

CLASSICAL THEORY

920: 515: 01

Professor Karen A. Cerulo, Department of Sociology
Thursday –1:00PM-4:00PM

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Office Hours: Tues: 11:30AM--12:30PM and by Zoom appt.
Location: Davison Hall, Rm 127 (The seminar room)

OBJECTIVES

In this class, we will read works by the founding fathers and mothers of our discipline. Rather than following the “book a week” strategy that many classical theory courses use, I am organizing the readings by concept. Each week, we will discuss writings by various authors that address concepts such as order, conflict, power, culture, mind, the self, etc. As we discuss these readings, you will be exposed to a variety of the foundational theories upon which sociology is built. In each class, we will also try to apply ideas from the classics to current events in our society, working to see how and if classical sociological theories apply in the present day.

READINGS

All readings for this course will be posted on Canvas or available on the web (link included in the syllabus). So this is a no cost course—no books to buy. Yay! Keep in mind that these are old readings and the pages you read may be marked up or not perfectly Xeroxed, but I hope that is a small price to pay for the financial savings. To access Canvas readings:

- Go to <https://canvas.rutgers.edu/> and log in.
- On the left side of the page, click on “Courses.” Our course site, identified by name and course number, should immediately pop up as one of your courses.
- Look at the bar on the left side of the screen and click on “Modules.”
- The syllabus is organized by modules and each module will contain the readings (and any other materials relevant for a specified week).

Note: If you have trouble accessing the Canvas site, please e-mail help@canvas.rutgers.edu or visit <https://it.rutgers.edu/help-support>. Phone numbers and email addresses are in the middle of the page. These people are very helpful.

CLASS ENVIRONMENT

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 respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.

Knowing this, **our classroom should be considered a “safe place” for everyone.** Students are encouraged to engage in discussion and debate related to the readings and topics scheduled for the class provided that one’s views are not intended to provoke, insult, or damage another member of the class or the instructor. To facilitate such an environment, all of us (students and instructor) must act with mutual respect and common courtesy.

LEARNING GOALS

In this course, you will:

- Master the various foundational theories in sociology
- Be able to state the similarities and differences among the theorists we discuss
- Be able to suggest ways to apply these theories in explaining current events
- Get insight into the more contemporary theories spawned from these early ideas

ACHIEVING THE LEARNING GOALS-- DESIGN OF THE CLASS

There are several requirements for the course:

- 1) Read the works assigned for each class. **All readings must be completed prior to class.** Our classes will not be reliant only on lectures but will revolve heavily on discussion. So, familiarity with the material is essential.
- 2) You are expected to attend every class and fully participate in class discussions of the readings. If you are taking the course for credit, **this portion of the course will account for 10% of your grade.**
- 3) Each week, you must produce 2-3 detailed discussion questions tied to the week’s readings. Your questions must be emailed to me (cerulo@sociology.rutgers.edu) **by 5PM or earlier on each Wednesday**—the day before our class. **Please do not send me emails through Canvas—email me directly at the address I just gave.** If you are taking the course for credit, **this portion of the course will account for 20% of your grade.**
- 4) There will be two short papers (8-10 double spaced pages in length), **each of which constitutes 35% of your grade** if you are taking the course for credit.

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Course Papers, continued

Here's what you'll be expected to do in each paper:

- You will use any 3 readings from Modules 2-6 in paper 1. In paper 2, you will use any 3 readings from Modules 8-13
- I will give you a list of current events or issues. I'll provide at least five and you will use the readings you selected to do a sociological analysis of one event or issue—you choose it from the list.
- By doing a sociological analysis, I mean describing the people/groups/institutions involved in the event, using the readings to explain the viewpoints of the participants, using the readings to suggest how such an event or issue may have emerged, and finally suggesting solutions or resolutions derived from your reading, or using the readings to illustrate an impossibility to resolution.

We will discuss this in class and I will be meeting with each one of you before each paper is due. But the goal here is to show me that you can actively apply theories—even classical theories written some time ago—to better understand social phenomenon.

OK—Let's Get Going!

Module 1—September 8: Introduction to the Course

First, we'll do some “book keeping”: review the syllabus, discuss course requirements, talk about the classroom environment and your participation, etc. Then, I will give a short lecture on classical theory.

Assignment: No reading or discussion questions for this week, but ...

- ✓ Make sure you are registered on the Canvas site. If you cannot access the site, please contact Canvas personnel at help@canvas.rutgers.edu or visit <https://it.rutgers.edu/help-supporthttps://canvas.rutgers.edu/>

Module 2—September 15: Order

Today, we will review some classic ideas of the role of order in society—something that many theorists see as the lynch pin of social life.

Assignment:

Spencer, Herbert. 1898. *The Principles of Sociology*. New York: Appleton. Pp. 447-462

Durkheim, Emile. 1972. *Selected Writings*. (Anthony Giddens, editor). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 123-154

Parsons, Talcott. 1991[1951]. *The Social System*. New York: Routledge. Pp. 1-29

Module 3—September 22: Conflict

Today, we will review some classic ideas of the role of conflict in society—for some, an unavoidable but potentially constructive element of social life.

