

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL
Spring, 2008

Sociological Theory

(SOCI 250)

Sections 001 and 601 TR 9:30–10:45 Bingham 103, Woollen Gym 304

Professor Andrew J. Perrin

TA: Matthew Loyd

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Matt Loyd: Carolina Population Center, 401-I (in University Square, east tower)
Office hours: **Prof. Perrin:** Tuesdays, 11:00–12:30; Wednesdays, 10:00–11:30; or by
appointment

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COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is designed to give you an overview of major themes in sociological theory. In addition, it should give you an idea of the relationship between sociological theory and sociological research, and of the process of building sociological theory.

This course has four broad goals:

1. To present the history of sociological theory
2. To encourage a theoretical mode of thought
3. To consider the theoretical implications of social research and action
4. To promote excellent writing

READINGS AND RESOURCES

Required Books

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. *Racism Without Racists* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2006).

Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J. D. Wacquant. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (University of Chicago Press, 1992).

Émile Durkheim. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Free Press, 1995).

Michel Foucault. *The Birth of the Clinic* (Vintage, 1994).

Optional Books for the Second Paper

You will write on **one** of these books, of your choice, for your second paper; you do not need all of them unless you are interested in them for your own purposes. The first four have been ordered in the bookstore for this class; the others you will have to find on your own in a bookstore or library.

Barry Glassner. *The Gospel of Food* (Ecco, 2007).

Sam Harris. *The End of Faith* (Norton, 2005).

Frank Rich. *The Greatest Story Ever Sold* (Penguin, 2006).

Mark Steyn. *America Alone: The End of the World as We Know It* (Regnery Publishing, 2008).

You may select one of the following for your final paper; however, they have not been ordered by the bookstore for this class.

Malcolm Gladwell. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (Back Bay Books, 2000).

James Surowiecki. *The Wisdom of Crowds* (Anchor, 2004).

Supplementary Readings

All other readings are available either on the web or on the course website. Readings available on the course website are marked with the WWW symbol. Those available on the web are linked from the course website. A few readings are on reserve in the library, and should also be available by electronic reserve; these are marked with the LIB symbol. The course website is available through <http://blackboard.unc.edu> and is also linked from <http://perrin.socsci.unc.edu>. The library maintains a special site for this class with helpful resources: http://www.lib.unc.edu/coursepages/soci/s08_soci250.html.

Other Resources

Have a dictionary close at hand to look up words you don't know. You can find an adequate one at <http://www.dictionary.com> if you prefer using an online version.

The UNC Writing Center (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb>) can help you with writing clearly and correctly. These are requirements of the class; you cannot do social theory adequately without writing well.

There is an astonishing amount of information available on the World Wide Web. A significant proportion of that information—though by no means all—is true and relevant. By all means, use the Web to supplement your reading and knowledge, but use it critically and make sure you know the source of the information.

FORMAL REQUIREMENTS

The requirements of this course are as follows:

Reading You must complete all the course readings. *You are responsible for understanding the readings*—make use of your fellow students, your dictionary, the Internet, your TA, and me to make sure you understand the readings. Course time is to be used for substantive discussion and further exploration of the implications of course readings, *not* for grasping the basic contents.

Reading is due on the first *discussion* session about the reading. You may decide whether to do readings before or after a lecture pertaining to them.

Participation You must attend, *and participate in*, all class discussions. Participation in discussions means actively talking in them; attendance counts only for a very small portion of the credit. Come to discussions prepared to ask questions and discuss the readings. You are also responsible for the information contained in course lectures.

Exams There will be two examinations. The midterm examination will be a one-period, essay-style test held in class on March 6. You may consult any notes or printed materials you wish during the midterm exam.

The final exam will be a time-limited, open-book and open-note exam. It will take place in Bingham 103 on Tuesday, April 29, 2008, at 8:00 AM. **You may be required to view a video before taking the exam. If so, this will be announced in class.**

Class Papers There are four written assignments:

1. Spend at least 30 minutes observing some social scene, such as a sporting event, a restaurant, a class, etc. Carefully note the social environment you observe, including the interactions and your observations about them. Write a short (2–4 page) description of your observations, highlighting anything you found puzzling, problematic, or particularly interesting. **Due January 29 in class.**
2. Choose one of the optional books listed at the top of the syllabus and write a short (4–7 page) *social theoretical* discussion of it. Your discussion should be neither a summary nor an opinion about the book; rather, it should engage with one or more theories of society in or related to the book and explore the implications. You may select a different book only with Professor Perrin's prior permission. It is strongly recommended, but not required, that you select a book with whose argument you expect to *disagree*. **Due February 26 in class.**
3. Write a short (2–4 page) theoretical discussion of Professor Joyce Rudinsky's installation, *Spectacular Justice*. Your discussion should connect, in some way, the art installation with one or more topic(s) or theorist(s) we have studied in class. **Due April 10 at the beginning of class. No late papers accepted whatsoever.**
4. The final paper is your opportunity to synthesize what you have learned during the class with outside interests and experiences. Your final paper must develop a sociological argument using appropriate sources. It is an academic paper and, as such, must be written in an appropriate style. Use the observations you catalogued for assignment 1 above. Analyze these interactions, and the social system of your observed setting, using *at least* two theorists from class. If you have another topic, relevant to the course and its readings, on which you would like to write, you must discuss it and get approval *before* you begin work on it. Papers on other topics that have not been pre-approved will receive no credit. **Due April 7 by 5:00 pm.**

Completing these requirements adequately will earn you a **B-** in the course. Completing them *exceptionally well* will earn you a B+, A-, or A, depending on the quality of work.

