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SOCI 455.01: Classical Sociological Theory

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Classical Social Theory
Soci 455: Fall 2018
Tues/Thurs 6:30-7:50 LA 308

INSTRUCTOR: Krista Caffrey

OFFICE: Social Science 307

OFFICE HOURS: Tues/Thurs 5:00 pm-6:15 pm and by appointment

EMAIL: krista.caffrey@mso.umd.edu (I will try to respond as promptly as possible)

“All our knowledge results from questions, which is another way of saying that question-asking is our most important intellectual tool. I would go so far as to say that the answers we carry about in our heads are largely meaningless unless we know the questions which produced them. ... What, for example, are the sorts of questions that obstruct the mind, or free it, in the study of history? How are these questions different from those one might ask of a mathematical proof, or a literary work, or a biological theory? ... What students need to know are the rules of discourse which comprise the subject, and among the most central of such rules are those which govern what is and what is not a legitimate question.”

Neil Postman (1979)

Purpose of the course

To introduce advanced undergraduate students to major classical sociological theories. It is important to note that while we will be covering many theorists it is not enough to memorize the names and concepts. Everyone needs to be involved in the analysis of each theorist's philosophical premises and implications, and the historical conditions from which their ideas arose.

Learning objectives: The class is structured to provide you with opportunities

- To appreciate the contributions of selected classical theorists to sociological thought.
- To apply classical sociological theory to contemporary social behavior and issues.
- To encourage further exploration of topics in sociological theory.
- To develop transferable skills: collaborative learning¹, professional writing, and presentation.

Required Reading: Bring your text and any additional readings to class.

Allan, Kenneth and Sarah Daynes. 2017. *Explorations in Classical Sociological Theory: Seeing the Social World, 4th edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications

Summary of Course Requirements

| <u>Requirement:</u> | <u>Points:</u> |
|--|----------------|
| “Pop” assignments | 75 |
| Tests: 3 @ 100 points; (4 tests, will drop lowest) | 300 |
| Final Test | 100 |
| Group Project | 75 |
| Total Points | 550 |

Grades: 90% A; 80%B; 70%C; 60% D; Less than 60% F

¹ **Collaborative learning** (i.e., a learning context in which students share the responsibility for interpreting, coming to some agreement about the meaning of assigned readings, and/or clarifying disagreements). In collaborative learning environment the instructor has many responsibilities from selecting appropriate text to developing learning activities. Of all these responsibilities one of the most important is creat[ing] a classroom environment that help students experience the ambivalence, anger, frustration that often accompany genuine learning” (Delucchi and Smith 1997:337). To create this environment the class is structured around instructor guided lectures, small student lead discussion groups, writing exercises, and student presentations.

Participation and attendance are required if you would like to do well

Attendance: I will not take formal attendance. You are all adults and as such I expect you to make wise decisions regarding the education you pay so much for. In lieu of attendance there will be “pop” assignments, and if you do not attend class, you may miss some assignments and lose those points.

Some points to consider for class & group discussions.

Remember to respect your fellow students. Theorists often disagree, but they usually do so in a professional manner. We will always try to do so.

Tests:

Regular Tests: There will be 4 regular tests. Tests may not be fully comprehensive, but will always have a comprehensive component. The regular tests will consist of multiple choice, matching, define & explain relevance, short answer, and refutes. You may drop your lowest **non-zero** (i.e., you will not be able to drop a test score if you do not take all 4 tests).

Final Test: The final is one question (you select from two). Please bring a blue book for the final

Important Stuff

Academic Etiquette: Class begins on time. Please resist the temptation to begin packing up to leave before the end of class. If you must leave early please let me know before class and cause as little disruption as possible when you leave. Academic etiquette also includes treating all class members with respect and resisting the desire to have private conversations with the people sitting near you. Even whispering is distracting to others, including the instructor.

Academic Integrity & Misconduct: Plagiarism or cheating of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in failing the course. In addition to failing the course it is possible there will be other disciplinary action as I will report the incident. Cheating is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. Forms of cheating include, but are not limited, to turning in a paper written for another course, having another student write your assignment, copying another student’s assignment, and plagiarizing. Plagiarism comes in a lot of forms. The most common form of plagiarism used by students is failure to cite sources. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism please ask. Also read the plagiarism handouts prepared by Mansfield Library.

