

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER
Department of Sociology
Fall 2008

SEMINAR IN SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY
SOCY 5201
Thursdays 3:30-6:20 KTCH33

Dr. Leslie Irvine
KTCH223
irvinel@colorado.edu
Office hours: Thu 11:30-1:30

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines theoretical approaches to core issues and problems in sociology, including the nature of society, the relationship between society and the individual, the role of culture and social structure, the sources of social power, and the conceptual structure of sociological knowledge itself. When you finish the course, you should feel comfortable using the major concepts and frameworks of social theory in your research and writing, and you should be able to pursue further theoretical reading on your own, as your work requires.

We will accomplish this preparation in theory by close reading and extended discussion of classic and contemporary texts, and by sharing our own sociological knowledge, perspectives on the reading, and extant research interests and projects with one another; theory is of necessity a collective project. Please bring each week's texts to class and do not be afraid to reference them during discussion. Also, do not hesitate to ask questions about the definition of terms or certain aspects of a theoretical perspective, or to use a dictionary when you are reading.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Grades will be based on response papers and participation (60%) and a presentation (40%).

Response papers: One page, single-spaced. There are six of these spaced throughout the semester, graded on a check-minus, check, and check-plus scale. In your paper, you will discuss some aspect(s) of the texts that you found compelling, and explain why.

Presentation: Twenty-minute presentation on one of the related readings. The related readings complement the required readings each week, and thus cannot be moved or changed. Students will select a reading by the second week of classes. We will have a sign-up sheet available. Your presentation should:

- Clearly summarize the central argument(s) of the reading;
- relate the reading to the required reading for that week and to the themes of the course more generally; and
- express at some point your own perspective on the reading (criticisms, comments on utility for empirical research, etc.).

REQUIRED AND RELATED READINGS

All readings not listed as “related” are required. The following books are available for purchase at the CU Bookstore. Other required readings will be posted on CULearn (indicated on schedule with *). You are responsible for obtaining the related readings for your presentation (and any others of interest to you).

- Blumer, Herbert. 1969. *Symbolic Interactionism*.
Durkheim, Émile. 1997. *The Division of Labor in Society*.
----- . 1982. *Rules of the Sociological Method*.
----- . 1995. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.
Foucault, Michel. 1990. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*.
Freud, Sigmund. 1989. *Civilization and its Discontents*.
Garfinkel, Harold. 1984. *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. (2nd Edition).
Gerth, H.H., and C. Wright Mills (eds.). 1958. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*.
Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*.
Polanyi, Karl. 2001. *The Great Transformation*.
Tucker, Robert C. (ed.). 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd Edition.
Weber, Max. 2003. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to change. I will announce changes in class and over email.)

Week 1 (Aug 28): Introduction to the Course

*Selection from C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*.

Week 2 (Sep 4): Marx: Subject-Object Relations and Ideology

The Marx-Engels Reader: “Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*,” 3-6; selections from the *1844 Manuscripts*, 66-93; and *The German Ideology*, 146-200.

*G.W.F. Hegel. “Lordship and Bondage” from *The Phenomenology of Mind*

Week 3 (Sep 11): Marx and the System of Capital

RESPONSE PAPER 1 on Marx due in Class

The Marx-Engels Reader: “The Coming Upheaval,” 218-219; selections from *Capital*, Volume One, 302-361, 376-388, and 403-431.

Related Reading:

(1)* Georg Lukacs, “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat,” from *History and Class Consciousness*

Week 4 (Sep 18): Economic Sociology beyond Marx

*Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Chapters 1-1 from *The Man-Made World, or, Our Androcentric Culture*.

Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13

Related Reading:

(2) Viviana Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child*

Week 5 (Sep 25): Durkheim: The Nature of Human Society and How to Study It
The Rules of Sociological Method, 50-59
The Division of Labor in Society, 31-88, 126-175, 310-322.

Related Reading:

(3) Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*

Week 6 (Oct 2): Durkheim: Religion and the Social Order

RESPONSE PAPER 2 on Durkheim due in class.

Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, Introduction, Chapters 1, 6, 7, 8, and Conclusion.

Related Reading:

(4) Kai Erikson, *Wayward Puritans*

Week 7 (Oct 9): Race in Sociological Thought

W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, The Forethought, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9

Related Reading:

(5) bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman?*

(6) Franz Fanon, *White Skin, Black Masks*

Week 8 (Oct 16): The Interaction order & tacit knowledge

RESPONSE PAPER 3 on Du Bois due in class.

Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*

Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, selections

*Ann Warfield Rawls, "The Interaction Order Sui Generis: Goffman's Contribution to Social Theory."

Related Reading:

(7) Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*

Week 9 (Oct 23): Theorizing the individual in society

RESPONSE PAPER 4 on interactional sociology due in class.

Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*, 1-61 and 78-90.

*Spencer Cahill. "Toward a Sociology of the Person."

*Mead: "Play, the Game, and the Generalized Other;" "The 'I' and the 'Me';" "The Social Self;" "The Fusion of the I and Me in social activities;" "Cooley's Contribution to Social Thought"

Related Reading:

(8) Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart*

Week 10 (Oct 3): Weber: Modernity and Capitalism

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

Related Reading:

(9) Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, (“The Concept of Enlightenment” and “The Culture Industry”).

Week 11 (Nov 6): Weber: On Theory, Science, and Methodology

In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*: “Science as a Vocation,” and “Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy”

*From *Economy and Society*: “Definitions of Sociology and Social Action” and “Types of Social Action”

Related Reading:

(10) Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*

Week 12 (Nov 13): Legitimate Authority, the State, and Rationalization

RESPONSE PAPER 5 on Weber due in class.

In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*: “Class, Status, Party” and “Politics as a Vocation.”

* From *Economy and Society*: “The Types of Legitimate Domination”

Related Reading:

(11) James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*

Week 13 (Nov 20): The Influence of Freudian Thought

Sigmund Freud, **“Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality,”* **“Beyond the Pleasure Principle”*

Civilization and Its Discontents (selections).

Related Reading:

(12) Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering*

Week 14 (Nov 27) FALL BREAK

Week 15 (Dec 4): Beyond Weber and Freud: Rationalization and Subjectification

RESPONSE PAPER 6 on Freud **OR** Foucault due in class.

Michel Foucault. 1990. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*.

Related Reading:

(13) Edward Said, *Orientalism*.

(14) Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

Week 16 (Dec 11): Contemporary Debates on Culture and Society

Pierre Bourdieu, *TBA*

*Ann Swidler, “Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies.” *ASR* 51 (2): 273-286.

*Jeffrey Alexander and Philip Smith, “The Strong Program in Cultural Sociology: Elements of a Structural Hermeneutics” pp. 11-27 in *The Meanings of Social Life*:

A Cultural Sociology. Oxford. 2005.

Related Reading:

(15) Pierre Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant, *Invitation to a Reflexive Sociology*.

RELEVANT POLICIES

Laptops

I find laptops distracting in class and thus do not allow them. If you must use a laptop because of a disability, please provide documentation within the first two weeks of class (see below).

Absences

You can miss one class without penalty. Missing two classes will lower your grade by one letter. I will make exceptions if extenuating circumstances such as serious illness or a death in the immediate family cause you to miss class. If you find yourself in such a situation, please inform me as early as possible.

Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter from Disability Services within the first two weeks of class so that we can address your needs. Disability Services determines accommodations based on *documented* disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and <http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices>"

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty members have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity, and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code

Academic Integrity

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to

university probation, suspension, or expulsion). For other information on the Honor Code, see <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

Religious Observances

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please notify me early in the semester if religious observance will cause you to miss a class, test, or assignment. See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

Discrimination and Harassment

The University of Colorado at Boulder policies on Discrimination and Harassment (<http://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination.html>) Sexual Harassment, and Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. For information about the ODH and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment, see <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>