

**SOC501 Classical Sociological Theory**  
**Fall Semester 2006**  
**Faner 3410 Tuesday 5:00-7:30pm**

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**Course Objectives:** For very interesting reasons, best understood through the sociology of science, classical theory continues to be viewed as the common entryway into professional sociology. Some classic texts aim to establish the boundaries of sociology as a new discipline; others provide paradigmatic examples of sociological inquiry from which longstanding research traditions received their impetus. These texts, as well as the matrix of assumptions in the philosophy of social science out of which they grew or to which they contribute, serve as our common knowledge, and can offer a reasonable, if by now quite dated, introduction to the discipline.

Understanding and evaluating the classics requires an ability to read closely and think critically. These abilities are acquired through practice and are aided by a broad liberal education. I will offer models of close reading and critical thinking, and your written work for the course will consist of a paper geared to elicit them. John Wilson, an analytical philosopher, offers some coaching in *Thinking with Concepts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), which you might consider ordering (it's not in our library). Let me also encourage you to acquire Joseph Williams, *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), which is a very good guide to the sort of clear and effective expository writing that permits you to communicate the results of your close reading and critical analysis.

**Assigned Texts:** Constructing the canon of classical theorists is an ongoing process, as is constructing the meaning of *theory*. While I have very strong opinions about both, I welcome discussion. Anyway, what we're reading is:

Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge)  
Robert Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (Norton)  
H. Gerth & C.W. Mills, eds., *From Max Weber* (Oxford)  
Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (various possible editions)  
Emile Durkheim, *Suicide* (Free Press)  
Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (various possible editions)  
Georg Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (Levine, ed., Chicago)  
G. W. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society* (Chicago)

Some additional material will be on WebCT, on web sites, and perhaps on electronic and regular reserve at Morris Library.

**Assignments and grading:** your grade will be based on your performance on the paper for the course. You will turn in a preliminary version of the paper midway through the course, and then have a chance to revise, amplify, and resubmit it.

## Course schedule:

### Aug 22<sup>th</sup> Introduction.

Schneider, "Theories and Theorizing," Chapter 1 of *The Theory Primer* (WebCT)

Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, Preface and Introduction

Resource: E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: 1789-1848*. (You may read this for historical background.)

For paper assignment, read Howard S. Becker, "The Power of Inertia," *Qualitative Sociology* 1995 (18:3) 301-309 and Mark Schneider, "Does Culture Have Inertia?" *Culture* 15:3 1, 3-5. (Both on WebCT)

### Aug 29<sup>st</sup> From Hegel to Marx

"Hegelianism" (*The Catholic Encyclopedia* online)  
selection on *The Phenomenology of Mind* from the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*  
selections from Hegel's *The Philosophy of History and Reason in History*. (WebCT)

Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, pp. 1-34 (Marx's Early Writings; Historical Materialism)

Robert Tucker, Introduction to *The Marx-Engels Reader*

Marx, selection from *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (pp. 66-81);  
Marx on the History of His Opinions (pp. 3-6); selection from *The German Ideology* (pp. 146-163, 172-200); selection from *Capital Vol I* (pp. 388-403); Letters on Historical Materialism (pp. 760-768)

### Sept 5<sup>th</sup> Social Classes

Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, pp. 35-46 (The Relations of Production and Class Structure)

Marx, *Wage Labor and Capital* (pp. 203-217); selections from *Capital Vol I* (pp. 302-329, 344-361, 376-384), Crisis Theory (pp. 443-465).

Compare: Thorstein Veblen, "Introduction" and "Conspicuous Consumption" from *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, at  
<http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/veblen/leisure/index.html>

Resources: Frank Parkin, *Marxism and Class Theory: a Bourgeois Critique* (Columbia: Columbia University Press 1979); Eric Olin Wright, *Class Counts* (Cambridge University Press 1997); Kim A. Weeden and David Grusky, "The Case for a New Class Map," *AJS* 111 (July 2005) 141-211

Sept 12<sup>th</sup>      **Conflict and Change**

Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, pp. 46-64 (The Theory of Capitalist Development)

Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (pp. 469-500); *Critique of the Gotha Program* (pp. 525-541); selection from *Capital* Vol III (pp. 439-442)

Sept 19<sup>th</sup>      **Speculative Developmental Patterns: Comte, Spencer, Toennies.**

Lewis Coser *Masters of Sociological Thought*, Comte and Spencer material  
(<http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~Iridener/DSS/Comte/COMTEPER.HTML>)  
(<http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~Iridener/DSS/Spencer/SPENWRK.HTML>)

Toennies, selections from *Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft* in Parsons, *Theories of Society*, pp. 191-201 (Electronic Reserves)

Sept 26<sup>th</sup>      **Weber's Protestant Ethic Thesis**

Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, pp. 119-132 (Max Weber: Protestantism and Capitalism)

R. Collins, "Weber's Last Theory of Capitalism" in *Weberian Sociological Theory*, pp. 19-44

Compare: Richard F. Hamilton, "Max Weber and the Protestant Ethic" from *The Social Misconstruction of Reality* (Yale University Press, 1996); Philip S. Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution: Calvinism and the Rise of the State in Early Modern Europe*. (Chicago, 2003)

Oct 3<sup>th</sup>      **Methodological Issues and the Essays**

Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, pp. 133-144, 190-195 (Weber's Methodological Essays, Weber's Relation to Marxism and Marx)

Gerth & Mills, "Introduction," *From Max Weber*

Weber, "Science as a Vocation," and "Politics as a Vocation" in *From Max Weber*

Compare: Mark Schneider, "Explanation and Interpretation" from *Culture and Enchantment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993)

**Bureaucracy**

Weber, "Bureaucracy" in *From Max Weber*, pp. 196-253

Compare: Blau and Meyer, *Bureaucracy in Modern Society*; Charles Perrow, *Normal Accidents*; DiMaggio and Powell, "The iron cage revisited: institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields," *American Sociological Review*, 48 (1983), 147-60.

