Advanced Sociological Theory
(SOCI 800)

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

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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


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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team presentations</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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Honor Code

Your participation in this course is covered by the UNC Honor Code (see [http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/studinfo.html](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](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**

Recommended Background Readings:

Week 2: Hedström, *Dissecting the Social*

**August 31** Chapters 1–4

**September 2** Chapters 5–7
Week 3: Events and Eventfulness

September 7:

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:

September 23:

Week 6: Performativity and Economics

September 28:

September 30:

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:

October 14:


Week 9: Publics and Public Opinion

October 19:
• From Pollock, Adorno, et al., Group Experiment:
  – Franz Böhm, “Foreword” to Group Experiment

October 21: No class, Fall Break

Week 10: The Network Worldview
October 26:


October 28:


Week 11: The Biosocial Self

November 2:


November 3: Rosemary Hopcroft

- Colloquium lecture: 12:00–100, 271 Hamilton
- Class lunch/discussion to follow, 271 Hamilton

November 4:

- Guo in *Contexts*


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:

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

Final Paper Due in class.