

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL  
Fall, 2010 v2

# Advanced Sociological Theory

(SOCI 800)

---

Section 001   Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30–1:45   Murphey 202

---

Andrew Perrin

Office: Hamilton 159

Office hours: Monday, 10:00–11:30; Thursday, 11:00–12:20; or by appointment

Phone: 962-6876

E-mail: [andrew\\_perrin@unc.edu](mailto:andrew_perrin@unc.edu) • <http://perrin.socsci.unc.edu>

## COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is designed to provide an overview of current sociological theory with a special emphasis on the epistemology and ontology of social research. We will be reading a very wide, eclectic range of material, the vast majority of which has appeared in the last 15 years and is directly related to the practice of sociological research. The goal is to encourage theoretical engagement across subfields of sociology and other disciplines and, thereby, to erode barriers between theoretical and empirical work in social science.

## READINGS AND RESOURCES

### *Required Books*

**Peter Hedström.** *Dissecting the Social* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

**Charles Kurzman.** *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran* (Harvard University Press, 2005).

**John Levi Martin.** *Social Structures* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

**Ann Mische.** *Partisan Publics* (Princeton University Press, 2007).

**Anne Norton.** *95 Theses on Politics, Culture & Method* (Yale University Press, 2003).

**Charles Ragin.** *Redesigning Social Inquiry* (University of Chicago Press, 2008).

### *Supplementary Readings*

All other readings are available either on the web or on the course blackboard website.

## FORMAL REQUIREMENTS

**Course Participation.** You must read and carefully consider all the materials listed for each class session and come to class ready to discuss them actively. With the exception of the first class session, this is not a lecture course but a discussion.

**Seminar Paper and Class Leadership.** You will be part of two groups responsible for preparing and distributing a short, pithy, even polemical paper to the class and using it to focus discussion during one class session. Groups will be formed the first week of class.

**Final Paper.** You must write a final paper for the class. The final paper should be useful to your current intellectual focus and should engage with the questions we explore during the course. The purpose of this paper is to link your research focus with theoretical questions. Length, style, and substance are all negotiable based on how the paper fits into your intellectual development.

### *Grading Policy*

The main principle is this: *Nobody sees, or cares about, your grades in graduate classes.*

For the qualitatively inclined, the grading policy is essentially this: students who excel *both* in classroom elements of the course (e.g., seminar papers, presentations, discussion) *and* in the writing project will receive **H** grades. This is unlikely to be more than 2 or 3 students in a class, although it can of course vary. Students who excel in one or the other, but not both, will receive grades in the **P+** to **H-** range. The vast majority of students will receive a **P**, which represents substantive mastery, at a Ph.D. level, of sociological theory—a significant accomplishment.

For the quantitatively inclined, think in these terms:

| Assignment                 | Grade percentage |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Attendance & Participation | 30%              |
| Team presentations         | 20%              |
| Final Paper                | 50%              |

### *Honor Code*

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. The usual sanction for the first offense of academic dishonesty is suspension from the university for a semester. If you have questions as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, check <http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/plagiarism.html> or consult me.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### **Week 1:** Introduction to the Course

**August 24** Student introductions; Lecture: “A Brief Tour of Sociological Theory.”

#### **August 26**

- Mayer N. Zald, “Sociology as a discipline: Quasi-science and quasi-humanities.” *The American Sociologist* 22:3–4 (September, 1991). <http://www.springerlink.com/content/802m47263752g771/>
- Elisabeth S. Clemens. “Toward a Historicized Sociology: Theorizing Events, Processes, and Emergence.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 33 (2007): 527-549 <http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.soc.33.040406.131700>

#### **Recommended Background Readings:**

- Andrew Abbott, “Transcending General Linear Reality.” *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Autumn, 1988), pp. 169-186. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/202114>
- Lewis A. Coser. “Sociological Theory From the Chicago Dominance to 1965.” *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 2, (1976), pp. 145-160. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2946090>

### **Week 2:** Hedström, *Dissecting the Social*

**August 31** Chapters 1–4

**September 2** Chapters 5–7

### Week 3: Events and Eventfulness

#### September 7:

- Peter Bearman, Robert Faris and James Moody. "Blocking the Future: New Solutions for Old Problems in Historical Social Science." *Social Science History* 23:4, Special Issue: What Is Social Science History? (Winter, 1999), 501-533. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1171636>
- Robin Wagner-Pacifici. "Theorizing the Restlessness of Events." *AJS* 115:5 (March, 2010): 1351-86. <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/651299>
- Jeffrey Haydu, "Reversals of fortune: path dependency, problem solving, and temporal cases." *Theory and Society* 39:1 (January, 2010). <http://www.springerlink.com/content/nh485h406p045661/>

#### September 9: No Class: Rosh Hashanah holiday

### Week 4: Martin, *Social Structures*

#### September 14: Preface, Chapters 1–4

#### September 16: Chapters 5–9

### Week 5: The Rational/Formal Actor

#### September 21:

- Ernst Fehr and Herbert Gintis. "Human Motivation and Social Cooperation: Experimental and Analytical Foundations." *Annual Review of Sociology* 33 (2007). <http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.soc.33.040406.131812>
- Michael Hechter and Satoshi Kanazawa. "Sociological Rational Choice Theory." *Annual Review of Sociology* 23 (1997). <http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.soc.23.1.191>
- Breen, Richard (2009). Game Theory in Peter Hedström and Peter Bearman (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Analytical Sociology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 619-38.

