

Soc 501

Classical Sociological Theory

Fall 2001

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Practical information:

We will be meeting on Tuesdays between 2:30 and 5:30 in Wallace 190. If you wish to meet with me outside seminar hours, please contact me at mlamont@princeton.edu.

Objectives:

This seminar offers an introduction to classical sociological theory. We will explore several topics, namely: 1) what are the major themes of the foundational texts of sociology; 2) how these texts were shaped by the social context in which they were produced; 3) how do these texts connect with broader development in social and economic thoughts in the nineteenth and early twentieth century; 4) how do the key authors compare with one another; and 5) how do they influence sociological theorizing today. The more general objective is to learn about and reflect on the role of theory in sociological research. This seminar is required of first-year graduate students in sociology. It is also open to graduate students in the humanities and the social sciences, and to senior-year sociology major.

Structure:

We will begin with two introductory sessions that will discuss the usefulness of classical sociological theory today, outline some of the key ideas to be explored throughout the semester, compare various approaches to classical theory, and learn about the prehistory of sociology and disciplinary institutionalization. The remaining sessions will be organized as follows: Each week will be dedicated to a particular author, or, in the case of Marx, Durkheim, and Weber, to an important theme in their work (with at least two sessions consecrated to each of these sociologists). These sessions will begin with an hour-long presentation by one of our faculty member on an author's key ideas and how they inform ongoing sociological research (including the faculty member's own). During the remaining two hours, seminar participants will present and discuss readings and I will situate them within their broader theoretical and social context. The concluding session will give us the opportunity to systematically compare authors along key analytical dimensions.

Course requirements:

- 1) Three memos on weekly readings (to be selected at the end of the first session). These memos, of a maximum length of five pages (double-space), should be emailed to all seminar participants at least 24 hours prior to our meetings. They should raise substantive and critical issues to be discussed in class (10% of final grade each).
- 2) Two class presentations: you will share the responsibility with one other graduate student for introducing key concepts and leading one weekly discussion (20% of final grade each).
- 3) Final exam in class (open books), to be scheduled in January. Students who have a strong background in classical theory can opt to write a term paper *in lieu* of taking the exam, with my prior approval (30% of final grade).
- 4) Participation: This seminar involves very heavy reading. Plan your weekly schedule accordingly. You are expected to be an active seminar participant and to come to meetings fully prepared according to graduate school standards.

Readings:

The following books are available at the U-Store (36 University Place, 3rd floor). I strongly recommend that you buy them: they should be part of every sociologist's personal library. The books marked with an asterisk are not required. All books are also available at the reserve of Firestone Library:

Emile Durkheim, 2001. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Emile Durkheim, 1984. *The Division of Labor in Society*, New York: Free Press.

Emile Durkheim, 1951. *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*. New York: Free Press.

*Johan Heilbron, 1995. *The Rise of Social Theory*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Donald N. Levine, ed. 1971. *George Simmel. On Individuality and Social Forms*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Alexis de Tocqueville, 1988. *Democracy in America*. New York: Harper Collins.

*Alexis de Tocqueville, 1998. *The Old Regime and the Revolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Robert C. Tucker, 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, New York: W. W. Norton.

Max Weber, 1978. *Economy and Society*, Vol. 1 and 2. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Max Weber, 2001. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing Co.

Two copies of a few additional readings will be available for copying purposes in a box marked “Classical Sociological Theory” located in the mailroom of the Department of Sociology, Wallace Hall. You are asked to promptly return the readings in the box after having completed your copying, so that they remain available to other seminar participants.

Week 1 (September. 18): Introduction: Classical Sociological Theory for What?; Key Concepts; Approaches to the Topic.

Charles Camic and Neil Gross. 1998. “Contemporary Developments in Sociological Theory: Current Projects and Conditions of Possibility.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24: 453-76.

Charles Camic and Neil Gross. 2001. “The New Sociology of Ideas.” *The Blackwell Companion to Sociology*, ed. Judith Blau. New York: Blackwell. Pp. X-X.

Robert W. Connell, 1997. “Why is Classical Theory Classical?” *American Journal of Sociology* 102 (6): 1511-57.

Randall Collins, 1997. “A Sociological Guilt Trip: Comments on Connell.” *American Journal of Sociology*. 102 (6): 1558-1564.

Week 2 (September 25): The Prehistory of Sociology; The Logic of Disciplinary Institutionalization

Johan Heilbron, 1995. *The Rise of Social Theory*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 1-16, 65-115, 119-148, 164-274.

Wolf Lepenies, 1988. *Between Literature and Science: The Rise of Sociology*. New York: Cambridge University Press and Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme. Pp. 1-19, 93-112, 203-258

Recommended:

Thomas F. Gieryn, 1995. Boundaries of science. In *Handbook of Science and Technology Studies*, edited by S Jasanoff, G Markle, J Petersen, T. Pinch. Thousand Oaks: Sage. Pp. 393-443.

Week 3 (October 2): Tocqueville, the Macro-Sociologist and Student of Civil Society

Guest: Robert Wuthnow.

Please spend some time looking at the website

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/home.html>

Alexis de Tocqueville, 1991. *Democracy in America*, New York: New American Library (also posted on website).

Volume 1, Part 1: author's introduction; chs. 2-4, 5 (pp. 61-63, 68-70, 87-98)

Volume 1, Part 2: Chs. 4, 5 (pp. 197-99, 224-226), 6-9/.

