SOC 610 - Classical Social Theory

Fall 2012

Section 001: 2002 JFSB on M W from 1:30 pm - 2:45 pm

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Course Information

Description
Our objective is to know what good social science theory is and to be able to apply it in the interpretation of social events and in designing and conducting research. Those theorists who are our particular guides are often considered “classical,” both in the chronological sense that their work represents early or “pioneering” social science, and in the sense that their formulations continue to affect contemporary research and theorizing, and their worldviews continue to influence, and often dominate, the way we see things and define problems. They are classical in the sense that they are both pioneers and have continuing relevancy.

Apart from the assigned texts, all reading materials for this class are to be located by the students. For materials available in local libraries or on the Internet, we will not provide copies but rather rely on students to become adept at locating copies of whatever is necessary to their work in an efficient manner. Learning how to do research and find sources is one of the objectives of this course. The work of the class consists of:

1) Learning about and assessing the utility of the work of eight theorists: Machiavelli, Comte, Marx, Tocqueville, Nietzsche, Durkheim, Weber, and Simmel. We may consider other theorists of the 19th and early 20th centuries briefly, and attempt to achieve some familiarity with the “world” of theory at that time, but these eight will be studied in depth.

2) During the first weeks of class, we will spend approximately two class periods on each theorist, with students taking turns leading the discussion on the various theorists.

3) In the second half of the course, students will choose to “specialize” in particular theorists, devoting several weeks to developing as comprehensive an assessment as possible of that theorist’s history, biography, and theoretical ideas, and the benefits and liabilities, breakthroughs and dead-ends, that have been based on his ideas. They will share their ongoing research by topic in the seminars, speaking as they have learned, or believe, that “their” theorist would speak about the topics at hand. That is, each specialist will work to represent the theoretical positions of his or her theorist as he is represented in the literature, on the various topics to be considered.

4) Periodically, at least every two weeks, students will be asked to summarize their recent intellectual explorations and progress. These oral reports will advise other seminar members of useful items discovered, materials possibly relevant to others’ work, and detail where students have they gone, what they have done, what they have discovered, etc.

5) On the basis of their intimate acquaintance with their selected theorists, their literature review, and their discussions with the group, students will write an original paper, typically ranging from 12-15 double-spaced pages, making a case for the utility of their theorist in a topic area he is not generally identified with, or clarifying some general misunderstanding about his theories or neglect of his relevance that has become clear in our discussions and the student’s reading. For a model of what this paper might eventually become, see the essays in Camic (1997). It may be after mid-semester before the student knows the theorist’s work, and the general literature and the work of other theorists as discussed in class, well enough to make a topic selection. The final selection of the paper topic is made in consultation with the teacher and, to a degree, the other seminar members. Ideally, it is an imaginative attempt to apply the theorist’s work to contemporary issues or to clarify the theorist’s relevance to topics beyond familiar applications.

Material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Vendor</th>
<th>Price (new)</th>
<th>Price (used)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms (Heritage of Sociology Series) Required by Simmel, Georg</td>
<td>BYU Bookstore</td>
<td>$27.50</td>
<td>$20.65</td>
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### Prerequisite

Normally students will have completed at least one undergraduate social theory course. In unusual circumstances this prerequisite may be met by recommended readings completed prior to the beginning of the course.

### Participation Policy

Attendance and participation in class is critical to successful completion of the course. Students are to come having read the day’s assignments, plus having extended their knowledge of the topic area and their theorist as widely as possible. Successful attendance and participation means that the student was present, animated, and involved. Thoughtful and creative participation demonstrates mastery of the material and enriches everyone as they are exposed to each other’s research and thinking each week.

The class sessions will usually be organized in a discussion mode, beginning with issues raised in the assigned readings, or with theorists’ positions on the assigned topics. Questions or other issues for discussion may come from any of us. This means that we all are to come to class having read the materials assigned for that day, and especially prepared for the topics of the day with respect to our assigned theorists. It is expected that anyone present may, if requested, provide a summary of the assigned reading.

Much of the benefit of taking this class, rather than simply reading and watching life around you, is the interaction, the give-and-take that having prepared makes possible. Each student’s preparation enriches the group; the group is impoverished without all its members. The constructed-in-process learning environment of the seminar cannot be “made up.” Good scholarship involves going beyond expectations, reading beyond what is required, in search of new insights and applications.
Learning Outcomes

Sociological Theory

Sociology 610 is a core graduate course in the BYU Department of Sociology masters degree program. Its content supports the BYU mission statement <http://unicomm.byu.edu/president/aimsprintable.html> and is designed to impact all four expected outcomes of the BYU experience, namely to be (1) spiritually strengthening, (2) intellectually enlarging, (3) character building, and (4) oriented to lifelong learning and service.

