

University of Pittsburgh
Department of Sociology
SOC.0140
Classical Sociological Theory
Fall term, 2022

Meets:

TuTh 2:30pm - 3:45pm

Room:

2800 Wesley W Posvar Hall

Instructor: Sergio Cabrales

Office Hours: Tuesday 03:45 pm - 04:45 pm (At the Sociology Department)

E-mail: smc224@pitt.edu

Course Rationale and Description

This course will give the students an interactive exposure and applied discussion on the foundations of modern sociological theory through a study of significant 18th, 19th, and early 20th-century social theorists, mainly Marx, Durkheim, and Weber. We will study some fundamental concepts from their perspective to understand past and present societal issues.

During the semester, students will develop an inductive approach that will allow them to become familiar with the theory directly read in the classic works of the authors. In addition, the instructor will facilitate cases, discussions, and activities in which students will find functional applications of the theoretical background in academic, civic, or professional life.

Since this is an Intensive Writing Course (WRIT), students should carefully complete writing assignments (Weekly summary post and a case study final paper). However, other learning activities will be required, such as quizzes, oral presentations, and in-class discussions.

Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- a. Explain the approaches, concerns, and main definitions of the classical sociological theory of the 18th, 19th, and early 20th-century.
- b. Identify how key concepts and ideas of classical social theorists transform in response of their times, social issues, and author's concerns.
- c. c. Reflect upon the academic, civic, and professional applications of these classical social theories.

Required Texts

Craig Calhoun et al., eds., *Classical Sociological Theory* (Wiley-Blackwell; 3rd edition, 2012).

(Hard copies preferable. Other editions from the same editors are also fine).

All other required readings (papers) will be posted to Canvas.

Classroom Policies

Teaching statement and policies on administrative tasks.

In my sociology classes, I present real situations (no matter how very theoretical the discussion is) with pragmatic elements applicable to social, political, and personal transformation. I try to make the students very competent at mastering sociological concepts and theories and

developing their critical thinking, while familiarizing them with various authors and schools of thinking. I do this through assignments, such as essays, that require their analysis and posturing. In our classes, it is common to ask: "What do you think of this author or case?"; not necessarily "What does this author say?". In this way, students will join current academic discussions in the sociological field, bringing their valuable contextualized contributions.

Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity.

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity. This class will not tolerate plagiarism and cheating. Please make sure that you properly cite authors, papers, and materials that are not your own. Be careful with this policy, especially in writing assignments and class discussions.

E-mail Policy

Each student is issued a University e-mail address upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read emails sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and respond to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications.

I will respond your email consultation, usually, within 24 hours in normal business days (Monday-Friday). If you do not receive a response from me within 24 hours, it likely means that I did not receive your email; **please resend and verify the accounts.**

Copyright Notice

These materials may be protected by copyright. United States copyright law, 17 USC section 101, et seq., in addition to university policy and procedures, prohibit unauthorized duplication or retransmission of course materials. See Library of Congress Copyright Office and the University Copyright Policy.

Statement on diversity and classroom culture guidelines

As a sociologist, analyzing the heterogeneity of social actors is essential. Sociology that does not recognize the diversity of perspectives, opinions, points of view, methods, and interpretations runs the risk of being limited in its work. For this reason, scientific rigor invites us to have an openness to listen, accept, and even discuss, all within the framework of respect for different opinions and ways of being. This provision enriches our disciplinary work and contributes greatly to the development of science and a better society. In addition, as an international teacher-student, I am aware of the enormous challenges of being exposed to multiple cultures and identities. I want my students to be aware of the enormous benefits of being exposed to diversity among their classmates and to protect that environment conducive to expressing it.

Names and Pronouns

If you go by a different name or gender pronoun than the one under which you are officially enrolled, please feel free to share it in our Zoom discussions. Students are expected to refer to each other by preferred names and pronouns during class and discussions.

Accessibility and Accommodations

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting accommodations, especially regarding Zoom, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890/412-624-3346 (Fax), as early as possible in the term.

