

SOCIAL THEORIES
SOCI/HMCS 272/Spring 2011
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MWF: 1:10-2:20pm Theater 204

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Office Hours:
MW: 4:00-4:30

I COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to engage sociology majors with the most sophisticated and useful schools of thought available in the social science disciplines. The course raises a number of questions: How can we best understand the complexities of self and society? Are these units of analysis useful in and of themselves? Are they contained in an essential body or polity that we can identify as some unitary entity called Jenny and John Doe, American, French, Arab/Jew, black/white, modern/primitive, developed/underdeveloped, Oriental/ Occidental, homo/heterosexual, male/female? Or are they socially produced units that have no essence in-of-themselves, produced and made real only through performance with the “Other”? What role does the state – with its power to classify, to name, to categorize, to say who is who and who is not – play in all of this? What about other social institutions, like medicine, psychiatry, social work, primary and secondary schools, and science? Furthermore, is there something unique about modernity that has fundamentally transformed the notions of our selves, bodies, polities, races, and civilizations? If the answer to the last question is in the affirmative, how and why did this come to be the case, and what consequences does it hold for our understanding of the past and of the future? These are the kinds of questions that great figures in sociology have been asking since the nineteenth-century, including classic theorists like Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx, as well as more recent writers such as Ervin Goffman, Michel Foucault, Immanuel Wallerstein, and Edward Said.

The theorists covered will include the classic statements of Marx, Durkheim and Weber as well as the contemporary theories of Goffman, Wallerstein, Foucault, and Said. As we will see, the theoretical transformations from the former to the latter are many, but at the center of this change is the collapse of the essentialized self and society. The preferred terminology is dramaturgical performance, interlocutor, contrapuntal, hybridity – concepts used to demonstrate that there is no essential self, society, race, gender, nation, civilization, or religion outside of “its” relation with the “other.”

Course is divided into three sections:

Part I: The Classics: The Essentialized Self & Other

Part II: Rethinking the Classics: Self & Other as Relationally Constructed and Disciplined

Part III: After Modernity & Colonialism: Self, Society and “Other” as Nationalized, Colonized and Narrated

II REQUIRED TEXTS:

Scott Appelrouth and Laura Destor Edles, *Classical and Contemporary Sociological Theory: Text and Readings*, Pine Forge Press (2007)

III GRADING – total points = 100

94 to 100 = A	74 to 76 = C
90 to 93 = A-	70 to 73 = C-
87 to 89 = B+	67 to 69 = D+
84 to 86 = B	64 to 66 = D
80 to 83 = B-	60 to 63 = D
77 to 79 = C+	0 to 59 = F

TWO ORAL EXAMS (60 POINTS) – 30 points each x 2 (60 points)

JOURNALS DUE EACH CLASS MEETING (15 points total): For each class where readings are assigned, you are expected to write (one to two pages, typed, double-spaced) a journal entry in which you reflect on the readings. You can get creative, incorporating the readings into a movie you saw, a discussion you had with a friend or family member, found possible venues towards a future career idea, or simply a concept or an idea you found interesting or troubling. You are expected to show me this at the beginning of each class, making sure to receive a signature from me. This is your responsibility. A failure to get my signature during class time negates any possibility of receiving it afterwards. I will not grade these until the very end of the course. I will at that time ask you to hand in your entire journal for grading. The 1st week you must hand in the journal to receive comments, but after that I will no longer provide comments. You are to hold on to these journals to the end of the semester, at which point I will collect them and grade them in one sitting. **You may not hand in journals late. If you are absent on a given day, your journal for that day will not count.** A failure to hand in a journal (even if it is lost) will result in zero points for the journal grade. Your journal grade will largely be determined by:

1. How well you convinced me you read the assigned readings carefully and thoughtfully
2. The imaginative nature of incorporating the readings to your life experience, research interest, films you've seen, books you've read in other classes, and so on.

