

University of Colorado Boulder
SOCY 3001
Classical Theory
Spring 2020 T/TH 2-2:50 Hellems 199

Professor Leslie Irvine

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Ketchum 311

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Ketchum 482

Course Overview

This course offers an introduction to the body of sociological theories considered “classical” through a survey and critical analysis of foundational texts. There are different approaches to learning sociological theory. One way is to read extensively to get a broad sense of the classics and the issues they raise. Another is to read a few texts closely and mine them for their meaning and contradictions. We will take the second approach. We will read primary (original) writings along with a secondary (interpretive) text. We will focus on the work of six theorists: Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Georg Simmel, George Herbert Mead, and W.E.B. Du Bois. Their work helped make the field of sociology what it is today. We will explore the following questions: (1) What are the main themes and arguments developed in classical sociological theory? (2) How do they relate to the social and intellectual context in which these texts were produced? (3) How do these theories help us understand the world around us today?

Course goals

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Identify and discuss core theoretical traditions in sociology;
- Understand what sociological theory is and how it differs from everyday thinking about society;
- Link theoretical ideas to social changes in the structure of society;
- Develop a critical stance regarding the limitations of particular theories.

Note

You are holding a paper syllabus, but this isn't actually the syllabus we'll use this semester. Instead, there is a course website on Canvas. That's where you'll find the full list of readings, the course schedule, and assignments. The paper syllabus introduces these topics. The online version, however, is the official version and the one I will keep up-to-date.

Course requirements

- Complete all assigned reading by the dates listed. You will find some of this material quite challenging to read, so plan your time accordingly. You are accountable for all content assigned even though we will not review each reading in detail during class. In some cases, we will discuss the material extensively, but more often, the reading will provide a platform for considering related issues.
- Attend class and recitations regularly and contribute to the learning environment by participating in discussions and asking informed questions.
- Complete the work required for the grade you want to earn according to the table below. You will find prompts, instructions, and rubrics on Canvas.

Course Materials

The required book is available at the campus bookstore. Note: you must have the Second Edition:

Pampel, Fred C. 2007. *Sociological Lives and Ideas: An Introduction to the Classical Theorists*. 2d ed. New York: Worth Publishers.

You will find the additional required readings posted on Canvas.

Grading


See Canvas for descriptions of required work. This course uses points-free grading that works like this:

For a D (or an F) in the course, fail to meet the minimal requirements for a C, which demand only basic knowledge and comprehension of the material.

For a C, complete the Discussion Questions, Reading Quizzes and Assignments, which demonstrate basic knowledge and comprehension of the material.

For a B, fulfill all the requirements for a C, plus successfully complete the Critical Reflections that demonstrate application and analysis of the material.

For an A, fulfill all the requirements for a B, plus successfully complete additional, challenging work that demonstrates synthesis and evaluation of the material.

To earn this grade 	Discussion Questions (12)	Quizzes (6) 70% = Passing (Best of 2 attempts)	Assignments (3)	Critical Reflections (4)	Synthesis and Evaluation Essays (3)
A	Submit all 12	Pass all 6	Complete all 3 to specifications	Complete all 4 to specifications	Complete all 3 to specifications
B	Submit all 12	Pass all 6	Complete all 3 to specifications	Complete all 4 to specifications	N/A
C	Submit all 12	Pass all 6	Complete all 3 to specifications	N/A	N/A
D	Submit all 12	Pass all 6	N/A	N/A	N/A

Plus or minus grades

To earn a *plus* grade: meet the requirements for the desired letter, **plus** meet the requirements for the Assignments, Critical Reflections, or Synthesis and Evaluation Essays for the next level up. Examples:

- A student who submits 12 Discussion Questions and passes all 6 Quizzes *and also* completes 1 Assignment to specifications would earn a D+.
- A student who submits 12 Discussion Questions, passes all 6 Quizzes, meets specifications for all 3 Assignments and 4 Critical Reflections *and also* completes 1 Synthesis and Evaluation Essay would earn a B+.

To earn a *minus* grade: meet the standards for the desired letter and fail to meet the

requirements for the next lower letter.

