

Prof. John Boli
727-7509 jboli@emory.edu
Tarbutton 231

Spring 2001-02
MWF 10:40-11:30
home (770) 393-4720

Sociology 457 **Development of Sociological Theory**

Overview

This course introduces and critically analyzes the sociological theories of Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Simmel, and Mead, as well as examples of recent theoretical work drawing on these classic traditions. Major themes include the rise of modern society, dimensions of stratification, social solidarity and identity, and the social nature of the individual and the self. Special attention will be given to showing the relevance of classic theory for contemporary society and social issues. The course covers challenging material that requires a good deal of work to be understood and absorbed.

Pointers for doing well:

(1) *Keep up with the reading.* Much of the reading is from the original texts, so it will be time-consuming and sometimes difficult. If you have read the assigned material before each class, you will get much more out of the lectures and discussions.

(2) *Think about the readings and ideas.* Reading alone will not be enough; you'll need to think through the ideas you encounter and reflect on them. Discussing readings and ideas with other students in the course will help greatly in this regard.

(3) *Apply the theoretical ideas* to present-day society and your own life. These are not simply abstract theories about unfamiliar places or long-ago times; they can illuminate your understanding of yourself, of American society, and of world society as a whole.

(4) *Ask questions in class* about anything that is unclear. Any question that comes to mind can be useful, so don't hesitate even if you feel that your question may have an obvious or simple answer.

Course requirements

A. **Reading** in accordance with the syllabus. You will be required to prepare short statements with the main points of the reading selections as well as questions useful for initiating discussion in class about the readings.

B. Written **exercises** of three to four pages each. The exercises concern concepts or themes in the readings, the application of ideas to present-day situations, or the implications of theories for research. Six exercises will be assigned; your five best exercises will count for your grade.

C. Two **midterm examinations** and a **final** examination, each covering about a third of the course. The final is scheduled for Tuesday, May 7, 8:30-11 am. The exams will include short-answer and essay questions. The final will not be cumulative.

D. **Class participation** is essential. Do the assigned reading before class, come to class, and be prepared to talk about the reading and lecture material.

Grading

Your grade will be determined as follows:

Participation and reading statements	15%
Written exercises	30%
Exams (two midterms and third exam)	
20% each midterm, 15% for third exam	55%

Books to buy

Robert Bellah, ed. *Emile Durkheim on Morality and Society*, 1975

Richard W. Hadden, *Sociological Theory: An Introduction to the Classical Tradition*, 1997

Anselm Strauss, ed. *George Herbert Mead on Social Psychology*, 1964

Robert C. Tucker, ed. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., 1978

Online reserve reading

Numerous articles and book chapters are available online as reserve reading in the LearnLink conference for this course. The readings are in .PDF format for use with Acrobat Reader; you can read them on the screen or print them. Everything on the syllabus that is not in the books listed above is on reserve.

COURSE OUTLINE
(subject to revision)

- Jan 16 Introduction: the rise of modern society, the rise of social theory
Jan 18 Theory in daily life.

Part 1. Adam Smith and Rational Choice Theory

- Jan 23 Adam Smith, excerpt from *The Wealth of Nations*
Jan 25 Laurence Iannacone, "Why Strict Churches Are Strong," from *American Journal of Sociology*

Exercise 1: Rational choice theory

Part 2. Karl Marx: Materialism, Classes, Dialectical Change

- Jan 28- Hadden, Ch. 2, "Karl Marx" (pp. 39-84)
Feb 8 A. Tucker reader, pp. 3-6, 143-65, 172-5, 190-3, 473-83
(Preface to *Critique of Political Economy, German Ideology, Manifesto Part I*)
B. Tucker reader, pp. 218-9, 439-42, 579-85, 594-617
(Coming Upheaval, Necessity/Freedom, Engels on Manchester, 18th Brumaire)
C. Tucker reader, pp. 351-61, 407-15, 436-8, 483-91, 512-9
(Capital Vol. 1, *Manifesto Part II, Address to Working Men's Intl. Assoc.*)