#### September 23:

- Kiser, Edgar. "Comparing Varieties of Agency Theory in Economics, Political Science, and Sociology: An Illustration from State Policy Implementation." *Sociological Theory* 17:2 (2002), 146–170. <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/119093867/abstract>
- Peter M. Blau (1977). "A Macrosociological Theory of Social Structure." *American Journal of Sociology* 83, pp. 26–54. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2777762>

### Week 6: Performativity and Economics

#### September 28:

- MacKenzie, D., Y. Millo. 2003. Constructing a market, performing theory. The historical sociology of a financial derivatives market. *Amer. J. Sociol* 109:107145. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3568326>
- Callon, M. 2007. What does it mean to say that economics is performative? D. MacKenzie, F. Muniesa, L. Siu, eds. *Do Economists Make Markets: On the Performativity of Economics*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.
- Fourcade, M. 2007. "Theories of markets and theories of society." *Amer. Behav. Sci.* 50 10151034. <http://abs.sagepub.com/content/50/8/1015>

#### September 30:

- Thomas Osborne and Nikolas Rose. "Do the social sciences create phenomena?: the example of public opinion research." *British Journal of Sociology*, 50:3 (September 1999): 367–396. <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/119058195/abstract>
- Teppo Felin, Nicolai J. Foss. "Social Reality, the Boundaries of Self-Fulfilling Prophecy, and Economics." *Organization Science* 20:3 (May-June, 2009). <http://orgsci.journal.informs.org/cgi/content/abstract/20/3/654>

- Fabrizio Ferraro, Jeffrey Pfeffer, Robert I. Sutton. “How and Why Theories Matter: A Comment on Felin and Foss.” *Organization Science* 20:3 (May-June, 2009). <http://orgsci.journal.informs.org/cgi/content/abstract/20/3/669>
- Teppo Felin, Nicolai J. Foss. “Performativity of Theory, Arbitrary Conventions, and Possible Worlds: A Reality Check.” *Organization Science* 20:3 (May-June, 2009). <http://orgsci.journal.informs.org/cgi/content/abstract/20/3/676>

**Week 7:** Norton, *95 Theses on Politics, Culture & Method*

**October 5:** Theses 1–50

**October 7:** Theses 51–95

**Week 8:** Micro-Macro Linkages

**October 12:**

- John W. Meyer and Ronald L. Jepperson (2000). “The ‘Actors’ of Modern Society: The Cultural Construction of Social Agency.” *Sociological Theory* 18, 100–120. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/223284>
- Gerald Berk and Dennis Galvan. “How people experience and change institutions: a field guide to creative syncretism.” *Theory and Society* 38:6 (November, 2009). <http://www.springerlink.com/content/j22215uu15304w55/>
- Anna C. Korteweg. “The Sharia Debate in Ontario: Gender, Islam, and Representations of Muslim Women’s Agency.” *Gender & Society* 22:4 (2008): 434–454. <http://gas.sagepub.com/content/22/4/434>

**October 14:**

- Vaisey and Lizardo, “Can Cultural Worldviews Influence Network Composition?” *Social Forces* June, 2010. [https://auth.lib.unc.edu/ezproxy\\_auth.php?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=51647259&site=ehost-live&scope=site](https://auth.lib.unc.edu/ezproxy_auth.php?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=51647259&site=ehost-live&scope=site)
- R. Keith Sawyer. “Durkheim’s Dilemma: Toward a Sociology of Emergence.” *Sociological Theory* 20:2 (2002). <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/118953483/abstract>

**Recommended:** Isaac Ariail Reed. “Epistemology Contextualized: Social-Scientific Knowledge in a Postpositivist Era.” *Sociological Theory* 28:1 (March, 2010): 20–39. <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/123314089/abstract>

**Week 9:** Publics and Public Opinion

**October 19:**

- Javier Lezaun. “A Market of Opinions: The Political Epistemology of Focus Groups.” *Sociological Review* 55:s2, 130–151 (October, 2007). <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/117976148/abstract>
- From Pollock, Adorno, *et al.*, *Group Experiment*:
  - Perrin and Olick, “Before the Public Sphere: The Group Experiment and the Frankfurt School on Public Opinion.” (Translators’ Introduction to *Group Experiment: The Frankfurt School on Public Opinion in Postwar Germany*, Ed. Trans., and Introd. Andrew J. Perrin and Jeffrey K. Olick. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011)
  - Franz Böhm, “Foreword” to *Group Experiment*
  - Peter Hofstätter, “On the *Group Experiment* by Friedrich Pollock: A Critical Assessment.” in Theodor Adorno, *Guilt and Defense: On the Legacies of National Socialism in Postwar Germany*, Ed., Trans, and Introd. Jeffrey K. Olick and Andrew J. Perrin. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.
  - Theodor W. Adorno. “Reply to Peter R. Hofstätter’s Critique of the *Group Experiment*.” in *Guilt and Defense*.

