

SOCY 4131-003: Critical Sociologies

Tuesdays and Thursdays 5:00-6:15pm; HLMS 267

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Office Hours: Th 10:00-12:00am

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Ever since Max Weber, the dominant tendency within sociology has been to separate “fact” and “value” and to disavow sociology’s normative pretensions. This course begins with the premise that sociology is an inherently critical enterprise, and that normative implications are unavoidable in sociological analysis. We will explore different critical traditions within sociology and other related fields, with a particular focus on Marxist, feminist, Bourdieusian, Foucauldian, and critical race theories. Our goal in this course will be to appreciate and examine the different conceptions of sociology’s critical vocation, i.e. the different ways in which sociological thinking challenges dominant understandings of the social world.

This is a small, seminar-style course and as such it will only work if you keep up with the readings. Discussions will be grounded in the readings themselves, so it will not be possible to participate effectively in class if you have not done them. With that in mind, I have designed the course such that you will need to complete short but regular assignments, instead of exams or a final paper. Please keep in mind that some of the readings are challenging. My expectation is



not that you will understand everything on the first try, but rather that you make a good faith effort to try and engage with the material. We will go over the readings in class, and discussion will be focused on critical reflections on the readings. The point of this course is not to drill you with knowledge, but to familiarize yourself with a certain critical style of doing social science.

EVALUATION

Reading Memos (10 total): 50%

Reading Questions: 20%

Participation: 30%

Reading Memos:

By the end of the semester, you must have turned in 10 reading memos. Each is worth 5% of your total grade. You may choose to respond to any 10 of the reading assignments on the syllabus. Each memo should be no shorter than 1 page and no longer than 2 pages, typed in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins. The memos are due the same day as the readings, and will be collected *at the end* of class.

For each memo, you must: 1) summarize the main point of the reading in your own words, and 2) provide critical commentary on the reading from your own perspective. Some questions you might consider are: Was the argument convincing? Do you see any flaws or gaps in what the author has presented, or in the author's conclusions? How did you react to the reading from a personal perspective? Does the reading relate to your own experience? Does the reading connect to other readings from the course?

The memos will be graded based on your comprehension of the reading and on the level of critical engagement with it.

Reading Questions:

For each reading assignment for which you *do not* write a reading memo, you will be required to submit at least one reading question prior to class. The question can be a comprehension question or a discussion question. The idea is to use these questions as a basis for discussion, so please come to class prepared to share your question. The questions must be submitted to me via email by 4:00pm on the day of class.

Participation & Attendance:

This course is designed to be discussion-intensive. As such, consistent class participation is necessary to do well. To participate productively, you will also need to keep up with the readings. Everybody is encouraged to participate actively, but you will also be graded on how well and respectfully you engage with and listen to your classmates. Consistently rude behavior and/or lack of respect for your peers and for the course will be punished harshly.

Attendance is required and will be taken session. If you are late to class, it is your responsibility to talk to me *after* class to make sure that your attendance is recorded. All students are allowed up to three *unexcused* absences, but each *unexcused* absence beyond four will result in a 10% penalty on your *overall course grade*. *Excused* absences (i.e. medical or family emergencies with the proper documentation) will not count against you.

Required Books

Pierre Bourdieu (2001) *Masculine Domination*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Didier Eribon (2013) *Returning to Reims*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).
David Graeber (2004) *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.
Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2016) *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.

Course Schedule

WEEK 1: Introduction

Jan 17 (T): No reading.
Jan 19 (Th): Max Weber (1917) “Science as a Vocation”

WEEK 2: Science and Emancipation

Jan 24 (T): Screening of *The Chomsky-Foucault Debate* (1971).
Erik Olin Wright (2010) *Envisioning Real Utopias*, pp. 10-29.
Pierre Bourdieu (2010) *Sociology is a Martial Art*, pp. 179-185.
Jan 26 (Th): Pierre Bourdieu (1993) “A Science That Makes Trouble” in *Sociology in Question*, pp. 8-19.
Pierre Bourdieu & Loïc Wacquant (1992) *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, pp. 174-202.

