Nature of the Course:
This is a required course on sociological theory primarily for graduate students in sociology. No one semester course in sociological theory can be exhaustive. This course is intended to introduce you to “the lay of the land,” especially in classical but also to some extent in contemporary sociology by emphasizing the in-depth study of primary texts of four major historical figures – Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Mead. It uses these texts to understand in more general terms the role of metatheory in theoretical and empirical analyses, as well as to consider alternative ways of putting together ideas and evidence in sociological research. The course will show you how the theoretical traditions associated with Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Mead “live” in various ways in contemporary sociological theory and research. This includes examining how these traditions have provided intellectual resources for current theory and empirical research on major topics in macrosociology [or social organization] and microsociology [or social psychology]. As well, it includes considering how these traditions have been built on and critiqued by such major contemporary perspectives as feminist sociology. Although full consideration of American sociology’s institutional history in its larger cross-national context is beyond the scope of the course, Soc 500a does introduce you to some institutional as well as intellectual history of sociology. It will give you a sense of how sociology’s institutional history, intellectual history and current landscape are interconnected.

Requirements:
Written Assignments:
There will be two open book take-home written examinations. Students will have one week to complete each of them. Each exam will consist of from 1-3 essay questions. Questions may have multiple sub-parts. The exams will call for you to pull together various ideas and assumptions, draw out implications of these ideas and assumptions, and compare and contrast basic perspectives of the theorists. Exams will provide you with an opportunity to wrestle with fundamental issues and ideas that are important to the field.

Prior to the first exam, I will provide you with additional information on what you can expect. In addition, exams will be distributed in class with ample time for everyone to read through the questions and instructions and ask about anything that remains unclear. That way, we can be sure that everyone has understood what is expected, and that any additional clarifying instructions and information are provided equally to all of you.
Your written assignments will have a page limit. They can NOT be handwritten. SAVE A DIGITAL COPY ON YOUR COMPUTER when you turn your exam in.

Class Participation:
This course is a combination of lecture and seminar style discussion. Ordinarily, I will provide orienting lecture material before we engage in discussion. Often, I will provide a discussion question or questions to think about in advance. I also will encourage you to submit your own questions for class discussion. There are no formal classroom presentations, but you will get the most out of the class if you are an active participant in class discussion. The kind of lively and thought provoking interchange that enhances both individual and collective learning and enjoyment depends on active engagement and participation from each of you, as well as from me. Outstanding performance in class discussions will be formally rewarded if your grade is otherwise on the borderline between two grades. [See grading below.]

Grading:
The examination on which you do best will count for 2/3 of your grade. The other examination will count for 1/3 of your grade. If your grade is on the borderline between two grades (say between A and B) outstanding performance in class discussions will be taken into account in your favor in assigning a final grade.

I will read your examinations carefully. In grading, I will pay particular attention to the clarity and logic of your arguments, as well as to the evidence that you provide for your arguments. To receive a good grade, you do NOT need to try and reproduce the answer you think that I might give to questions that I ask. You DO need to advance a clear, well organized, well thought out and developed argument, one that proceeds logically and one that provides appropriate evidence for your assertions/position. You also must think for yourself. If you use or develop somebody else’s ideas in constructing your response to an examination question, you must credit the proper source.

Throughout the semester, I strongly encourage you to discuss and debate course issues and materials with each other outside of class. Study groups are encouraged. However, when it comes time to formulate responses to distributed examination questions, you are expected to work solo. Scholastic dishonesty and plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Other Administrative:
If you are unable to make my office hours because of another class, employment or child care obligations, please give me advance notice so that we can schedule an alternative appointment. I am happy to schedule appointments to meet with you, but I can not be available to meet with you outside of my office hours unless you and I have made an appointment. If you would like to schedule an appointment for sometime other than my normal office hours, you are invited to check in with me immediately after class. You also may telephone me at the office or e-mail me to schedule an appointment. Please do not telephone me at home unless it is a dire emergency. E-mail is the best way to get in touch with me. You can expect regular—but not instantaneous—turn around.
If you have a disability that may require some modification of any aspect of the course, please see me so that reasonable accommodation can be made.

