SOC 500a: THEORY

Professor Robin Stryker       Fall, 2017
T-Th 12:30-1:45 pm             415 Social Science
Office Hours 2-3 pm T-Th       428 Social Science
and by appointment.
e-mail: rstryker@email.arizona.edu
Tel: 520-621-3109

Course Description:
This is a required course on sociological theory primarily for graduate students in sociology. It involves a mixture of lecture and seminar style discussion and there is substantial reading material. The course focuses primarily on in-depth study of theoretical traditions associated with Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim and George Herbert Mead, as well as the study of how each of these traditions “live” in various ways in contemporary sociological theory and research. Students are evaluated through their class participation and two take home written examinations.

Learning Objectives:
No one semester course in sociological theory can be exhaustive. However, although sociology is a very diverse discipline, virtually all sociologists are trained in the “classics,” and these remain foundational for disciplinary in- and inter-disciplinary connection, communication and debate.

The objective of this course is to provide first year graduate students in sociology (and students outside the School of Sociology who elect to take the course) with a “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 also examines how the traditions associated with Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Mead 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.
By the end of this class, you should:

- Know the key elements of the sociological paradigms associated with Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Mead, how they are similar and different, and the implications of each for sociological theory and research.
- Be able to articulate multiple strategies for combining theory and data in sociological research projects, and be able to explain the strengths and weaknesses of each strategy and for what purposes each is most appropriate.
- Be able to show that you can do in-depth, critical evaluation of analytical arguments and that you can use prior analytical arguments as building blocks for your own analytical arguments.

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. The final grading scheme is A, B, C, D and E (failing). However, in grading your two examinations, I will use a grading scheme that includes + and – (e.g., A+, A, A-, B+, B, B- etc. so that you have a good gauge of exactly where you are.

**Exam Grading Criteria:** 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.

**Appointments and e-mail queries:**

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.

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

**Attendance Policy**

I expect students to attend class. I will *pre*approve absences if there is a credible personal, health, or professional reason.

UA policy concerning Class Attendance and Administrative Drops is available at: [http://catalog.arizona.edu/2014-15/policies/classatten.htm](http://catalog.arizona.edu/2014-15/policies/classatten.htm)
UA policy on absences and accommodation of religious holidays is available at: http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policies-and-codes/accommodation-religious-observance-and-practice.

Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean designee) will be honored. See: http://uhap.web.arizona.edu/chapter_7#7.04.02

**Classroom Behavior:**
To foster a positive learning environment, students may not text, chat, make phone calls, hunt Pokémon, or surf the web during class. Students observed engaging in disruptive activity will be asked to cease this behavior. Students who continue to disrupt the class will be asked to leave the classroom and may be reported to the Dean of Students.

The Arizona Board of Regents’ Student Code of Conduct, ABOR Policy 5-308, prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to one’s self. See: http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students

**Accessibility and Accommodations:**
It is the University’s goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact Disability Resources (520-621-3268) to establish reasonable accommodations. For additional information on Disability Resources and reasonable accommodations, please visit http://drc.arizona.edu/.

If you have reasonable accommodations, please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may impact your ability to fully participate.

Please be aware that the accessible table and chairs in this room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not usable.

**Student Code of Academic Integrity:**
Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. See: http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/academic-integrity/students/academic-integrity.

* Selling class notes and/or other course materials to other students or to a third party for resale is not permitted without the instructor’s express written consent. Violations to this and other course rules are subject to the Code of Academic Integrity and may result in course sanctions. Additionally, students who use D2L or UA email to sell or buy these copyrighted materials are subject to Code of Conduct Violations for misuse of student email addresses. This conduct may also constitute copyright infringement.

**Additional Resources for Students:**
UA Non-discrimination and Anti-harassment policy: http://policy.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/Nondiscrimination.pdf
UA Academic policies and procedures are available at:
http://catalog.arizona.edu/2014-15/policies/aaindex.html
Student Assistance and Advocacy information is available at:
http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/student-assistance/students/student-assistance
Confidentiality of Student Records: http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/default.htm

Subject to Change Statement:
Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

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.

