

SOAN 112: Development of Social Theory

Lehigh University, Spring 2018

CRN: 11874 (4 Credits)

Tuesday/Thursday 10:45 am-12:00 pm

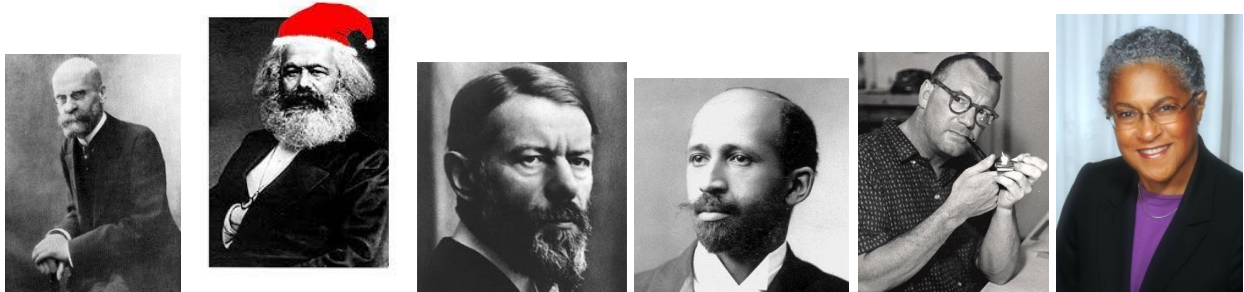
Room: Mohler 355/356

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Office: 223 Williams Hall

Office Hours: By Appointment



Course Description:

Social theory provides explanations. Why do we observe what we observe in the social world? What does it mean to have a “sociological imagination”? In understanding society, is it more important to look at conflict or at solidarity? Who holds the power in society, and why? How does the individual come to internalize societal expectations? How does the type of society in which one lives impact his or her individual experience? To what extent is there an “essential self,” and to what extent are we all just playing roles? Why do some people refuse to follow society’s rules? Why and how does social class reproduce itself? What does it mean to look at a social problem through a “feminist,” “queer,” or “intersectional” lens? Who’s that guy smoking a cigar in the photo above? In this course, we tackle these questions and more!

By tracing the development of social theory from classical to modern, we not only examine theoretical frameworks that are essential to the discipline of sociology, but we grapple with how to apply these frames to contemporary social problems, empirical research, and our own daily lives. For your final group projects, you will select the work of one theorist from our syllabus and apply it to a contemporary “cultural artifact” (e.g. a film, a TV show, a novel, etc.).

Course Objectives:

By the end of the semester, students should be able to...

...identify and understand the key theoretical traditions in sociology; [*continued...*]

...analyze, synthesize, and contrast the major theoretical contributions of “classical” scholars—such as Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim—and discuss and debate the strengths and weaknesses of each theory.

...understand how modern theorists have drawn upon, and extended, these “classical” writings to make their own contributions to social theory.

and

...think critically about how to apply these theories—both classical and modern—to empirical research, today’s social issues, contemporary cultural artifacts, and their own daily lives.

Required Materials:

- PDFs of all required readings are available on Coursesite.
- The required film *Pretty Woman* (1990; dir. Garry Marshall) is also available on Coursesite as streaming content.

Course Requirements:

*Note: All writing assignments should be submitted via Coursesite as **Word or PDF documents only**—otherwise, I will not be able to open your document and it will be marked late. Final projects must be submitted as **PDFs or PowerPoint slides**. You are responsible for making sure your assignments have been submitted. Do not assume a paper has been submitted unless you receive electronic confirmation.*

See “Assignments” sheet for further information, guidelines, and grading criteria.

- IN-CLASS EXAM 1: 15% of grade
- IN-CLASS EXAM 2: 15% of grade
- “POWER PAPER”: 20% of grade
- “*PRETTY WOMAN* PAPER”: 20% of grade
- “LEHIGH TYPE” SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENT: 5% of grade
- FINAL GROUP PROJECT: 15% of grade
- PARTICIPATION: 10% of grade [Note: Your grade for this item will reflect your *active, engaged participation* in our class. In order to receive a high grade for participation, you must not only attend class consistently but demonstrate that you are prepared (having done the readings) and speak regularly during our discussions.]