Disability Resources and Services will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. For more information, visit <http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drsabout>.

Basic Needs

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean's office and/or Pitt Pantry (<http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/pittserves/the-pitt-pantry/>) for support.

These guidelines fulfill the best intentions of the University of Pittsburgh's Non-Discrimination Policy: <https://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/07/07-01-03.html>. For additional information please visit the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program: <http://www.gswstudies.pitt.edu/>

Course Requirements and Grades

The following tasks and assignments should be completed at the due.

Individual and weekly discussion post on Canvas – 48 points, 4 points each week—

Every week, starting week 2, students should post two to three paragraphs (around 400 words in total) on Canvas discussion board to react the week's readings and lectures.

The posts should answer three questions:

- (a) What key ideas we covered this week? (Try to use your own words instead of pasting excerpts from the readings).
- (b) What did you find most helpful or impressive about the readings and lecture?
- (c) What did you find most unclear about it?

These paragraphs will be due each Friday, as noted in the schedule, by 11:59 pm. We will use these reactions as an initial discussion in the following session.

Short quizzes (2) – 20 points total, 10 points each—

You will answer two quizzes in class during the course: one in Week 6, and another one in Week 12. In these quizzes we will focus on the authors and materials in the course by that moment (see the topics in the next section). I will provide you with more details the week before each quiz is due.

Final Case Study – 32 points

We will work individually on this task toward the end of the semester. You will select a case study (a contemporary social issue, situation, etc). For the first part of the paper, you will comprehensively describe the situation by using academic articles, news reports, etc.

Then, you will explore how that situation may be **explained** in terms of one or more theoretical approaches covered in class. You are expected to use materials from the syllabus, but you may use other sources. This paper should be 5-6 pages long (or between 1200-1500 words). This assignment will graded by rubric in two formats:

- A. Written piece, as described here (20 points)
- B. Oral Presentation (12 points). In the last week of the semester, we will present and discuss the final papers in class.

I will provide you with more details later in the course.

Grades, dates, and scale

Late Work will be lowered a half grade if turned in a day late; a full grade if turned in two to three days late. Work will not be accepted after three days, except in extenuating circumstances that you have discussed it with me in advance.

98-100% = A +

93-97% = A

90-92 = A-

88-89 = B+

83-87 = B

80-82 = B-

78-79 = C+

73-77 = C

70-72 = C-

68-69 = D

Below 68 = F

Schedule

Note: Most readings below refer to Calhoun et al, except otherwise noted. Additional required readings are available on Canvas. The schedule follows this structure:

Unit X

Week X.

Date: Session's topic

Assigned readings.

Graded Assignment.

Unit I. Introduction and Precursors.

Week 1.

Tuesday, August 30: Introduction: Course description, requirements. A Historical Sketch of Sociological Theory.

Thursday, September 1: What is Classical Social Theory?

General Introduction.

Connell, Raewyn W. (1997). Why Is Classical Theory Classical. *American Journal of Sociology*, 102(6), 1511-1557.

Week 2.

Tuesday, September 6: Precursors I.

Introduction to Part I.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762), "Of the Social Contract"

Thursday September 8: Precursors II.

Immanuel Kant (1784), "What is Enlightenment?"

Adam Smith (1776), "The Wealth of Nations"

Weekly post due on Friday, September 09.

Week 3.

Tuesday, September 13: Precursors III

Alexis de Tocqueville (1835), "Democracy in America"

Thursday, September 15: Sociological Imagination

Berger. Sociology as an Individual Pastime (from Invitation to Sociology).

C.W. Mills "Sociological Imagination".

Weekly post due on Friday, September 16.

Unit 2. The Sociological Theory of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

Week 4.

Tuesday, September 20: Alienation and Historical Materialism.
Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1845), "The German Ideology"
Marx (1844), "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844".

Thursday, September 22: History and Class Struggle I
Marx and Engels (1848), "Manifesto of the Communist Party"
Weekly post due on Friday, September 23.

Week 5.

