

**Classical Social Theory<sup>1,2</sup>**  
**Eastern Illinois University**  
**Soc 2850-001 Spring 2008**

**Class:** MWF 10:00 - 10:50

**Professor:** Darren Hendrickson, Ph.D.

**Phone:** 581-8364

**Office Hours:** MW 3:00-4:00, Th 11:00-1:00, or by appointment

**Room:** 2165 Blair Hall

**Office:** 3122 Blair Hall

**E-Mail:** dhendrickson@eiu.edu

“The classic social theorists are worth our attention because...at a time when others continued to deny the darker side of modern life, they spoke of it without lapsing into despair.”

- Charles Lemert

***Required Text:***

Bert N. Adams and R.A. Sydie. 2002. *Classical Sociological Theory*. Pine Forge Press: Thousand Oaks, CA.

***Course Description and Objectives:***

What is social theory? Social theory is often defined as a body of organized, verifiable ideas that scholars have developed to explain various aspects of society and social behavior. As such, social theory is used to help us understand how people interpret, understand, and experience the social world. This course is designed to present an overview of the development of social theory and sociological thought from the 1800s through the early 1900s. The theories developed during this time period have been labeled “classical sociological theory” because they were instrumental in establishing sociology as a unique academic discipline and they are ideas that have stood the test of time. Specific attention will be directed at the major thinkers that constitute the foundation of the sociological tradition: Comte, Martineau, Marx, Durkheim, Weber, DuBois, Mead, and others.

The specific objectives of this course are as follows:

- (1) To begin to learn how to think both theoretically and sociologically.
- (2) Become versed in the classical body of theoretical knowledge which has influenced all substantive areas in the discipline of sociology.
- (3) Provide opportunities to apply classical sociological theory to social issues of both past importance and current concern.
- (4) To encourage and provide opportunities for critical thinking.

These objectives will be met through lectures, class discussions and exercises, readings, video presentations, and examinations.

---

<sup>1</sup> Also known as a course about Dead Sociologists.

<sup>2</sup> There is a prerequisite for this course: Soc 2710 - Introduction to Sociology

**Readings:**

The reading assignments for each week are indicated below on the syllabus in italics. You are expected to complete the reading in advance of the respective class session so you will be prepared for lecture and discussion. In class we will deal with additional, and occasionally different, material than is found in the corresponding readings. Nonetheless, class lectures and discussion are designed to build off of and complement the assigned readings.

**Course Requirements:**

(1). *Examinations.* There will be a total of four examinations in this course. Three of the exams are scheduled during the semester and will take place during regular class time (see schedule below). The fourth examination will be administered during finals week on Monday, April 28<sup>th</sup> from 10:15-12:15.

(2). *Writing Assignment.* There will be one writing assignment due during the semester. This assignment is designed to help you explore and apply the ideas of one or more of the classical social theorists addressed in this course. Specific instructions for this assignment will be distributed in class. It is important that you follow the instructions for this assignment or you will receive a “0.” Late writing assignments will *not* be accepted.

(3). *Dead Sociologist Crossword Puzzles.* In an attempt to ensure that you have reviewed material in the text prior to our coverage of specific classical sociological theorists, you will be required to complete a number of “Dead Sociologist Crossword Puzzles” during the course of the semester. These crossword puzzles are designed to help you begin to become familiar with the key concepts and terminology of the different theorists covered in this course. The specific crossword puzzles, along with the corresponding due dates, will be distributed in class. Late crossword puzzles will *not* be accepted.

(4). *Participation.* Students are expected to both raise and answer questions and remain active participants in this course. If at any time you are confused or unclear about a topic, you are probably not alone, the entire class would most likely benefit from your question or comment. Do not be afraid to ask or answer questions!

**Grading Scale:**

100% - 90%... A  
89% - 80%..... B  
79% - 70%..... C  
69% - 60%..... D  
59% - 0%..... F

**Basis for Final Grade:**

Exam #1..... 20.0%  
Exam #2..... 20.0%  
Exam #3..... 20.0%  
Exam #4..... 20.0%  
Writing Assignment..... 15.0%  
Crossword Puzzles..... 5.0%  
Total..... 100.0%

