

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL  
Spring, 2004

# Social Theory

(SOCI 50)

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Section 3 MWF 1:00–1:50 Peabody 311 and Dey 313

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Professor Andrew Perrin

TA: Erin Collins; Office Hours Wednesday 2:00–2:55

Office: Hamilton 269

Office hours: 2:30–4:30 Mondays; 9:30–11:30 Thursdays

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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 write well

## READINGS AND RESOURCES

### *Required Books*

**Charles Lemert.** *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings*, 2nd ed (Westview Press, 1999).

**Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.** *The Communist Manifesto* (Signet, 1847 (1987)).

### *Recommended Book*

**George Ritzer.** *Contemporary Sociological Theory and its Classical Roots: The Basics* (McGraw-Hill, 2003).

### *Supplementary Readings*

All other readings are available either on the web or on the course website. 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://www.unc.edu/~aperrin>.

There are several other good textbooks of social and sociological theory. These include Lewis Coser's classic *Masters of Sociological Thought* and Turner et al.'s *The Structure of Sociological Theory*. You may find copies of these in the library or borrow my copies if you are interested.

### *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.

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. *You are responsible for establishing the reliability of information you glean from the web and use in course activities including discussions and written work.*

## 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.

**Vocabulary Exercises** You must turn in two short (one page or less) exercises in which you learn the meaning of a word in one of the class readings *whose meaning you did not previously know*. You should note the word, its definition, and its meaning in the context of the reading.

**Exams** There will be two examinations. The midterm examination will be a one-period, essay-style test. You may consult any printed materials you wish during the midterm exam.

The final exam will be a time-limited, take-home exam, due on May 3. It will be available for pickup on April 26. **You may be required to view a video before taking the exam. If so, this will be announced in class.**

**Reading Response** Choose one of the readings listed as “recommended” and write a short (2–4 page) response that relates the reading to other readings from the class. Your response may be synthetic (discussing the points made and how they are similar to, and different from, others in the class) or evaluative (judging the reading's usefulness in understanding social phenomena). **Due February 20 in class.**

**Final Paper** 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. Choose an everyday setting—for example, a shopping mall, a café, a restaurant, etc.—and observe *closely* the interactions you see going on there. 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 in class.**

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	15%
Attendance	3%
Active Discussion	12%
Vocabulary Exercises	10%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Exam	25%
Reading Response	10%
Final Paper	25%

## COURSE ORGANIZATION

During most weeks, Monday's class will be a combined lecture, to be held in 311 Peabody. Wednesday and Friday will be discussion classes; they will meet as follows:

- **Students with a PID ending in 0–4:** Peabody 311
- **Students with a PID ending in 5–9:** Dey 313

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

**January 7** Lecture: “Why Theory?” and course overview

**January 9** Lecture: Sociology, Social Theory, and the Problem of Modernity

Reading:

- Plato, “The Allegory of the Cave” (Book VII of *The Republic*) [WWW](http://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/platoscave.html) <http://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/platoscave.html>
- Immanuel Kant, “What is Enlightenment?” [WWW](http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/kant.html) (<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/kant.html>)
- Marshall Berman, “Introduction: Modernity—Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow,” pp. 15–36 in *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (Penguin, 1988) [WWW](#) [LIB](#)

Recommended Reading: Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* [LIB](#)

**January 12** Lecture: Émile Durkheim: Social Facts and Solidarity

Recommended Reading:

- Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method* [LIB](#)
- Jeffrey C. Alexander and Philip Smith, “The Discourse of American Civil Society: A New Proposal for Cultural Studies.” *Theory and Society* 22:2 (April, 1993): 151–207, **and** Jeffrey C. Alexander, “On the Social Construction of Moral Universals: The ‘Holocaust’ from War Crime to Trauma Drama,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 5:1 (February, 2002): 5–85. [WWW](#)
- Fields, “Individuality and the Intellectuals: An imaginary conversation between W.E.B. Du Bois and Emile Durkheim.” *Theory and Society* 31 (2002): 435–462. [WWW](#) <http://ipsapp007.lwonline.com/content/getfile/5152/34/3/fulltext.pdf>

**January 14** Discussion: Modernity and Sociology

Reading: Durkheim, “Anomie and the Modern Division of Labor,” “Sociology and Social Facts,” and “Suicide and Modernity,” pp. 70–82 in Lemert

**January 16** Discussion: Religion and Classification

Reading: Durkheim, “The Cultural Logic of Collective Representations,” pp. 89–99 in Lemert

**January 19** No Class - Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday

**January 21** Lecture: Émile Durkheim: Religion and Symbols

Recommended Reading:

- 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](#)

**January 23** Discussion

Reading: Durkheim, “Secularisation and Rationality.” pp. 239–249 in “Selected Writings” (ed. Anthony Giddens). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.

**January 26** Lecture: Karl Marx: Humanity, Alienation, Capitalism

Recommended 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 28** Discussion

Readings:

- Marx, “Camera Obscura,” pp. 36–37 in Lemert
- Marx, “Estranged Labour,” pp. 70–81 in Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader, 2nd ed.*, or [WWW](#)  
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/labour.htm>

**January 30** Discussion

Marx, from *Capital*, volume I. Lemert, pp. 51–66.

