

# SOCI 455

## Classical Sociological Theory

### Fall 2016

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#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this class is to familiarize you with the language, epistemologies, and key insights of sociology's "classical" period, as well as give you a chance to position yourself within the diverse theoretical frameworks of the American sociological tradition. To this end, we will interpret dense texts written in an increasingly unfamiliar historical context and (attempt to) apply the ideas we find there to contemporary social life. This class is about learning to read classical sociological theory both on the page and in the world around us.

As juniors and seniors, I expect you to be aware of basic sociological concepts and outlooks. You should understand how to perform elementary scholarly research (i.e. finding relevant articles through the Mansfield website). You should be prepared to present your work to your peers and, in turn, give a respectful critique of their work. Most of all, I expect students in this class to work hard and be honest.

You can expect me to structure the class as outlined in this document (with revisions as necessary and agreed upon by the class). I will relate whatever insights I can on the readings via lecture and discussions and give you timely and constructive feedback on your work. I'll work as hard as I expect you to work.

#### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course, the successful student will:

1. Be familiar with classical sociological themes, concepts, and areas of inquiry
2. Be able to systematically evaluate and critique social theories (both within and outside texts)
3. Uncover and evaluate beliefs, assumptions, and "common-sense" knowledge of the social world
4. Have a series of papers documenting their progression into their own theoretical perspective, as well as a number of additional resources and readings to explore

#### **Class Structure**

This class consists of reading and research, structured discussion (mostly you talking), open-ended lectures (mostly me talking), and written analysis. I will consistently challenge you to read and write with more rigor than you may be accustomed to. I facilitate—and enforce—this by (1) assigning no more than 20 pages of required reading for each class (and often far less) and (2) by giving twenty semi-random reading quizzes (see below for more information).

**Grading:** In the interests of transparency, the cumulative point value of this class is 100. Therefore, every point you earn is 1% of your grade. Here's a detailed breakdown of the grading system:

<u>Task</u>	<u>Proportion of overall grade</u>
Twenty 3-point Reading Quizzes	60%
Four 5-point Theory Memoranda	20%
Fieldnotes	Multiplier for memo grade
Final Paper	20%
Final Paper Peer Review	Multiplier for final paper grade

See the "Description of Tasks" (below) for more information.

**The Texts:** Many of the readings for this class are in the textbook:

Edles, Laura Desfor and Scott Appelrouth. 2015. *Sociological Theory in the Classical Era: Text and Readings*. Third Edition. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.

Edles and Appelrouth's introductions to the readings are an accessible, though by no means definitive, interpretation of the primary texts assigned on the following pages. My recommendation is to skim E&A's opinions *after* you've attempted to make sense of the readings yourself. Also note that many, if not all, the readings are available online. I will provide links to PDF and HTML versions of the readings when possible.

**Links to readings outside the textbook will be available on Moodle as necessary.**

**Please bring your textbook to class every day.**

### Other Reminders and Caveats

**Disabilities:** Please let me know if you have any sort of disability or language difficulties that might hinder your performance in any of the assigned tasks.

**Office Hours:** Making use of office hours will be critical to your success. Attending office hours indicates your engagement with the material and gives me a chance to get to know you. I will send out an office hours poll to the class on the first week before establishing regular hours.

**Moodle:** Where you'll find class updates (i.e. revisions to this document and others), grades, readings, the course schedule, and a place to upload your memos and final paper.

**E-mail:** My e-mail policy is as follows.

- I do not respond to e-mails after 6PM on weekdays. With a few exceptions, I do not check e-mail on Saturdays.
- I will respond to your (relevant) questions or concerns within 48 hours.
- Please keep your e-mailed questions and concerns relevant to this class. Complex issues should be discussed in person during office hours or by appointment.
- Per university policy, I will only respond to e-mails from your student e-mail account.
- I use university e-mail to communicate important information to the class. Therefore, to succeed in this class, you'll need to check your student e-mail account regularly. It's easy to forward e-mails from your student account to another account. Let me know if you need assistance with this.

**Drop deadlines:** September 19th is the last day to drop individual classes via Cyberbear.

**Incompletes:** Please see the University Catalog for the University policy on incompletes:

<http://www.umt.edu/catalog/academics/academic-policy-procedure2.php>

I will not give incompletes unless there are compelling reasons to do so. I strongly discourage this option.

**Plagiarism:** Please see the Student Conduct Code. If you use someone else's words or ideas, cite them and use quotes as appropriate. If you have any questions regarding this matter please contact me before you submit your work. You will find this method works better than allowing me to find these issues on my own. Do the right thing.

**Personal device policy:** Personal information devices are an increasingly important part of daily communication and information gathering. They are also a distraction and a nuisance in class. We will produce a meaningful device policy the first day of class.

**Late Assignments:** Please turn in assignments on time. Extensions will be considered if requested at least a week in advance. Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade per day unless prior arrangements are made.

