

Social Theory

SOC 3140 - 001

Fall 2011

T & Th: 10:45 AM -12:05 PM

BEH S 102

Professor: Dr. Julie Stewart

Office: BEH S 411

Office Hours: Thursday 12:30pm – 2:30pm or by appointment

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Please note that this is a preliminary syllabus. Due to a university transition in educational software, certain components of the syllabus may change. A final syllabus will be available the first day of seminar.

Course Description

The industrial revolution, the democratic revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries, and the development of modernity fascinated the European theorists who founded sociology. Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim were all concerned with understanding social change, the rise of modernity, the emergence of capitalism, and the social impact – both positive and negative – of these great transformations.

The scholarship of the founders of sociology generated many crucial questions which continue to resonate today. These questions include, but are not limited to: What generates social solidarity? How is culture developed, shared and transformed? Is our social reality a given, or is it constructed? Are ideas or material conditions the fundamental agents in historical change? Can individuals shape their social world or are they inherently constrained by their socio-economic status?

The course begins with a brief overview of social theory, exploring the distinct contributions of sociological analysis, as compared to other disciplines. It devotes considerable attention to the scholarship of sociology's founding fathers, studying their work from multiple perspectives: historical, methodological, topical and analytical. The second half of the class is more contemporary. While retaining many of the analytical perspectives introduced in the half of the class, it explores current concerns related to the emergence of more recent sensibilities such as contemporary feminism and post-modernism and new concerns generated by globalization, such as immigration and global warming.

Much of the reading for this course draws from the original writings of sociological theorists. These are considered classics for a reason. The concerns, concepts and approaches within these works have withstood the test of time and remain relevant. Nevertheless, whenever possible, I have supplemented these

works with more recent – and more accessible – writings which either reflect or challenge the classical positions.

The main goals of the class are two-fold. First, I hope that after completing this class, students will have a broad familiarity with the variety of perspectives and theories that together form the discipline of sociology. The second goal is that students will develop and refine their personal analytical ability. Being able to grasp, assess and act on information will help ensure success not only in this class, but in most endeavors outside of the classroom.

Course Materials

Reading assignments for this course come from three sources: the Farganis reader in social theory, the Schlosser book, and individual readings available electronically. The Farganis reader and the Schlosser book are available for purchase at the University Bookstore as well as from on-line sources. They have also been placed on reserve at the Marriott Library. The full citations are as follows:

James Farganis. 2008. *Readings in Social Theory: the Classic Tradition to Post-Modernism*, 5th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Eric Schlosser. 2004. *Reefer Madness: Sex, Drugs, and Cheap Labor in the American Black Market*. Boston: Mariner Books.

All of the supplemental readings for this class are available through the e-reserve service provided by the university library. Students can access and print materials on e-reserve course reserves by selecting the course reserves tab in the Marriott Library catalog: <http://www.lib.utah.edu/>. Select “Go” on the window prompt and that will bring you to the “Course Reserves” tab that you can select. Additional information on using course reserves can be found in the Course Reserve “How to Guide.” It provides a walkthrough that will explain searching courses, filtering courses and finally how to access copyrighted material from off campus. http://campusguides.lib.utah.edu/course_reserves_guide

Note that in the reading assignments, readings from the social theory text are identified with the name Farganis, are denoted by page numbers, and end in (Reader). All assigned readings that are posted on E-Reserve are denoted with page numbers and end with (E-Reserve). The readings assignments from the Schlosser text are identified with his name.

Course Requirements

The readings for this course are substantial, but not excessive. They do require a commitment of active and engaged reading. While most days will include a class lecture, we will frequently do small group exercises and have class discussions. In order to make this an engaging and rewarding experience for everyone, students are required to complete *all* of the assigned readings *before* class and

actively participate in class. As both a motivation for you and a method to allow me to check your weekly progress, we will have six pop quizzes during the semester. They will be simple, two-question quizzes that will be easy to answer, provided you have completed the day's reading. **Fifteen percent** of your grade will be based on these quizzes.

Students are also required to submit six memos on the assigned readings. Memos should be approximately one to two pages in length (12 point font, double-spaced, standard one-inch margins). You may choose to write on any session that interests you, provided that you submit three by the mid-point of the semester (**Oct. 18**), with the other three due in the last half of the semester. Each Thursday, I will post reflection questions on WebCT. These questions are to help guide your reading and to provide topics for your writing. Each memo is due *before* class on the day of the assigned session. Late memos will not be accepted, nor do I accept memos via e-mail. However, I will drop the lowest memo grade, so this gives you one built-in "miss" if you choose to take it. The memos will be worth **twenty-five percent** of your final grade.

Finally, we will have three in-class exams. The first exam will be on **Oct. 2**. The second exam will take place on **Nov. 6**. The third exam will take place on **Dec. 6**. Each exam will cover the lectures and readings to date. In other words, exams two and three will not be comprehensive. The exams will have a varied format, consisting of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. Each exam constitutes **twenty percent** of your grade.

Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism

Sometimes, students unwittingly plagiarize because they are unaware of citation standards or how to use the work of others. Please take a few moments to carefully review the university's policy on academic misconduct, available on-line at <http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html>. If you feel uncertain in this area, feel free to ask me for clarification. The Department of Sociology has a zero tolerance policy towards plagiarism. Past plagiarism cases detected by the Department have resulted in course failures and even college expulsions.

