

Advanced Sociological Theory

Sociology 6783

Fall 2019

Tuesdays 6:00pm-9:00pm

MILN 316

Instructor

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00pm-4:00pm or by appointment

MILN 348

COURSE OBJECTIVES: How does society work, and how does it break down? What is the role of the individual in social life, and what makes you *you*? In this class, we will consider ideas drawn from classical sociological theory that are meant to help us understand the world around us, each other, and indeed ourselves. Some of these ideas align, some of them conflict, and some of them seem to talk past each other. The point of this course is not to come up with the Truth about any one topic, but to consider some of the foundational ways sociologists have come to try to understand society, the questions that have animated that quest, and the appropriate methods to study to employ in pursuit of this knowledge.

In addition to focusing on these ideas in their own right, we will consider them as part of an intellectual history related to the formation of the discipline of the sociology and its canon. While the primary focus on the course will be on a close reading of these ideas, we will also take seriously the idea that an important use of sociological theory is that it provides a common language for sociologists to talk with each other with as well as a form of intellectual socialization for initiates to the discipline. It can—and will, in this class—be debated whether the works we will read together are correct, but it is indisputable that they act as a sort of coin of the realm among sociologists, and familiarizing yourself with them allows you access to disciplinary conversations.

With that in mind, this syllabus has been constructed in order to give you a working familiarity with “classics” of sociological theory, in terms of both the authors we will read and the subjects we will read about. This is by no means a comprehensive course on all sociological theory—such a task is not possible in a semester—but it is a good introduction to the thinkers and debates that have animated sociology as a collective enterprise since the founding of the discipline. Each week we will focus on a different topic, matched with one or more classical theorists, along with more contemporary work that relates to the particular sociological tradition (although sometimes “more contemporary” still means over thirty years old).

COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES: By the end of this course, students will be able to take sociological theory and apply it to their own empirical projects. They will have a working knowledge of many of the key debates that have animated sociology as a discipline since its inception, and be able to explain how different schools of thought in sociology relate to each other, whether in a complementary or conflictual manner. Students will have an understanding of what theory creation consists of, and be able to apply that knowledge to their own work.

ASSIGNMENTS

Class Participation	20%
Discussion Postings	20%
Pop Culture Artifact	20%
Final Paper	40%
TOTAL	100%

Attendance and Class Participation: You are required to attend class, and I expect you to participate in discussions. Since this class only meets once per week, we will be covering a great deal of material in each session, so it is imperative that you be in attendance every week. If you miss a week, you are still responsible for the readings, and you should contact a classmate to get an understanding of what was discussed in class. Just as importantly, I expect you to participate in discussions. This class will be run as a seminar, not a lecture, which means that it depends on your active, thoughtful participation in order to work. Participation means engaging with the text *and* with your classmates, so be prepared to both discuss your own ideas and to listen thoughtfully to others. In order to facilitate productive discussion in class, everyone is expected to read all of the weekly assigned material **BEFORE** the class meets (i.e. you will read all of the readings listed under Thursday of Week Two *before* the class meets on Thursday of Week Two). **Each week there will be about 150-200 pages of reading**, so budget your time accordingly. Grades for class participation will be based on the following guidelines: A = no absences and frequent meaningful contributions, B = up to 2 absences and regular contributions, C = 4 absences and occasional contributions, D = 5+ absences and sporadic contributions, F = 5+ absences and/or no contribution.

Discussion Postings: In Weeks 2-16, you will be responsible for posting a 500 word (+/- 10%) response to the readings on the class website. Please cut and paste your posting (with a word count) into the Moodle discussion board. Do not upload a Word document.

It's okay to include a description of the argument the author is making, but I'm more interested in seeing you critically engage with the reading. Here are some questions you might think about as you write these responses:

- Does the author have an understanding of what a society does, or should do, in some essential way?
- Does the author's logic hold up? If it doesn't, where does it break down?
- Does the author's explanation of social life resonate with your own experience? If it doesn't, is it because you think the writer is wrong, or is there an important difference between social life as you experience it and social life as the author might have experienced it?
- How does the reading relate to other ways of thinking about social life we may have covered in class?