### **Readings and Due Dates**

We will cover the readings in the following sequence. Dates are approximate, since three classes will be cancelled sometime around the third week of the semester. [M] indicates the reading is available on Moodle. Readings without an [M] are available in your textbook.

#### **Week One: Defining Society, Defining Social Science**

1. Review syllabus, introductions
2. Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method* (8 pages)
3. Weber, "Science as a Vocation" [M] (16 pages)

#### **Week Two: Definitions cont'd**

1. Labor Day (no class)
2. Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach" [M] (3 pages)
3. Du Bois, "The Negro Problems" [M] (approx. 10 pages)

MEMO 1 DUE AT 5PM FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9 <sup>th</sup>
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#### **Buffer Week (approx. Week Three): Data collection**

Sometime around the third week of the semester, three class periods (three hours) will be devoted to participant observation at a site you identify in the first memo. I will notify you via e-mail when class is cancelled. See the detailed description of tasks for more information.

#### **Week Four: Religion and Society**

1. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (14 pages)
2. Marx, Introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* [M] (approx. 10 pages)
3. Weber, "The Social Psychology of World Religions" (9 pages)

FIELDNOTES DUE AT 5PM FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18<sup>th</sup>

### **Week Five: Economy and Society**

1. Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (6 pages)
2. Marx, selections from *Capital* (11 pages)
3. Marx, “The Buying and Selling of Labour-Power” [M] (approx. 6 pages)

### **Week Six: Religion, Economy, and Society**

1. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (11 pages)
2. Marx, *The German Ideology* (8 pages)
3. Review: origins of social science, workshop Memo 2

MEMO 2 DUE AT 5PM FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30<sup>th</sup>

### **Week Seven: Pragmatism and the Chicago School**

1. Dewey, “The Development of American Pragmatism” [M] (9 pages) and “Social Science and Social Control” [M] (3 pages)
2. Addams, “Problems of Municipal Administration” [M] (19 pages)
3. Mead, “Society” (8 pages)

### **Week Eight: Interaction**

1. Simmel, “Exchange” (9 pages), Mead, “Review of Philosophie des Geldes by Georg Simmel” [M] (3 pages)
2. Simmel, “Conflict” (4 pages) and “Sociability” (5 pages)
3. Simmel, “Fashion” (6 pages)

### **Week Nine: Interaction and Pragmatism**

1. Mead, “Mind” (8 pages)
2. Mead, “Self” (12 pages)
3. Review: pragmatism, interactionism and American social science, workshop Memo 3

MEMO 3 DUE AT 5PM FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21<sup>st</sup>

### **Week Ten: Race, Colonialism and Society**

1. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro* (6 pages)
2. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (14 pages)
3. Du Bois, “The Souls of White Folk” (3 pages)

### **Week Eleven: Gender and Society**

1. Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper,” and “Why I Wrote the Yellow Wallpaper” (8 pages); Gilman, “Women and Economics” Part I (7 pages)
2. Finish: Gilman, “Women and Economics” (15 pages)
3. Addams, “A Belated Industry” [M] (14 pages)

### **Week Twelve: Race, Gender, and Society**

1. Wells-Barnett, “The Case Stated” [M] (approx. 10 pages)
2. Race, gender and intersectionality in American social science, workshop Memo 4
3. Veterans Day (no class)

MEMO 4 DUE AT 5PM FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>

### **Week Thirteen: The Problem of Agency in Classical Social Theory**

1. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (9 pages)
2. Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (12 pages)
3. Weber, “The Types of Legitimate Domination” and “Bureaucracy” (14 pages)

### **Week Fourteen: Review of Critical Concepts, Thanksgiving**

1. Review and comparison: anomie, alienation, and disenchantment
2. Thanksgiving (no class)
3. Thanksgiving (no class)

### **Week Fifteen: The Contemporary State of Social Theory**

1. Burawoy, “Sociology as a Vocation” [M] (13 pages)
2. Polanyi, “The Self-Regulating Market and the Fictitious Commodities: Labor, Land, and Money” [M]
3. Bourdieu [M]

FINAL PAPER DRAFTS DUE AT 5PM SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18<sup>th</sup>

FINAL AT 8AM MONDAY, DECEMBER 19<sup>th</sup>

REVISED FINAL PAPERS DUE AT 8AM WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21<sup>st</sup>

## Description of Tasks

Each of the following tasks will be discussed in class. These descriptions are mainly for future reference and to document my expectations of/obligations to you.