I will not use D2L this semester. Readings that are in article or book chapter form will be circulated to you by e-mail.

**Readings:**
Below, you will find listed for each section of the course a set of books and articles that are the *required reading* for that section. For each section, there also are some *recommended readings*. Recommended readings are listed, by week to which they correspond, at the end of your syllabus.

Since primary texts of Durkheim, Marx, Weber and Mead constitute most of the required reading, recommended readings include a select group of “overview” secondary sources, commentaries and interpretive work. Recommended readings include sources that comment on the theorists directly as well as sources that do not directly comment on or about the particular theorists, but do discuss relevant theoretical issues. Thus, in addition to more contemporary sources interpreting one or more of the major thinkers we are examining, recommended readings include some more recent statements about key ideas and issues raised by the texts we examine.

Again, I want to emphasize that the course requires you to read in-depth and engage seriously with the required reading, but does NOT assume that you will read any of the recommended readings. However, if you find that you are having difficulties with required primary texts, recommended readings (as well as class lectures and discussion) can help orient you. As well, the list of recommended readings provides you with a set of resources for your ongoing education—to be consulted if and when you find useful as you develop your skills and interests throughout your graduate school training.


For additional training in contemporary sociological theory and social theory more generally, I encourage you to take graduate courses in major substantive areas of your
interest, both in- and outside sociology, as well as additional graduate courses and seminars in contemporary theory, theory construction, philosophy of science, logic, etc. offered in this and diverse other departments and programs. Which other courses will be most useful for your own intellectual and professional development will of course vary, depending on your own background, interests, goals, etc. I am pleased to discuss such issues with you, and offer what guidance I can. UA has a wealth of resources to help further your development.

**Required Books:**
The following books will be used extensively in the course. Because you can get the books more cheaply on Amazon, I have not placed a bookstore order this year. If you order immediately, you will have the books in plenty of time. When I checked Amazon, for example, it was possible to get *The Division of Labor*—which is the first book we will be reading—in a couple of days. (We will read the *The Division of Labor* in the second week of the course.)

If you already have some of these books, and they don’t happen to be from the publisher listed below, this is fine, as long as you have complete versions of the works. Page numbers are different from different publishers, and different translations from the German or French will be somewhat different. In the few instances where different translations become a serious issue for interpretation, we will discuss this. There are now electronic versions of some of the required books.

Please be aware that my lectures and slides typically will reference relevant passages and quotations using page numbers from an edition associated with the indicated publisher. I also will provide section and chapter markers so that you can find the relevant passages more easily in your edition/translation.

The library no longer will place books on course reserve, but I have extra copies of some of the books and will put these in the 4th floor conference room. Feel free to use them there, but PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE THEM. If you have a different edition or translation of a given book than the one ordered for the class, feel free to use it. But


Emile Durkheim. *The Division of Labor in Society.* [1893]. Free Press, with introduction by Lewis Coser (or the new 2014 edition that has introductions by both Coser and Steven Lukes) [Emile Durkheim. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life.* [1912]. BN Publishing


Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. *The Communist Manifesto.* [1848]. Introduction by AJP Taylor (non-Classics)


**Required Articles:**
In addition to the above-listed required books, we will make use of a number of required articles, and also some excerpts from edited volumes and out-of-print books. I will provide these directly to you as E-mail attachments. The vast majority of them are also available directly from JSTOR.

**Some Recommended Books:**
The following recommended books will be useful during large parts of the course. Some of you may wish to go on Amazon (or elsewhere) and purchase one or more of these as resources for your graduate education.


Here are some non-technical and very thought-provoking works that are both great reads and provide contemporary statements and developments pertaining to some of the major issues that confronted the classical theorists and continue to confront us today.

