

Sociology 316: Introduction to Sociological Theory

Summer 2011

TTH 10:50am – 1pm, SWS B014

Course Website: <https://catalyst.uw.edu/workspace/shawl/22481/>

Instructor: Lynette Shaw
Email: shawl@u.washington.edu

Office Hours: Wed. 1:30-3:30pm
Office: SAV 274

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course acts as an introduction to major theoretical perspectives used in sociology. In addition to familiarizing you with the ideas of well-known social theorists, this class will also give you tools for critical thinking in general. Doing well in this course will require more than just memorizing other people's ideas. You will also have to apply established frameworks of thought to new situations and learn how to develop your own thoughts in a systematic and clear way.

The beginning of the course will consider what "theory" is and does. From this discussion, a natural division will become evident between those social theories that focus on "individuals" and those that focus on "society." This division will organize the rest of our course. In the first half of the quarter, we will compare two perspectives that focus on individuals and in the second half, two that focus on society. As we consider each pair, it will become clear how it is possible to paint vastly different pictures of the exact same world just by beginning from a different set of simple, reasonable sounding assumptions. In the process of taking on these different perspectives and learning to use them in your analyses of the social world, you will not only gain new insights into society but also greatly increase your own analytical skills.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This course is writing-intensive and meets the criteria for writing ("W") credit. As such, in addition to exams, quizzes, and participation, two papers will also be required.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Collins, R. (1994). *Four Sociological Traditions*. New York: University of Oxford Press.
- Collins, R. (1994). *Four Sociological Traditions: Selected Readings*. New York: University of Oxford Press.
- **Additional readings online via course website and eReserves**

GRADES

Your grade in this class is based upon 2 exams, 2 five-page papers, regular reading quizzes, and class participation. The final score for this course will be broken down as follows:

Reading Quizzes and Class Participation	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Paper One	20%
Paper Two	20%

Reading Quizzes and Class Participation: Creating a good, enjoyable, and instructive class is a joint effort between instructor and students. To this end, your primary responsibilities will be completing readings in time for lecture and participating in class discussions. Short quizzes will be administered on a regular basis to assess whether or not you've done the readings. They will be very straightforward and should be easy if you've kept up on the reading. Factored into the same grade will also be your participation in class. Asking thoughtful questions and providing thoughtful answers (even if they are incorrect!!!) directly contributes to a good grade in this class.

Exams: There will be two exams. They will be composed of a set of short answer questions covering the two theory traditions considered in the preceding weeks (separately and compared to one another). Most responses will end up being a paragraph in length. You will need to bring a bluebook for your answers.

Papers: Two, 5-page papers that ask you to apply different theoretical frameworks to your own recent experiences in the social world will be required in this class. These papers will be graded both on the application of course material to your case as well as quality of writing.

COURSE POLICIES:

Make-up Exams: Arrangements for make-up exams must be made as soon as possible. If you know in advance that you will not be able to make an exam date, it is your responsibility to contact me as soon as you become aware of the schedule conflict. If you end up being unable to attend the exam due to an emergency, it is your responsibility to contact me within 24 hours if at all possible. In the interest of fairness, a **failure to notify me and/or inability to provide documentation excusing your absence** may result in your **not being able to make-up the exam** or **additional work**.

Late Work: The same standards of notification and documentation are required in order to turn in assignments late without penalty.

Academic Honesty: Cheating and plagiarism are not tolerated in this course. Please refer to the following website for definitions of plagiarism and cheating and a description of their consequences: <http://depts.washington.edu/grading/pdf/AcademicResponsibility.pdf>

The Learning Environment Please be respectful and let me know if there are any problems that distract from your ability to learn or communicate freely. Be aware of resources available to you as a student, including the Sociology Department's Advising Office (tel: 206-543-5396; email: asksoc@u.washington.edu). If you have paperwork from Disabled Resources for Students (telephone: 206-543-8924; email: uwdss@u.washington.edu), please provide it to me as soon as possible so I can make appropriate accommodations.

LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE

6/21 Introduction to course and social theory

The Rational/Utilitarian Tradition –Individuals and Rational Action

Collins: pp. 120 - 180

6/23 Markets

Online: “*The Division of Labor*” Smith (pp. 166-174*)

Collins, Selected: pp. 136 – 144:

“*Social Exchange among Equals and Unequals*” Homans

6/28 Bounded Rationality

Collins, Selected: pp. 145 – 161:

“*Bounded Rationality and Satisficing*” March and Simon

“*Tacit Coordination*” Schelling

6/30 Social Dilemmas

Online: “*Leviathan*” Hobbes (pp. 88-98*)

Collins, Selected: pp. 162 - 189

“*Public Goods and the Free Rider Problem*” Olson

“*The Realization of Effective Norms*” Coleman

The Microinteractionist Tradition – Individuals and Meaning-filled Interaction

Collins: pp. 243 - 290

7/5 The Social Mind

Collins, Selected: pp. 284 - 303

“*Society is in the Mind*” Cooley

“*Thought as Internalized Conversation*” Mead

7/7 Symbols and Interaction

Online: “*The Symbol*” White (pp. 31-38**)

Collins, Selected: pp. 304 - 321

“*Symbolic Interactionism*” Blumer

7/12 Meaning-filled Behavior

Online: “*Performances*”; “*Role Distance*” Goffman (pp. 252-260**)

Collins, Selected: pp. 322 - 340

“*The Ethnomethodology of the Human Reality Constructor*” Mehan and Wood

7/14 Review Day for Midterm Exam

~First Paper Due~

7/19

Midterm Exam

The Conflict Tradition – Society and Conflict

Collins: pp. 47 - 120

- 7/21 Stratification and Inequality
Online: “*The Definition of Class*”; “*Are the Peasants a Class?*” Marx; “*Class and the Division of Labor*” Marx and Engels; “*Class and Status*” Weber (pp. 294 – 307**)
Collins, Selected: pp. 110 - 132
“*A Conflict Theory of Stratification*” Collins
- 7/26 Power, Politics, and Domination
Collins, Selected: pp. 4 - 35
“*History as Class Struggle*”; “*Materialism and the Theory of Ideology*”; “*The Class Basis of Politics and Revolution*” Marx and Engels
Online: “*Types of Authority*”; “*Characteristics of Bureaucracy*”; “*Some Consequences of Bureaucratization*” Weber (pp. 120 – 125 and pp. 327 - 335 **)
- 7/28 Origins of Capitalism
Collins, Selected: pp. 36 - 57
“*The Origins of Modern Capitalism*” Weber
Online: “*Productive Forces and Relations of Production*” Marx; “*Bourgeois and Proletarians*” Marx and Engels (pp. 524 – 525 and pp. 551 – 561**)

The Durkheimian Tradition – Society and Cohesion

Collins: pp. 181 - 241

- 8/2 Society and Functionalism
Collins, Selected: pp. 194 - 206
“*Precontractual Solidarity*” Durkheim
Online: “*Social Structure and Social Function*” Spencer; “*The Function of Social Conflict*” Coser; “*Social Structure and Anomie*” Merton (pp. 466 – 471, pp. 181 – 184, and pp. 551 – 561**)
- 8/4 Challenging Empirical Applications: Suicide and Crime
Online: “*Suicide and Social Cohesion*” “*Anomie and Suicide*”; “*The Normality of Crime*” Durkheim (pp. 165 – 172, pp. 388 – 397, and pp. 431 – 437**)
- 8/9 Religion and Ritual
Collins, Selected: pp. 206 – 226, 244 - 261
“*Social Rituals and Sacred Objects*” Durkheim; “*The Social Circulation of Sentiments, Magic, and Money*” Hubert and Mauss; “*The Nature of Deference and Demeanor*” Goffman

- 8/11 Review Day for Final Exam
~Second Paper Due~

8/16 **Final Exam**

8/18 **NO CLASS!!!**

* Hechter, M. and Horne, C.(2009). *Theories of Social Order: A Reader*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

** Coser, L. and Rosenberg, B. (1982). *Sociological Theory: A Book of Readings*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.