

Social Theory

Sociology 380



*D. Michael Lindsay
mlindsay@rice.edu
552 Sewall Hall*

*Office hours are available anytime by appointment
Department of Sociology, Rice University
Spring 2011*

Description of the course

This course engages and analyzes the foundational texts of social theory from its classical roots to its contemporary branches. The theoretical perspectives explored in this course represent major traditions within sociology. Although most social theory has been articulated by white men historically, we will draw upon notable women and people of color whose contributions have not always been appreciated in the social theory canon. The course aims to introduce students to the major approaches, themes, thinkers, and debates in social theory; it is an overview and, as such, moves quickly from one important topic to another.

Social theory seeks to explain change in society—how it develops, what factors facilitate and inhibit it, and what results from it. Looking at foundational texts within the discipline, we will consider the principal ideas offered by leading theorists of the last two centuries and how those ideas relate to the social and intellectual contexts in which they were produced. More important, we will consider their relevance for ongoing issues we face today.

Social theory means nothing unless it can translate into some news you can use. While some approach social theory as a historical narrative of ideas to be studied, in this class we will regard theory as a set of tools to be used in constructing our own explanations of what is happening in society around us. In order to draw on these ideas, we must carefully consider what each theorist has written and bring critical analysis to our interpretation.

The questions we will ask in social theory are important and weighty. What are the distinctive features of modern society? How does the individual relate to larger groups of people—his community, his workplace, his culture? What does it mean to be human, and how, therefore, should humans respond? What are the points of connection between individual behavior and wider social structures (such as school, church, and the media)? By the end of the course, you will know the major social theorists that have shaped Western society—their ideas and their major works. You will also be able to apply their categories of analysis to contemporary issues.

Course Requirements

Each student will be given the chance to engage two different social phenomena of particular interest from the perspective of two major theorists, one from the “classical roots” part of our class (Tocqueville, Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Simmel, Freud, Mead, DuBois) and one from the “contemporary branches” part of the course (Merton, Parsons, Conflict Theory [Coser/Mills], Goffman, Social Construction Theory [Shutz/Berger & Luckmann], Garfinkel, Rational Choice, Feminist Theory, Habermas, Foucault, Douglas, Bourdieu, and Collins). Students will choose one contemporary social issue that interests them (for example, the rise of radical Islam in France) and examine that topic by incorporating a particular theoretical perspective from the classical era of social theory (for example, Marx). That short paper, which will constitute 15% of the final course grade, should be 4-6 pages (excluding a reference page and a title page) and will be handed in at the beginning of class on Friday, February 18.

Students will choose a second topic (for example, executive compensation for American CEOs today) and examine that issue by incorporating a particular theoretical perspective from the contemporary era (for example, social constructionism). That short paper, which will constitute an additional 15% of the final course grade, should be 4-6 pages (excluding a reference page and a title page) and will be handed in at the beginning of class on Friday, April 22.

Rice is a community of students and scholars committed to developing educated persons of substance and character. As a result, you are expected to practice personal and academic integrity as a member of this community. Adherence to the honor code is one way Rice students contribute to the community’s integrity.

Students are expected to abide by the Rice Honor System (<http://honor.rice.edu/>). Violations include, but are not limited to, cheating on exams, having unauthorized possession of an exam, and submitting the work of another person as your own (aka, plagiarism). Ignorance of this policy is not an excuse for noncompliance.

While the Honor Code system is designed to enforce rules about what is considered acceptable and honorable behavior, Rice does not have a unified Honor Code policy that *defines* these rules. Therefore, I offer the following set of conventions and rules that will apply to academic writing and examinations in this course. First, consulting or seeking to consult previous years’ exams for this course constitutes a violation of the Honor Code in this class and will not be tolerated. Also, all students must adhere to the following format when citing published works. This includes material drawn from books and journal articles (including those assigned for the course and outside sources), in addition to personal interviews and information obtained online.

Information from class discussions does not need to be cited in-text. Students should not discuss their assignments with others, nor should other students edit or collaborate on their papers, though students are free to talk with me about the assignment. I define plagiarism as quoting, paraphrasing, or otherwise using another person's words or ideas as one's own without properly crediting the source.