**Course Schedule:**

Jan. 7 - Jan. 11	General Course Introduction <i>Chapter 1: The Origins of Sociological Theory</i>
Jan. 14 - Jan. 18	August Comte Harriet Martineau Herbert Spencer <i>Chapter 2: Theorizing After the Revolution - Auguste Comte (pp. 37-45)</i> <i>Chapter 2: Theorizing After the Revolution - Harriet Martineau (pp. 45-55)</i> <i>Chapter 3: Evolutionism and Functionalism - Herbert Spencer (pp. 61-81)</i>
Jan. 23 - Jan. 25	Karl Marx <i>Chapter 5: Radical Anticapitalism - Marx &amp; Engels</i>
Jan. 28 – Feb. 1	Karl Marx <i>Chapter 5: Radical Anticapitalism - Marx &amp; Engels (cont'd)</i>
Feb. 4 - Feb. 8	Karl Marx Emile Durkheim <i>Chapter 5: Radical Anticapitalism - Marx &amp; Engels (cont'd)</i> <i>Chapter 4: Society as Sui Generis - Durkheim</i>
<b>Exam #1 – Wednesday, Feb. 6<sup>th</sup></b>	
Feb. 11 - Feb. 13	Emile Durkheim <i>Chapter 4: Society as Sui Generis - Durkheim (cont'd)</i>
Feb. 18 - Feb. 22	Emile Durkheim Max Weber <i>Chapter 4: Society as Sui Generis - Durkheim (cont'd)</i> <i>Chapter 7: Social Action &amp; Social Complexity - Max Weber &amp; Marianne Weber</i>
Feb. 25 - Feb. 29	Max Weber <i>Chapter 7: Social Action &amp; Social Complexity - Max Weber &amp; Marianne Weber (cont'd)</i>
Mar. 3 - Mar. 7	Max Weber <i>Chapter 7: Social Action &amp; Social Complexity - Max Weber &amp; Marianne Weber (cont'd)</i>
<b>Exam #2 – Friday, Mar. 7<sup>th</sup></b>	
Mar. 10 - Mar. 14	SPRING BREAK

Mar. 17 - Mar. 21                   Georg Simmel  
Thorstein Veblen  
*Chapter 8: The Sociology of Form & Content - Simmel (cont'd)*  
*Chapter 10: Economic Sociological Theories - Thorstein Veblen*  
*(pp. 245-254)*

Mar. 24 - Mar. 28                   Thorstein Veblen  
Charlotte Perkins Gilman  
*Chapter 10: Economic Sociological Theories - Thorstein Veblen*  
*(pp. 245-254) (cont'd)*  
*Chapter 11: Society & Gender - Gilman and Webb*

Mar. 31 - Apr. 4                   Beatrice Potter Webb  
*Chapter 11: Society & Gender - Gilman and Webb (cont'd)*

***Exam #3 – Friday, Apr. 4<sup>th</sup>***

Apr. 7 - Apr. 11                   W.E.B. DuBois  
*Chapter 12: Sociological Theory & Race - W.E.B. DuBois*

Apr. 14 - Apr. 18                   Ida Wells-Barnett  
Charles Horton Cooley  
*Chapter 13: Society, Self, and Mind - Charles Horton Cooley*  
*(pp. 310 - 319)*

Apr. 21 - Apr. 25                   George Herbert Mead  
*Chapter 13: Society, Self, and Mind - George Herbert Mead*  
*(pp. 319-329)*  
*Chapter 14: Final Thoughts on Classical Sociological Theory*

***Exam #4 – Monday, April 28<sup>th</sup> – 10:15-12:15***

***Policies:***

*Attendance:* Students are expected to attend class on a regular basis. Attendance will be taken on daily basis, but it will not be used as part of your final grade determination. However, regular class attendance is strongly recommended. Much of the material presented during class time will be included on the examinations. You are responsible for any course material that you miss if you are not in class, regardless of the reason for your absence. Most certainly your grade will suffer if you miss a number of classes.

*Late/Missed Exams & Assignments:* If, for some reason, you are going to miss an examination you must make every reasonable effort to notify me in advance. If you fail to notify me in advance that you are going to miss an examination, you will not be able to make-up that exam. Furthermore, make-up exams will only be given with a legitimate excuse (medical reason, death of a family member, etc.) and may be somewhat different than the original exam. Late writing assignments and crossword puzzles will not be accepted.

*Cheating and Plagiarism:* Not allowed. If you are found cheating or plagiarizing you will receive a "0" for that assignment, exam, or quiz and you will be immediately reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs. See the University policy regarding academic integrity for details about plagiarism.

*Tape Recorders:* The use of tape recorders, or other recording devices, during class is not allowed. Exceptions will be made only under special circumstances.

*Cell Phones/Text Messaging :* I know that many of you like to stay connected and many important people are constantly trying to get a hold of you, but if you have a cell phone please turn it *off* before coming to class. Furthermore, text messaging during class is not permitted or tolerated.

*Special Needs:* Students with documented disabilities are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) to address any necessary academic accommodations. Adaptations of methods, materials, or testing can be made to provide for your equitable participation in class as long as I am aware of your needs before tests and assignments.

*Office Hours:* Please come see me if you need any help, elaboration on a topic, have a questions, or have suggestions regarding this course. My office hours are as follows: MW 3:00-4:00, Th 11:00-1:00, or by appointment.

*Note: All material in this syllabus, including dates of exams, may be subject to change.*