Tuesday, September 27: History and Class Struggle II
Marx (1852), "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte"

Thursday, September 29: Capitalism and the Labor process I
Marx (1847), "Wage Labor and Capital"
Weekly post due on Friday, September 30.

Week 6.

Tuesday, October 4: Capitalism and the Labor process II
Marx (1867), "Classes"

Thursday, October 6: Capitalism and the Labor process III
Sassen, S. (2013). Expelled: Humans in capitalism's deepening crisis. Journal of World-Systems Research, 19(2), 198-201.
Midterm Quiz: 10 points
Weekly post due on Friday, October 7.

Unit 3. The Sociological Theory of Emile Durkheim

Week 7.

Tuesday, October 11: Society and Social facts
Introduction to Part III.
Durkheim (1895), "The rules of Sociological Method"

Thursday, October 13: Solidarity and modern life.
Durkheim (1893), "The Division of Labor in Society"
Weekly post due on Friday, October 14.

Week 8.

Tuesday, October 18: Origins of Collective Conscience
Durkheim (1912), "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life"

Thursday, October 20: Egoism and Anomie.
Durkheim (1897), "Suicide"

Weekly post due on Friday, October 21.

Week 9.

Tuesday, October 25: Durkheim's approach today

Birrell, Susan. (1981). Sport as Ritual: Interpretations from Durkheim to Goffman. *Social Forces*, 60(2), 354.

Horne, McIlwaine and Taylor_Civility and Order: Adult Social Control of Children in Public Places.

Thursday, October 27: Durkheim's approach today

Gans, H. J. (1994). Positive functions of the undeserving poor: Uses of the underclass in America. *Politics & Society*, 22(3), 269-283.

Barnes, L. (2019). Holiday Gifting at a Children's Hospital: Sacred Ritual, Sacred Space. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 48(5), 591-618.

Weekly post due on Friday, October 28.

Unit 4. The Sociological Theory of Max Weber

Week 10.

Tuesday, November 1: Method of Social Science

Introduction to Part IV

Max Weber (1904), "'Objectivity' in Social Science"

Thursday, November 3: Sociological terms

Weber (1914), "Basic Sociological Terms"

Weekly post due on Friday, November 4.

Week 11

Tuesday, November 8: Religion and Rationality

Weber (1904-05), "The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism".

Thursday, November 10: Bureaucracy and Politics

Weber (1914), "The Distribution of Power within the Political Community: Class, Status, Party"

Weber (1914), "Types of Legitimate Domination"

Weekly post due on Friday, November 11.

Week 12.

Tuesday, November 15: Bureaucracy and Politics

Weber (1922), "Bureaucracy"

Thursday, November 17: Weber's approach today

Pick two of the following three readings:

Thompson, W. E. (1983). Hanging tongues: A sociological encounter with the assembly line. *Qualitative Sociology*, 6(3), 215-237.

Ritzer, G. (1996). The McDonaldization thesis: Is expansion inevitable? *International sociology*, 11(3), 291-308.

Penta, Samantha., Wachtendorf, Tricia., & Nelan, Mary M. (2020). Disaster Relief as Social Action: A Weberian Look at Postdisaster Donation Behavior. *Sociological Forum*, 35(1), 145-166.

In Class- Quiz: 10 points

Weekly post due on Friday, November 18.

Week 13.

Thanksgiving break.

Tuesday, November 22

Thursday, November 24

Unit 5. Self and Society in Classical Social Theory

Week 14.

Tuesday, November 29: Self and society I

Introduction to part V

George Herbert Mead (1934), "The Self"

Georg Simmel (1908), "The Stranger"

Thursday, December 1: Self and Society II

W. E. B. Du Bois (1903), "The Souls of Black Folk"

Weekly post due on Friday, December 02.

Week 15. Final paper and presentations: Case Studies.

Tuesday, December 6: Final paper presentation I

Thursday, December 8: Final paper presentation II.

Week 16.

Finals week: Final Paper.

Final paper due on December 12