**October 21:** No class, Fall Break

**Week 10:** The Network Worldview

**October 26:**

- Harrison C. White, Scott A. Boorman, and Ronald L. Breiger (1976). "Social Structure from Multiple Networks I: Blockmodels of Roles and Positions." *American Journal of Sociology* 81, pp. 730–779. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2777596>
- Scott A. Boorman and Harrison C. White (1976). "Social structure from multiple networks II: Role structures." *American Journal of Sociology* 81, 1384–1446. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2777009>
- Miller McPherson, Lynn Smith-Lovin, Matthew E. Brashears. "Social Isolation in America: Changes in Core Discussion Networks over Two Decades." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 71, No. 3, 353–375 (2006). <http://asr.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/71/3/353>
- Claude S. Fischer. "The 2004 GSS Finding of Shrunk Social Networks: An Artifact?" *American Sociological Review* 74, No. 4, 657-669 (2009). <http://asr.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/74/4/657>
- Miller McPherson, Lynn Smith-Lovin, Matthew E. Brashears. "Models and Marginals: Using Survey Evidence to Study Social Networks." *American Sociological Review*, August 2009; vol. 74: pp. 670-681. <http://asr.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/74/4/670>

**October 28:**

- Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties." *AJS* 78:6 (1973). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2776392>
- Cook, Networks, Norms and Trust: The Social Psychology of Social Capital, *Social Psychology Quarterly*. March 2005. Vol. 68, No. 1: 4-14. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4148778>
- Frédéric Godart and Ashley Mears. "How Do Cultural Producers Make Creative Decisions? Lessons from the Catwalk." *Social Forces* 88:2 (December, 2009). [https://auth.lib.unc.edu/ezproxy\\_auth.php?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=47617800&site=ehost-live&scope=site](https://auth.lib.unc.edu/ezproxy_auth.php?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=47617800&site=ehost-live&scope=site)

**Week 11: The Biosocial Self****November 2:**

- Freese, J., J. C. A. Li, L. D. Wade. 2003. The potential relevance of biology to social inquiry. *Annual Rev. Sociol.* 29 233-256. <http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.100012>
- Hopcroft, "The Evolved Actor in Sociology." *Sociological Theory* 27:4 (2009). <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/123189874/abstract>
- Kenneth S. Kendler. "'A Gene for...': The Nature of Gene Action in Psychiatric Disorders." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 162:7 (July, 2005): 1243-1252. <http://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/content/abstract/162/7/1243>

**November 3: Rosemary Hopcroft**

- Colloquium lecture: 12:00–1:00, 271 Hamilton
- Class lunch/discussion to follow, 271 Hamilton

**November 4:**

- Guo in *Contexts*
- Allan V. Horwitz, Tami M. Videon, Mark F. Schmitz and Diane Davis. "Rethinking Twins and Environments: Possible Social Sources for Assumed Genetic Influences in Twin Research." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 44:2 (Jun., 2003), pp. 111-129. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1519802>
- Freese, Jeremy, and Brian Powell. "Tilting at Windmills: Rethinking Sociological Responses to Behavioral Genetics." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 44:2 (Jun., 2003), pp. 130-135. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1519803>
- Perrin and Lee, "The Undertheorized Environment: Sociological Theory and the Ontology of Behavioral Genetics." *Sociological Perspectives* 50:2 (Summer, 2007). (<http://caliber.ucpress.net/doi/abs/10.1525/sop.2007.50.2.303>)

**Week 12: Mische, *Partisan Publics***

**November 9:** Prologue, Chapters 1–3

**November 11:** Chapters 8–10, Methodological Appendix

**Week 13:** Ragin, *Redesigning Social Theory*

**November 16:** Introduction, Parts I and III

**November 18:** Part IV

**Week 14:** Method and Theory

**November 23:**

- Small, Mario L. 2009. “How Many Cases Do I Need? On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field Based Research.” *Ethnography* 10(1): 5-38. <http://eth.sagepub.com/content/10/1/5>
- Stanley Lieberman and Freda B. Lynn (2002). “Barking up the Wrong Branch: Scientific Alternatives to the Current Model of Sociological Science.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 28, 1–19. <http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.soc.28.110601.141122>

**November 25: No Class:** Thanksgiving

**Week 15:** Kurzman, *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran*

**November 30:** Introduction, Chapters 1–5

**December 2:** Chapters 6–8

**Week 16:** Wrap up

**December 7:** Andrew V. Papachristos. “Murder by Structure: Dominance Relations and the Social Structure of Gang Homicide.” *American Journal of Sociology* 115:1 (July, 2009): 74–128. <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/597791>

**Final Paper Due** in class.