Exercise 2: Critiquing Marx

2a. Marxian Analysis

- Feb 11- Erik Olin Wright, Ch.14, "Class Consciousness and Class Formation in Sweden, the
Feb 15 United States and Japan," from *Class Counts*
Immanuel Wallerstein, "Theoretical Reprise" from *The Modern World-System, Vol. 1*
James O'Connor, Ch.8, "Is Sustainable Capitalism Possible?" from *Is Capitalism Sustainable?*

Feb 18 **First midterm exam**

Part 3. Durkheim: Differentiation and the Moral Dimension

- Feb 20- Hadden, Ch. 3, "Emile Durkheim" (pp. 85-124)
Mar 1 A. Bellah reader, Chs. 4, 10
(Individualism and the Intellectuals, Dualism of Human Nature)
B. Bellah reader, Chs. 7, 8, 9
(Solidarity and the Division of Labor)
C. Bellah reader, Chs. 11 (all), 12 (pp. 187-206)
(Totemic Principle, Elementary Forms of Religious Life)

Exercise 3: Rituals and religious reality

3a. Durkheimian Analysis

- Mar 4- Randall Collins, Ch. 1, "The Nonrational Foundations of Rationality," from
 Mar 8 *Sociological Insight*
 Amitai Etzioni, "Toward a Theory of Public Ritual," from *Sociological Theory*
 Thorulfur Thorlindsson and Thoroddur Bjarnason, "Modeling Durkheim on the Micro
 Level: A Study of Youth Suicidality," from *American Sociological Review*
 Robert Bellah et al., "Transforming American Culture," from *Habits of the Heart*
- Mar 11-15 **Spring recess.**

Part 4. Max Weber: Rationality, Religion, Authority

- Mar 18- Hadden, Ch. 4, "Max Weber" (pp. 125-158)
 Mar 27 A. Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," from *From Max Weber*
 "Bureaucratic Authority," from *Sociological Writings*
 B. Max Weber, "Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism," from *The Protestant Ethic
 and the Spirit of Capitalism*
 C. Randall Collins, revised introduction to *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of
 Capitalism* (pp. vii-xxiv only)

Exercise 4: Rationalization and Weber's iron cage

4a. Weberian Analysis

- Mar 29- George Ritzer, "McDonald's as 'Americana', Sacred 'Icon', and at 35,000 Feet," from
 Apr 3 *The McDonaldization of Society*
 Frank Lechner, "The Case Against Secularization: A Rebuttal," from *Social Forces*
 Randall Collins, "Situational Stratification: A Micro-Macro Theory of Inequality," from
Sociological Theory

Apr 5 **Second midterm exam**

Part 5. Georg Simmel: The Individual, Forms, Culture

- Apr 8- Georg Simmel, "Conflict"
 Apr 12 "The Philosophy of Fashion," from *Simmel on Culture*
 "Group Expansion and the Development of Individuality"
 "Metropolis and Mental Life"
 "Money in Modern Culture" (pp. 17-27 only)

Exercise 5: Interaction in urban life

Part 6. Mead: Mind, Self, Others in Symbolic Interaction

- Apr 15- A. Strauss reader, Chs. 2, 6 (pp. 163-96 only), 14
Apr 19 (Society and Selves, Mind, Objective Reality of Perspectives)
B. Strauss reader, Chs. 7, 8
(Self, Society)

Exercise 6: Origins and structure of the self

5a and 6a. Meadian Analysis and Simmelian Analysis

- Apr 22- Peggy Giordano, "The Wider Circle of Friends in Adolescence," from *American*
Apr 24 *Journal of Sociology*
Cathryn Johnson, "The Emergence of the Emotional Self," from *Symbolic Interaction*

Part 7. Habermas: Civil Society and the Public Realm

- Apr 26- Jürgen Habermas, "Civil Society and the Constitutional State," from *Habermas and the*
Apr 29 *Korean Debate*
Nancy Love, "What's Left of Marx?", from *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas*

May 7 (Tuesday), 8:30-11 am. **Third (final) exam**