You don't need to cover *all* of these questions in any given response—they're pretty big questions, and you only have 500 words, after all. Think of them as suggestions for how you might approach the writers we'll be reading.

You will post on the readings for the week by 8am TUESDAY.

**** If you miss a posting deadline, you may respond, in 500 words (+/- 10%), to someone else's posting for the day you missed for partial credit. You have 24-hour window after the time the assignment was originally due to complete this make-up assignment. ****

Pop Culture Artifact: Much of what we understand about theory comes not from books or articles, but from the realm of popular culture. On one occasion this semester, you are required to choose a piece of popular culture—a song, a film, a play, an interpretive dance, etc.—and explain how it relates to the readings for a class in a one- to two-page (12-font, 1” margins, double- spaced) paper. In class, you will present this piece of popular culture in video or audio form—try to keep it around 5 minutes—and give a short explanation of why you chose it, and propose one major question it raises about theory and the readings we have done for the class to discuss. **Students should sign up for one class to present in at the beginning of the semester, and presentations will be done at the beginning of each class. Papers will be due at the beginning of the class they are presented in.**

**** No extensions are allowed on pop culture artifacts. Papers not turned in on the due date will be penalized a full letter grade for each class day late, eg an A paper/ artifact due on Tuesday will become a B if presented and turned in Thursday ****

Final Paper: You will be required to write one 12-15-page paper (12-font, 1” margins, double-spaced) for this course, due in exam week. The topic should be an application of sociological theory covered in class to an empirical topic you are interested in. While the theories you apply are up to you, you must incorporate material from at least three weeks of class. If you are on the thesis track, I would encourage you to use this as an opportunity to work on the theory section for your thesis. **Final papers must be submitted to me by e-mail by 5pm on Friday, December 6, 2019.**

**** No extensions are allowed on the final paper. Papers not turned in by e-mail by the 5pm on the due date will be penalized a full letter grade for every day late, eg an A will become a B, a B will become a C, etc. ****

CLASSROOM POLICIES: My goal is for all students to feel included in the course. This means being respectful of other students, even while discussing issues that are complicated and controversial. I am committed to meeting the needs of all the students, and am readily accessible via email and office hours to address any concerns with the class or material that may arise. If you are unable to come to office hours at the scheduled time but would still like to meet, send me an e-mail and we can figure out another time.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students with documented disabilities can seek a variety of accommodations. If you have a disability, you must register with the Office for Disability Services and they will work with you to determine appropriate accommodations. Further information is available at:

http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu/studentpolicies/policymanual/disabilities_policy.cfm

**** Please no recording (video or audio), duplicating, copying, etc. any materials or lectures from this course without previous permission. ****

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: As stated in the UNO Student Handbook available at: <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu/accountability.cfm>

“Academic honesty and intellectual integrity are fundamental to the process of learning and to evaluating academic performance. Maintaining such integrity is the responsibility of all members of the University. All faculty members and teaching assistants should encourage and maintain an atmosphere of academic honesty. They should explain to the students the regulations defining academic honesty and the sanctions for violating these regulations.

“However, students must share the responsibility for creating and maintaining an atmosphere of honesty and integrity. Students should be aware that personally completing assigned work is essential to learning. Students who are aware that others in a course are cheating or otherwise committing academic dishonesty have a responsibility to bring the matter to the attention of the course instructor and/or academic unit head, or the Associate Dean. To promote academic integrity, students will assign the following pledge when required by the instructor.”

By submitting work in your name, I assume you are certifying the work as yours and yours alone. I have zero tolerance for Academic Dishonesty.

Regarding classroom conduct, I support the principle of freedom of expression for both instructors and students. I believe in the rights of instructors to teach and students to learn. Maintenance of these rights requires classroom conditions that do not impede their exercise. Classroom behavior that seriously interferes with either (1) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (2) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program will not be tolerated. An individual engaging in disruptive classroom behavior may be subject to disciplinary action, which occurs through Judicial Review Services.