Grading

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

Discussion Participation	10%
Attendance	2%
Active Discussion	8%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Exam	20%
Observation paper	10%
Book discussion	15%
Rudinsky art paper	10%
Final Paper	20%

COURSE ORGANIZATION

During most weeks, Tuesday's class will be a combined lecture, to be held in Bingham 103. Thursday classes will usually be discussion classes; they will meet as follows:

- Last names beginning with A–M: Bingham 103
- Last names beginning with N–Z: Woolen Gym 304

Check the syllabus schedule for exceptions to this rule.

Lectures and videos are integral to the content of the course. Slides and notes will *sometimes* be posted to the course website, but there is no substitute for attending the lecture.

COURSE POLICIES

YOU ARE AN ADULT. As a student in this class, you are provided with a set of resources for learning the class's contents, and you are expected to fulfill a series of requirements designed to evaluate the depth and breadth of your knowledge of those contents. Your grade, therefore, is a reflection of your success in utilizing the resources you have at your disposal.

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INFORMATION IN THE READINGS AND GIVEN DURING LECTURES. If you do not understand something I say in a lecture, ask me during the lecture, during a later class, or privately via e-mail or office hours.

ON DAYS WHEN DISCUSSIONS ARE SCHEDULED, participation is mandatory. Your participation will be useless—and graded as such—if you have not done the reading.

ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE ON THE DATES LISTED. Make sure you give yourself sufficient time to finish assignments by their due dates. You will lose roughly one letter grade per day between the due date and the date the paper is received. You may make the calculation yourself as to whether your work will improve sufficiently in the extra time to make up for the grade reduction. In exceptional cases, I may grant an extension; you *must* discuss this with me in advance.

YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS COURSE IS COVERED BY THE UNC HONOR CODE (see <http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/studinfo.html>). I take academic dishonesty—including, but not limited to, plagiarism—very seriously. There will be no excuses or second chances; if you have plagiarized the *ideas* or *words* of someone else without giving credit, you will be referred to the Student Attorney General. If you have questions as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, check <http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/plagiarism.html> or consult your TA or me.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction

January 10 Lecture: Introduction to Sociological Theory

Week 2: Philosophical Foundations

Reading:

- Plato, “Allegory of the Cave” (<http://www.historyguide.org/intellect/allegory.html>)
- Kant, “What is Enlightenment” (<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/kant.html>)
- Hegel, “Enlightenment” and “Absolute freedom and terror” (<http://www.class.uidaho.edu/mickelsen/ToC/Hegel%20Phen%20ToC.htm>)

January 15 Lecture: Philosophical Foundations

January 17 Discussion: Philosophical Foundations

Week 3: Durkheim

Reading: Durkheim, pp. 1–20, 33–44, 99–126, 418–448

Recommended Additional Reading:

- Karen Fields, Translator's Introduction to *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*
- The rest of Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*
- Robert Bellah, et al. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* LIB
- Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (University of Chicago Press, 2000) LIB
- Durkheim, "Secularisation and Rationality." pp. 239–249 in "Selected Writings" (ed. Anthony Giddens). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.

January 22: Lecture: Émile Durkheim

January 24: Discussion

Week 4: Marx I

Reading: Marx, "The German Ideology," Part I, Section A (pp. 149–175 in the *Marr-Engels Reader*, or sections A and B from the MIA: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01.htm>)

Recommended Additional Reading:

- Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," pp. 157–210 in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, edited by Rayna Reiter. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975. WWW)
- Michael Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent* LIB

January 29: Lecture: Karl Marx: Humanity, Alienation, Capitalism

First paper due in class

January 31: Discussion

Week 5: Marx II

Reading: Marx,

- "Wage Labor and Capital," pp. 203–217 in the *Marr-Engels Reader* or <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/wage-labour/index.htm> (skip preface)
- *Capital*, Volume One, Part II, "The Transformation of Money into Capital." pp. 329–343 in the *Marr-Engels Reader* or:
 - <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch04.htm>
 - <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch06.htm>

Recommended Additional Reading:

- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*
- Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air* LIB
- Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts* (Cambridge University Press 2000) LIB

February 5: Lecture: Karl Marx: Economics and the Theory of History

February 7: Discussion

Week 6: Weber I

Reading: Weber, Selections from *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (Free Press, 1947): pp. 115–118, 324–345, 358–386 WWW

February 12: Lecture: Max Weber: Rationalization and Bureaucracy

February 14: Discussion

Week 7: Weber II

Reading: Weber, "Class, Status, Party," pp. 926–939 in *Economy and Society* WWW

Recommended Additional Reading:

- Weber, “Science as a Vocation”
- Ann Swidler, *Talk of Love* (University of Chicago Press, 2001) LIB
- Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* LIB

February 19: Lecture: Marx and Weber: Opposing Worldviews?

