Anthropology 488: Foundations of Social Theory

This class introduces the ideas of important early social theorists (Marx, Engels, Freud, Durkheim, Weber) through close readings of their seminal works, paying special attention to the issues that preoccupied these thinkers and the historical conditions in which the study of society emerged in Western thought. Two related goals guide this course:

1) to guide students to an accurate understanding of the arguments and concerns of these foundational authors; and
2) to foster in students a critical awareness of the social and cultural grounds of early social theorizing.

Required books
- Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss: *Primitive Classification*
- Sigmund Freud: *The Future of an Illusion*
- Anthony Giddens: *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*
- Max Weber: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

Required BlackBoard readings
- Herbert Spencer: *On Social Evolution* (U of Chicago 1972), Chs. 7-8, “The social organism” & “Evolutionism defined” (pp. 53-74), & Ch. 13, “The factors of social evolution” (pp. 121-133)
- Karl Marx and F. Engels: “The Communist Manifesto” (1848)
- Sigmund Freud: *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (WW Norton & Co, 1965), Lecture XXXI “The dissection of the psychical personality” (pp. 57-80).

Class format and requirements. The class follows a combined lecture and seminar format. Students will be assigned to small discussion groups and in those groups will analyze the assigned readings. Students are expected to participate actively in group and class discussions. Class participation and attendance count for 35% of the final grade.

Over the term, each student will write three 2-3 page essays on the readings. All students will write the essay on the first set (Victorian anthros), and then will choose two from the remaining three sets of readings listed below. Each essay is worth 15% of the final grade.

Set 1: Victorian anthropologists Frazer, Tylor, and Spencer, due April 15
Set 2: Materialists Marx, Engels, and Morgan, due April 29
Set 3: Psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, due May 13
Set 4: Sociologists Durkheim and Mauss, due May 27

There will be a comprehensive, take-home final, available for pick-up at the end of class on June 5. The essay exam is due at Condon 372 by 3pm, Tuesday, June 10.

Final grades. The 3 essays contribute 45% toward the final grade; class attendance and participation in discussion groups contribute 35%; and the final exam contributes the remaining 20%.
SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Introduction
April 1

The Victorians and evolutionism
April 3
April 8 Reading: Frazer, Spencer and Tylor (BB)

Historical Materialism
April 10, 15, 17 Reading: Marx and Engels (BB), Giddens (pp. 1-64)

American materialism
April 22 Reading: Morgan (BB)

Psychodynamics
April 24, 29 Reading: Freud (BB)

The psychoanalysis of culture
May 1, 6 Reading: Freud The Future of an Illusion

Social realism
May 8, 13 Reading: Giddens (pp. 65-81, 105-118)
May 15, 20 Reading: Primitive Classification

Interpretive Sociology
May 22, 27 Reading: Giddens (pp. 119-184)
May 29, June 3 Reading: Weber, Protestant Ethic

Conclusions
June 5