REQUIRED BOOKS (Prices in red are what they cost if you buy them all new. You can get much cheaper used versions that will be perfectly good for the purposes of this class.)

De Beauvoir, Simone. 1949 (reprint 2011). *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage Books. (\$14.31)

DuBois, W.E.B. 1903 (reprint 1994). *The Souls of Black Folk*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications. (\$5.00)

Durkheim, Émile. 1893 (reprint 2014). *The Division of Labor in Society*, trans. W. D. Halls. New York: Free Press. (\$14.55)

Durkheim, Émile. *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*. New York: Free Press, 1951 [1897]. (\$14.99)

Fanon, Frantz. 1963 (reprint 2005) *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press. (\$12.51)

Goffman, Erving. 1967. *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior*. New York: Pantheon Books. (\$10.40)

Martin, John Levi. 2015. *Thinking Through Theory*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. (\$27.92)

Mead, George Herbert. 1934 (reprint 1967). *Mind, Self, and Society from the Standpoint of a Social*

- Behaviorist*. Edited by Charles W. Morris. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (\$32.53)
- Simmel, Georg. 1971. Ed. Donald Levine. *On Individuality and Social Forms*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (\$27.00)
- Tucker, Robert C. ed. 1978. *The Marx–Engels Reader*, 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. (\$31.47)
- Veblen, Thorstein. 1899 (reprint 1994). *The Theory of the Leisure Class: an Economic Study of Institutions*. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications. (\$6.00)
- Weber, Max. 1905 (reprint 2001). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Routledge. (\$21.50)
- Weber, Max. 1946. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills Editors. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (\$18.00)
- Weber, Max. 1968. Ed. S.N. Eisenstadt. *On Charisma and Institution Building*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (\$43.00)

All readings outside the required books should be accessible via databases available through the University of New Orleans library. Contact me by e-mail if you have any trouble accessing the readings. ***Always check the on-line syllabus. Any changes to the syllabus will be announced with reasonable advance notice and will be reflected on the updated on-line syllabus.***

Week One: Preparation

- Tue 8/13: - Because our class meets on Tuesdays and classes start on Wednesday, there will be no class meeting this week. Please read this syllabus carefully and be prepared with any questions about it during our first class meeting on Tuesday, August 20. Additionally, please send me an e-mail with the following information: your name, your year, where you are from, and what you hope to get out of this class.

Week Two: How To Read Theory

How do you read sociological theory? We will discuss some strategies for approaching the reading we will be doing in this course—which is substantial!—and talk about how it is different from other forms of reading we might have done in the past. We will also go over the syllabus and discuss the logistics of the course.

- Tue 8/20: - Abbott, Andrew. 2011 (2018 revision). “Notes on reading and thinking for students of sociological theory.” Personal memo. 1-15.

Week Three: What Is Theory Even For?

Why do we study theory, or even sociology for that matter? We will discuss some competing views on the particular value of theory, and introduce some of the themes of the course.

- Tue 8/27: - Weber, Max. “Science as a Vocation” (pp. 129-158) in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*.
 - Parsons, Talcott. 1948. “The Position of Sociological Theory.” *American Sociological Review* 13(2): 156-171.
 - Merton, Robert K. 1957. “The Role-Set: Problems in Sociological Theory.” *The British Journal of Sociology* 8(2): 106-120.

- Becker, Howard. 1967. "Whose Side Are We On?" 1967. *Social Problems* 14(3): 239-247.
- Martin, John Levi. 2015. "Chapter 1: On Theory in Sociology" and "Chapter 4: Rationality and Other Lunacies" (pp. 1-44; 131-174) in *Thinking Through Theory*.
- Burawoy, Michael. 2016. "Sociology as a Vocation." *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews* 45(4): 379-393.