February 21: Discussion

Week 8: The Critical Turn

Reading:

- C. Wright Mills, Selection from *The Sociological Imagination*, <http://www.camden.rutgers.edu/~wood/207socimagination.htm>
- Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, “The Culture Industry” (selection), <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/adorno/1944/culture-industry.htm>
- Herbert Marcuse, “Repressive Tolerance” <http://www.marcuse.org/herbert/pubs/60spubs/65repressivetolerance.htm>

Additional Recommended Reading:

- Theodor Adorno, “Opinion Research and Publicness,” Translated and introduced by Andrew J. Perrin and Lars W. Jarkko. *Sociological Theory* 23 (2005). <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/links/doi/10.1111%2Fj.0735-2751.2005.00245.x>
- Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*. <http://www.marcuse.org/herbert/pubs/64onedim/odmcontents.html>

February 26: Lecture: The Critical Turn
Second paper due in class

February 28: Discussion

Week 9: Summing up the High Modernists

Reading:

- du Bois, “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” (chapter 1 of *The Souls of Black Folk*. <http://www.bartleby.com/114/1.html>)
- Fields, “Individuality and the Intellectuals: An imaginary conversation between W.E.B. Du Bois and Emile Durkheim.” *Theory and Society* 31 (2002): 435–462. <http://ipsapp007.lwonline.com/content/getfile/5152/34/3/fulltext.pdf>

March 4: Lecture: Summing Up the High Modernist Period

March 6: Midterm Exam

Week 10: Structure and Agency, Self and Society

Reading:

- Anthony Giddens, “Agency, Structure,” pp. 49–95 in *Central Problems in Social Theory*
- William H. Sewell, Jr., “A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation.” *American Journal of Sociology* 98 (1992). <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-9602%28199207%2998%3A1%3C1%3AATOSDA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-9>
- Jo Freeman, “The Tyranny of Structurelessness.” <http://www.jofreeman.com/joreen/tyranny.htm>

Additional Recommended Reading:

- Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*
- George Herbert Mead, “The Social Self,” <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/us/mead3.htm>
- Mische, Ann, and Mustafa Emirbayer. “What is Agency?” *American Journal of Sociology* 103 (1998): 962. (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-9602%28199801%29103%3A4%3C962%3AWIA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-7>)

March 18: Lecture: Structure and Agency

March 20: Discussion

Week 11: High Modernism in Popular Culture

March 25: *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, Part I

March 27: *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, Part II

Week 12: Bourdieu

Reading: Bourdieu and Wacquant, pp. 94–139 and 224–234

April 1: Lecture: Bourdieu and the Problem of Practice

April 3: Discussion

Week 13: Contemporary Inequalities

Reading:

- Bonilla-Silva, chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6
- Richard N. Pitt, Jr. “Downlow Mountain?: De/Stigmatizing Bisexuality through Pitying and Pejorative Discourses in Media.” *Journal of Men’s Studies* 14:2 (Spring, 2006): 254–258. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=20913805&site=ehost-live>
- Visit Professor Joyce Rudinsky’s art installation, *Spectacular Justice*, at the ITS Manning building (more information in class)

Additional Recommended Readings:

- Patricia Hill Collins, “It’s All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation.” *Hypatia* 13:3 (1998): 62. (<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=1234300&site=ehost-live>)
- Donna Haraway, “The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others.” In Grossberg, Nelson, and Treichler, eds., *Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1992). (<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/Haraway/monsters.html>)
- Steven Seidman, “Queer-ing Sociology, Sociologizing Queer Theory: An Introduction.” *Sociological Theory* 12:2 (1994): 166. (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0735-2751%28199407%2912%3A2%3C166%3AQSSQTA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S>)
- Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

April 7: Final paper due by 5:00 pm

April 8: Lecture: Inequalities in High Modernity

April 10: Full-class discussion in Bingham 103. Guest visit: Professor Joyce Rudinsky

Week 14: Foucault

Reading:

- Foucault, from *The Birth of the Clinic*:
 - Preface
 - Chapter 3, The Free Field
 - Chapter 6, Signs and Cases
 - Chapter 8, Open Up a Few Corpses
 - Conclusion
- Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?”, <http://foucault.info/documents/whatIsEnlightenment/foucault.whatIsEnlightenment.en.html>

April 15: Lecture: Inequality, Foucault, and Postmodernity

April 17: Discussion

Week 15: The Postmodern Moment in Popular Culture

April 22: *Blade Runner: The Director’s Cut* Part I

April 24: *Blade Runner: The Director’s Cut* Part II

April 29, 8:00 AM: Final Examination