

**SR381**  
**DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL THEORY**

Spring 2005  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:45am-12:00pm  
Packard Lab 360

Instructor: Ziad Munson  
office: Price Hall 8G (office hours 9:00-10:30am and 1:00-2:30pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays)  
email: munson@lehigh.edu, Yahoo IM: profmunson, phone: 758-3821

Teaching Assistant: Elizabeth Wolski  
office: Price Hall 301  
email: emw304@lehigh.edu, phone: 610-867-3155

Course information available on Blackboard

This course will introduce you to the main theoretical traditions within the field of sociology. We will survey each of these traditions by reading the original writings of their most influential proponents, analyzing their main themes, discussing the key points of contrast between them, and examining how these traditions are used in empirical sociological research today. Throughout the course, we will place an emphasis on using what you learn from social theory to better understand sociological questions of your own.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Students are expected to attend all class sessions, complete all assigned readings and actively participate in both classroom and online discussions. There will also be five short theoretical movie reviews, a lengthier final paper, and a required online discussion.

*movie reviews:* We will be watching five full-length films over the course of the semester. For each film, you will take the role of a classical theorist and write a review of the movie from his or her perspective. Each review should address two central concerns: 1) how key theoretical concepts are depicted in the film, and 2) how the film is inconsistent or challenging of other theoretical concepts. In addressing these concerns, it will also be necessary to summarize—in your own words—the overall theoretical tradition of the theorist whose persona you are taking for the purposes of writing the review. The purpose of these reviews is to show that you understand the different theoretical traditions and provide you with some practice with applying these traditions to contemporary issues and situations. Reviews should be between 1,000 and 1,400 words and must be handed in through the online blackboard system no later than 10:45am on the day that they are due. I can accept papers in Word, WordPerfect, RTF, and Acrobat formats. Late reaction papers will not be accepted. Reaction papers will be graded on check, check plus, and check minus basis. Papers are due February 8th, February 24<sup>th</sup>, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, April 5<sup>th</sup>, and April 19<sup>th</sup>.

*final paper:* This paper will give you the opportunity to apply what you've learned in class to a social problem, puzzle, or issue of interest to you. In the paper, you must present and analyze your topic from at least two of the four different theoretical traditions we will cover in class. Your analysis should focus on the strengths and weaknesses of each tradition in helping understand your topic. Rough drafts of these papers will be exchanged in class and you will be expected to provide editing and constructive critique of someone else's draft. There are several deadlines associated with this paper: You must hand in a 400-500 memo describing your paper topic no later than February 15<sup>th</sup>, a complete rough draft of your paper no later than April 14<sup>th</sup>, and editing and critique of another person's draft no later than April 21<sup>st</sup>. Final papers should be between 3,200 and 4,500 words and must be handed in through the online blackboard system no later than 10:45am on April 29<sup>th</sup>. I will accept late final papers, but will deduct 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of a letter grade for every eight hours the paper is late.

*online discussion:* Each week I will post one or more questions to a special course discussion forum to serve as a starting point for discussion. You should read these questions, as well as responses made by fellow class members, every week and post your own responses, ideas and questions where appropriate. These online discussions are an integral part of the class. You will be graded on both the quantity and quality of your posts. As a general rule of thumb, to receive full credit for this component of the course you should plan on participating in at least half of the discussion 'threads' with posts that reflect careful thought and knowledge of course readings and lectures.

We will discuss further details of each of these course requirements in class.

Course grades will be determined as follows:

- 40% final paper
- 25% movie reviews
- 15% online discussion
- 15% class attendance and participation
- 05% editing and constructive critique of another student's final paper

Any student who has a documented disability and is in need of academic accommodations should notify me and/or Cheryl Ashcroft, Director of the Office of Academic Support Services (610-758-4152). Accommodations will be individualized and in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992.

An important note about academic honesty: Plagiarism and cheating are both forbidden by University policy. Ideas as well as every word in your writing must be your own unless contained in quotation marks and properly cited. This includes text taken from the Web. Plagiarism or cheating will, *at minimum*, result in an F for the entire course along with other sanctions by the university. If you have questions or concerns about acceptable ways to use and cite outside material in your writing, please see me; I'm happy to help. So too is Susan Lantz in the Academic Support Services office (610-758-4159). Lehigh also has a special website devoted to academic integrity: <http://www.lehigh.edu/~indost/integrity.html>.