COURSE CALENDAR AND OUTLINE:

WEEK 1: (August 25-27) Introduction: Sociology and Sociological Theory

REQUIRED READING: (about 140 pages total)
Albion Small, “The Era of Sociology.” American Journal of Sociology 1 (July 1895), reprinted in AJS 100 ix-xxiii
WEEKS 2-5: Durkheim and Durkheimian Legacies:

WEEK 2 (September 1 is Labor Day, a holiday – class meets September 3)
REQUIRED READING:

WEEK 3 (September 8-10): REQUIRED READING
Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*. (147 pages total)
(about 370 total pages of reading)

Week 4 (September 15-17): REQUIRED READING

WEEK 5 (September 22-24): REQUIRED READING

WEEKS 6-9: Marx and Marxist Legacies:

WEEK 6 (October 29-October 1): REQUIRED READING
Marx, opening pages of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in *The Essential Marx*, edited by Ernst Fischer, pp. 167-72
Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, Part I “Feuerbach” (95 pages)
(about 150 total pages of reading)

**WEEK 7 (October 6-8): REQUIRED READING**
Part I, Chapter I “Commodities,”
Part II, Chapter VI, “The Buying and Selling of Labour Power,”
(approximately 133 pages total for reading from *Capital*; (about 165 total pgs. for week)

**WEEK 8 (October 13-15): REQUIRED READING**
Part IV “Production of Relative Surplus Value,” Chapters XII “The Concept of Relative Surplus Value,” Chapter XIII, “Co-operation,” Chapter XIV, Sections 4-5, (Section 4 is the Division of Labor in Manufacture and Division of Labor in Society, Chapter 5 is The Capitalistic Character of Manufacture);
Part IV, Chapter XV “Machinery and Modern Industry, read from the beginning up until Section 6;
(about 230 total pages of reading)

**WEEK 9 (October 20-22): REQUIRED READING**
(about 55 total pages of reading)
TAKE HOME MID-TERM EXAM distributed in class on Wednesday, October 22. Mid-Term due in hard copy on Wednesday, October 29 at the beginning of class. Please also provide a digital copy by e-mail.

WEEKS 10-13: Weber and Weberian Legacies:

WEEK 10 (October 27-39): REQUIRED READING

Week 11 (November 3-5): REQUIRED READING
Chapter II “Sociological Categories of Economic Action,” Parts 1-26 (pp. 63-154).
Chapter III “The Types of Legitimate Domination,” Parts 1-12a, 14 (pp. 212-254, 266).
Also, in Vol. 2 of *Economy and Society*, pp. 654-58 “The Categories of Legal Thought”
(about 250 total pages of reading)

WEEKS 12-13 (November 10-12, 17-19): REQUIRED READING
(about 250 total pages of reading for two weeks)

WEEKS 14-16: (November 24-26, December 1-3, 8-10) Mead and Symbolic Interaction:

Note: Thanksgiving is Thursday November 27. Class will meet on Wednesday morning.

REQUIRED READING:
*George Herbert Mead on Social Psychology*, Part I, Chapter 2 “Problem of Society: How We Become Selves.
Part III, Chapter 4 “Mind Approached Through Behavior -- Can Its Study Be Made Scientific?”

TAKE HOME FINAL EXAMINATIONdistributed in class on Wednesday, December 10. Due on Wednesday December 17 by 4:30 pm (digital copy by e-mail and hard copy in my office mailbox at 4:30 p.m.)

Recommended Readings:

WEEK 1: Sociology and Sociological Theory

*On the “Pre-classics”*
Irving Zeitlin, Ideology and The Development of Sociological Theory, Chapters 1-12, covering the Enlightenment, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Mary Wollstonecraft, Romantic-Conservative Reaction, Bonald and Maistre, St. Simon, Compte and de Tocqueville, Harriet Martineau, Harriet Taylor and John Stuart

*On the nature of science:

