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SOCI 455.01: Classical Sociological Theory

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SO CI 455

Classical Sociological Theory

Spring 2017

Instructor: Peter Ore, M.A.

Office Hours: TBD

Social Sciences 319

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Preceptor: Whisper Harris

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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.

You should be prepared to present your work to your peers and, in turn, give a respectful critique of their work. 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 critically evaluate beliefs, assumptions, and "common-sense" knowledge of the social world
4. Most importantly, be able to *theorize* about the social world in a coherent and meaningful way

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 weekly reading assignments (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. See the next page for a more detailed breakdown of the grading system.

Task	Proportion of overall grade
Up to twelve Reading Assignments	70%
Final Paper	20%
Final Paper Peer Review	Multiplier for final paper grade
Class Participation	10%

More information on these assignments will be given as the semester progresses.

I reserve the right to fail students who do not show up for class on a regular basis (i.e. those that miss more than a week of class time).

To get a good grade: show up, do the readings, keep up on the assignments, and do extra credit from time to time.

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.

Note that many, if not most, of 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.

Drop deadlines: February 10th is the last day to drop individual classes via Cyberbear.

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

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. Please do not use laptops, smart phones, or tablets in class. Write notes by hand and digitize them later, if necessary.

Late Assignments: Please turn in assignments on time. Extensions will be considered if requested at least a week in advance. Late assignments will not be accepted.

Readings and Due Dates

We will cover the readings in the following sequence. [M] indicates the reading is available on Moodle. Readings without an [M] are available in your textbook.

Weekly assignments are due on Moodle on Fridays at 5PM, unless otherwise indicated. You must be in class to receive instructions on all assignments.

The Sociological Project

1. Review Syllabus
2. Burawoy, "Sociology as a Vocation" [M] (13 pages)

Roots of the Sociological Project

1. Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" [M] (approx. 5 pages)
2. Spencer, "A Society is an Organism"; "Social Structures"; and "Social Functions" [M] (approx. 19 pages)

Durkheimian Sociology I

1. Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method* (8 pages)
2. Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (6 pages) and *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (12 pages)

Durkheimian Sociology II

1. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (14 pages)
2. Merton, "Social Structure and Anomie" [M] (9 pages)

Marxian Sociology I

1. Marx, Introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* [M] (approx. 10 pages) and "Theses on Feuerbach" [M] (3 pages)
2. Marx, *The German Ideology* (8 pages) and *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (9 pages)
3. *Thursday, February 23rd at 6PM*: Michael Burawoy's public lecture (sponsored by UM Sociology), "Whose University? Reflections on the Future of the Public University." Written analysis of lecture worth one assignment in point value.

Marxian Sociology II

1. Marx, selections from *Capital* (11 pages) and "The Buying and Selling of Labour-Power" [M] (approx. 6 pages)
2. Sweezy, "The Triumph of Financial Capital" [M] (5 pages)

German Idealism

1. Dilthey, "The Rise of Hermeneutics" [M] (14 pages)
2. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (11 pages)

Weberian Sociology I

1. Weber, "The Distribution of Power Within the Political Community: Class, Status, Party" (8 pages)
2. Weber, "The Types of Legitimate Domination" and "Bureaucracy" (14 pages)

SPRING BREAK

Weberian Sociology II

1. Weber, "Science as a Vocation" [M] (16 pages)
2. Mills, "The Promise" [M] (6 pages)

American Pragmatism

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)

Pragmatic Sociology I

1. Mead, "Mind" (8 pages) and "Self" (12 pages)
2. Mead, "Society" (8 pages)

Pragmatic Sociology II

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

First-Wave Feminism

1. Gilman, "Women and Economics" Part I (approx. 10 pages)
2. Gilman, "Women and Economics" Part II (approx. 13 pages)

The Contemporary State of Social Theory

1. Polanyi, "The Self-Regulating Market and the Fictitious Commodities: Labor, Land, and Money" [M]
2. Bourdieu, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* [M]

Paper Draft Due Sunday, May 7th at 5PM on Moodle.

Final: REQUIRED anonymous peer review session at 8AM on Monday, May 8th.

Final Paper due Friday, May 12th at 5PM on Moodle.