All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at: <http://life.umt.edu/SA/documents/fromWeb/StudentConductCode1.pdf>.

Reading: Learning about sociological theory involves lots of reading and thinking about what you have read. Some of the material will be difficult to read but it is imperative that you make every effort to read through it BEFORE class. This will give you a sense of what you do and don’t understand. When you read it the second or third time you will be likely start to gain an understanding of the perspective in question

About You: If you have needs that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know in person or on your written information sheet. By working together we will be able to make this class a positive experience for you. I am happy to make reasonable accommodations for any student who desires them. Please let me know as soon as possible what you require

Professor's Philosophy of Education

- The quality of the course is the reciprocal responsibility of teachers and students.
- Education requires active learning and practice in all types of communication skills (e.g. writing and speaking as well as reading and listening.)
- Grades should reflect achievement both in absolute terms and relative to other students.
- A course should truly be worth three semester credits at a very good, accredited institution.

This class will be oriented toward student participation: You are responsible for doing the reading, preparing comments/questions, and participating in class discussion. Class time will be spent discussing the material. **I will spend little time lecturing.**

COURSE OUTLINE

The schedule is *TENTATIVE and SUBJECT TO CHANGE*. If there are any changes they will be announced in class and/or Moodle.

| Date | Topic & Important Dates | Reading |
|--|--|--|
| Week 1 Aug 28 th & 30 th | What is sociology? What is theory? In-Class discussion of Chapter 1 | Allan: Chapters 3 |
| Week 2 Sept 4 th & 6 th | A Radical Theorist: Karl Marx | Allan: Chapter 3 Plagiarism read the following: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/ http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/plagiarism.pdf |
| Week 3 Sept 11 th & 13 th | A Radical Theorist: Karl Marx <u>Thursday:</u> Review for Exam 1 | Allan: Chapter 3 |
| Week 4 Sept 18 th & 20 th | <u>Tuesday:</u> Exam 1 <u>Thursday:</u> Durkheim intro <i>*assign groups for project and discuss topic</i> | Allen: Chapter 4 |
| Week 5 Sept 25 th & 27 th | A Conservative Theorist: Durkheim | Allan: Chapter 4 |
| Week 6 Oct 2 nd & 4 th | A Conservative Theorist: Durkheim <u>Thursday:</u> Review for Exam 2 | Allan: Chapter 4 |

| | | |
|---|---|------------------|
| Week 7 Oct. 9 th & 11 th | <u>Tuesday: Exam 2</u> <u>Thursday: Intro to Weber</u> | Allan: Chapter 5 |
| Week 8 Oct 16 th & 18 th | Theories of Complexity and Form: Weber | Allan: Chapter 5 |
| Week 9 Oct 23 rd & 25 th | Theories of Complexity and Form: Weber <u>Thursday: Review for Exam 3</u> | Allan: Chapter 5 |
| Week 10 Oct 30 th & Nov 1 | <u>Tuesday: Exam 3</u> <u>Thursday: Intro to Simmel</u> <u>*Annotated Bibliographies Due</u> | Allan: Chapter 6 |
| Week 11 Nov 6 th & 8 th | <u>Tuesday: Election Day: NO CLASS</u> <u>Thursday:</u> Theories of Complexity and Form: Simmel | Allan: Chapter 6 |
| Week 12 Nov 13 th & 15 th | Theories of Complexity and Form: Simmel <u>Thursday:</u> <u>*Detailed plan for presentation due</u> | Allan: Chapter 6 |
| Week 13 Nov 20 th & 22 nd | Social Psychology: Mead <u>Thursday: Thanksgiving : NO CLASS</u> | Allan: Chapter 6 |
| Week 14 Nov 27 th & 29 th | <u>Tuesday: Finish Mead and Review for Exam 4</u> <u>Thursday: Exam 4</u> | |
| Week 15 Dec 4 th & 6 th | <u>Tuesday: Group Presentations</u> <u>Thursday: Review for final</u> | |
| Finals Week Dec 10 th -14 th | Final Exam. ○ TBD | |