SOAN 330: SOCIOLOGICAL THOUGHT AND THEORY

Cartoon Source: https://marxismocritico.com/2012/06/13/marx-marginalism-and-modern-sociology/
COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Many individuals have contributed to the development of sociology as an intellectual discipline and mode of social inquiry; however, few have had the long-lasting influence of Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, and Max Weber. This course focuses on the influential texts and ideas generated by these and other theorists from sociology’s classical era. The work we examine in the next nine-and-a-half weeks is considered part of sociology’s heritage and intellectual culture.

Additionally, we will learn how classical sociological theory is used by contemporary sociologists, while also focusing on more recent theoretical developments in the discipline of sociology. Because the work we complete in this course fulfills the SOAN student learning outcome – apply sociological theory to analyze socio-cultural phenomena – you will also have multiple opportunities throughout the course to connect classic theoretical ideas to contemporary social events. An additional learning outcome is:

- Articulate the complexity of contemporary socio-cultural phenomena in their many dimensions (e.g. temporal, structural, spatial and symbolic).

The reading load for SOAN 330 consists of original texts, which can sometimes be difficult to process, contemporary empirical examinations of the frameworks developed by classical social theorists, and short videos that provide an overview. Your success in this course will be determined by the amount of effort you devote to reading, thinking, talking, and writing about the work we will be exploring this term.

OFFICE HOURS:

I love seeing students during my office hours. A one-on-one visit can clarify course material; provide answers to questions you may have; and help you understand, on a deeper level, my expectations for the work you complete in this course.

This term I am holding office hours during the following days and times, and have additional times available by appointment:

- Tuesdays 10:30-11:45 am
• Wednesdays 3:30-5:00 pm
• Thursdays 4:00-5:00 pm

To schedule an office visit, please visit the Google form I’ve shared with you. Please note that I meet students on the main floor of the library, close to the circulation desk, in the southeast corner.

COURSE MATERIAL:

The required material for this course consists of readings and short videos. All of the material can be accessed through the course Moodle.

Please complete the assigned material before class. Read (and watch) the material closely, take effective notes, and determine what is clear and what needs further clarification. Because I do not expect students to fully understand the material, we will all benefit if you bring your questions and preliminary insights to our class discussions. Our goal is to work through the ideas together.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Your grade in this course will be determined by your performance on the following assignments. When completing these assignments, you are expected to abide by Carleton’s standards for academic integrity. Please click on this link to learn more about these standards, particularly as they relate to plagiarism.

Six reflection papers (30 points):

Throughout the term, students will write reflections on course readings. These reflection papers provide opportunities to enhance your understanding of course material and improve your analytical and interpretive writing skills. There are 8 opportunities to write a reflection paper but you are required to write just 6 papers, with each worth 5 points. Three papers must be written before mid-term break; the remaining three papers will be written after mid-term break.

Group presentation (15 points):

In this assignment, small groups of students will give a biographical introduction to an assigned theorist. The goal is to help us learn about the personal and intellectual lives of theorists we cover this term. Presentations will answer questions such as: who is the theorist? When and where was the theorist born? Where did the theorist spend their lives? Who influenced the theorist, intellectually and personally? Which socio-historical events shaped the theorist’s perspective? What are some important personal events the theorist experienced?
Mid-term exam (20 points):
The mid-term will be administered as an essay-format, take-home exam. You will have approximately one-week to develop your responses.

Final exam (25 points):
The final also will be administered as an essay-format, take-home exam. This exam is due at 4:30 p.m. on November 25th, the last day of the final exam period.

Participation (10 points):
Ten points are devoted to class participation. Participation will be evaluated according to punctuality, regular class attendance, and close-reading of the material so that comments and questions have solid grounding and advance the discussion. Participation also involves listening when others are speaking.

Please note that cell phones and other electronic devices – including computers – must be turned off. By turning off these devices, we reduce student distraction, our carbon footprint, and the level of electro-magnetic frequencies in the classroom (which have been found to cause mood and sleep disruptions). If you have a personal circumstance that merits exception, please see me so we can discuss an accommodation.