Total pages: 158 pages

Weeks Four: Division of Labor

- Tue 9/3:
- Durkheim, Émile. 1934. "Preface to This Edition, by Steven Lukes," "Introduction to the 1984 Edition, by Lewis Coser," "Introduction to This Edition, by Steven Lukes," "Preface to the First Edition (1893)," "Preface to the Second Edition (1902)," "Introduction," Chapters 1-3 in Book I and Chapter 1 in Book III (pp. vii-xlvi, 3-104, 277-292) in *The Division of Labor in Society*.
 - Merton, Robert K. 1934. "Durkheim's Division of Labor in Society." *American Journal of Sociology* 40(3): 319-328.
 - Faunce, William A. 1965. "Automation and the Division of Labor." *Social Problems* 13(2): 149-160.
 - Thornton, Arland. 2001. "The developmental paradigm, reading history sideways, and family change." *Demography* 38(4): 449-465.

Total pages: 196 pages

Week Five: Social Solidarity, Ritual, and Symbolism

- Tue 9/10:
- Chapters 1-2 in Part I; Chapters 2, 4, 5 in Part II; Chapter 1 in Part III (pp. 152-70, 217-76, 57-103, 297-325) in *Suicide*.
 - Suttles, Gerald. 1969. "Anatomy of a Chicago Slum." *Trans-action* 6(4): 16-25.
 - Bryson, Bethany. 1996. "Anything But Heavy Metal: Symbolic Exclusion and Musical Dislikes." *American Sociological Review* 61 (5): 884-99.
 - Mueller, Anna S., Seth Abrutyn, and Melissa Osborne. 2017. "Durkheim's 'Suicide' in the Zombie Apocalypse." *Contexts* 16(2): 44-49.

Total pages: 187 pages

Week Six: Rationality and Bureaucracy

- Tue 9/17:
- Chapters 1-10 (pp. 1-128) in *On Charisma and Institution Building*
 - Chapters 8-9 (pp. 196-252) in *From Max Weber*
 - Meyer, John W. and Brian Rowan. 1977. "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony." *American Journal of Sociology* 83(2): 340-363.

Total pages: 209 pages

Week Seven: Institutions

- Tue 9/24:
- Weber, Max. 1905. Parts 1-2 (pp. 1-125) in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*
 - DiMaggio, Paul J. and Walter W. Powell. 1983. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields." *American Sociological Review* 48(2) 147-160.
 - Luzer, Daniel. 2017. "The Protestant Work Ethic is Real." *Pacific Standard*.
 - Malesic, Jonathan. 2019. "How to Save Americans From the Hell of Work." *The New Republic*.
[\[https://newrepublic.com/article/153205/save-americans-hell-work\]](https://newrepublic.com/article/153205/save-americans-hell-work)

Total pages: 139 pages + two non-academic online articles

Week Eight: Social Types and Networked Interaction

- Tue 10/1:
- Chapters 1-10, 19-20 (pp. 1-140 and 294-339) in *Individuality and Social Forms*
 - Granovetter, Mark S. 1973. "The Strength of Weak Ties." *American Journal of Sociology* 78(6): 1360-1380.

Total pages: 207 pages

Weeks Nine: Labor, Capital, and Class

- Tue 10/8:
- Marx, Karl. "Capital Volume One" (145) (pp. 66-125 and 294-438) from *The Marx Engels Reader*
 - Benjamin, Walter. 1935 (2010 translation). "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility [First Version]." *Grey Room* 39; 11-37.

Total pages: 205 pages

Week Ten: Conflict, Class and History

- Tue 10/15:
- Marx, Karl. "Theses on Feuerbach," "The German Ideology: Part I," "Manifesto of the Communist Party" (pp. 143-202, 469-500, and 594-617) from *The Marx Engels Reader*
 - Engels, Friedrich. "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific" (pp. 683-717) from *The Marx Engels Reader*
 - Turner, Ralph H. 1960. "Sponsored and Contest Mobility and the School System." *American Sociological Review* 25(6): 855-867.
 - Burawoy, Michael. 2000. "Marxism after communism." *Theory and Society* 29(2): 151-174.
 - Desmond, Matthew. 2019. "American Capitalism is Brutal. You Can Trace That to the Plantation." *New York Times Magazine*.

