

SEMINAR IN SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY
Sociology 5021
Spring Semester 2016

Rachel Rinaldo
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University of Colorado Boulder

Class Hours

Monday 4:00 – 6:30 pm
Education 132

Office Hours:

Mondays 1:00 – 3:00 pm
Or email for appointment: Rachel.Rinaldo@Colorado.Edu

This course examines major theoretical approaches to core issues and problems in sociology, including the nature of society, the relationship between society and the individual, the role of culture and social structure, the sources of social power, and the conceptual structure of sociological knowledge itself. Many contemporary debates in sociology build on – or at the very least are informed by – the ideas, concepts, methods, and approaches of these theorists.

This class will feature close readings and extended discussion of both classic and contemporary texts and we will also consider what potential such ideas may have for explaining social life in the 21st century. We will share our own sociological knowledge, perspectives on the reading, and research projects and interests with each other; theory is of necessity a collective project. When you finish this class, you should be able to use the major concepts and frameworks of social theory in your own research and writing, and pursue further theoretical reading on your own. However, we cannot read everything sociological theory has to offer. I am happy to recommend additional readings to anyone interested in theoretical directions that we are not able to explore in this seminar.

The following books are strongly recommended for purchase. If obtaining any of them poses too much of a financial hardship, please speak to me about other ways of getting hold of the book. In some cases, the full text of the book is available online. Other readings (articles, book chapters, etc.) will be posted on D2L.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Robert C. Tucker, ed. 1978. *The Marx/Engels Reader*
Anthony Giddens. 1972. *Emile Durkheim: Selected Writings*
H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills. 1958. *From Max Weber*
Max Weber. 1997 edition. *Theory of Social and Economic Organizations* (edited by Talcott Parsons)

Max Weber. 2001 edition. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (also available online)
W.E.B. DuBois. *The Souls of Black Folk* (also available online)
C.Wright Mills. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*
Harold Garfinkel. 1984. *Studies in Ethnomethodology*
Foucault, Michel. 1975. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*
Foucault, Michel. 1976. *A History of Sexuality, Vol, 1*
Pierre Bourdieu. 1993. *The Field of Cultural Production*.
Pierre Bourdieu. 1992. *The Logic of Practice*
John Levi Martin. 2015. *Thinking through Theory*.
Pampel, Fred. 2006. *Sociological Lives and Ideas*.

EXPECTATIONS:

Students are expected to attend each class meeting, complete all of the readings on the syllabus, and participate actively in discussions. You are expected to bring texts to class and reference them during discussions, so for this reason I strongly encourage you to obtain print copies.

I am aware that students enter graduate school with different levels of experience and comfort with discussions. Being able to contribute to academic discussions is a crucial aspect of becoming a scholar, and this class is one of the places you will practice this skill. Do not hesitate to ask questions, make mistakes, or disagree with others (as long as it is done in a respectful manner).

ASSIGNMENTS

Your grade for this class will be based on the following:

- 1) Four Short papers. These 3-5 page papers will respond to questions posted on D2L. They will ask you to do things such as analyze a particular theorist's position on an issue, compare/contrast how various theorists understand a concept, and so on. You must demonstrate that you have done close and critical readings of the assigned texts. I will offer five dates for submitting these papers and you choose the four that work best for you. You should turn in hard copies during class and upload them to the D2L dropbox by the time of the class. (60%)**
- 2) Discussion Paper and Presentation. Each week, starting on January 25, a student will write and share a short critical summary of the assigned texts (approximately 2-5 pages). You should read the assigned texts closely, discuss them critically, and pose several questions to stimulate class discussion. You will read your paper aloud on the assigned day and provide hard copies to me and the other students. (30%)**
- 3) Informed contributions to class discussions (10%)**

CLASS POLICIES

Technology: I allow students to take notes on their laptops. However, I request that you not use your laptop or any other device to surf the internet, send/receive text messages, etc. during class. Similarly, cell phone ringers should be turned off for class.