The content of Sociology 610 supports the Sociology M.S. program purpose statement: "The program objective for the Sociology Master of Science degree is to produce graduates who have the following characteristics: . . . They have an in-depth understanding of the principal theories of sociology and how these theories may be used to elucidate key social issues facing the world today."

Expected learning outcomes from this course appear in the "Program Purpose" statement under the "Theoretical and Analytical Outcomes" section, and include the following:

--"Graduates will be able to evaluate orally and in writing selected, major theories in sociology, including their historical development, philosophical underpinnings, key assumptions, strengths and weaknesses, and practical implications."
--"Graduates will acquire an in-depth understanding of a single theory or theoretical framework, and be able to apply a single theory or theoretical framework to a research problem, accurately laying out the implications of that theory or framework for the topic of investigation and the design of the research, and, at the end of the research, discuss the implications of the research findings for the theory." Retrieved from https://learningoutcomes.byu.edu/wiki/index.php/Sociology_MS

Grading Policy

Course grade is based on the following:

1) Attendance and participation in seminar discussions; apparent preparation on assigned topics, and creative effort and imagination in applying the assigned readings and other relevant materials to the topics of the day (33%).

2) Term paper, typically 12-15 double-spaced pages (33%)

3) Final examination (33%)

Citations, references, and format of the term papers are to be according to the style accepted by the American Sociological Association. Papers will be graded with respect to content, quality and quantity of research, originality and creativity of presentation, apparent contribution, writing style, etc., as if they were articles submitted to professional journals for review.

Classroom Procedures

In the sessions of the seminar, members take turns leading the discussion, reporting on their reading, pondering, and conclusions, especially with reference to their assigned theorist(s), but also on relevant matters of general scholarly/theoretical interest. Typically our discussions will be organized around four general issues that will concern us throughout the semester:

1) What are the theorist’s intellectual contributions? (What did he say and do?);
2) In historical context, how important were these ideas? Why? (Analysis of impact);
3) Today, how useful are these ideas? (Analysis of contemporary relevance and utility, based on actual usage);
4) How might they be more useful, or how might we use them in creative ways? (Analysis of potential usage).

The identification of topics for discussion in the last few weeks of class is tentative, driven by the research underway and the scope of prior discussions. That is, in the final weeks of class, we may decide to continue an unfinished, fruitful topic, or substitute a new one, rather than slavishly follow the outline.

Students present their term papers, in near-final form, to the class in the final weeks. Criticisms and suggestions from the presentations should be taken into account in the final revision of the paper.

BEGINNING SUGGESTIONS FOR SUPPLEMENTAL READING


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### Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>W - Aug 29</strong></td>
<td>Beginnings: Machiavelli and Loyola as modernist social scientists</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>M - Sep 03</strong></td>
<td>Labor Day &lt;br&gt; Labor Day Holiday</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>M - Sep 10</strong></td>
<td>Comte</td>
<td>Collins &amp; Makowsky Ch. 1; Coser Ch. 1 (pp. 3-41); Camic Ch. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>W - Sep 12</strong></td>
<td>Tocqueville</td>
<td>Elster, <em>Alexis De Tocqueville</em>, Chapters 1-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topics</td>
<td>Assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>M - Sep 17</td>
<td>Tocqueville</td>
<td>Elster, <em>Alexis De Tocqueville</em>, Chapters 5-7, 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>W - Sep 19</td>
<td>Marx</td>
<td>Berlin, <em>Karl Marx</em>, Foreword, Chapters 1, 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>M - Sep 24</td>
<td>Marx</td>
<td>Berlin, <em>Karl Marx</em>, Chapters 6, 10, 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>W - Sep 26</td>
<td>Nietzsche</td>
<td>Zeitlin, <em>Nietzsche: A Re-Examination</em>, Chapters 1-5 (pp. 1-85)</td>
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<tr>
<td>M - Oct 01</td>
<td>Nietzsche</td>
<td>Zeitlin, <em>Nietzsche: A Re-Examination</em>, Chapters 6-12, Epilogue (pp. 86-173)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W - Oct 03</td>
<td>Durkheim</td>
<td>Poggi, <em>Durkheim</em>, Chapters 1-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>M - Oct 08</td>
<td>Durkheim</td>
<td>Poggi, <em>Durkheim</em>, Chapters 5-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>W - Oct 17</td>
<td>Simmel</td>
<td>Simmel: <em>On Individuality and Social Forms</em>, Introduction (ix-lvi), and Chapters 1-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>M - Oct 22</td>
<td>Simmel</td>
<td>Simmel: <em>On Individuality and Social Forms</em>, Chapters 5-6, 9-10, 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>W - Oct 24</td>
<td>Consultations with our theorists: The nature of society: social structure and process</td>
<td>Survey and analysis of the appropriate literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>M - Oct 29</td>
<td>Society: Issues of solidarity, morality, and legitimacy (what makes &quot;right&quot;?)</td>
<td>Survey and analysis of the appropriate literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>W - Oct 31</td>
<td>Social stratification (functions, costs); hierarchy, power, inequality</td>
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<tr>
<td>M - Nov 05</td>
<td>Social change: Causes, patterns, directions; modernization, &quot;development&quot;</td>
<td>Survey and analysis of the appropriate literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>W - Nov 07</td>
<td>Social change: Causes, patterns, directions; modernization, &quot;development&quot; (continued)</td>
<td>Survey and analysis of the appropriate literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>M - Nov 12</td>
<td>Religion: origins, meanings, functions</td>
<td>Survey and analysis of the appropriate literature</td>
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<td>W - Nov 14</td>
<td>Sociology of religion (concluded)</td>
<td>Survey and analysis of the appropriate literature</td>
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Topics