Papers should include a title page and a references page beyond the 4-6 pages of substantive material. They must be handed in personally (no email submissions). Guidelines for the paper assignments will be given in class during the week of February 9, but naturally, all direct and indirect quotations from sources consulted should be properly acknowledged (for insights drawn from course lectures and discussions, this is not necessary). Because these assignments allow you to choose pressing social issues of particular interest to you, they must be independent pieces of work, not simply summaries or a literature review; constructive social analysis is required of both assignments. For both paper assignments, no extensions are allowed, but students may submit them early.

Unless specified otherwise, ALL paper assignments must be/use:

- ✓ Typed
- ✓ Double-spaced
- ✓ Paginated
- ✓ Stapled
- ✓ 12-point font
- ✓ "Normal" character spacing (this is the default setting in Microsoft Word)
- ✓ One-inch margins on all sides

All online references (including Wikipedia, though I strongly discourage its use in formal academic writing) must be cited. All students are required to follow ASA rules for format and style when writing papers for sociology classes at Rice. Below are examples for both in-text citations and the bibliography page. If you have any questions, search on the Internet for "ASA style guide" to find links to several on-line postings that provide additional detail on citation guidelines. I also encourage students to consult the following websites, which contain helpful recommendations for writing.

Common errors in English (<http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/>)

Using Microsoft Word (<http://word.tips.net/>)

In-text citations

You must cite the original author if you pull in either exact phrases or sentences, or if you use essentially the same ideas, concepts, or research findings -- even if paraphrasing. That is, even if you rewrite the author's words, you must still cite the original author as the source of the ideas.

- When referencing work in the body of a paper, you must always include (a) the author name, and (b) the year of publication. Example:

In her study of men in "women's professions," Williams (1995) demonstrates that men are not disadvantaged by their gender minority status in the same way that women often are in predominantly male workplaces.

- You can also cite multiple authors who draw on the same ideas, who have similar findings on similar topic. Example:

Men in "women's professions" often feel their masculinity is called into question by outsiders (Williams 1995; Cross and Bagilhole 2002).

- Whenever you draw on a new idea, concept, or finding, you must use internal citations with author's names and years of publications. However, if you are discussing the same article or author in a series of sentences, you only need to provide a citation the first time. Example:

Miller (1997) demonstrates how the military men in her study engage in gender harassment of their women superiors. She illustrates several forms of this gender harassment, including foot-dragging and rumor spreading.

Note: In the second sentence, there is no citation for the year, as you provided it in the previous sentence. However, if you discuss Miller later in the paper, you will provide the year again to make clear you are discussing the same article.

- When quoting directly, you must also include the page(s) the quote is found on, and enclose the quote in parentheses. Example:

According to Tran (2002:34), the "way of the way is the way."

- For citations with four or more authors, use "et al." rather than list all author names in-text. Example:

Research has documented elevated infant mortality rates among children born to teenage mothers (Jackson et al. 1992).

- Do not use titles of books and articles in your paper, or the author's first name. Rather, use the author's last name and internal citations to give the year of the publication. Example:

INSTEAD of: *Virginia Valian, in her 1999 book Why So Slow: The Advancement of Women, shows that women in professional occupations often advance more slowly than their men counterparts.*

USE: *Valian (1999) shows that women in professional occupations often advance more slowly than their men counterparts.*

- Common mistakes you should take care to avoid:
 - ✓ In all of these examples listed above, the period comes AFTER the parentheses, NOT before it. Please remember that the author citation is part of the sentence, so it should be listed before you end the sentence with a period.
 - ✓ Many students use too many direct quotes from a book or journal article. Quotes should be used very sparingly, while paraphrasing from the text should be the norm.

Works Cited page: A Works Cited page lists all sources cited in the paper. The page should follow the basic format of author, year of publication, title of publication, publisher, and if an article, the volume and page numbers. Here are some examples:

Anderson, Maya. 1978. *Ever Heard of Hip Hop?* New York: Oxford University Press.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2006. "Cigarette Use Among High School Students – United States, 1991-2005." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports* 55:724-726.

