The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (on blackboard)

For those who wish to write about Adam Smith, you should consult a larger selection of his work, namely the following:
Book 1, Chapter 1 on the Division of Labor
Book 1, Chapter 4 on the Origins and Use of Money
Book 1, Chapter 6 on Wages and Profits of Labor and Commodities
Book 4, Chapter 2 on the Invisible Hand

Karl Marx. "Critical Notes on the Article: 'The King of Prussia and Social Reform' by a Prussian." *Vorwarts!*, No.63, August 7 1844
Marx's essay can be found in your textbook, or free from this link: http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/08/07.htm

For the second half of class, be prepared to discuss these questions regarding Adam Smith:
1. What is a market, according to Smith?
2. What does a market do, according to Smith?
3. Why do you think Adam Smith considered himself a moral philosopher?
4. According to Marx, how should one go about studying poverty?
5. How is Marx's approach different than Smith's?

Week 4  W 2/12

Alexis de Tocqueville *Democracy in America*

Read:  Volume 1, Part 1, Chapters 4, 5, 6,
       Part 2, All Chapters
Volume 2, Part 2, Chapters, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

What are the social causes of Democratic political organization?
What are the social consequences of Democratic political organization?
What is the difference between the aristocratic world and the modern world?
What are the weaknesses of Democracy, and how are these weaknesses overcome in America?
Week 5  W 2/19  ***FIRST FORMAL PAPER DUE on TOQUEVILLE***

The Young Marx: Alienation, Materialism & The Purpose of Philosophy

*On the Jewish Question*

*Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*

*Critical Marginal Notes on the Article “The King of Prussia and Social Reform”*

*Thesis on Feuerbach*

*The German Ideology*

Be prepared to discuss key questions:
1. What does Marx mean when he says that alienation does not come from ideas, but from material conditions?
2. Where does truth reside?
3. Who and what shapes the ideology of a people?
4. What does Marx mean by "the purpose of philosophy is not to understand the world, but to change it"?
5. What is commodity fetishism?
6. What is alienation?

Week 6  W 2/26

The Young Marx: Alienation, Materialism & The Purpose of Philosophy

*Alienation and Social Classes*

*Society and Economy in History*

Repeat the above questions

Week 7  W 3/5

Marx & Engels and The Capitalist Mode of Production

*Manifesto of the Communist Party*

*Wage Labour and Capital*

*The Coming Unheaval*

*Class Struggle and Mode of Production*

*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louise Bonaparte*

*The Origin of the Family, Private, Property, and the State*

As Marx's thinking matured, he developed the concept of class and capitalist modes of production in order to substantiate his ideas on exploitation.

Be prepared to discuss key questions:
1. What defines the capitalist mode of production? Money or labor?
2. How does the capitalist compensate the laborer and how does the laborer produce value for the capitalist?
3. How is the laborer exploited?
4. What are the bourgeoisie and the proletariat classes, and how do they form?
5. What is the structure, infrastructure, and superstructure?
6. Where do social values and social institutions come from?
7. In the capitalist economy, what grows faster: wealth or pauperism?
**Week 8**  
W 3/12  
***SECOND FORMAL PAPER DUE on MARX***

**Durkheim, The Field of Sociology and Methods of Explanation and Analysis**

**Durkheim, Suicide, (on blackboard)**

Be prepared to discuss key questions:
1. How do social organization shape the moral choices of individuals?
2. Durkheim helped pioneer a method of multivariate statistical analysis to understand the social phenomenon of suicide. What are his findings on suicide rates using the variables of religion, education, and marital status?
3. What does "high and low regulation" and "high and low integration" mean?
4. What are the four types of suicide that Durkheim identifies?

**SPRING BREAK**  
M 3/17 & W 3/19

**Week 9**  
W 3/26

**Durkheim**

*The Science of Morality*

*Moral Obligation, Duty, and Freedom*

*Forms of Social Solidarity*

Be prepared to discuss Social Solidarity key questions:
1. What is the difference between mechanical and organic solidarity?
2. What is the "collective conscience"?
3. Does Durkheim remind you of Montesquieu? How? (Hint: focus on the law)

**Week 10**  
W 4/2

**Durkheim**

*The Division of Labor and Social Anomie and the Moral Structure of Industry*

**Durkheim**

*Religion and Ritual*

*Secularization and Rationality*

Be prepared to discuss key questions on the Anomie:
1. What happens when a society industrializes and urbanizes?
2. What is the "Anomie"?
3. What is Durkheim's view of capitalism?
4. How does Durkheim remind you of Hobbes? (Hint: focus on his idea of regulation)

Be prepared to discuss key questions on Religion:
1. What holds society together as it evolves?
2. How are religious beliefs and social organization related?
3. Can you identify any differences between Durkheim and Tocqueville?
Week 11  W 4/9  

***THIRD FORMAL PAPER DUE on DURKHEIM***

**Weber**

*Politics as a Vocation*

*Science as a Vocation*

*The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (p. 302)*

Be prepared to discuss key questions:

1. How does Luther's idea of a "calling" and Calvinist ideas of "predestination" lay the foundation for the spirit of capitalism?
2. What is an "elective affinity"?
3. Do you see a difference between Marx's "historical materialism" and Weber's ideas?

Week 12  W 4/16

**Weber, Part II Power**

*Structures of Power*

*Class, Status, Party*

*Bureaucracy*

*The Sociology of Charismatic Authority*

*The Meaning of Discipline*

Be prepared to discuss key questions:

1. How is Weber's thesis on authority differ from Marx's belief that history is shaped by modes of production?
2. How are power and legitimacy related?
3. What does Weber mean by "traditional authority," "charismatic authority," and "legal-rational authority"?
4. In feudal societies, how were social status and wealth established?
5. Under capitalism, how does the market change wealth?
6. Why and how does Weber disagree with Marx, and argue that class is a product of the modern capitalist world?
7. Has status been replaced by class? What does Weber think? What do you think?
8. What is the Iron Cage?

Week 13  W 4/23

**Weber, Extra Session**

***FOURTH FORMAL PAPER DUE on WEBER***
Presentation Grading Sheet

Student Name: ________________________________ Date: ________________________________

Book Name: ________________________________

_____ out of 30 points Did the presenter demonstrate a **critical** understanding of the entire book, chapter, or essay or did the presenter merely summarize?

_____ out of 20 points Did the presenter articulate his or her own **original thesis**?

_____ out of 20 points Did the presentation successfully **synthesize three texts** from the syllabus and support her thesis?

_____ out of 10 points Did the presenter present on a **different** chapter of the book or a different essay than the other presenters in her/his group?

_____ out of 10 points Were the **PowerPoint or handouts** clear and organized?

+ _____ out of 10 points Did the presenter finish within **10 minutes**?

= ______ out of 100 points Final Grade: ________________________________