

Foundations of Sociological Thought

SOC285

Fall 2014

Syllabus

Professor: Dr. Daniel C. Johnson
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Office hours: Mon., 12:30 – 2:00 pm;
Wed., 2:00 – 4:15 pm;
Thurs., 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
and by appointment.

Class meetings: TR, 1:15 – 2:50
Chase B030

Texts: Tucker, Robert C. (Ed.) 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, second edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
Thompson, Kenneth (Ed.). 2004. *Readings from Emile Durkheim*, second edition. New York: Routledge.
Gerth, Hans H. and Mills, C. Wright (Eds.). 1958. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Levine, Donald N. (Ed.). 1972. *Georg Simmel: On Individuality and Social Forms*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Objectives:

- 1) To introduce students to the thoughts of the most prominent early theorists in sociology.
- 2) To give students a glimpse into the historical contexts within which these theorists worked.
- 3) To facilitate students' own critical engagement with the texts that these thinkers produced.
- 4) To develop an appreciation for why these texts have come to be regarded as classics in the field, as well as a healthy regard for their ability to stretch one's mind.
- 5) To (re)kindle an awareness of the pivotal role theoretical reflection plays in sociological inquiry.

Course description

Sociology is a highly diverse field of study, and yet most everyone who pursues it recognizes the key role that a few 19th- and early 20th-century thinkers played in staking out its borders and outlining its main theoretical orientations. This course will introduce you to the works of these few, who have come to be called the "classic" theorists in sociology.

I am driven by one overarching aim in this endeavor: to equip (and indeed, **compel**) you to read and understand for yourself at least a small portion of these writers' very large bodies of work. Accordingly, the required readings consist almost exclusively of selections from the primary sources. My presentations, in turn, will lay out what I think the authors are saying in the various texts, as well as what I take to be the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments. In this, I hope to provide a framework within which you can understand and evaluate their contributions.

My ability to do this will depend in large part on your preparation, as well as your willingness to question what I have to say. My interpretations are bound to be partial and controversial, if for no other reason than that the classic texts themselves are complex, controversial, and, at times, a little obscure. As such, I urge you to pursue your own understandings, at the very least through diligent reading of (and writing about) the assigned texts. I also encourage you to go beyond what I have assigned, reading as widely as possible from each author's own works and from the enormous secondary literature that expounds upon and critiques those works. But no matter what you do, make sure you come to class prepared to ask for clarification (which you may do freely), to criticize the interpretations that I and others set forth, and to articulate your own readings of the texts. Your task here is to do more than simply learn about the classics; you are to let yourself be stretched by them.

Assignments

You will be doing a lot of writing in this course over the coming semester. For starters, you will be required to keep a notebook in which you routinely write in response to the reading that you are doing. At minimum, I would expect you to fill about five of these notebook pages per week. While this may sound like a lot, most of this writing will be what is known as “freewriting,” and you should find that it actually goes very quickly.

In addition, every other week you will be required to attend a one-hour writing group made up of a handful of your fellow classmates. For each session, you will bring in and read aloud one piece of writing (roughly a page) that you are prepared to share with the group. Your group will then provide insightful and incisive feedback for you to think about as you go back to revise the work later on. And you, of course, will do the same for them.

Finally, you will be working throughout the semester on a term paper—a sustained, critical reflection on one of the classic texts of sociology. You will work on the paper in three separate chunks. On or about September 9, I will make available a list of texts to choose from, as well as a detailed description of what I expect you to do in the paper’s first section. That section will be due on Tuesday, October 7. After grading the section and making suggestions for revision, I will return it and provide instructions for the paper’s second section. That (along with your revised first section) will be due on Thursday, November 13. After assigning yet another grade and making more suggestions for revision, I will return the paper along with instructions for its final section. The final paper will be due on Thursday, December 11. **I will not accept any of these papers late unless I grant you an extension in advance, and any extension will involve a three-point penalty for each day the paper is late.**

A midterm exam is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, October 23. The final exam is set for Tuesday, December 16, from 2:30 to 4:30 pm. Both will be in-class, open-book examinations, consisting entirely of essay questions.

Grading

I will grade each version of your term paper and both exams on a 100 point scale. In addition, I will collect and check your writing notebooks four times over the course of the semester, just to make sure you are keeping up with that task. Finally, at the end of the semester I will assign separate participation grades for your writing group and for the class time itself. The contribution of each course component to the final course grade will be as follows:

Writing group participation:	15%
Writing notebook:	15%
Term paper, first submission:	10% (or 0%)
Term paper, second submission:	10% (or 0%)
Term paper, final submission:	20% (or 40%)
Mid-term exam:	15%
Final exam:	15%

Letter grades will be assigned according to the standard 90-80-70-60 scale, with “plusses” and “minuses” assigned to the top and bottom 3 percent of each letter grade range. Some slight adjustments, based on the performance of the class as a whole, may be made when computing final grades.