**File naming conventions:** Please upload your files to Moodle in Microsoft Word or plain text format (.docx, .doc, .rtf, or .txt). Additionally, please use the following naming convention to ease management of class files:

**Lastname\_TaskNumber.docx (or another applicable file extension)**

For example, Jane Doe's second memo would be named as follows:

Doe\_Memo2.docx

Her final would be named:

Doe\_Final.docx

**Quizzes:** Yes, there will be *twenty* 3-point quizzes which will account for the bulk of your grade in this class (60%). This is as much a way of making sure you attend class as it is a means of assessing your understanding of the readings. The format of quizzes will vary between multiple choice, short answer, and others. No quiz should take longer than the first five to ten minutes of class time. Think of the quizzes as a test spread out over the semester. While some quiz questions will be harder than others, in general I will strive to write questions that reward you for doing the reading, taking notes, and showing up for class.

I offer a few bonus quizzes here and there, as well as some other opportunities for extra points, but I do not offer make-up quizzes. If you must be absent, make sure you take advantage of bonus quizzes/activities as they are offered. Note that you cannot receive more than 60 points for your cumulative quiz grade.

I may (or may not) give a quiz during every class with an assigned reading. (In other words, there will no quizzes on review/memo workshop days.)

**Memoranda:** There are four 5-point memoranda assigned throughout the semester (20% of your grade). Each memo will have a slightly different function (and slightly different length requirements), but their overall purpose is to help you develop your final paper. Since this is a 400-level class, I expect memoranda to have a professional appearance, be well-written, and contain some original analysis. However, note that memoranda are not meant to be traditional essays. Rather, the goal is to find ways to convey your thinking in a concise (if cursory) manner without the baggage of the "essay" form. Memoranda may be annotated bullet-points, a detailed outline, a (logical) series of theses or aphorisms, a conceptual map (that is intelligible to an outside reader), or whatever other mode allows you to develop ideas appropriate to the assigned task.

You will workshop your memos with your peers the Friday morning they are due. Your ability to incorporate other students' feedback into your work (or defend your work from their critique) could raise or lower a marginal grade. Conversely, providing constructive, insightful critiques of your peers' work could mean the difference between a B+ and an A- (for example). Attaching your peer-reviewed memo (with notes, line edits, etc.) to your final draft will give me a way to evaluate this component of your grade.

Memoranda will be graded based on their relevance to the assigned task, their comprehensibility, their sensitivity to peer critique, and their originality. I will give detailed feedback on the memoranda as a group. In other words, I will tease out patterns (good and bad) and present them (without identifying specific individuals) to the class. With the author's permission, excellent memoranda will be offered as examples for the rest of the class.

Due to class size, I must restrict myself to giving small amounts of specific feedback (beyond a grade) to each individual. However, I am happy to meet during office hours for further explanation as necessary.

The memoranda will have the following broad themes:

**Memo 1: Fieldwork Proposal** Choose a field site and justify your choice sociologically. Explain your fieldwork methodology.

**Memo 2: Symbolic and Material Explanations of Social Life** Is one form of explanation more powerful than the other? Is there a way to hybridize the two?

**Memo 3: Pragmatism and Interaction** How should we think of this uniquely American contribution to sociological theory?

**Memo 4: Stratification and Radical Social Theory** What role does (or should) social theory have in society?

**Fieldnotes:** In your first memo, you will identify a site where you will conduct three hours of observation (either all at once or in units of at least one hour) in lieu of going to class. You will document your observations at this site and post them (with any identifying information removed) on Moodle for the class to use in future memos. The site can be any public space. Like the peer review of final papers, fieldnotes will be graded with a 0 (fail), 0.5 (inadequate), or 1 (pass) point and multiplied by the raw points you receive for all of your memos to get your final memo score:

$$\text{Fieldnotes} * (\text{Memo1} + \text{Memo2} + \text{Memo3} + \text{Memo4})$$

Arif will conduct a workshop about fieldnote-taking prior to their due date.

**Final Paper:** This ten-page formal essay will synthesize your research and idea-making in memos, the readings assigned for class, and the feedback you received from your classmates and myself. The goal of the paper is to articulate your own theoretical outlook in conversation with the “classics.” We will discuss my expectations for the paper throughout the semester.

**Final Paper Peer Review:** This will consist of a long peer review session (on Monday, December 19 from 8 to 10 AM) in which you anonymously write a detailed critique of your peers’ final paper in an effort to improve and refine their work (and someone else does the same for you).

Like the fieldnotes, you will be assigned either a 1 (pass), a 0.5 (inadequate), or a 0 (fail) for this task. Whatever point value you are assigned will be multiplied by the raw points you obtain for your final paper to determine your overall final paper grade. If you don’t show up to help your peers, you won’t get any points for your final paper. Alternatively, if you show up but do a shoddy job, or if you show up without a final paper to critique, you’ll only get half the raw score. Show up to the final prepared to give and receive a substantive critique to get all possible points.

**Theory Workshops:** After I assign each memo, Arif will lead a workshop to assist you in completing the memos. Workshops will consist of field trips to various social settings and events, viewing and discussion of films and documentaries, and other activities that will aid in your classical-theory-infused interpretation of the social world. Attendance is optional, but, if noted, will replace your lowest quiz grades with full credit.