Because this course focuses on in-depth engagement with a small number of central theorists and theoretical traditions, it can not provide coverage of every theorist or tradition that has been important or useful to the development of sociology, sociological theory and sociologists. For the beginning of an orientation to various classical and contemporary figures and perspectives that this course does not examine in depth, you can consult the following: Handbook of Social Theory, edited by George Ritzer and Barry Smart (Sage, 2001); Classical Sociological Theory, edited by Craig Calhoun, Joseph Gerteis et al (Blackwell, 2003); Contemporary Sociological Theory, edited by Craig Calhoun, Joseph Gerteis et al (Blackwell, 2003); George Ritzer and Douglas J. Goodman, Sociological Theory (6th Edition, 2003, McGraw-Hill), Irving Zeitlin, Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory (7th edition, Prentice-Hall, 2000); and Wesley Longhofer and Daniel Winchester, Social Theory Rewired: New Connections to Classical and Contemporary Perspectives, Routledge, 2012.
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 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. They are available at the UA Bookstore.

If you already have some of these books, and they don’t happen to be from the publisher and edition ordered by the Bookstore, 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.


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 also are available directly from JSTOR or otherwise online.

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.


I will place a copy of the Zeitlin book, mentioned earlier (Irving Zeitlin, Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory, 7th edition, Prentice-Hall, 2000) in the 4th floor library. Because it only is available in hard back, it is quite expensive.

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

   (especially if you are interested in the intellectual history of the United States or pragmatism and the foundations of American sociology).
   (especially for the relationship between cognition and emotion, known heuristics and biases).
   1996 (paper 2005)
   (biological underpinnings and neurological mechanisms of self and consciousness).
Eric Kandel, 2012. *The Age of Insight: The Quest to Understand the Unconscious in Art, Mind and Brian, from Vienna to the Present.* Random House

**COURSE CALENDAR AND OUTLINE:**

**WEEK 1: (August 22-24) 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 (August 29-31): REQUIRED READING:

WEEK 3 (September 5-7): REQUIRED READING
Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*. (147 pages total)
(about 370 total pages of reading)

WEEK 4 (September 12-14: REQUIRED READING

WEEK 5 (September 19-21): REQUIRED READING [no class on Sept. 19]

WEEKS 6-9: Marx and Marxist Legacies:

WEEK 6 (September 26-October 28): REQUIRED READING
Marx, opening pages of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in *The Essential Marx*, edited by Ernst Fischer, pp. 167-72
(about 150 total pages of reading)

**WEEK 7 (October 3-5): 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 10-12): 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;
(approximately 230 pages total of reading)

**WEEK 9 (October 17-19): REQUIRED READING**
(about 55 total pages of reading)

**TAKE HOME MID-TERM EXAM** distributed in class Thursday, October 29.
   Mid-Term due in hard copy on Thursday, October 26 at the beginning of class.
   Please also provide a digital copy by e-mail.
WEEKS 10-13: Weber and Weberian Legacies:

WEEK 10 (October 24-26): REQUIRED READING

Week 11 (October 31-November 2): REQUIRED READING
Weber, Economy and Society, Chapter I, “Basic Sociological Terms,” (pp. 4-54).
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 7-9, 14-16): REQUIRED READING
(about 250 total pages of reading for two weeks)

WEEKS 14-16: (November 21, 28-30, December 5) Mead and Symbolic Interaction:
Note: Thanksgiving is Thursday November 23, No class.
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?”
Sheldon Stryker. 2008. From Mead to a Structural Symbolic Interaction and Beyond,” Annual Review of Sociology 34: 15-31;
www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.soc.34.040507.134649
Reprinted in Calhoun, Gerteis et al, Classical Sociological Theory, pp. 281-286
(about 245 total pages of reading for the final 3 weeks of class)

TAKE HOME FINAL EXAMINATION distributed in class Tuesday December 5.
Due on Tuesday 12 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*

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
*Capitalism and Patriarchy*

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*


Classes

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
Eric Kandel, 2012. The Age of Insight: The Quest to Understand the Unconscious in Art, Mind and Brian, from Vienna to the Present. Random House

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.