

SOCIAL THEORY

Sociology 3140 -001

University of Utah, Fall 2014

M/W/F 10:45-11:35 – BEH S 110



[THIS IS TENTATIVE SYLLABUS – IT IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE]

Instructor: Marcel Paret, marcelparet@gmail.com

Office hours: Wednesday 12pm-2pm, BEH S 405

Course Description

Social theory operates at multiple levels. This course will primarily be concerned with grand theories, which operate at a broader level and provide a foundation for the development of sociology. It will have two inter-related goals: to introduce you to the thinking of major social theorists, both classical and contemporary, and to develop your critical thinking skills. We will achieve these goals by reading carefully, dissecting the arguments of each author, and comparing and contrasting their theories.

Throughout the course we will consistently pose a series of questions that will allow us to compare and contrast the various theorists: What is the nature of human beings? Where do groups (classes, races, genders, etc.) and inequality come from? How are individuals inserted into the social structure? What is the state and what role does it play? What are the driving forces of history?

The course will be divided into four parts. After a brief introduction on theories of human nature, Part I will turn to the theories of Marx and Lenin. In Part II we will examine extensions of Marxist thought that pay particular attention to the role of “society” in both the West and the postcolonial world, including Gramsci, Fanon, and Chatterjee. Part III then turns to critiques of Marxism, both from traditional sociologists Durkheim and Weber as well as the post-structuralist Foucault. Finally, in Part IV we will examine more recent theories of gender and race.

Responsibilities of Students

Your primary responsibility is to carefully study the reading material, and to come to class prepared to discuss it. All students are expected to actively participate in class discussions, and may be called on to ensure that this happens. You are expected to attend every class. In addition, over the course of the semester there will be 2-3 pop quizzes. These are designed to encourage you to read and to be engaged during class. If you miss class on the day of a pop quiz you will receive a grade of 0. Attendance/classroom participation will count for 10 percent of your final grade, and the pop quizzes will count for 10 percent of your final grade.

There will be two take-home exams, due at the conclusion of Parts II and III, respectively. Each take-home exam will consist of two essays of 1,000 words each, and each take-home exam will be worth 30

percent of your final grade. The essays will require you to compare and contrast the different theories and apply them to current events.

The final exam will be an oral exam, consisting of a dialogue with the professor lasting approximately 10-12 minutes. The exam will cover the entire course. You will be required to present and defend an argument regarding the relation between theories presented in Part IV and the theories presents in Parts I, II, and III. The oral exam will count for 20 percent of your final grade.

Calculation of final grade

Take home exam #1	30%
Take home exam #2	30%
Oral exam	20%
Pop quizzes	10%
Attendance/participation	10%

Readings

There is only one required book for the course:

Durkheim, Emile. 1933 [1984]. *The Division of Labor in Society*. New York: The Free Press.

The remainder of the readings will either be made available as part of a reader, or will be distributed to students separately during the course of the semester.

Plagiarism and study groups

Students are encouraged to form study groups when preparing for exams, including discussion of answers to take-home essay questions. Students may not, however, work together in the actual writing of the exams. Each student must prepare and submit their own individual answers. Students who submit the same written answers will be penalized.

Plagiarism of written work by others is, of course, strictly prohibited. For the University of Utah “Student Code”, please visit the following website: <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>.

Accommodation for Disabilities

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

READING SCHEDULE

Week I: Introduction and Human Nature (8/25 – 8/29)

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*.

Locke, John. *Second Treatise of Government*.

PART I: MARX AND LENIN

No class on Labor Day (9/1)

Week 2: Marx I – Historical Materialism, Capitalism, and Communism (9/3 – 9/5)

Marx, Karl. *The German Ideology* and *Wage Labor and Capital*.

Week 3: Marx II – Class Struggle and the State (9/8 – 9/12)

Marx, Karl, and Frederick Engels. *Capital, Volume III*, *The Communist Manifesto*, and *Preface to the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*.

Week 4: Lenin (9/15 – 9/19)

Lenin, Vladimir. *State and Revolution*.

PART II: THEORIZING SOCIETY – GRAMSCIAN EXTENSIONS

Week 5: Gramsci (9/22 – 9/26)

Gramsci, Antonio. “Revolution Against Capital.”

Gramsci, Antonio. *Prison Notebooks*.

Week 6: Fanon (9/29 – 10/3)

Fanon, Frantz. 1963. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press.

Week 7: Chatterjee (10/6 – 10/10)

Chatterjee, Partha. *Politics of the Governed*, chapter 2.

Chatterjee, Partha. *Lineages of Political Society*.

First Take Home Exam Due: Friday, October 10, 10:45AM (in class)

Fall Break (10/13 – 10/17)

PART III: POST-MARXIST CRITIQUES

Week 8: Durkheim I – The Division of Labor and Solidarity (10/20 – 10/24)

Durkheim, Emile. 1933 [1984]. *The Division of Labor in Society*. New York: The Free Press.

Week 9: Durkheim II – Normal and Abnormal Division of Labor (10/27 – 10/31)

Durkheim, Emile. 1933 [1984]. *The Division of Labor in Society*. New York: The Free Press.

Week 10: Foucault – Disciplinary Power (11/3 – 11/7)

Foucault, Michel. 1977 [1995]. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Second Vintage Books Edition. New York: Random House.

Week 11: Weber I – Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism (11/10 – 11/14)

Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Mineola: Dover.

Week 12: Weber II – Bureaucracy and Charisma (11/17 – 11/21)

Weber, Max. *Bureaucracy and Types of Legitimate Domination*.

Second Take-Home Exam Due: Friday, November 21, 10:45AM in class

PART IV: GENDER AND RACE

Week 13: Gender and Sexuality (11/24 – 11/26)

Mackinnon, Catharine. 1982. "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory." *Signs* 7(31):515-544.

Thanksgiving Break (11/27 – 11/28)

Week 14: Race and Racial Domination (12/1 – 12/5)

Dubois, W.E.B. *Souls of Black Folk*. "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" and "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others."

Wacquant, Loic. 1997. "For An Analytic of Racial Domination." *Political Power and Social Theory* 221-234.

Week 15: Redistribution and Recognition (12/8 – 12/12)

Fraser, Nancy. 1995. "From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a Post-Socialist Age." *New Left Review* 212:68-93.

Oral exams: December 15 – December 17