Attendance: Attendance is your responsibility, but since the class is small it is obvious to me when someone is not there. Repeated absences will result in a lower grade unless you have very serious extenuating circumstances.

Grades: Evaluation in the class is based on the assignments listed above. Grades are awarded on the basis of quality of work rather than effort. You should see me early in the semester if you are concerned about your grade.

Late Work: Late work will be marked down half a grade per day. However, I will grant an appropriate extension for written work if it is for a serious reason and if you contact me at least 12 hours before the deadline.

This class uses the standard Sociology Department grading rubric for graduate classes:

- A** Consistently performed well above expectations for the course.
- A-** Performs above expectations
- B+** Meets expectations for the class
- B** Occasionally performed below expectations for the course
- B-** Consistently performed below expectations for the course
- C** Unsatisfactory work for a PhD student (incomplete or late work, missed classes, lack of participation in discussions, etc.)

UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Classroom Behavior: Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference by the end of the first week of class so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also read the following policies regarding classroom behavior <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.

Discrimination and Harassment: The University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. The University of Colorado does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in admission and access to, and treatment and

employment in, its educational programs and activities. (Regent Law, Article 10, amended 11/8/2001). CUBoulder will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this CUBoulder policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or veteran status. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Student Conduct (OSC) at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://hr.colorado.edu/dh/>

Religious Observances and Athletic Engagements: Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please inform your instructor in person by the end of the second week of class if you will be unable to attend class, scheduled in class exams, or turn in assignments on time because of religious obligations and observances, or athletic engagements so that we can work out a revised schedule with you to meet course requirements.

http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

Students with Disabilities: Please inform Professor Rinaldo in person by the end of the second week of class if you qualify for accommodations because of a disability. Please bring along a letter from Disability Services by then so that she can work with you to enable you to do your best in this course. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (Contact: 303-492-8671, Center for Community N200, and <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices> or by email at dsinfo@colorado.edu). If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Injuries under Quick Links on the Disability Services website (<http://disabilityservices.colorado.edu/>) and discuss your needs with your professor. Disability Services' letters for students with disabilities indicate legally mandated reasonable accommodations. The syllabus statements and answers to Frequently Asked Questions can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>

CU Honor Code: All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Please read the Honor Code at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/> 6 and what constitutes a violation at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/studentinfo/violation.htm>

SCHEDULE (Subject to change – changes may be announced in class or on D2L)

WEEK 1: Introduction

Monday, January 11

Introduction to the class, expectations, sign-up for presentations

Charles Lemert. 1993. "Social Theory: Its Uses and Pleasures." (D2L)

WEEK 2: MLK Day (No class)

WEEK 3: Historical Context and Scope of Classical Sociological Theory

Monday, January 25

Connell, R.W. 1997. "Why is Classical Theory Classical?" *American Journal of Sociology* 102: 1511-1557.

Hadden, Richard W. 1997. "The Enlightenment: Conservative Reaction, Comte, and Spencer." Pages 15-38 in *Sociological Theory: An Introduction to the Classical Tradition*. (D2L)

John Levi Martin. 2015. Chapter 1 of *Thinking through Theory*.

WEEK 4: MARX

Monday, February 1

Pampel. Chapter on Marx

Marx Engels Reader. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (Tucker pages 66-93).

Marx Engels Reader. *Theses on Feuerbach* (Tucker 143-145)

Marx Engels Reader. *The Communist Manifesto*. (Tucker 473-483)

ESSAY DUE DATE #1

WEEK 5: MARX

Monday, February 8

Marx Engels Reader, pages 3-6

Marx Engels Reader. Selections from *Capital*, Vol. 1 (302-343).

Marx Engels Reader. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. (Tucker pages 594-617).

Marx Engels Reader. "The Coming Upheaval" (Tucker 218-219).

Erik Olin Wright, et al. 1982. "The American Class Structure." *American Sociological Review* 47/6, pp. 709-726.

