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SOCI 455.01: Classical Social Theory

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Classical Social Theory
Soci 455: Spring 2014
MWF 9:10-10:00; GBB 205

INSTRUCTOR: Krista Caffrey

OFFICE: Social Science 317

OFFICE HOURS: Mon, Wed, and Friday 10:10 -11:00 and by appointment

EMAIL: krista.caffrey@mso.umt.edu (I will try to respond as promptly as possible)

“All our knowledge results from questions, which is another way of saying that question-asking is our most important intellectual tool. I would go so far as to say that the answers we carry about in our heads are largely meaningless unless we know the questions which produced them. ... What, for example, are the sorts of questions that obstruct the mind, or free it, in the study of history? How are these questions different from those one might ask of a mathematical proof, or a literary work, or a biological theory? ... What students need to know are the rules of discourse which comprise the subject, and among the most central of such rules are those which govern what is and what is not a legitimate question.”

Neil Postman (1979)

Purpose of the course

To introduce advanced undergraduate students to major classical sociological theories. It is important to note that while we will be covering many theorists it is not enough to memorize the names and concepts. Everyone needs to be involved in the analysis of each theorist’s philosophical premises and implications, and the historical conditions from which their ideas arose.

Learning objectives: The class is structured to provide you with opportunities

- To appreciate the contributions of selected classical theorists to sociological thought.
- To apply classical sociological theory to contemporary social behavior and issues.
- To encourage further exploration of topics in sociological theory.
- To develop transferable skills: collaborative learning¹, professional writing, and presentation.

Required Reading: Bring your text and any additional readings to class.

Allan, Kenneth. 2013. *Explorations in Classical Sociological Theory: Seeing the Social World, 3rd edition*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.

Reserve Readings. The readings will be posted on eRes and/or Moodle

Summary of Course Requirements

<u>Requirement:</u>	<u>Points:</u>
Attendance	75
Tests: 3 @ 100 points; (4 tests, will drop lowest)	300
Final Test	100
Group Project	75
Total Points	550

Grades: 90% A; 80%B; 70%C; 60% D; Less than 60% F

¹ **Collaborative learning** (i.e., a learning context in which students share the responsibility for interpreting, coming to some agreement about the meaning of assigned readings, and/or clarifying disagreements). In collaborative learning environment the instructor has many responsibilities from selecting appropriate text to developing learning activities. Of all these responsibilities one of the most important is creat[ing] a classroom environment that help students experience the ambivalence, anger, frustration that often accompany genuine learning” (Delucchi and Smith 1997:337). To create this environment the class is structured around instructor guided instructions, small student lead discussion groups, writing exercises, and student presentations.

Participation and attendance are required

Attendance: Everyone begins with 75 attendance points. You lose 10 points for every absence and 5 points for each tardy after 2 tardies and 2 absences. (i.e., everyone will be allowed “2 free” absences and 2 “free tardies.”) If you must be late, try to let me know in advance and enter the room as quietly as possible so as to not disturb your classmates. Documented medical issues and family emergencies are exceptions to the attendance policy.

Some points to consider for class & group discussions.

Remember to respect your fellow students. Theorists often disagree, but they usually do so in a professional manner. We will always try to do so.

Tests:

Regular Tests: There will be 4 regular tests. All tests are comprehensive. The regular tests will consist of multiple choice, matching, define & explain relevance, short answer, and refutes. You may drop your lowest **non-zero** (i.e., you will not be able to drop a test score if you do not take all 4 tests).

Final Test: The final is one question (you select from two). Please bring a blue book for the final

Important Stuff

Academic Etiquette: Class begins on time. Please resist the temptation to begin packing up to leave before the end of class. If you must leave early please let me know before class and cause as little disruption as possible when you leave. Academic etiquette also includes treating all class members with respect and resisting the desire to have private conversations with the people sitting near you. Even whispering is distracting to others, including the instructor.

Academic Integrity & Misconduct: Plagiarism or cheating of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in failing the course. In addition to failing the course it is possible there will be other disciplinary action as I will report the incident. Cheating is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. Forms of cheating include, but are not limited, to turning in a paper written for another course, having another student write your assignment, copying another student’s assignment, and plagiarizing. Plagiarism comes in a lot of forms. The most common form of plagiarism used by students is failure to cite sources. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism please ask. Also read the plagiarism handouts prepared by Mansfield Library.

All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at: <http://life.umt.edu/S:/documents/forms/eb/StudentConductCode1.pdf>.