Volume 2: author's preface, Part 2, chs. 1-5, 7-8, 13, 20

Volume 2, Part 3, chs. 1-2, 5, 7-13, 17-18

Volume 2, Part 4: All

Alexis de Tocqueville, 1998. *The Old Regime and the Revolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 111-194 (Book Two).

Recommended reading:

Raymond Aron, 1965. *Main Currents in Sociological Thoughts*, Vol. 1 New York: Doubleday. Pp. 237-302.

Gianfranco Poggi. 1972. *Images of Society, Essays on the Sociological Theory of Tocqueville, Marx, and Durkheim*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Pp. 3-84.

François Furet and Françoise Melonio.a. 1998. "Introduction." In *The Old Regime* . . . pp. 1-82.

Week 4 (October 8): Marx the Humanist and the Theorist of Revolution

Guest: Marvin Bressler

Robert C. Tucker, 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, New York: W. W. Norton, Preface to "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy", pp. 3-6, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, pp. 66-105; Theses on Feuerbach, pp. 143-147

The German Ideology, pp. 146—200

The Communist Manifesto, pp. 469-500

The Class Struggle in France, pp. 586-93

Recommended:

Leszek Kolakowski, 1978. *Main Currents of Marxism*, vol. 1. Oxford: Clarendon.

Shlomo Avineri, 1968. *Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Week 5 (October 15): Marx the Political Economist

Guest: Bruce Western

Robert C. Tucker, 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, New York: W. W. Norton, Wage Labor and Capital, pp. 203-217
The *Grundrisse*, pp. 222-294
Capital, Volume 1, pp. 302-308; 319-61; 392-403; 419-38.

Recommended: see week 4

Week 6 (October 22): Durkheim the Evolutionist and Student of Modernity

Guest: Frank Dobbin

Emile Durkheim, 1984. *The Division of Labor in Society*, New York: Free Press. Preface to First Edition; Introduction. Book 1: Chs. 1-2, 3 (pp. 68-72; bottom of p. 81-87); 5 (pp. 101-106, 118-23); 7; Book 2: ch.1 (pp. 179-95); 2; 5 (pp. 283-87); Book 3: chs. 1-2; Conclusion; Preface to Second Edition.

Emile Durkheim, 1951. *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*. New York: Free Press. Preface; Introduction; Book 2: Chs. 1-2; 3 (pp. 208-16); 4-5; Book 3: chs. 1; 2 (pp. 326-38); 3 (pp. 386-92).

Recommended:

Steven Lukes. 1973. *Emile Durkheim. His Life and Work. A Historical and Critical Study*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Gianfranco Poggi, 2000. *Durkheim*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Week of October 29: Break

Week 7 (November 6): Durkheim the Cosmologist and the Student of Norms

Lecturer: Michèle Lamont

Emile Durkheim, 2001. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: Oxford University Press. Introduction; Book 1, chs. 1, 4; Book 2, chs. 1, 3 (pp. 165-73); chs. 6-7, Book 3, ch. 3. Conclusion.

(reread TBA passages from *Suicide* discussed during week 6)

Recommended: see week 6

Week 8 (November 13): Weber, the Student of Religion and Capitalism

Guest: Alejandro Portes

Max Weber, 2001. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing Co. (including introduction by Stephen Kalberg).

Max Weber, “The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism” in *The Protestant Ethic*, pp. 127-148.

Recommended:

Wolfgang Mommsen, 1984. *Marx Weber and German Politics, 1890-1920*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Reinhard Bendix, 1962. *Max Weber, an Intellectual Biography*. New York: Doubleday.

Week 9 (November 20): Weber, the Student of Power and Inequality

Guest: Miguel Centeno

Max Weber, 1978. *Economy and Society*, Vol. 1 and 2. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

“Basic Sociological Terms” pp. 24- 56

“The Types of Legitimate Domination” pp. 212-31; 237-54; 262-71.

“Status Group and Class” pp. 302-307

“The Economic Relationship of Organized Groups” Pp.339-348

“Ethnic groups” Pp. 385-398

“Class, Status, Party” etc. pp. 926-938

Week 10 (November 27): Weber, the Student of Bureaucracy and Political Power

Guest: Paul DiMaggio

Max Weber, 1978. *Economy and Society*, Vol. 1 and 2. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

“Domination and Legitimacy” pp. 941-954

“Bureaucracy” pp. 956-1003

Max Weber. 1946, “Politics as a Vocation” in *From Max Weber*, ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 77-128.

Recommended:

Wolfgang Mommsen, 1974. *The Age of Bureaucracy. Perspectives on the Political Sociology of Max Weber*. New York: Blackwell.

Week 11 (December 4): Simmel, the Student of Social Relations

Guest: Viviana Zelizer

Kurt H. Wolff, ed. 1950. *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. New York: Free Press, pp. 3-16 (“The Field of Sociology”).

Donald N. Levine, ed. 1971. *George Simmel. On Individuality and Social Forms*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. IX-LXV; 3-25; 41-149; 251-94.

Recommended:

Lewis A. Coser, 1977. *Masters of Sociological Thought. Ideas in Historical and Social Context*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. Pp. 177-216.

Week 12 (December 10): Synthesis and Conclusion