Sociology of knowledge (nature, language, reality, knowing, meaning)

Assignment Descriptions

Attendance, Participation
Due: Wednesday, Dec 05 at 3:00 pm
Participation in seminar activity, including preparation, presentation, imagination, creativity, etc.

Term Papers Due
Due: Wednesday, Dec 05 at 3:00 pm
Final Version of Term Papers Handed In

Final Exam
Due: Friday, Dec 14 at 5:00 pm
Comprehensive Exam over entire semester

Point Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance, Participation</td>
<td>47.62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>47.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Papers Due</td>
<td>47.62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
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University Policies

Honor Code
In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university. Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university's expectation, and my own expectation in class, that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Please call the Honor Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

**Sexual Harassment**
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education and pertains to admissions, academic and athletic programs, and university-sponsored activities. Title IX also prohibits sexual harassment of students by university employees, other students, and visitors to campus. If you encounter sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor or contact one of the following: the Title IX Coordinator at 801-422-2130; the Honor Code Office at 801-422-2847; the Equal Employment Office at 801-422-5895; or Ethics Point at http://www.ethicspoint.com, or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours).

**Student Disability**
Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (UAC), 2170 WSC or 422-2767. Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified, documented disabilities. The UAC can also assess students for learning, attention, and emotional concerns. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the UAC. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures by contacting the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-285 ASB.

**Academic Honesty**
The first injunction of the Honor Code is the call to "be honest." Students come to the university not only to improve their minds, gain knowledge, and develop skills that will assist them in their life's work, but also to build character. "President David O. McKay taught that character is the highest aim of education" (The Aims of a BYU Education, p.6). It is the purpose of the BYU Academic Honesty Policy to assist in fulfilling that aim. BYU students should seek to be totally honest in their dealings with others. They should complete their own work and be evaluated based upon that work. They should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, cheating, and other academic misconduct.

**Plagiarism**
Intentional plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft that violates widely recognized principles of academic integrity as well as the Honor Code. Such plagiarism may subject the student to appropriate disciplinary action administered through the university Honor Code Office, in addition to academic sanctions that may be applied by an instructor. Inadvertent plagiarism, which may not be a violation of the Honor Code, is nevertheless a form of intellectual carelessness that is unacceptable in the academic community. Plagiarism of any kind is completely contrary to the established practices of higher education where all members of the university are expected to acknowledge the original intellectual work of others that is included in their own work. In some cases, plagiarism may also involve violations of copyright law. Intentional Plagiarism-Intentional plagiarism is the deliberate act of representing the words, ideas, or data of another as one's own without providing proper attribution to the author through quotation, reference, or footnote. Inadvertent Plagiarism-Inadvertent plagiarism involves the inappropriate, but non-deliberate, use of another's words, ideas, or data without proper attribution. Inadvertent plagiarism usually results from an ignorant failure to follow established rules for documenting sources or from simply not being sufficiently careful in research and writing. Although not a violation of the Honor Code, inadvertent plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct for which an instructor can impose appropriate academic sanctions. Students who are in doubt as to whether they are providing proper attribution have the responsibility to consult with their instructor and obtain guidance. Examples of plagiarism include: Direct Plagiarism-The verbatim copying of an original source without acknowledging the source. Paraphrased Plagiarism-The paraphrasing, without acknowledgement, of ideas from another that the reader might mistake for the author's own. Plagiarism Mosaic-The borrowing of words, ideas, or data from an original source and blending this original material with one's own without acknowledging the source. Insufficient Acknowledgement-The partial or incomplete attribution of words, ideas, or data from an original source. Plagiarism may occur with respect to unpublished as well as published material. Copying another student's work and submitting it as one's own individual work without proper attribution is a serious form of plagiarism.