Grading Scale:

93%-100% = A

90%-92% = A-

87%-89% = B+

83%-86% = B

80%-82% = B-

77%-79% = C+

73%-76% = C
70%-72% = C-
67%-69% = D+
63%-66% = D
60%-62% = D-
0%-59% = F

Late Papers/ Missed Exams:

Barring extreme circumstances, **I will not accept late assignments.**

Students must sit for exams **in class on the day they are given.**

Policy on Laptops/Cell Phones:

In general, students are not permitted to use laptops except at times specified by the instructor. If you have a circumstance that requires you to use a device in class, please speak with me privately. See the policy on accommodations below.

Cell phone use is never permitted.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting accommodations, please contact both myself and the Office of Academic Support Services, Williams Hall, Suite 301 (610-758-4152) as early as possible in the semester. You must have documentation from the Academic Support Services office before accommodations can be granted.

The Principles of Our Equitable Community:

Lehigh University endorses The Principles of Our Equitable Community [http://www.lehigh.edu/~inprv/initiatives/PrinciplesEquity_Sheet_v2_032212.pdf]. We expect each member of this class to acknowledge and practice these Principles. Respect for each other and for differing viewpoints is a vital component of the learning environment inside and outside the classroom.

Student Senate Statement on Academic Integrity:

“We, the Lehigh University Student Senate, as the standing representative body of all undergraduates, reaffirm the duty and obligation of students to meet and uphold the highest principles and values of personal, moral and ethical conduct. As partners in our educational community, both students and faculty share the responsibility for promoting and helping to ensure an environment of academic integrity. As such, each student is expected to complete all academic course work in accordance to the standards set forth by the faculty and in compliance with the University's Code of Conduct.”

Schedule of Assignments:

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION/ WHAT IS “SOCIAL THEORY”?

Tuesday, January 23rd

- Introductions/ Course Administration/ What is “social theory”?
- *There are no assigned readings for this class session.*

Thursday, January 25th

Read for this class:

- C. Wright Mills. “Chapter One: The Promise” in *The Sociological Imagination* [1959]
- Peter Kaufman, “Asking Sociological Questions” (2 pages)
- Joseph Heath. 2017. “[Absent-Minded Professor—Or Inconsiderate Boor?](https://www.chronicle.com/article/Absent-Minded-Professor-or/241780/)” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 19 Nov. (<https://www.chronicle.com/article/Absent-Minded-Professor-or/241780/>)

WEEK 2: THE CONFLICT TRADITION/ DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM (KARL MARX)

Tuesday, January 30th

Read for this class:

- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “History as Class Struggle,” [1848] in Randall Collins (Ed.). *Four Sociological Traditions: Selected Readings*. New York: Oxford University Press: pp. 3-13.
- Karl Marx, “The Class Basis of Politics and Revolution,” [1852] in *Four Sociological Traditions*: pp. 17-35.

Thursday, February 1st

Read for this class:

- Karl Marx. 1867. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. Translated by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling. New York: International Publishers: pp. 43-87.

WEEK 3: THE CONFLICT TRADITION/ INTERPRETIVE SOCIOLOGY (MAX WEBER)

Tuesday, February 6th

Read for this class:

- Max Weber. 1968 “The Distribution of Power within the Political Community: Class, Status, Party,” in *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. 1968. Edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. New York: Bedminster Press: pp. 926-940

Thursday, February 8th

Read for this class:

- Max Weber. “Part I,” in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. 2005. New York: Routledge: pp. 1-50.

WEEK 4: POSITIVISM/ STRUCTURALISM (EMILE DURKHEIM)

Tuesday, February 13th

Read for this class:

- Emile Durkheim, “Precontractual Solidarity” [1893] in *Four Sociological Traditions*: pp. 193-206.
- Emile Durkheim, “Chapter One: What Is a Social Fact?” in *The Rules of the Sociological Method*, edited by Steven Lukes and translated by W.D. Halls. New York: Free Press: pp. 50-59.

Thursday, February 15th

Read for this class:

- Emile Durkheim. *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*. Translated by John A. Spaulding and George Simpson. Edited with an Introduction by George Simpson. London: Free Press: pp. 297-325 (The editor’s introduction – pp. 13-32 – is included in the PDF as optional reading.)

WEEK 5: ANTIPOSITIVISM/ FORMAL SOCIOLOGY (GEORG SIMMEL)

Tuesday, February 20th

- **“Power paper” is due** to Coursesite prior to the start of class (10:45 AM) today.

Read for this class:

- Georg Simmel. [1903 (1971)]. “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” In *On Individuality and Social Forms*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago: pp. 324-339.