WEEK 3: Historical Materialism

Jan 31 (T): Karl Marx (1859) “Preface to *A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy*.”
Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels (1848) “Manifesto of the Communist Party”
Feb 2 (Th): Karl Marx (1981) *Capital, Volume 3*, pp. 953-957.
Karl Marx (1898) *Value, Price and Profit*, pp. 13-30.

WEEK 4: What’s So Bad About Capitalism?

Feb 7 (T): Erik Olin Wright (2010) *Envisioning Real Utopias*, pp. 33-85.
Feb 9 (Th): Erik Olin Wright “How to be an Anticapitalist Today” *Jacobin*, December 2015.
Dylan Riley “An Anticapitalism That Can Win” *Jacobin*, January 7 2016.

WEEK 5: Anarchism and the State

Feb 14 (T): David Graeber (2004) *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, pp. 1-64.
Feb 16 (Th): David Graeber (2004) *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, pp. 65-105.

WEEK 6: The State and Symbolic Violence

- Feb 21 (T):** Pierre Bourdieu (1994) "Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field" *Sociological Theory* 12(1): pp. 1-18.
Pierre Bourdieu (1989) "Social Space and Symbolic Power" *Sociological Theory* 7(1): pp. 14-25.
- Feb 23 (Th):** Pierre Bourdieu (1991) "Delegation and Political Fetishism" in *Language and Symbolic Power*, pp. 203-219.

WEEK 7: Ideology & Discipline

- Feb 28 (T):** Louis Althusser (1971) "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" in *Lenin and Philosophy*, pp. 121-172.
- Mar 2 (Th):** Michel Foucault (1977) *Discipline & Punish*, pp. 195-228.

WEEK 8: Power

- Mar 7 (T):** Steven Lukes (2005) *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd Edition, pp. 14-48.
- Mar 9 (Th):** Michel Foucault (1978) *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction. Volume 1*, pp. 81-102.

WEEK 9: *Sociology is a Martial Art*

- Mar 14 (T):** No reading. Screening of *Sociology is a Martial Art* (2002).
- Mar 16 (Th):** No reading. Screening of *Sociology is a Martial Art* (2002).

WEEK 10: Masculine Domination

- Mar 21 (T):** Pierre Bourdieu (2001) *Masculine Domination*, pp. vii-ix, 1-81.
- Mar 23 (Th):** Pierre Bourdieu (2001) *Masculine Domination*, pp. 82-117.

WEEK 11: SPRING BREAK

- Mar 28 (T):** NO CLASS
- Mar 30 (Th):** NO CLASS

WEEK 12: Returning to Reims

- Apr 4 (T):** Didier Eribon (2013) *Returning to Reims*, pp. TBD
- Apr 6 (Th):** Didier Eribon (2013) *Returning to Reims*, pp. TBD

WEEK 13: Materialist Feminism and the Other

- Apr 11 (T):** Christine Delphy (2016) "The Main Enemy" in *Close to Home*, pp. 57-77.
Christine Delphy (2016) "A Materialist Feminism is Possible" in *Close to Home*, pp. 154-181.
- Apr 13 (Th):** Nancy Fraser (2013) "Feminist Politics in the Age of Recognition: A Two-Dimensional Approach to Gender Justice" in *Fortunes of Feminism: from State-Managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis*, pp. 159-173.

WEEK 14: *Finally Got the News*

Apr 18 (T): Screening of *Finally Got the News* (1970)

Christine Delphy (2015) “Who’s Behind the ‘Others’?” in *Separate and Dominate: Feminism and Racism After the War on Terror*, pp. 1-28.

Christine Delphy (2015) “A Movement: What Movement?” in *Separate and Dominate: Feminism and Racism After the War on Terror*, pp. 125-134.