Students who meet the standards of class participation at only the most basic level will receive the “default” participation grade of 5 points; those who miss more than three classes without a suitable explanation risk forfeiting their participation grade. A grading rubric for class participation is attached to this syllabus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Distribution date</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Points awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection papers</td>
<td>9/16</td>
<td>See syllabus for due dates</td>
<td>5 points each; 30 points in total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group presentation</td>
<td>9/27</td>
<td>See syllabus for presentation dates</td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>10/18</td>
<td>10/24</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>11/20</td>
<td>11/25</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>9/16</td>
<td>See last page of syllabus</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grade range: "A" = 90-100%; "B" = 80-89%; "C" = 70-79%; "D" = 60-69%; "F" <= 59%
A WORD ABOUT EXTENSIONS

Extensions will be granted only for serious illness, disability accommodation, or extreme extenuating circumstances that have been vetted by a class dean. Late submissions for other reasons (including: “I have multiple assignments/test due on the same day”) will have a half point deducted for each day late. For example, if you received a 4 out of 5 before the deduction, you will ultimately get a 3.5. Because SOAN 330 is a required course for your major, please treat it as an academic priority.

COURSE OUTLINE

9/16,18 What is theory and why do we study it?

9/16:
Crash Course Sociology Video: Major Sociological Paradigms

[The host speaks quickly and can be hard to follow at times, but she covers important information. You can slow down the video by going into the settings (symbol looks like a gear), selecting "playback speed" and changing it to “0.75”]


9/20 What is sociology and what are its defining characteristics?


Crash Course Sociology Video: What is sociology? [this video is optional but it provides a good review of the field of sociology. May be helpful for students who haven’t taken Introduction to Sociology]

1 This syllabus is subject to change. Please check the course Moodle for new additions to the syllabus.
You will be assigned one of the following readings, which are available on Moodle. Please complete your assigned reading and prepare a 6-minute summary of the main ideas, which you will teach to fellow students:

2. Simmel, “On the Field of Sociology”
4. Durkheim, “The Method of Sociology”

9/23, 25

Berger and Luckman on the social construction of reality

9/23 Gender and classical social theory


Crash Course Sociology Video: Harriet Martineau and Gender Conflict Theory

9/25 Race and classical social theory


Vox: The Myth of Race, Debunked in Three Minutes, published on January 13, 2015 [note: This video also mentions Dorothy Roberts, who will be visiting class on 10/2]

- Reflection paper due. This paper will reflect on readings assigned on the following dates: 9/20, 9/23, and 9/25.
9/27  C. Wright Mills and the sociological imagination


9/30  Emile Durkheim: A founding father of sociology


- This class will begin with a biographical presentation of Durkheim’s life and influences

10/2  Sociologist Dorothy Roberts visits class


10/4  Durkheim on law and justice


- Reflection paper due. This paper will reflect on readings assigned on the following dates: 9/27, 9/30, and 10/4.
10/7,9 Karl Marx: Another founding father of sociology

10/7:


Crash Course Sociology Video: Karl Marx & Conflict Theory

- This class will begin with a biographical presentation of Marx's life and influences

10/9:

Marx, Karl. 1842/1996. “Debates on the law on thefts of wood.” First published: in the Supplement to the Rheinische Zeitung, Nos. 298, 300, 303, 305 and 307, October 25, 27 and 30, November 1 and 3, 1842. Translated: by Clemens Dutt. [Note: the link takes you to the end of the reading, so you will need to scroll to the top of the webpage]


10/11 Capitalism and neo-liberalism: What’s the difference?


- Reflection paper due. This paper will reflect on readings assigned on the following dates: 10/7, 10/9, and 10/11.

10/14,16 Max Weber: A final founding father of sociology

10/14:


Crash Course Sociology Video: [Max Weber and Modernity](#)

- This class will begin with a biographical presentation of Weber's life and influences

**10/16:**


**10/18**

A contemporary application of Weber


- Reflection paper due. This paper will reflect on readings assigned on the following dates: 10/14, 10/16, and 10/18.