GROUP LED DISCUSSIONS: 5 POINTS

Each student will be assigned a group on the first day of class. The group assigned to lead discussion is responsible for

1. **TWO PAGE PAPER:** Each member must send to the entire class via moodle a 2-page word.doc critical essay on the readings for the day. The essay must be delivered via moodle 24 hours before the class meeting. This essay ought to mainly discuss the utility of the said readings, their usefulness, if any, with your own thinking about a particular issue related to your developing research interest, and if it could be applied to other unforeseen issues not discussed in the reading. You are also to assume the

reader has done the reading, SO PLEASE DO NOT SUMMARIZE. **This is in addition to your required journal.** So yes, you still have to do your journal as well.

2. **AS A GROUP, FORMULATE CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** The group must meet prior to class and formulate good discussion questions for the class. These must be typed and distributed to every student the day of the class.
3. **LEAD CLASS DISCUSSION:** The group leads class discussion.

I will grade you on the quality of your paper, the quality of the questions your group formulates for the discussion, and your leadership presence in the discussion, and the quality of the class discussion.

CLASS PARTICIPATION – 20 points:

Each student is expected to come to class prepared. A failure to participate in class will result in fewer points awarded. A student who comes prepared to class and *constructively* participates regularly will receive all 20 points.

CLASS ATTENDANCE – You may miss up to two sessions, after which you forfeit half a letter grade for each absence thereafter.

COMING TO CLASS LATE: You are allowed two tardiness, after which every two tardiness counts as one absence. A tardiness longer than 20 minutes counts as an absence.

EXCUSED ABSENCES: Since you are permitted two absences without penalty, those two function as your buffer for emergency days. Thus there is no need of sending me an email asking to be excused for an absence. Once you miss two absences, you will not be excused even if you are ill.

ORAL EXAMS MISSED: Only medical or family related absences will be Accepted. Documented material must be handed in to the instructor. If excused and permitted to take a make-up, be prepared for a more difficult exam than the original.

IV FILMS

Office Space

Codes of Gender

Race: The Power of an Illusion (Disc 2)

Edward Said On Orientalism

V COURSE OUTLINE

Part I: The Classic Statements: The Essentialized and Temporalized Self & Other

“In the Beginning . . .”

M 1/24: OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE:

- a) What to expect in the course
- b) Introduction & overview of the course
- c) Class structure: The difference between Lecture days, student led discussions, small group, and fishbowl
- d) Read the syllabus closely for 5 minutes and then take a quiz.
- e) Getting to Know One Another
- f) Group assignment (1 through 5)

W: 1/26: EMILE DURKHEIM (Lecture)

Appelrouth & Edles, Chapter 3

F: 1/28: CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION of Durkheim (GROUP 1):

- Robert Putnam, “Health and Happiness” (moodle)

M: 1/31: CRITICAL APPRAISALS (Small group discussion):

- R.W. Connell, “Why is Classical Theory Classical?” (moodle)
- 7 page selection of Durkheim on modern versus traditional societies (moodle).

W: 2/02: KARL MARX (Lecture)

Appelrouth & Edles, Chapter 2

F: 2/04: CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION of Marx (GROUP 2):

- Kellner, Media Culture and Ideology from Reagan to Rambo (moodle)
- Nick Dyer-Witherford, The New Combinations: The Revolt of the Global Value-Subjects (moodle)

M: 2/7: CRITICAL APPRAISALS: (Small group discussion)

- Karl Marx, “On Imperialism in India” (moodle)
- Karl Marx, “On Algeria”
- Ali Mirsepassi, “Western Narratives of Modernity” (moodle)

W: 2/9: MAX WEBER (Lecture)

Appelrouth & Edles, Chapter 4

F: 2/11: CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION of Weber (GROUP 3):

- Bauman, “Sociology After the Holocaust” (moodle)

M: 2/14: CRITICAL APPRAISALS (Fish Bowl):

- Weber, “Introduction: The Protestant Ethic & Spirit of Capitalism” (moodle)
- Blaut, “Max Weber: Western Rationality” (moodle)

W 2/16 ORAL EXAM 1 SCHEDULING: Students must schedule their 40 minute session with the professor (no class on W 2/16)