Reading: Learning about sociological theory involves lots of reading and thinking about what you have read. Some of the material will be difficult to read but it is imperative that you make every effort to read through it BEFORE class. This will give you a sense of what you do and don’t understand. When you read it the second or third time you will be likely start to gain an understanding of the perspective in question

About You: If you have needs that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know in person or on your written information sheet. By working together we will be able to make this class a positive experience for you. I am happy to make reasonable accommodations for any student who desires them. Please let me know as soon as possible what you require

Professor's Philosophy of Education

- The quality of the course is the reciprocal responsibility of teachers and students.
- Education requires active learning and practice in all types of communication skills (e.g. writing and speaking as well as reading and listening.)
- Grades should reflect achievement both in absolute terms and relative to other students.
- A course should truly be worth three semester credits at a very good, accredited institution.

This class will be oriented toward student participation: You are responsible for doing the reading, preparing comments/questions, and participating in class discussion. Class time will be spent discussing the material. **I will spend little time lecturing.**

COURSE OUTLINE

The schedule is *TENTATIVE and SUBJECT TO CHANGE*. If there are any changes they will be announced in class and/or Moodle.

Date	Topic & Important Dates	Reading
Week 1 Jan. 27 th -31 st	What is sociology? What is theory? Karl Marx.	Allan: Chapters 1 & 3
Week 2 Feb. 3 rd -7 th	A Radical Theorist: Karl Marx	Allan: Chapter 3 Reserve Reading: "Working Longer, Living Less: Understanding Marx Through the Workplace Today" by Walsh and Zacharias-Walsh Plagiarism read the following: http://www.english.purdue.edu/owb/resources/522/01/ http://sta.ucop.edu/files/plagiarism.pdf
Week 3 Feb. 10 th -14 th	A Radical Theorist: Karl Marx <u>Friday:</u> Review for test	Allan: Chapter 3 Reserve Reading: Marx from Walsh and Zacharias-Walsh
Week 4 Feb. 17 th -21 st	No class Monday, Feb 17th; President's Day <u>Test 1: Wednesday, Feb 19th</u> A Conservative Theorist: Durkheim	Allan: Chapter 4
Week 5 Feb. 24 th -28 th	A Conservative Theorist: Durkheim	Allan: Chapter 4 Reserve: "Surfing the Net for Community: A Durkheimian Analysis of Electronic Gatherings" by Hornsby
Week 6 Mar. 3 rd -7 th	A Conservative Theorist: Durkheim Friday: Assign groups <u>Friday:</u> Review for test	Allan: Chapter 4 Reserve: Durkheim from Hornsby

Week 7 Mar. 10 th -14 th	<u>Test 2: Monday, Mar. 10th</u> Theories of Complexity and Form: Weber	Allan: Chapter 5
Week 8 Mar. 17 th -21 st	Theories of Complexity and Form: Weber	Allan: Chapter 5 Reserve: "The Weberian Theory of Rationalization and the McDonaldization of Contemporary Society" by Ritzer
Week 9 Mar. 24 th -28 th	Theories of Complexity and Form: Weber Annotated Bibliographies due Monday, Mar. 24th	Allan: Chapter 5 Reserve: Weber from Ritzer
Week 10 Mar. 31 st -Apr. 4 th	<u>No Classes: Spring Break</u>	
Week 11 Apr. 7 th -11 th	Detail plan for Group Project Due Monday, April 7th <u>Monday</u> : Review for test <u>Test 3: Wednesday, April 9th</u> Theories of Complexity and Form: Simmel	Allan: Chapter 6 Reserve: "Alcohol-Related Windows on Simmel's Social World" by Staudenmeier, Jr.
Week 12 Apr. 14 th -18 th	Theories of Complexity and Form: Simmel	Allan: Chapter 6 Reserve: Simmel from Ritzer, Ch. 9
Week 13 Apr. 21 st -25 th	Social Psychology: Mead <u>Friday</u> : Review for test	Allan: Chapter 6 Reserve: Mead from Ritzer, Ch. 14
Week 14 Apr. 28 th -May 2 nd	<u>Test 4: Monday, April 28th</u> Group Presentations (Wednesday and Friday)	
Week 15 May 5 th -May 9 th	Group Presentations (Monday and Wednesday) <u>Friday</u> : Review for final	
Finals Week May 12 th -May 16 th	Final Exam. ○ Thursday, May 15th 10:10-12:10	