Apr 20 (Th): No Class

WEEK 15: From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Emancipation

Apr 25 (T): Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2016) *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, pp. 21-73, 153-190.

Apr 27 (Th): Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2016) *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, pp. 191-219.

WEEK 16: What is Critique?

May 2 (T): Michel Foucault (1997) “What is Critique?” in *The Politics of Truth*, pp. 41-81.

May 4 (Th): Bruno Latour (2005) *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, pp. 141-159.

****I reserve the right to change the readings on the syllabus. If I do change something, I will make sure to notify you.****

IN CLASS EXPECTATIONS

- Arrive to class on time.
- Turn your cell phone off.
- Put away newspapers and magazines.
- Refrain from having conversations with, or in other ways distracting, your classmates
- Remain for the whole class.
- Display professional courtesy and respect in all interactions related to this class.
- If you must use your laptop, use it ONLY for classroom purposes. If laptop privileges are being regularly abused, I reserve the right to revoke those privileges.

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM—See section, below, on Academic Integrity for full description. *All instances of cheating and plagiarism are taken extremely seriously and will be immediately reported.*

OUT OF CLASS EXPECTATIONS

- Respect posted office hours. Plan your weekly schedule to align with scheduled office hours.
- Do not expect me to answer emails immediately, or over the weekend. I do not answer emails at all hours of the day and night. You can expect an answer to your email within the next 1 to 2 business days from when you send it.
- Send emails to me using a professional format. That is:
 1. Always fill in the subject line with a topic that indicates the reason for your email to your reader.
 2. Respectfully address the individual to whom you are sending the email (e.g., Dear Professor Smith).
 3. Avoid email, chat room or text message abbreviations.
 4. Be brief and polite.
 5. Add a signature block with appropriate contact information.
 6. Reply to emails with the previously sent message. This will allow your reader to quickly recall the questions and previous conversation.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Disability Accommodations: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Injuries](#) guidelines under the Quick Links at the [Disability Services website](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/) (<http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/>) and discuss your needs with your professor.

Religious Observances: 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. *In this class, it is important that if the date of an exam is during a religious holiday you observe that you let me know immediately at the beginning of the semester so that we can decide what to do. In fact, it is helpful if you let me know in writing, by email, at the beginning of the semester any days you will miss due to religious observances, so that the proper accommodations can be made.* See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_religh.html

Learning Environment and Salutations: 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 differences of race, culture,

religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. *I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.* See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code

Discrimination and Harassment: The University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. The University of Colorado does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities. (Regent Law, Article 10, amended 11/8/2001). CU-Boulder will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or veteran status. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127. Information about the OIEC, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/>

Academic Integrity: All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [academic integrity policy](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/academic-integrity-policy) of the institution (available here: <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/academic-integrity-policy>). Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access, clicker fraud, resubmission, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code Council as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the academic integrity policy can be found at honorcode.colorado.edu.

Student-Athletes: It is the student's responsibility to notify each instructor—in the first week of the semester and in writing--about any known conflicts between academic requirements and intercollegiate varsity athletic events. For conflicts that arise during the regular term, instructors have full authority to decide whether and/or how to accommodate those conflicts. While an instructor has the right to refuse to allow make-ups or other accommodations, he or she is permitted to provide such accommodations. Intercollegiate varsity athletics events during final exams, which are normally forbidden by university policy, must be approved in writing by the

BFA Intercollegiate Athletics Committee well in advance of the event. Students involved in these events must then work with their instructors in regard to any missed work, as required above.

Club Sports: It is the student's responsibility to notify each instructor—in the first several weeks of the semester and in writing--about any known conflicts between academic requirements and sport club events. For conflicts that arise during the regular term, instructors have full authority to decide whether and/or how to accommodate those conflicts. While an instructor has the right to refuse to allow make-ups or other accommodations, he or she is permitted to provide such accommodations.