

Sociology 615
Winter 2002

CONTEMPORARY MARXIST THEORY

FINAL ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

The purpose of this essay assignment is to have you reflect on what you see as the main strengths and/or weaknesses of Marxist theory and how effectively (or ineffectively) you believe 20th century Marxists and neo-Marxists theorists have been in addressing the criticisms raised by non-Marxists, correcting the deficiencies of Marx's original theory, and/or adapting Marxist theory to account for the important social changes that have occurred in the decades since Marx's death.

Along with this assignment you will receive a critique of orthodox Marxist theory that was written in the early 1960s by C. Wright Mills (*The Marxists*, chapter 6). Choose one or two (no more) of the main criticisms raised by Mills and, drawing upon the course readings, assess the applicability of Mills' critique to contemporary variants of Marxist theory; discuss the revisions and refinements that have been advanced and the theoretical debates that have resulted from efforts to address these criticisms; and evaluate the relative merits of specific variants of contemporary Marxist or neo-Marxist theory in relation to the criticisms raised by Mills.

Suggested length for the assignment is 10-15 double-spaced pages. The assignment should be sent to me as an email attachment by Wednesday, March 20th. My email address is vburris@oregon.uoregon.edu. Any students who have not submitted a paper by that date will receive an incomplete.