## READINGS

The following books have been ordered from the Lehigh University Bookstore (758-3374) and are also available at a discount from online retailers such as ecampus.com and bn.com:

- McIntosh, Ian. 1997. *Classical Sociological Theory*. New York: NYU Press
- Collins, Randall. 1994. *Four Sociological Traditions*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Additional readings are fully cited in the class schedule below and are available online in the “Required Readings” section of the course blackboard site. You are expected to have read the readings listed under each class session and come to class prepared to discuss them.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### Introduction: Thinking Sociologically

#### **1/18 Introduction to the class**

#### **1/20 What is social theory?**

McIntosh reader: “Introduction: ‘Marx, Weber and Durkheim: Why Bother?’” (pp.1-9)  
Mills, C. Wright. 1959. “The Promise,” chapter 1 in *The Sociological Imagination*.  
New York: Oxford University Press.

#### **1/25 Why bother with social theory?**

Collins, “And Finally Sociology” (pp.38-46)

*Recommended:* Collins, “The Rise of the Social Sciences” (pp.3-46)

### The Conflict Tradition

#### **1/27 Introducing Karl Marx**

McIntosh reader: “Karl Marx: A Brief Biography,” “Alienated Labor,” “The Theses on Feuerbach,” and “The German Ideology” (pp.13-38)

#### **2/01 Marx, Economics, and Society**

McIntosh reader: “The Communist Manifesto,” “Wage Labour and Capital,” “A Critique of Political Economy,” “The Fetishism of Commodities,” “The So-Called Primitive Accumulation,” “Selected Correspondence” (pp.39-105)

#### **2/03 Understanding Marx: The Oatmeal Game**

Collins, pp.47-78

- 2/08 Marx Applied: *American Dream* (1990)**  
 McIntosh reader: "Selected Correspondence" (pp.106-109)  
 [Marx's review of *American Dream* due]
- 2/10 The Conflict Tradition Beyond Marx**  
 Kent, Stephanie L., and David Jacobs. 2004. "Social Divisions and Coercive Control in Advanced Societies: Law Enforcement Strength in Eleven Nations from 1975 to 1994," *Social Problems* 51(3): 343-361.  
 Beckfield, Jason. 2003. "Inequality in the World Polity: The Structure of International Organization," *American Sociological Review* 68: 401-424.
- 2/15 Introducing Max Weber: Ideas and Social Structure**  
 McIntosh reader: "Max Weber: A Brief Biography," "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" (pp.113-131)  
 [final paper topic memos due]
- 2/17 Max Weber: Power and Domination**  
 McIntosh reader: "Class, Status and Party," "Bureaucracy," "Legitimacy and Authority"(pp.132-153, 165-174)
- 2/22 Max Weber as Sociologist**  
 McIntosh reader: "Science as Vocation," "Definitions of Sociology and Social Action" (pp.154-164, 175)
- 2/24 Weber Applied: *Brazil* (1985)**  
 Collins, pp.81-112  
 [Weber's review of *Brazil* due]
- 3/01 The conflict tradition beyond Weber**  
 Bittman, Michael, et. al. 2003. "When Does Gender Trump Money? Bargaining and Time in Household Work," *American Journal of Sociology* 109: 186-214.  
 Penscosolido, Bernice A., Elizabeth Grauerholz, and Melissa A. Milkie. 1997. "Culture and Conflict: The Portrayal of Blacks in U.S. Children's Picture Books Through the Mid- and Late-Twentieth Century," *American Sociological Review* 62: 443-464.  
 Collins, pp.112-118

### **The Societalist Tradition**

- 3/03 Introducing Emile Durkheim**  
 McIntosh reader: "Emile Durkheim: A Brief Biography," "The Division of Labor in Society," "Sanctions and Mechanical and Organic Solidarity," "The Division of Labour: Causes and Abnormal Forms" (pp.179-206)

## SPRING BREAK

### **3/15 Durkheim, Religion, and Suicide**

McIntosh reader: "Suicide: A Study in Sociology," "Religion and Society" (pp.212-248)

Durkheim, Emile. 1965. "Altruistic Suicide," selections from Durkheim's *Suicide* in *Theories of Society*, Talcott Parsons et. al., eds. New York: Free Press. (pp.217-218).