You may appeal your grade on any written work or examination. Appeals must be presented **in writing** within one week of the date the graded paper or exam is returned to you.

Students with Disabilities

Gordon College is committed to assisting students with documented disabilities. (See Academic Catalog Appendix C, for documentation guidelines.) A student with a disability who may need academic accommodations should follow this procedure:

- 1) Meet with a staff person from the Academic Support Center (Jenks 412, x4746) to:
 - a. make sure documentation of your disability is on file in the ASC,
 - b. discuss the accommodations for which you are eligible,
 - c. discuss the procedures for obtaining the accommodations, and
 - d. obtain a Faculty Notification Form.
- 2) Deliver a Faculty Notification Form to each course professor *within the first full week of the semester*; at that time make an appointment to discuss your needs with each professor.

Failure to register in time with your professor and the ASC may compromise our ability to provide the accommodations. Questions or disputes about accommodations should be immediately referred to the Academic Support Center. (See also Grievance Procedures in Student Handbook).

Course Sketch

Part I: Karl Marx

Required reading: Tucker, Robert C. (Ed.) 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, second edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Class discussions will focus primarily on the following themes and selections:

- Human nature & alienation
 - “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844” (pp. 66-125)
 - “Theses on Feuerbach” (pp. 143-145)
 - “*Capital*, volume one” (pp. 319-329)
- Historical materialism
 - “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*” (pp. 16-25)
 - “Society and Economy in History” (pp. 136-142)
 - “*The German Ideology*: Part I” (pp. 146-200)
 - “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte” (pp. 594-617)
 - “Letters on Historical Materialism” (pp. 760-768)
- Ideology & religion
 - “Marx on the History of His Opinions” (pp. 3-6)
 - “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*: Introduction” (pp. 53-65)
- Capitalism
 - “Wage Labour and Capital” (pp. 203-217)
 - “The *Grundrisse*” (pp. 221-293)
 - “*Capital*, volume one” (pp. 294-319, 329-361)
- Class & class conflict
 - “The Coming Upheaval” (pp. 218-219)
 - “The *Grundrisse*” (pp. 291-293)
 - “The Manifesto of the Communist Party” (pp. 469-500)
 - “Inaugural Address of the Working Men’s International Association” (pp. 512-519)

Part II: Emile Durkheim

Required reading: Thompson, Kenneth (Ed.) 2004. *Readings from Emile Durkheim*, second edition. New York: Routledge.

Class discussions will focus primarily on the following themes and selections:

- Sociological inquiry
 - “Sociology and the Social Sciences” (pp. 21-27)
 - “Review of Antonis Labriola, *Essays on the Materialist Conception of History*” (pp. 28-32)
 - “*The Rules of Sociological Method*” (pp. 63-90)
- The division of labor
 - “*The Division of Labour in Society*” (pp. 33-57)
- Social solidarity
 - “*Professional Ethics and Civic Morals*” (pp. 139-158)
 - “Two Laws of Penal Evolution” (pp. 58-62)
- Moral regulation
 - “*Suicide*” (pp. 91-116)
 - “*Moral Education*” (pp. 176-180)
- Religion & science
 - “*The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*” (pp. 117-135)
 - “*Primitive Classification*” (pp. 136-138)
 - “*The Evolution of Educational Thought*” (pp. 167-175)

Part III: Max Weber

Required reading: Gerth, Hans H. and Mills, C. Wright (Eds.). 1958. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Class discussions will focus primarily on the following themes and selections:

- Science and social science
 - "Science as a Vocation" (pp. 129-156)
 - "The Definition of Sociology and Social Action" (from *Economy and Society*, pp. 4-24)
- Power and politics
 - "Structures of Power" (pp. 159-179)
 - "Politics as a Vocation" (pp. 77-128)
- Social stratification
 - "Class, Status, Party" (pp. 91-116)
- Charisma and its routinization
 - "Domination and Legitimacy" and "The Three Pure Types of Authority" (from *Economy and Society*, pp. 212-216)
 - "The Sociology of Charismatic Authority" (pp. 245-252)
 - "The Routinization of Charisma" (from *Economy and Society*, pp. 246-254)
 - "Bureaucracy" (pp. 196-244)
- Religion and Rationalization
 - "The Social Psychology of the World Religions" (pp. 267-301)
 - "Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions" (pp. 323-359)
 - "The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism" (pp. 302-322)