Thursday, February 22nd

- *AWAY AT A CONFERENCE – NO CLASS*

WEEK 6: THE MICROINTERACTIONIST TRADITION

Tuesday, February 27th

Read for this class:

- Charles Horton Cooley, “Society Is in the Mind” [1902] in *Four Sociological Traditions*: pp. 283-289.
- George Herbert Mead, “Thought as Internalized Conversation” [1934] in *Four Sociological Traditions*: pp. 290-303.

Thursday, March 1st

- **“Lehigh type” assignment is due** to Coursesite prior to the start of class (10:45 AM) today.

Read for this class:

- Erving Goffman. (1979). “Display,” In *Gender Advertisement*. London: Harper: pp. 1-9.

WEEK 7: FROM CLASSICAL TO CONTEMPORARY THEORY / EXAM #1

Tuesday, March 6th

- We will do a brief review for the exam in class today. Please come prepared with any lingering questions you might have about the material. I will also distribute your essay “question bank” in class.

Read for this class:

- Robert William Connell. (1997). “Why Is Classical Theory Classical?” *American Journal of Sociology* 102(6): 1511-1557.

Thursday, March 8th

- **IN-CLASS EXAM #1**
- *There are no assigned readings for this class session.*

WEEK 8: SPRING BREAK!

Tuesday, March 13th – NO CLASS

Thursday, March 15th – NO CLASS

WEEK 9: CULTURAL SOCIOLOGY (PIERRE BOURDIEU)

Tuesday, March 20th

Read for this class:

- Rogers Brubaker. (1985). “Rethinking Classical Theory: The Sociological Vision of Pierre Bourdieu.” *Theory and Society*, 14(6): 745-775.

Thursday, March 22nd

- You will indicate your final project group preferences in class today.

Read for this class:

- Pierre Bourdieu. 1986. “The Forms of Capital.” In JG Richardson (Ed.) *Handbook of Theory*. New York, Greenwood: pp. 241-258.

WEEK 10: NO CLASS/ THEORIES OF DEVIANCE

Tuesday, March 27th

- NO CLASS

Thursday, March 29th

Read for this class:

- Dalton Conley. 2008. “Social Control and Deviance,” in *You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist*. New York: W.W. Norton: 185-207.

WEEK 11: WHERE’S RACE?

Tuesday, April 3rd

- Project groups will meet in class today to decide on final presentation material.

Read for this class:

- W.E.B. Du Bois, Chapters I and II in *The Souls of Black Folks*: pp. 1-18.

Thursday, April 5th

- **“Pretty Woman Paper” is due** to Coursesite prior to the start of class (10:45 AM) today.

Read for this class:

- Patricia H. Collins (1993 [1990]). “Black Feminist Thought in the Matrix of Domination.” In *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings*, edited by Charles Lemert. Boulder: Westview Press: pp. 553-564.

WEEK 12: WHERE’S GENDER?

Tuesday, April 10th

Read for this class:

- Gayle Rubin. 1975. “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex.” In Reiter, Rayna R (Ed.). *Toward an Anthropology of Women*: 157-210.

Thursday, April 12th

Read for this class:

- Judith Stacey and Barrie Thorne (1985) “The Missing Feminist Revolution in Sociology.” *Social Problems*, 32(4): 301-316.

WEEK 13: WHERE’S SEXUALITY?

Tuesday, April 17th

Read for this class:

- Michel Foucault. (1979). *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage: pp. 1-49.

Thursday, April 19th

- We will do a brief review for the exam in class today. Please come prepared with any lingering questions you might have about the material. I will also distribute your essay “question bank” in class.

Read for this class:

- Arlene Stein and Ken Plummer. 1994. “‘I Can’t Even Think Straight’: ‘Queer’ Theory and the Missing Sexual Revolution in Sociology.” *Sociological Theory* 12(2): 178-87.

WEEK 14: EXAM #2/ GROUP MEETINGS/ COURSE WRAP-UP

Tuesday, April 24th

- **IN-CLASS EXAM #2**
- *There are no assigned readings for this class session.*

Thursday, April 26th

- Course wrap-up
- Student presentation groups meet in class to finalize projects and get instructor feedback
- *There are no assigned readings for this class session.*

WEEK 15: FINAL PRESENTATIONS

Tuesday, May 1st

- **ALL groups’ presentation slides are due** to Coursesite prior to the start of class (10:45 AM) today. *[continued...]*

- Groups 1-5 present in class today.
- *There are no assigned readings for this class session.*

Thursday, May 3rd

- Groups 6-10 present in class today.
- *There are no assigned readings for this class session.*

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER BREAK! ☺