Assignment:

Marx, Karl. 1969. “Manifesto of the Communist Party.” *Marx-Engels Selected Works, Vol. One*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, Moscow. Pp. 98-105.

_____. 1978[1972]. “The Class Struggles in France.” in *The Marx-Engels Reader* (Robert C, Tucker, editor). New York: W. W. Norton and Co. Pp. 586-593

Goldman, Emma. 1911. “Anarchism: What It Really Stands For.” (Speech)
[file:///C:/Users/cerulo/Documents/Emma%20Emma%20Goldman,%20'Anarchism%20What%20it%20Really%20Stands%20For'%20\(1911\)%20-%20The%20Libertarian%20Labyrinth.htm](file:///C:/Users/cerulo/Documents/Emma%20Emma%20Goldman,%20'Anarchism%20What%20it%20Really%20Stands%20For'%20(1911)%20-%20The%20Libertarian%20Labyrinth.htm) (A copy will also be posted on Canvas.)

Simmel, Georg. 1904. “The Sociology of Conflict.” *American Journal of Sociology* 9: 4: 490-525.
Please read only pp. 490-504

Coser, Lewis. 1951. *The Functions of Social Conflict*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press. Pp. 121-138.

Module 4—September 29: Power and Social Control

Today, we will review a variety of ideas—first on power (i.e. what it is and how it works) and then ideas on social control (what some see as a variation on power).

Assignment:

Weber, Max. 2004 [circa 1917-1920].

“The Three Pure Types of Legitimate Rule.” *The Essential Weber: A Reader*. (Sam Whimster, editor). London/New York: Routledge. Pp. 133-145

“The Distribution of Power in Society: Classes, Status Groups and Parties.” *The Essential Weber: A Reader*. (Sam Whimster, editor). London/New York: Routledge. Pp. 182-194.

Mills, C. Wright. 1956. *The Power Elite*. London: Oxford University Press. Pp. 3-29.

Sumner, William Graham. 1940. *Folkways: A Study of the Sociological Importance of Usages, Manner, Customs, Mores, and Morals*. Boston: Ginn and Co. Pp. 2-mid 6 and mid 30-mid 36.

Durkheim, Emile. 1953. *Sociology and Philosophy*. (D. F. Pocock, translator). Glencoe, IL: The Free Press. Pp. 35-36 and 40-46. (These do not match the page numbers in the file.)

Mead, George Herbert. 1934. *Mind, Self and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 173-178.

Module 5—October 6: Inequality

Today, we review some of the early writings on inequality in society.

Assignment:

Davis, Kingsley and Wilbert E. Moore. 1944. “Principles of Stratification.” *American Sociological Review* 10: 2: 242-249.

Tumin, Melvin. 1953. “Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis.” *American Sociological Review* 18: 4: 387-394.

Dubois, W. E. B. 1898. “The Study of the Negro Problems.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 11. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc. Pp. 13-27

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. 1991[1911]. “The Man-Made World,” in *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Nonfiction Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press. Pp. bottom 203-bottom 212.

Friedan, Betty. 1960. “Women Are People Too!” *Good Housekeeping*
<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/career/advice/a18890/1960-betty-friedan-article> A copy will also be posted on Canvas.

Module 6—October 13: Alienation and Anomie

Today, we unpack and contrast the meaning of alienation and anomie.

Assignment:

Marx, Karl. 1844. "Alienation of the Worker from Their Work." *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. <https://libcom.org/article/karl-marx-alienated-labour>

Durkheim, Emile. 1951. "Anomie." *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*. Translated by John A. Spaulding and George Simpson. New York: Free Press. Pp. 246-258.

Merton, Robert K. 1938. "Social Structure and Anomie." *American Sociological Review* 3: 5: 672-682

In today's class, I will also distribute and explain the expectations for the first short paper and we will schedule one-to-one meetings.

Module 7—October 20: Individual meetings for Paper 1

Today will be one-on-one meetings to discuss and clarify your first paper for the class. **Papers are due by 5PM on Wednesday October 26, 2022. Do NOT be late!**

Woo-Hoo! You're halfway through the course!

Schedule continued on the next page.

Module 8—October 27: Culture

Culture—it's a big concept. How did the early theorists think about it?