Class Conduct

Class discussion is a central component of this course. At times we will discuss controversial subjects and there will be disagreement. This is expected and healthy. However, at all times, I expect students to be respectful of each other and of me. I will not tolerate personal attacks. Nor do I tolerate disruptive behavior. Talking to other students, receiving phone calls, or playing games during lecture all constitute class disruptions that will result in your being asked to leave class.

Faculty-Student Communication

If you have not already done so, please register with CIS, indicating your preferred e-mail address. When you register for classes, CIS automatically

generates a class list (comprised of student-provided e-mail addresses), which the university requires we use for all student communication. I will occasionally send course announcements, syllabus changes, etc. to this list, so please regularly check your e-mail.

ADA Statement

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

Introduction: Course overview & class exercise

8/21 No Reading.

The Unique Contributions of Social Theory in Historical Context

8/23 Robert Nisbet. "The Unit Ideas of Sociology." Pp. 3-20 (E-Reserve).
James Farganis. "The Classic Tradition to Post-Modernism: An Overview."
Pp. 1-19 (Reader).

8/28 Robert Nisbet. "The Two Revolutions." Pp. 21-44 (E-Reserve).
Charles Lemert. "Modernity's Classical Age: 1848-1919." Pp. 21-27 (E-Reserve).
Jonathan H. Turner et al. "The Enlightenment and New Ways of Thinking."
Pp. 1-7 (E-Reserve).

Karl Marx: Alienation, Class Conflict & Capitalism

8/30 James Farganis. "Introduction" and Marx selections. Pp. 23-43 (Reader).

9/4 Barbara Ehrenreich. Selections from *Nickel and Dimed*. Pp. 121-191 (E-Reserve).

9/6 James Farganis. Marx selections. Pp. 43-54 (Reader).
Karl Marx. "Theses on Feuerbach." Pp. 143-146 (E-Reserve).

Max Weber: from the Spirit of Capitalism to the Iron Cage

9/11 James Farganis. "Introduction." Pp. 81-84 (Reader).
James Farganis. Weber selections. Pp. 85-98 (Reader).

9/13 George Ritzer. "An Introduction to McDonaldization." Pp. 4-24 (E-Reserve).

9/18 James Farganis. Weber selections. Pp. 99-115 (Reader).

Émile Durkheim: Anomie, Solidarity & Social Integration

- 9/25 James Farganis. "Introduction." Pp. 55-57 (Reader).
James Farganis. Durkheim selections. Pp. 58-71 (Reader).
- 9/27 Ted Conover. Selections from *New Jack: Guarding Sing Sing*. Pp. 95-151 (E-Reserve).
- 9/29 James Farganis. Durkheim selections. Pp. 72-80 (Reader).
Review for Exam I.

10/2 Exam I

10/4 Individuals in the Modern World

- James Farganis. "Introduction" and Simmel selections. Pp. 117-131 (Reader).
James Farganis. "Introduction" and Mead selections. Pp. 133-143 (Reader).
James Farganis. "Introduction" and Du Bois selections. Pp. 145-156 (Reader).

10/9 **Fall Break – Enjoy!**

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Contemporary Sociological Theories

- 10/16 James Farganis. "Introduction" and Functionalism selections. Pp. 161-196 (Reader).
- 10/18 James Farganis. "Introduction" and Conflict Theory selections. Pp. 197-240 (Reader).
Jennifer Steinhauer. "When the Joneses Wear Jeans." *New York Times* May 29, 2005: 1-6 (E-Reserve).

**** Semester mid-point: three memos should have been turned in by now! ****

- 10/23 James Farganis. Social Capital selection. Pp 266-278 (Reader).
Malcolm Gladwell. Selections from *The Tipping Point*. Pp. 30-88 (E-Reserve).
- 10/25 James Farganis. Ethnomethodology selections. Pp. 281-282; 312-330 (Reader).
James Farganis. Symbolic Interactionism selections. Pp. 331-333; 341-362 (Reader).
- 10/30 James Farganis. Feminist Theory selections. Pp. 363-386 (Reader).

Sylvia Ann Hewlett. "Executive Women and the Myth of Having it All."
Harvard Business Review 80, 4: 66-73 (E-Reserve).

11/1 James Farganis. Post-modernism selections. Pp. 415-436 (Reader).
Review for Exam II

11/6 Exam II

After Modernity: Exploring the Dialectics of Globalization

11/8 Elizabeth Kolbert. 2005. "The Climate of Man I." *The New Yorker* April 25:
56+ (E-Reserve).

11/13 Elizabeth Kolbert. 2005. "The Climate of Man III." *The New Yorker* May 9:
52+ (E-Reserve)

11/15 Eric Schlosser. Selections from *Reefer Madness*. Pp. 1-74.

11/20 Eric Schlosser. Selections from *Reefer Madness*. Pp. 75-108.

11/22 Thanksgiving Holiday – Enjoy!

11/27 Eric Schlosser. Selections from *Reefer Madness*. Pp. 109-210

11/29 Eric Schlosser. Selections from *Reefer Madness*. Pp. 211-240

12/4 Review for Exam III

12/6 Exam III