

Sociological Theory I

This course will provide an introduction to classical sociological theory with an emphasis on the works of Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber. The aim is to provide a critical overview of the main ideas of these thinkers, to explore how their theories have been applied to modern society, and to use their writings to illustrate some general problems and alternative strategies of theory construction.

The following texts will be used extensively in the course and are recommended for purchase:

- Daniel Little, *Varieties of Social Explanation*
- Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*
- Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*
- Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*
- Emile Durkheim, *Suicide*
- Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber*
- Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

Evaluation will be based mainly on class participation. Roughly every other week each student will be required to introduce and lead discussion on a specific topic based on the readings. Three times during the term (once for each theorist) each student will also be required to write a brief essay discussing their own views, reactions, criticisms, or potential extensions or applications of a specific course reading (maximum length is 8 pages each). These are intended to be “thought pieces” and not textual exegeses. The first essay is due no later than November 5, the second no later than November 19, and the third no later than December 8.

Course Outline:

Week 1 (October 1). Introduction

Week 2 (October 8). Philosophical Foundations of Social Theory

Daniel Little, *Varieties of Social Explanation*, chapters 1-4, 11.

Russell Keat, *The Politics of Social Theory*, chapters 1-2 (electronic reserve).

Week 3 (October 15). Marx: Early Writings and Historical Materialism

Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, chapters 1-2.

Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 3-6, 16-125, 143-200, 683-727, 734-768.

Daniel Little, *Varieties of Social Explanation*, chapters 5-6.

Week 4 (October 22). Marx: Class and Politics

Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, chapter 3.

Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 469-500, 586-652.

Erik Olin Wright, “Class Analysis, History and Emancipation,” *New Left Review* 1993, No. 202 (<http://0-www.newleftreview.org.janus.uoregon.edu/?page=article&view=1735>).

Week 5 (October 29). Marx: Political Economy of Capitalism

Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, chapter 4.

Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 203-217, 221-465.

Erik Olin Wright, "Alternative Perspectives in Marxist Theory of Accumulation and Crisis." *Critical Sociology* 1999, Vol. 25 (<http://0-crs.sagepub.com.janus.uoregon.edu/cgi/reprint/25/2-3/115>).

Week 6 (November 5). Durkheim: Division of Labor; Politics; Socialism

Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, chapters 5 and 7.

Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, Introduction, Book One (chapters 1-5), Book Two (chapters 1, 2, and 5), Book Three (chapters 1, 2, and conclusion).

Kenneth Thompson, ed., *Readings from Emile Durkheim*, pp. 28-31, 159-166 (electronic reserve).

Week 7 (November 12). Durkheim: Suicide; Religion; Knowledge

Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, chapters 6 and 8.

Emile Durkheim, *Suicide*, Introduction, Book One (chapters 1-4), Book Two (chapters 1-4), Book Three (chapters 1 and 3).

Daniel Little, *Varieties of Social Explanation*, chapter 9.

Week 8 (November 19). Weber: Method; Protestantism; Capitalism

Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, chapters 9-10.

Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber*, chapters 1-3, 5, 11.

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Introduction, chapters 1, 2, 5.

Randall Collins, "Weber's Last Theory of Capitalism." *American Sociological Review* 1980, Vol. 45, No. 6 (<http://0-www.jstor.org.janus.uoregon.edu/stable/pdfplus/2094910.pdf>)

Week 9 (November 26). Weber: Authority; Bureaucracy; Rationalization

Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, chapter 11-12.

Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber*, chapters 4, 6, 8-10.

Daniel Little, *Varieties of Social Explanation*, chapter 10.

Week 10 (December 3). Weber: Class; Stratification; Socialism

Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, chapter 13-15.

Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber*, chapter 7, 14, 16.

Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "Capitalism and Socialism: Weber's Dialogue with Marx," In Robert J. Antonio and Ronald M. Glassman, eds., *A Weber-Marx Dialogue* (electronic reserve)

Val Burris, "The Neo-Marxist Synthesis of Marx and Weber on Class," in Norbert Wiley, ed., *The Marx-Weber Debate* (<http://uoregon.edu/~vburris/marxweb.pdf>).