Total pages: 188 pages + one non-academic online article

Week Eleven: Consumption

- Tue 10/22: - Veblen, Thorstein. 1899. Chapters 1-8 (pp. 1-116) from *The Theory of the Leisure Class*.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1983. "The Field of Cultural Production, Or: the Economic World Reversed." *Poetics* 12(4-5): 311-356.
- Greif, Mark. 2010. "What Was The Hipster?" *New York*.
[<http://nymag.com/news/features/69129/>]

Total pages: 162 pages + one non-academic online article

Week Twelve: Intersubjectivity

- Tue 10/29: - Mead, George Herbert. Parts II and III (pp. 42-227) from *Mind, Self, and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*.
- DuBois, W.E.B. "The Forethought" and "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" (pp. 1-8) from *The Souls of Black Folk*.

Total pages: 195 pages

Week Thirteen: Symbolic Interactionism

- Tue 11/5: - Goffman, Erving. "Introduction," "On Facework," and "The Nature of Deference and Demeanor" (pp. 1-96) in *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior*.
- Garfinkel, Harold. 1964. "Studies of the Routine Grounds of Everyday Activities." *Social Problems* 11(3): 225-250.
- Dempsey, Nick. 2008. "Hook-Ups and Train Wrecks: Contextual Parameters and the Coordination of Jazz Interactions." *Symbolic Interaction*. 31: 57-75.
- Martin, John Levi. 2015. "Chapter 6: 'The Gentleman is to Let the Lady Enter the Door First': or How the Environment Tells Us What to Do" in *Thinking Through Theory*.

Total pages: 194 pages

Week Fourteen: Feminism and Postcolonialism

- Tue 11/12: - de Beauvoir, Simone. "Introduction" (pp. 3-20) from *The Second Sex*
- Fanon, Frantz. "On Violence" (pp. 1-162) from *The Wretched of the Earth*.
- West, Candace and Don Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender and Society* 1(2): 125-151.

Total pages: 207 pages

Week Fifteen: Intersectionality

- Tue 11/19
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 1991. "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought." *Social Problems* 33(6): S14-S32.
 - Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams. 1991. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43 (6): 1241-99.
 - Cohen, Cathy J. 1997. "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" *GLQ* 3: 437-465.
 - Acker, Joan. 2006. "Inequality regimes: Gender, class, and race in organizations." *Gender & Society* 20(4): 441-464.
 - Hamilton, Laura and Elizabeth A. Armstrong. 2009. "Gendered Sexuality in Young Adulthood: Double Binds and Flawed Optiojns." *Gender & Society* 23(5): 589-616.
 - McQueeney, Krista. 2009. "'We are God's Children, Y'all': Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Lesbian- and Gay-Affirming Congregations." *Social Problems* 56(1): 151-173.
 - Choo, Hae Yeon and Myra Marx Ferree. 2010 "Practicing Intersectionality in Sociological Research: A Critical Analysis of Inclusions, Interactions, and Institutions in the Study of Inequalities." *Sociological Theory* 28(2): 129-149.
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- Total pages:** 206 pages

Week Sixteen: Social Construction of Reality and Academic Construction of Theory

- Tue 11/26:
- Becker, Howard. 1953. "Becoming a Marihuana User." *American Journal of Sociology* 59(3): 235-242
 - Lamont, Michèle. 1987. "How to Become a Dominant French Philosopher: The Case of Jacques Derrida." *American Journal of Sociology* 93(3): 584-622.
 - Gamson, William A., David Croteau, William Hoynes, and Theodore Sasson. 1992. "Media Images and the Social Construction of Reality." *Annual Review of Sociology* 18: 373-393.
 - Martin, John Levi. 2015. "Chapter 3: The Return of Realism" and "Conclusion" (pp. 77-131; 245-255) in *Thinking Through Theory*.
- Total pages:** 134 pages

*** FINAL PAPER DUE BY E-MAIL BY 5 PM ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2019 ***