Assignment:

- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. 1932. "First Premises of Materialist Method." *A Critique of the German Ideology*. Marx/Engels Internet Archive: file:///C:/Users/cerulo/Documents/Documents/Marx%20First%20Premises%20of%20Materialist%20Method%20The_German_Ideology.pdf Pp. 6-9. (A copy is on Canvas.)
- Durkheim, Emile. 1938. "What Is a Social Fact?" *The Rules of Sociological Method*. New York: The Free Press. Pp. 1-13.
- Weber, Max. 2004 [circa 1904-1905]. "Puritanism and the Spirit of Capitalism." *The Essential Weber: A Reader*. (Sam Whimster, editor). London/New York: Routledge. Pp. 25-34.
- Sorokin, Pitirim. 2010[1957]. "Ideational, Sensate, Idealistic and Mixed Systems of Culture." *Social and Cultural Dynamics: A Study of Change in Major Systems of Art, Truth, Ethics, Law and Social Relationships*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers. Pp 30-39.
- Simmel, Georg. 1971. "Subjective Culture." *On Individuality and Social Forms*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp, 227-234.
- Mead, George Herbert. 1934. "Mind and the Symbol." *Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. (Charles W. Morris, editor). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 117-top 125.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books. Pp. 310-323.
- Douglas, Mary. 1975. "The Functions of Pollution Beliefs." *Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. Pp. 53-59.

Module 9—November 3: Structure: Norms, Roles, Role Conflict, Role Strain, Institutions

Today, we will discuss the various components of what classical theorists call social structure.

Assignment:

- Garfinkel, Harold. 1964. "Studies of the Routine Grounds of Everyday Activities." *Social Problems* 11: 3: 225-250.
- Merton, Robert. 1957. "The Role-Set: Problems in Sociological Theory." *The British Journal of Sociology* 8: 2: 106-120.
- Goode, William J. 1960. "A Theory of Role Strain." *American Sociological Review* 25: 4: 483-496.
- Parsons, Talcott. 1954[1949]. "Institutions—defined." *Essays in Sociological Theory*. New York: The Free Press: Pp. 230- top of 233
- Parsons, Talcott. 1940. "The Motivation of Economic Activities." *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 6: 2: 187-202. **Read only Pp. 190- mid 192.**

Module 10—November 10: Mind

Mind is central to many classical and contemporary theories. Today we review some of the earliest ideas.

Assignment:

Dewey, John. 1973. *The Philosophy of John Dewey*. (John J. McDermott, editor.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 160 to top of 175.

Mead, George Herbert. 1934. *Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. (Charles W. Morris, editor). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

--Section I.5: "Parallelism and the Ambiguity of Consciousness," Pp. mid 27-mid 33

--Section II.10: "Thought, Communication and the Significant Symbol," Pp. 68-74

--Section II:11: "Meaning," Pp. 75 to top of 82.

Kant, Immanuel. 1929. "*Transcendental Analytic*" in *Kant Selections* (Theodore M. Greene, editor). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

--Section III-VI: Pp. Mid 76 to Lower 81.

Lewin, Kurt. 1939. "Field Theory and Experiment in Social Psychology: Concepts and Methods." *American Journal of Sociology*, May, 1939, Vol. 44, No. 6 (May, 1939), pp. 868- 896.

Read only 868-top of 884.

Module 11—November 17: Self

Equal to the importance of Mind is the concept of the Self. Today, we'll review some of the earliest ideas on the self. We'll also schedule one-to-one meetings for your second course paper.

Assignment:

Cooley, Charles Horton. 1922. "The Meaning of 'I'." *Human Nature and the Social Order (Revised edition)*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Pp. 1-19 (Chapter 5 in the original publication.)

Mead, George Herbert. 1934. *Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. (Charles W. Morris, editor). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 135 to bottom 144; mid 164 to bottom 178.

Simone de Beauvoir. 1949. "Woman as Other." *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage Press. Pp. xv-xxxiv.

Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckman. 1967. "Internalization and Social Structure." *The Social Construction of Reality*. New York: Anchor. Pp. mid 163-mid 173.

Module 12:--November 22: Individual Meetings for Paper

(Note date change. At Rutgers, Thursday classes will be held on Tuesday due to the Thanksgiving holiday. So we will meet on Tuesday November 22nd)

Today will be devoted to one-on-one meetings to discuss and clarify your second required paper for the class.

Happy Thanksgiving

Module: 13—December 1: Groups and Interaction

Today, we'll look at early theories about group interactions and broader social interaction.

Assignment:

Simmel, Georg. 1950. "The Dyad and Triad." Pp. 122-125; 145-153 in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. (Kurt H. Wolff, ed.). Glencoe, IL. **The page numbers in the pdf will not match these page numbers.**

Sherif, Muzafer. 1937. "An Experimental Approach to the Study of Attitudes." *Sociometry* 1: 1-2: 90-98.

Blumer, Herbert. 1986[1969]. *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
 "Joint Action." Pp. 70-77
 "Psychological Import of the Human Group." Pp. bottom mid 108-116

Goffman, Erving. 1959. "Performances." *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor. Pp. 17-34.

Module 14—December 8: Who Is a Social Interactant?

There is no reading assignment for today. Instead, I am going to lecture a bit on how classical theorist defined the social interactant. Then, we'll fast forward to today and look at some current research on human-nonhuman interactions. Just who is a social interactant?

Final Papers are due by Thursday December 16—no extensions!