*On Social Science and Social Service*
Alice O’Connor. 2001. Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy and the Poor in 20th Century US History. Princeton, Princeton University Press. This book is a great read, along the way providing an enormous amount of information about the history of economics and sociology, how economic and sociological knowledge has been mobilized for public policy making and how this mobilization has in turn fed back to help shape the nature of these fields.
On institutional and intellectual history in American sociology

WEEK 2, Durkheim, Division of Labor
Interpreting and Critiquing Durkheim and Division of Labor
Giddens, Capitalism and Modern Social Theory, Part II (Durkheim), Chapter 5
“Durkheim’s Early Works,” Chapter 7 “Individualism, socialism and the ‘occupational groups’”

Some key issues:
“Functional Causal Imagery”

A Phenomenological Take on Durkheim’s concept of anomie

Utilitarian foundations of solidarity?
WEEK 3: Durkheim, *The Rules and Suicide*

Interpreting and Critiquing Durkheim, *The Rules and Suicide*
“Emile Durkheim,” pp. 357-68.
Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, Part II (Durkheim), Chapter 6,
“Durkheim’s conception of sociological method.”

Some Key Issues

WEEK 4: Durkheim and *Elementary Forms*

Interpreting and Critiquing Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*
Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, Part II (Durkheim), Chapter 8,
“Religion and moral discipline.”

Some key issues

Testing Durkheim?

Norms and human agency
WEEK 5: Durkheimian Legacies
Interpretation and Critique of Parsons and Merton

Networks

Feminist “Rules”?

WEEK 6: Marx and Historical Materialism
Interpreting and Critiquing Marx
Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, Part I: Marx, Chapter 1 “Marx’s Early Writings.”

Some key Issues

WEEK 7: Marx and Historical Materialism, continued
Interpreting and Critiquing Marx
Some key issues

WEEK 8: Marx, Capitalism and Laws of Capitalist Development

Interpreting and Critiquing Marx

Some Key Issues
Casti, *Complexification*, Chapter 4 “The Lawless.”

WEEK 9: Marxist Legacies

Out of one, many:


Some Empirical Exemplars

Race, Class and Gender

**WEEK 10, Weber and The Protestant Ethic**

*Interpreting, Critiquing Weber*

**WEEK 11, Weber, Key Concepts; Economy, State and Society**

*Interpreting, Critiquing Weber*
Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, Chapters 11 & 12, “Fundamental concepts of sociology,” Rationalization, the world religions and Western capitalism,”

*Some Key Issues*
Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, Part 4 “Capitalism, socialism and social theory.”

**Weeks 12-13, Weber’s Methods**

*Interpreting, Critiquing Weber*


*Some Key Issues*


**Weeks 10-13: Weberian Legacies:**

**NOTE:** We are not doing a specific week of the course with required readings on Weberian legacies. Rather, I will work some information on these legacies into my lecture material for Weeks 10-13. The DiMaggio and Powell reading listed first below is a recent “classic,” – a foundational piece of the “new institutionalism”

*Rationalization and Legitimation*


State Autonomy and Capacity

The [not so?] new economic sociology

Ideas and Evidence
Stanley Lieberson. 1991. “Small N’s and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases.” Social Forces 70:307-20 [JSTOR].

Weeks 14-15: Mead and Symbolic Interaction

Interpreting and Critiquing Mead

Social Structure, Self and Identity
Structure and Agency

Consciousness

Cognition, Identity and Emotion
Emergence
Casti, Complexification, Chapter 6 “The Emergent.”

More context for Mead and the development of symbolic interaction
Patricia Madoo Lengermann and Jill Neibrugge-Brantley. 2001. “Classical Feminist Social Theory.” in Barry Smart and George Ritzer, Handbook of Social Theory. [key female contemporaries of Mead]
Louis Menand. 2001. The Metaphysical Club [pragmatism(s) and progressivism(s) including Dewey and his precursors, their relationship to DuBois and to Chicago school sociology]
George Ritzer, Sociological Theory, Chapter 10 “Symbolic Interactionism.” You may also wish to read Ritzer’s Chapter on Georg Simmel and his chapter on Ethnomethodology.