### **3/17 Durkheim as Sociologist**

McIntosh reader: "The Rules of the Sociological Method" (pp.207-211)

Collins, pp.181-193 and pp.211-214

### **3/22 Durkheim Applied: *Edward Scissorhands* (1990)**

Collins, pp.198-203

[Durkheim's review of *Edward Scissorhands* is due]

### **3/24 The Societalist Tradition Beyond Durkheim**

Putnam, Robert. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster. Chapters 1, 15, and any 1 of chapters 17-21

Yount, Kathryn M. 2004. "Symbolic Gender Politics, Religious Group Identity, and the Decline in Female Genital Cutting in Minya, Egypt," *Social Forces* 82(3, March): 1063-1091.

## **The Rational Choice Tradition**

### **3/29 Key Statements of the Rational Choice Tradition**

Olson, Mancur. 1965. "Public Goods and the Free Rider Problem," pp.162-170 selection in *Four Sociological Traditions: Selected Readings* (1994), Randall Collins, ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

March, James G. and Herbert A. Simon. 1958. "Bounded Rationality and Satisficing," pp.145-151 selection in *Four Sociological Traditions: Selected Readings* (1994), Randall Collins, ed. New York: Oxford University Press

### **3/31 Rationality Applied: The Tragedy of the Commons**

Collins, pp.121-153

### **4/05 Rational Choice Theory Applied: *A Beautiful Mind* (2002)**

Becker, Gary. 1976. "A Theory of Marriage," chapter 11 in *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[Olson's (or Becker's) review of *A Beautiful Mind* is due]

#### **4/07 The Rational Choice Tradition Today**

Iannaccone, Laurence R. 1994. "Why Strict Churches are Strong," *American Journal of Sociology* 99(5): 1180-1211.

Klandermans, Bert, and Dirk Oegema. 1987. "Potentials, Networks, Motivations, and Barriers: Steps Towards Participation in Social Movements," *American Sociological Review* 52(August): 519-531.

*Recommended:* Collins, pp.153-168

### **The Microinteractionist Tradition**

#### **4/12 Key Statements of the Microinteractionist Approach**

Cooley, Charles Horton. 1902. "Society Is in the Mind," pp.283-289 selection in *Four Sociological Traditions: Selected Readings* (1994), Randall Collins, ed. New York: Oxford University Press

Blumer, Herbert. 1934. "Symbolic Interactionism," pp.290-303 selection in *Four Sociological Traditions: Selected Readings* (1994), Randall Collins, ed. New York: Oxford University Press

Collins, pp.256-266

#### **4/14 The Social Construction of Reality**

Berger, Peter, and Thomas Luckmann. 1972 [1967]. *The Social Construction of Reality*. New York: Anchor Books. Online selection

Collins, pp.266-290

[complete rough draft of final paper due]

#### **4/19 Microinteractionism Applied: *The Persuaders* (2004)**

Berger, Peter L. 1963. *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective*. New York: Anchor. Online selection

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Books. Online selection

[Cooley's (or Blumer's or Berger's) review of *The Persuaders* is due]

*Recommended:* Collins, pp.242-256

#### **4/21 The Microinteractionist Tradition Today**

Katz, Jack. 1996. "Families and Funny Mirrors: A Study of the Social Construction and Personal Embodiment of Humor," *American Journal of Sociology* 101:1194-1237.

West, Candace, and Angela Garcia. 1988. "Conversational Shift Work: A Study of Topical Transitions Between Women and Men," *Social Problems* 35:551-575.

## **Dead, White Men: Challenging the Classical Traditions**

### **4/26 Standpoints, Subalterns, and Feminism**

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. 1898. "Women and Economics," selection in *Sociological Theory in the Classical Era* (2004), Edles, Laura Desfor and Scott Applerouth, eds. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 1986. "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought," *Social Problems* 33(6): S14-S32.

### **04/29 Social Theory in the Modern World**

[final papers due]