**February 2** Lecture: Karl Marx: Political Programme

Recommended Reading:

- Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air* [LIB](#)
- Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts* (Cambridge University Press 2000) [LIB](#)

**February 4** Discussion

Reading: Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, Preamble and Part I (pp. 21–36)

**February 6** Discussion

Reading: Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, Part II (pp. 36–46) and conclusion (pp. 56–58)

**February 9** Lecture: Marx and Weber: Opposing Worldviews?

Recommended Reading:

- Ann Swidler, *Talk of Love* (University of Chicago Press, 2001) [LIB](#)
- Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* [LIB](#)

**February 11** Discussion

Reading: Weber, “Class, Status, Party,” pp. 115–125 in Lemert

**February 13** Discussion

**February 16** Lecture: Max Weber: Rationalization and Bureaucracy

**February 18** Discussion

Reading: Weber, “The Spirit of Capitalism and the Iron Cage,” “The Bureaucratic Machine,” and “The Types of Legitimate Domination,” pp. 100–110 and 112–115 in Lemert

**February 20** Discussion (**Reading Response Paper Due**)

**February 23** Lecture: Georg Simmel: Social Forms

Recommended Reading:

- Lewis Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict* (Free Press, 1956) [LIB](#)
- Viviana Zelizer, *The Social Meaning of Money* (Princeton University Press, 1994) [LIB](#)

**February 25** Discussion

Reading: Simmel, “The Isolated Individual and the Dyad” and “The Triad” (excerpts) from Kurt Wolff, ed., *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* [WWW](#)

**February 27** Discussion

Reading: “The Stranger,” pp. 184–188 in Lemert

**March 1** Video: *The Wave* (1981)

**March 3** Exam Review (**Q&A Format - have questions ready!**)

**March 5** Midterm Exam

### **Spring Break**

**March 15** Lecture: Erving Goffman: Strategies of Interaction

Recommended Reading:

- Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart* [LIB](#)

**March 17** Discussion

Reading: “On Face-Work,” pp. 330–334 in Lemert

**March 19** Discussion

Reading: “The Self and its Other,” pp. 126–139 in Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (New York: Simon & Schuster 1963) [WWW](#)

**March 22** Lecture: Pierre Bourdieu: Capital, *Habitus*, Field

Recommended Reading:

- Michèle Lamont, *Money, Morals, and Manners* [LIB](#)
- Michèle Lamont, *The Dignity of Working Men* [LIB](#)

**March 24** Discussion

Reading: “Structures, *Habitus*, Practices,” pp. 441–446 in Lemert

**March 26** Discussion

Reading: Bourdieu, “On Television” (Excerpts). New York: The New Press. [WWW](#)

**March 29** Lecture: Theory of Race

Recommended Reading:

- W.E.B. duBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* [LIB](#)
- Heribert Adam, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind* (University of California Press, 1993) [LIB](#)
- Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” in *Marrxism and the Interpretation of Culture*; **and** “On the Politics of the Postcolonial Subject,” *Socialist Review* 90:3 (July–September, 1990), pp. 81–98 [WWW](#)

**March 31** Discussion

Reading: Henry Louis Gates, Jr., “‘Race’ as the Trope of the World,” pp. 532–539 in Lemert

**April 2** Discussion

Reading: Frantz Fanon, “Decolonizing, National Culture, and the Negro Intellectual,” pp. 359–364 in Lemert

**April 5** Lecture: Theory of Gender

Recommended Reading:

- Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus* (Routledge, 1997) [LIB](#)
- Dorothy Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic* (Northeastern University Press, 1987) [LIB](#)
- Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (Routledge, 1990) [LIB](#)

**April 7** Discussion (**Final Paper Due in class**)

Reading: Betty Friedan, “The Problem that Has No Name,” pp. 356–359 in Lemert

**April 9** No class (Good Friday)

**April 12** Discussion

Reading: Patricia Hill Collins, “Black Feminist Thought in the Matrix of Domination,” pp. 553–564 in Lemert

**April 14** Video: *Blade Runner: The Director's Cut* Part I

Recommended Reading: Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Trans. Edmund Jephcott; Stanford University Press, 2001) [LIB](#)

**April 16** Video: *Blade Runner: The Director's Cut* Part II

**April 19** Lecture: From Modernity to Post-Modernity

Recommended Reading:

- Jean Baudrillard, *The Spirit of Terrorism and Requiem for the Twin Towers* [LIB](#)
- Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* [LIB](#)
- Paul de Man, *The Resistance to Theory* [LIB](#)

**April 21** Discussion

Reading: Jean Baudrillard, "Sumulacra and Simulations: Disneyland," pp. 481–486 in Lemert

**April 23** Discussion/Wrap-up

**April 26** Take-home exam available, 155 Hamilton Hall, 12:00 noon

**May 3** Take-home exam due, 155 Hamilton Hall, 5:00 PM