WEEK 6: DURKHEIM

Monday, February 15

Pampel. Chapter on Durkheim

Emile Durkheim. Giddens chapters 1, 3, 5, 6

Excerpt from *Suicide*

WEEK 7: DURKHEIM AND HIS INFLUENCE

Monday, February 22

Emile Durkheim. Giddens chapters 11 and 13

Robert N. Bellah. 1967. "Civil Religion in America." *Daedalus* 96/1, pp. 1-21.

Randall, Collins. 1990. "Stratification, Emotional Energy, and the Transient Emotions." Pp. 27-57 in *Research Agendas in the Sociology of Emotions*, edited by T.Kemper.

Erving Goffman. 1967. *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face to Face Behavior*. (pages 53-56)

ESSAY DUE DATE #2

WEEK 8: WEBER

Monday, February 29

Pampel. Chapter on Weber

Max Weber. Definition of Sociology and Social Action (D2L)

Max Weber. Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy (D2L)

Max Weber. *Theory of Economic and Social Organizations*:

Types of Social Action

The Types of Legitimate Order

The Types of Authority and Imperative Coordination

WEEK 9: WEBER

Monday, March 7

Pampel. Chapter on Weber

Gerth and Mills reader:

Class, Status, and Party

Politics as a Vocation (first 10 pages)

Bureaucracy

WEEK 10: WEBER AND HIS INFLUENCE

Monday, March 14

Max Weber. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (Selections)

Snyder, Benjamin H. 2013. "From Vigilance to Busyness: A NeoWeberian Approach to Clock Time." *Sociological Theory* 31: 243-266.

George Ritzer. 2005. "The Weberian Theory of Rationalization and the McDonalidization of Contemporary Society." In Peter Kivisto (ed.) *Illuminating social life: Classical and contemporary theory revisited*. (Available at http://atgstg01.pineforge.com/upm-data/16567_Chapter_2.pdf)

ESSAY DUE DATE #3

WEEK 11
SPRING BREAK

WEEK 12: SIMMEL

Monday, March 28

Pampel. Simmel chapter

Essays on D2L

“The Metropolis and Mental Life”

“The Stranger”

“The Sociology of Sociability.”

“Fashion.”

WEEK 12: MEAD AND DUBOIS

Monday, April 4

Pampel. Mead and DuBois chapters

DuBois. *The Souls of Black Folk*.

Mead. “Play, the Game, and the Generalized Other.” “The I and the Me.” “The Social Self.”
(Online at The Mead Project)

ESSAY DUE DATE #4

WEEK 13: POSTWAR AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY

Monday, April 11

Talcott Parsons. 1948. “The Position of Sociological Theory”. *American Sociological Review* 13 (2): 156–71.

C.Wright Mills. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*. Chapters 2 and 3.

Harold Garfinkel. 1984. *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Chapters 1-5.

Dorothy E. Smith. 1974. “Women’s Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology.”
Sociological Inquiry 44/1, pp. 7-13.

Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman. 1987. “Doing Gender.” *Gender & Society* 1: 125-151.

WEEK 14: FOUCAULT

Monday, April 18

Foucault. *The History of Sexuality: Vol 1, An Introduction* (Selections)

Foucault. *Discipline and Punish*. (Selections)

Power, Michael. "Foucault and Sociology." *Annual Review of Sociology* 37 (2011): 35-56.

WEEK 15: BOURDIEU

Monday, April 25

Pierre Bourdieu. *The Field of Cultural Production*. Chapter 1.

Pierre Bourdieu. *The Logic of Practice*. Chapter 3 (Structures, Habitus, Practices)

Adam Isaiah Green. 2008. "The Social Organization of Desire: The Sexual Fields Approach*." *Sociological Theory* 26, no. 1 (2008): 25-50.

Recommended: Sallaz, Jeffrey J., and Jane Zavisca. 2007. "Bourdieu in American sociology, 1980-2004." *Annual Review of Sociology* 33: 21-41.

ESSAY DUE DATE #5