

## **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*, Westview Press, 1991.
- Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1973.
- Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), W. W. Norton, 1978.
- Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, Free Press, 1997 (or earlier edition).
- Emile Durkheim, *Suicide*, Free Press, 1997 (or earlier edition).
- Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber*, Oxford Univ. Pr., 1958.
- Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Routledge, 2001 (or earlier edition)

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* mere summaries of the text. The first essay is due no later than November 4, the second no later than November 18, and the third no later than December 4. Copies of this syllabus and other course materials may be found at <http://pages.uoregon.edu/vburris/soc617/>.

### **Course Outline:**

#### **Week 1 (September 30). Introduction**

#### **Week 2 (October 7). 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 14). 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, 26-125, 143-200, 683-727, 734-768.

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

#### **Week 4 (October 21). 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://newleftreview.org.libproxy.uoregon.edu/?page=article&view=1735>).

### **Week 5 (October 28). 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://crs.sagepub.com.libproxy.uoregon.edu/content/25/2-3/115.full.pdf>)

### **Week 6 (November 4). 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 11). 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 18). Weber: Religion; Protestantism; Capitalism**

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

Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber*, chapters 3 and 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://www.jstor.org.libproxy.uoregon.edu/stable/pdfplus/2094910>)

### **Week 9 (November 24). 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 4-5, 8-10.

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

### **Week 10 (December 2). 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://pages.uoregon.edu/vburris/marxweb.pdf>).