

Classical Sociological Theory

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Virtual “Office Hours”: by appointment

ome to “Classical Sociological Theory,” where we will examine some of the seminal writings of eleven major nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century thinkers (Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer, Ferdinand Tönnies, Emile Durkheim, Georg Simmel, Max Weber, Charles Cooley, George Herbert Mead, Ferdinand Saussure, and Sigmund Freud) whose work has greatly influenced the way we think sociologically. The course has four major learning goals: by the end of the semester you will have (a) become familiar with many key sociological concepts, (b) acquired a broad understanding of major theoretico-methodological debates within sociology, (c) acquired an intellectually pluralistic, eclectic perspective that promotes engagement with various theoretico-methodological perspectives rather than just a single “favorite” one, as well as (d) produced original, thematically inspired yet nevertheless empirically oriented pieces of sociological scholarship.

There are eight major books we will be using extensively throughout the course: Robert Tucker’s *The Marx-Engels Reader* (ISBN 0-393-09040-X), Emile Durkheim’s *The Division of Labor in Society* (ISBN 0-684-836-386), Durkheim’s *Suicide* (ISBN 0-684-836-327), Durkheim’s *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (ISBN 0-029-07937-3), Kurt Wolff’s *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (ISBN 0-02-928920-3), Georg Simmel’s *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations* (ISBN 0-02-928840-1), Max Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (ISBN 0-14-043921-8), and Sigmund Freud’s *Civilization and Its Discontents* (ISBN 1-453-833-897). Please allow yourselves enough time in advance to get them. All the other required course readings are posted as PDFs on the course website on sakai.rutgers.edu.

There are three course requirements which I will discuss in the first class: (a) a 10-page paper examining a particular “social fact” (also known as “the Durkheim paper”) due on October 22, (b) a 10-page paper examining a particular “social form” (also known as “the Simmel paper”) due on November 12, and (c) a 10-page paper examining two contrasting “ideal types” (also known as “the Weber paper”) due on December 3. Each of these assignments will count for a third of your final grade.

Unfortunately, given the current pandemic, we have to conduct all our class meetings online. Having conducted the second half of my “Cognitive Sociology” class last semester on Zoom, I have learned that it is actually quite doable. But it does require us to develop much more flexible communication skills. I make a point of being highly available to students on one-on-one video chats (on FaceTime, Skype, or Zoom), so I welcome you to arrange with me to have such “virtual office-hour” meetings.

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respective procedures for responding to such grievances.

September 3

Introduction I

September 10

Introduction II

Focus; perspectives; concepts; cognitive intentions; epistemic readiness; thought styles and thought communities; epistemic revolutions

Georg Simmel, "The Problem of Sociology," in Kurt H. Wolff (ed.), *Georg Simmel, 1858-1918* (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 1959 [1908]), pp. 310-24, 330-33.

Ludwik Fleck, *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981 [1935]), pp. 38-51, 89-105, 110-11.

Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970 [1962]), pp. 111-35.

Eviatar Zerubavel, *Generally Speaking: An Invitation to Concept-Driven Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 1-12.

September 17

Comte, Marx

Positivism; social physics; social statics; social evolution. Social change; historical materialism; ideology; false consciousness; class conflict; social inequality

Auguste Comte, "Social Physics," in Gertrud Lenzer (ed.), *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1975 [1842]), pp. 218-32, 239-52.

Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, reprinted in Robert C. Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: Norton, 1978 [1846], 2nd Edition), pp. 148-50, 154-75.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," reprinted in *The Marx-Engels Reader* [1848], pp. 473-83.

September 24

Marx, Spencer

Use value and exchange value; the fetishism of commodities; reification; alienation. Social systems; organicism; social differentiation; social structure; functionalism; homogeneity and heterogeneity

Karl Marx, *Capital*, reprinted in *The Marx-Engels Reader* [1867], pp. 302-08, 319-29.

Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, reprinted in Robert L. Carneiro (ed.), *The Evolution of Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974 [1886]), pp. 3-8, 14-18, 24-27, 214-17.

October 1

Tönnies, Durkheim

Social relations: organic and mechanical; union and association. Morality and utility; mechanical solidarity; collective consciousness; normality; social deviance; secularization; the division of labor

Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Society* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963 [1887]), pp. 33-35, 42-44, 191-93, 247-54.

Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (New York: Free Press, 1984 [1893]), pp. xxxi-xlvi, lv-lvii, 1-7, 11-47, 53-64, 68-72, 77-92, 109-23, 149-65, 172-74, 217-21, 226-44.

Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method* (New York: Free Press, 1982 [1895]), pp. 97-104.

Emile Durkheim, *Moral Education* (New York: Free Press, 1973 [1925]), pp. 55-73.

October 8

Durkheim

Social integration and disintegration; social regulation; anomie; social facts

Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, pp. 291-308.

Emile Durkheim, *Suicide* (New York: Free Press, 1966 [1897]), pp. 152-89, 197-216, 241-76, 297-325.

Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, pp. 50-59, 69-72.

October 15

Durkheim

Homo duplex; collective representations; language; classification; the sacred and the profane; totemism; ritual; the positive and negative cults; pollution and taboo

Emile Durkheim, "The Dualism of Human Nature and Its Social Conditions," in Robert N. Bellah (ed.), *On Morality and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973 [1914]), pp. 149-63.

Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1995 [1912]), pp. 4-18, 33-44, 99-133, 141-49, 207-08, 216-41, 265-72, 303-29, 348-54, 392-417, 433-48.

October 22

Simmel

Social interaction; formal sociology: forms of sociation; social circles and social networks; multiple

affiliations; divided and undivided commitment; social mobility; social marginality

Georg Simmel, "The Field of Sociology," in Kurt H. Wolff (ed.), *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (New York: Free Press, 1950 [1917]), pp. 3-16.

Georg Simmel, "The Web of Group Affiliations," in *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations* (New York: Free Press, 1964 [1908]), pp. 128-61, 167-84.

Georg Simmel, "The Stranger," in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* [1908], pp. 402-08.

FIRST PAPER DUE

October 29

Simmel

Social conflict; dyadic and triadic sociation; intimacy; secrecy and privacy; institutionalization

Georg Simmel, "Conflict," in *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations* [1908], pp. 13-55, 87-123.

Georg Simmel, "Fashion," in Levine (ed.), *On Individuality and Social Forms* [1904], pp. 294-308.

Georg Simmel, "Quantitative Aspects of the Group," in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* [1908], pp. 122-36, 145-69.

Georg Simmel, "The Secret and the Secret Society," in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* [1908], pp. 307-38.

Georg Simmel, "Faithfulness and Gratitude," in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* [1908], pp. 379-87.

November 5

Simmel

Impersonality; urbanism; anonymity; framing

Simmel, "Quantitative Aspects of the Group," pp. 87, 90-98, 105-17.

Georg Simmel, "The Persistence of Social Groups," *American Journal of Sociology* 3 (1897-98): 662-75.

Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* [1903], pp. 409-24.

Georg Simmel, "Sociability," in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* [1917], pp. 40-57.

November 12

Weber

Ideal types; social action; interpretive sociology; *verstehen*; mysticism and asceticism; social values; work and career; culture and economy

Max Weber, "'Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy," in *The Methodology of the*

Social Sciences (New York: Free Press, 1949 [1904]), pp. 59-61, 67-68, 72-84, 89-93.

Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978 [1925]), pp. 4-26, 541-56.

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2002 [1904]), pp. 8-36, 69-87, 98-122.

SECOND PAPER DUE

November 19

Weber

Charisma; person and position; bureaucracy; routinization; standardization

Max Weber, "Prefatory Remarks to Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion" [1920], in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, pp. 356-69.

Weber, *Economy and Society*, pp. 36-38, 212-31, 241-51, 956-63, 1111-15, 1135-41.

December 3

Cooley, Mead

Public opinion; the imaginary; self and other; identity; reflexivity. Socialization; intersubjectivity; symbols, language, and meaning; role taking

Charles H. Cooley, *Social Organization* (New York: Schocken, 1962 [1909]), pp. 121-22.

Charles H. Cooley, *Human Nature and the Social Order* (New York: Schocken, 1964 [1922 {Revised Edition}]), pp. 119-22, 181-85, 189-94.

George H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), pp. 42-51, 117-25, 135-64, 173-75.

THIRD PAPER DUE

December 10

Saussure, Freud

Semiology; representation and signification; signifiers and signifieds; semantics and syntactics; semiotic contrast; structuralism; synchronic and diachronic analysis. Id and superego; internalization and identification; transference; conscience; the unconscious; repression.

Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959 [1915]), pp. 15-17, 65-69, 114-24.

Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino, 2010 [1930]).