Part IV: Georg Simmel

Required reading: Levine, Donald N. (Ed.). 1972. *Georg Simmel: On Individuality and Social Forms*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Class discussions will focus primarily on the following themes and selections:

- The nature of social science
 - "How is History Possible?" (pp. 3-5)
 - "The Problem of Sociology" (pp. 23-35)
- Forms in social life
 - "Exchange" (pp. 43-69)
 - "Domination" (pp. 96-120)
 - "Prostitution" (pp. 121-126)
 - "Sociability" (pp. 127-140)
 - "The Stranger" (pp. 143-149)
 - "The Miser and the Spendthrift" (pp. 179-186)
- The societal world-form
 - "How is Society Possible?" (pp. 6-22)
 - "The Categories of Human Experience" (pp. 36-40)
- Culture
 - "Subjective Culture" (pp. 227-234)
 - "Female Culture" (from *Georg Simmel: On Women, Sexuality, and Love*, pp. 65-101)
- The modern assault on form
 - "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (pp. 324-339)
 - "Social Forms and Inner Needs" (pp. 351-352)
 - "The Transcendent Character of Life" (pp. 353-374)
 - "On the Concept and Tragedy of Culture" (from *Georg Simmel: The Conflict in Modern Culture and Other Essays*, pp. 27-46)
 - "The Conflict in Modern Culture" (pp. 375-393)

soc. rel. - Marx, me → why bel. that? over oth.? ← Choice ← Kierke's faith
 exp., Galt spoke to me → "man makes rel." → man's und. → Shorter I've heard & chose to bel. → how do we judge which is true? They can't both be in rel.

- criticism of religion, and Feuerbach's "truth of God as a projection, results from man's und. and Marx's God is a projection of man's alienation from one another"
 - ↳ [But God broke revealed himself to Israelites]... man made that sth.
- inverted consciousness of world... [seeing rel. reality, which is a fantasy]
- What did Marx see in the world that caused him to conc. man makes rel.? Also, what about the world made Marx such that he came to this irrel. crit.? The D's we see? ideas coming tog.?

"rel. suffering"?

By "emb. crit... vale of tears" crit. which is the start of a growing

Reading schedule

Part I: Karl Marx

Selections from: Tucker, Robert C. (Ed.) 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Date	Topic(s)	Selection(s)
2/4	The life and times of Karl Marx Characteristics of Marx's writings	"Chronology: The Lives of Marx and Engels," pp. xv-xvii "Introduction," pp. xix-xxxviii
2/6	Human nature and alienation	"Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," pp. 115-117 "Theses on Feuerbach," pp. 143-145 "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," pp. 70-81
2/11	The materialist conception of history	"Society and Economy in History," pp. 136-142 "Letters on Historical Materialism," pp. 760-768 "The German Ideology: Part I," pp. 146-200
2/13	Ideology and religion	"Marx on the History of His Opinions," pp. 3-6 "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's <i>Philosophy of Right</i> : Introduction," pp. 53-65
2/18	Capitalism The labor theory of value	"Capital, volume one," pp. 294-319, 329-361 "Wage Labour and Capital," pp. 203-217
2/20	Class conflict and the end of capitalism	"The Manifesto of the Communist Party," pp. 469-500 "The <i>Grundrisse</i> ," pp. 291-293 "The Coming Upheaval," pp. 218-219

Reading schedule

Part II: Emile Durkheim

selections from: Thompson, Kenneth (Ed.) 2004. *Readings from Emile Durkheim*, second edition. New York: Routledge.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic(s)</i>	<i>Selection(s)</i>
3/18	The life and times of Emile Durkheim	"Introduction," pp. 1-9 "Review of Antonis Labriola, <i>Essays on the Materialist Conception of History</i> " (pp. 18-21)
3/20	The animus of sociological inquiry	"Sociology and the Social Sciences" (pp. 12-17) " <i>The Rules of Sociological Method</i> " (pp. 53-79)
3/25	The division of labor and the shifting foundations of social solidarity	" <i>The Division of Labour in Society</i> " (pp. 23-47) "Two Laws of Penal Evolution" (pp. 48-52)
3/27	Deviance & moral regulation	" <i>Suicide</i> " (pp. 81-106) " <i>Moral Education</i> " (pp. 166-170)
4/1	The sociology of knowledge	" <i>The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life</i> " (pp. 107-125)