F 2/18 to M 2/21: FILM and discussion: *Office Space*

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Part II: Rethinking the Classics: Self and Other as Social Performance

W: 2/23: ERVIN GOFFMAN: The Dramaturgical Self (Lecture)

Appelrouth & Edles, chapter 12

F: 2/25: FILM: *Codes of Gender* [73 minutes]

M: 2/28: CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION I of Goffman (GROUP 4)

- Stuart Ewen, *The Dream of Wholeness*

W: 3/2: CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION II of Goffman (Small group discussion):

- C. Derber, *The Pursuit of Attention* (moodle)
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F: 3/4: FEMINIST THEORIES: Constructing the Body (Lecture)

Appelrouth and Edles, chapter 14

M: 3/7: CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION of Feminism (GROUP 5):

- Susan Bordo, “Beauty (re)discovers the Male Body” (moodle)

W: 3/9: POSTCOLONIAL APPLICATION AND CRITICISM of Feminism (GROUP 1):

- Uma Nayan, “Contrasting Colonial Stance and Contemporary Contestation of Sati” (moodle)
 - Chandra Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse (moodle)
 - Houria Bouteldga (very short), “White Women and the privilege of solidarity”
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F 3/11 TO F 3/18 SPRING BREAK (no class)

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M: 3/21: MICHEL FOUCAULT: Disciplining the Self & the Other (Lecture)

Appelrouth & Edles, Chapter 15 (only Foucault section)

W: 3/23: CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION of Foucault (GROUP 2)

Foucault, “The Incitement to Discourse” (moodle)

Stuart Hall, “Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse (moodle)

F: 3/25: CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION of Foucault (Small group)

William G. Staples, *Everyday Surveillance* (chs. 2, 3, & 4 moodle)

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M: 3/28: Youtube videos & Discussion: Foucault vs. Chomsky

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nz_xE7ywqHc&feature=related

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WveI_vgmPz8&feature=related

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0SaqrXgJvw&feature=related>

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Part III: After Modernity and Colonialism: Self, Society and “Other” as Nationalized, Colonized and Narrated:

W: 3/30: POSTMODERN ADVENTURES: BAUDRILLARD, Debord and the Situationists BAUDRILLARD & THE SITUATIONALISTS:

1. Appelrouth and Edles, chapter 15 (Baudrillard section only)
2. Best and Kellner, “From the Society of the Spectacle to Debord and Baudrillard” (moodle)

F: 4/1: CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION of Baudrillard (GROUP 3)

3. Best and Kellner, “Modern/Postmodern Wars” (moodle)

M: 4/04: IMMANUEL WALLERSTEIN: “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts”

Appelrouth & Edles, chapter 17 (do NOT read the section on Edward Said)

W: 4/06: WALLERSTEIN ON WORLD-SYSTEM ANALYSIS:

FILM: *Race: The Power of An Illusion* (disc 2?)

F: 4/8: CONTEMPORARY READINGS (GROUP 4):

J. Blaut, “After 1492” (moodle)

M: 4/11: EDWARD SAID: Orient & Occident as Mutually Constituted (Lecture)

- Appelrouth and Edles: Chapter 17 (the section on Said only)
- Edward Said, “Clash of Definitions” (moodle)

W: 4/13: CONTEMPORARY APPLICATIONS (GROUP 5):

- Samman, “The Colonizer’s Time Machine” (moodle)
- T. Mitchell, “The Invention and Reinvention of the Egyptian Peasant” (moodle)

F: 4/15: FILM and discussion: “Edward Said on Orientalism”

M 4/18: ORAL EXAM 2 SCHEDULING: Students must schedule their 30-minute session with the professor (no readings during exam week)

W 4/20 to W 4/27: STUDENT PRESENTS:

- Which theorist in your opinion is strongest and which is weakest. Please explain.
- How you think you’ll utilize specific theorists for your senior paper capstone. Please be specific.
- Each student gets 15 minutes to speak.

M 5/02: LAST DAY OF CLASS

- JOURNALS DUE: Students must hand in their entire journal
- EVALUATION
- FOOD [Shish] AND KHALDOUN WILL DRUM