- Midterm distributed. Due on 10/24 at 4:30 pm

**10/21**

MIDTERM BREAK

**10/23**

Where have we been? Where are we going next?

No readings assigned

**10/25**

George Herbert Mead on the emergence of mind and self


Crash Course Sociology Video: Social Development

- This class will begin with a biographical presentation of Mead’s life and influences

10/28, 30

Erving Goffman and Symbolic Interaction Theory

10/28:


- This class will begin with a biographical presentation of Goffman’s life and influences

10/30:


- Reflection paper due. This paper will reflect on readings assigned on the following dates: 10/25, 10/28, and 10/30.

11/1

Joel Best on claims making


11/4, 6

Du Bois on race conflict in the United States

11/4:

Task: Select an article from the 1619 Project of the New York Times. Click on this link to see a list of articles. Click on this link to gain access to the articles. Come to class prepared to discuss your article and possible links you found to Du Bois’s arguments in chapters assigned from The Souls of Black Folk.

Crash Course Sociology Video: Du Bois & Race Conflict
https://youtu.be/-wny0OAz3q8

- This class will begin with a biographical presentation of Du Bois’s life and influences

- Reflection paper due. This paper will reflect on readings assigned on the following dates: 11/4 and 11/6.

11/6: Guest Speaker: Charisse Burden-Stelly


11/8,11

De Beauvoir on Gender

11/8:


Crash Course Sociology Video: Theories of Gender

- This class will begin with a biographical presentation of De Beauvoir’s life and influences

11/11:


Reflection paper due. This paper will reflect on readings assigned on the following dates: 11/8 and 11/11.

11/13, 15

Collins on Intersectionality

11/13:


This class will begin with a biographical presentation of Collins’ life and influences

11/15:

Read a chapter from one of the following two books more recently published by Patricia Hill Collins. Come to class equipped to present a summary of the chapter you read and an understanding of how the argument builds on Collins’s theoretical perspective:


Reflection paper due. This paper will reflect on readings assigned on the following dates: 11/13 and 11/15.

11/18

Course evaluation and preparing for the final class


In preparation for the debate we will have on the last day of class, please review this debate between Noam Chomsky and Michel Foucault on Justice versus Power.
Wrapping up Sociological Thought and Theory

Final take-home exam distributed. Exam due on Monday, November 25th at 4:30 pm.
Grading Rubric for class participation

The following rubric provides guidelines for how class participation will be assessed at the end of term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Scholar – involved in the quest for knowledge. A scholar always comes to class on time and is prepared for the material to be covered. A scholar initiates discussion, regularly asks thoughtful and probing questions to expand the depth and breadth of understanding. A scholar is also an active listener who gives attention to the contributions of classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Student – seeks clarification of issues discussed in class. A student comes to class on time having prepared for the material to be covered. A student occasionally initiates discussion and facilitates class discussion by participating regularly. A student is a respectful listener who gives classmates attention when they participate in class discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Class member – attentive and aware of issues raised in class. A class member comes to class on time with the expected materials. A class member is familiar with the material to be covered. A class member participates in class discussion if called upon. A class member listens to class discussion and typically does not offer talking points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Accidental tourist – has a habit of daydreaming, often finding it difficult to respond to questions because they are lost in thought. An accidental tourist neither participates in discussion nor gives classmates attention when they are participating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Poseur – treats the classroom as an opportunity to catch up on “what’s happening” around campus or to get attention at the expense of disrupting the class. A poseur regards learning as secondary to their own personal interests. A poseur often presents their opinions but is unprepared to discuss any topic in depth. A poseur does not give the impression of being prepared for class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Disruptor – exhibits unhelpful or disruptive behaviors in the classroom. A disruptor is absent, late, and/or unprepared for class on a regular basis. A disruptor may convey that there is nothing to be learned from either the professor of classmates. A disruptor may hijack the class to gain attention for themselves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Class Discussion Rubric for Teachers: [http://study.com/academy/lesson/class-discussion-rubric-ideas-for-teachers.html](http://study.com/academy/lesson/class-discussion-rubric-ideas-for-teachers.html)