Oct 10<sup>th</sup>      **Analytic Typologies**

Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, pp. 145-168 (Fundamental Concepts of Sociology)

Weber, "The Types of Legitimate Domination" in *Economy and Society*, Vol 1, pp. 212-216

Weber, "The Sociology of Charismatic Authority" in *From Max Weber*, pp. 245-252, and "The Meaning of Discipline" pp. 253-264, selection from "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," pp. 295-301.

**Stratification**

Weber, "Class, Status and Party" in *From Max Weber*, pp. 180-195

Oct 17<sup>th</sup>      **Rationalization**

Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, pp. 169-184 (Rationalization, the "World Religions," and Capitalism)

Weber, selection from "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," in *From Max Weber*, pp. 267-295.

S. Kallberg, "Max Weber's types of rationality: cornerstones for the analysis of rationalization processes in history." *American Journal of Sociology* 85:1145-79.

Oct 24<sup>th</sup>      **Durkheim's Division of Labor**

Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, pp. 65-82 (Durkheim's Early Works)

Selection from Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, (Translated by George Simpson). by New York: The Free Press, 1947.

<http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~Iridener/DSS/Durkheim/DIVLABOR.HTML>

**Suicide**

Durkheim, *Suicide*, pp. 57-294

Oct 31st      **Social Facts; Normalcy and Pathology; The Rubric of Functionalism**

Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, pp. 82-94 (Durkheim's Conception of Sociological Method)

Durkheim, selection from *The Rules of the Sociological Method*, (Ed. by Steven Lukes; trans. by W.D. Halls). New York: Free Press, 1982, pp. 50-59

<http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~Iridener/DSS/Durkheim/SOCFACT.HTML>

Durkheim, "The social element of suicide," in *Suicide*, pp. 297-325

Durkheim, "The Normal and the Pathological" in *Rules of the Sociological Method*.

Nov 7<sup>th</sup>      **The Structural Explanation of Religion**

Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, pp.95-118 (Individualism, Socialism, and the "Occupational Groups"; Religion and Moral Discipline)

Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Book I, Book II (Chapters VI-IX), Conclusion

Nov 14<sup>th</sup>      **Simmel and Formal Sociology**

Donald Levine, "Introduction" to Simmel *On Individuality and Social Forms*

Simmel, selections from *On Individuality and Social Forms* (3. The Problem of Sociology; 6. Conflict; 7. Domination; 9. Sociability; 10. The Stranger; 18. Group Expansion and Individuality [pp. 251-261]; 19. Fashion I-IV [pp. 294-308]; 20. The Metropolis and the Mental Life; 24. The Conflict in Modern Culture.)

Nov 28<sup>th</sup>      **Mead and Symbolic Interaction**

Lewis Coser *Masters of Sociological Thought*, Mead material

<http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~Iridener/DSS/Mead/MEADPER.HTML>

Charles Morris, "Introduction" to *Mind, Self and Society*

G. H. Mead, selections from *Mind, Self and Society* (Chs. 1-3; 8-9; 18-22; 25-28; 34-39)

Dec 5<sup>th</sup>

Conclusion

**WebCT:** This course will make use of the campus WebCT facility. You need to establish an ID and password for the WebCT facility and then log on to SOC501. You can do this by going to the Morris Library Home Page (<http://www.lib.siu.edu/>), and clicking on “Online Courses” which is among the links in the box on the left side of the page. Remember that when you sign up for your general WebCT account, you need to remember the ID and password you select for yourself. If you don’t remember it, you can’t get back into the facility and I can’t help you with the problem (you’ll have to go to IT over in the Annex). But you only have to log in for SOC501 once. Thenceforward, you’ll have automatic access through your WebCT account.

**Paper Assignment:** Your assignment for SOC501 is to write a 20 page paper interrogating a single concept as used by one classical theorist. By “interrogating a...concept,” I mean that you first read closely a substantial number of passages in which the concept is used so as to determine the meaning(s) it has for the theorist and then write about this at length; and then evaluate the utility of the concept, at least partly in light of a specific understanding of “theory” that you explicate at length and argue for. A model for this sort of enterprise can be found in my short essay on Howard Becker’s concept of “cultural inertia” (see readings for first class). A more extended example can be found in the interrogation of the concept of social class by Parkin, Wright, and Weeden & Grusky (see Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> readings). I would like a draft of this paper on Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>. Send me a copy in Word via email. I will get the paper back to you with comments before Thanksgiving break. The final version is due Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>. While you are free to use secondary sources, I suggest that you first make an effort to perform the interrogation on your own, drawing examples from your existing stock of sociological knowledge. After you’ve exhausted your own resources, seek help in the literature on the concept you’ve chosen.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of the words or thoughts of another so as to make them appear one’s own. The penalty for plagiarism is failure of the course.