- A student who submits 12 Discussion Questions, passes 6 Quizzes and completes 3 Assignments and 4 Critical Reflections but completes only 1 Synthesis and Evaluation Essays would get an A-.

Tokens for do-overs or extensions

How does this work? Each student automatically has two virtual “tokens” at the beginning of the semester. You can cash your tokens in for one of the following:

- A do-over on a **Critical Reflection**, an **Assignment**, or a **Synthesis and Evaluation Essay** that did not meet specifications. You must meet with Robert or me if you want to revise your work, and you must submit on the designated “do-over days” (March 13 and May 5).
- A 24-hour extension for a **Critical Reflection**, an **Assignment**, or a **Synthesis and Evaluation Essay**. *You do not need permission for this. Just submit within 24-hours*

You can use your tokens for one of each of the above or use both for do-overs or extensions. You can use tokens **only** on Assignments, Critical Reflections, or Synthesis and Evaluation Essays (sorry, not for quizzes, but you automatically get two attempts and not for Discussion Questions).

Course policy for absences and missed assignments

You must keep current with the course. If you miss a class, first contact a classmate to catch up and get notes. Then arrange to see Robert or me for clarification of the material if needed. An absence counts as “excused” only in one of two ways:

1. If an event scheduled prior to the start of the semester (such as a religious observance, NCAA or Collegiate Sports Club meet, travel for a wedding, family reunion, or conference) will cause you to miss a class or a deadline, please notify me by **January 31**. We can discuss options for making up missed work individually. I will not consider make-up options for anyone who notifies me after this date.
2. If documentable medical, veterinary, or legal circumstances, such as illness, death of a family member, or a court date cause you to miss class, notify me by email at your earliest opportunity. Then, submit documentation in the class immediately following the one you missed. I will provide an alternate assignment or a new deadline.

You cannot make up work missed for reasons other than the two stated above.

Course schedule (subject to change) Full readings are listed on Canvas.

TUE JAN 14	Introduction to the course
THU JAN 16	The Enlightenment Roots of Classical Sociological Theory

Module 1: Karl Marx and the Centrality of Social Class

TUE JAN 21	The Material Basis of Social Life
THU JAN 23	The German Ideology
TUE JAN 28	Alienation
THU JAN 30	Capital and Labor
TUE FEB 4	Commodities

Module 2: Emile Durkheim and the Problem of Social Order

THU FEB 6	The Moral Basis of Social Life
TUE FEB 11	The Scientific Study of Society
THU FEB 13	The Division of Labor

TUE FEB 18	Suicide as Social Behavior
THU FEB 20	Durkheim in a Different Light

Module 3: Max Weber and the Advance of Rationality

TUE FEB 25	The Context of a Modernizing Germany
THU FEB 27	The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism
TUE MAR 3	Sources of Rationality
THU MAR 5	Bureaucracy
TUE MAR 10	Weber in a Different Light

Module 4: Georg Simmel and Everyday Social Interaction

THU MAR 15	Jewish Life in Germany
TUE MAR 17	Social Forms
THU MAR 19	City Life
TUE MAR 24	Spring break
THU MAR 26	Spring break
TUE MAR 31	Money
THU APR 2	The Stranger

Module 5: George Herbert Mead and Symbolic Interaction

TUE APR 7	Social Reform
THU APR 9	The Emergence of the Self
TUE APR 14	The Social Self
THU APR 16	Mead in a Different Light

Module 6: W.E.B. Du Bois and Race in America

TUE APR 21	The Failure of Reconstruction
THU APR 23	The Philadelphia Negro
TUE APR 28	Race and Social Theory
THU APR 30	The Souls of Black Folk

CU Policies

Accommodation for Disabilities If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

Classroom Behavior Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation, or political philosophy. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information

doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

Honor Code All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu; 303-492-5550). Students found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, intimate partner abuse (including dating or domestic violence), stalking, or protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#). Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

Religious Holidays Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. For each class, check with your faculty member in advance so that you are aware of their specific requirements for accommodating religious observances. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.