Cleary, Paul D., Lawrence B. Zaborski, and John Z. Ayanian. 2004. "Sex Differences in Health over the Course of Midlife." Pp. 37-63 in *How Healthy Are We? A National Study of Well-being in Midlife*, edited by O.G. Brim, C.D. Ryff, and R.C. Kessler. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

**Note that all authors after the first author have their first names listed first.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2002. "Hispanics Growing Fast." Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved March 30, 2007. (<http://www.census.gov/hispanic.html>).

Williams, Genia. 1997. "The Lonely Way." *American Journal of Sociology* 42:37-64.

Zenia, Genco. 2007. Personal Interview. Conducted April 2, 2007.

**Only include if person gives permission to be cited by name.

For the midterm assignment, students may choose between (1) an in-class presentation on an outside book they read and analyze by a particular theorist or (2) a quasi-open book conversational/oral midterm exam to be held in my office either before or after spring break. Students opting for the latter may choose to meet with me for the 20 minute conversation before spring break (Feb 23-25) or after spring break (March 7-8). Regardless of the time of the appointment, the midterm conversational exam will only cover material up through readings and class discussion on Monday, February 21. Students may bring to the exam three 5 x 8" index cards to help them recall course materials during the conversation (these will be turned into the professor at the end of the conversation). For those who are interested, we will have a practice round outside of class, at a time to be determined. The benefits of the conversational oral are that it gives the student a chance (1) to see what the conversational final exam will be like; (2) to synthesize seven weeks' material before moving to the second half of the course; and (3) requires no additional reading beyond the assigned texts.

Students opting for the in-class presentation will select a work from the list below and present to the class a 20-30 minute presentation on the work's main ideas, how it reflects the given theorist's main ideas, and how it relates to other course materials (assigned for that day and for previous theorists). The following works are available for this option (you may not choose a work you have already read).

Major Work	Social Theorist	Date of Presentation
<i>The German Ideology, Part I</i>	Karl Marx	Friday, January 21
<i>Manifesto of the Communist Party</i> and <i>The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte</i> (parts 1 and 7)	Karl Marx	Wednesday, January 19
<i>Suicide</i>	Emile Durkheim	Friday, January 28
<i>Elementary Forms of the Religious Life</i>	Emile Durkheim	Monday, January 31
<i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i>	Max Weber	Wednesday, February 2
Selections from <i>On Individuality and Social Forms</i>	Georg Simmel	Wednesday, February 9
Selections from <i>The Interpretation of Cultures</i>	Erving Goffman	Friday, February 25
<i>The Social Construction of Reality</i>	Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann	Friday, March 11
<i>The Sacred Canopy</i>	Peter Berger	Monday, March 14
Selections from <i>Discipline and Punish</i>	Michele Foucault	Wednesday, March 23
Selections from <i>Distinction</i>	Pierre Bourdieu	Wednesday, March 30
<i>Purity and Danger</i>	Mary Douglas	Monday, April 4
Selections from <i>The Sociology of Philosophies</i>	Randall Collins	Friday, April 15

The benefits of the in-class presentation are that it gives the student the chance (1) to delve more deeply into one theorist's writings, which likely could be helpful for one of the short papers as well; (2) can happen throughout the semester, so it is less likely to occur at a time when multiple assignments are due; and (3) requires no exam preparation time during midterms. However, these works are dense and, at times, difficult to understand. I expect both assignments will require about the same amount of time, and I leave it up to you to decide which is more in line with your personal preferences and scheduling demands this semester. This will constitute 20% of the final course grade.

During finals week (April 28-May 4), each student will meet with me for 20-30 minutes for a quasi-open book conversational/oral final exam to be held in my office. Students may bring three 5 x 8" index cards to the exam to help them recall course materials during the conversation (these will be turned into the professor at the end of the conversation). This final will be comprehensive in scope, covering readings, class discussions, and course material from all 15 weeks of the semester. Approximately one-third of the questions will be drawn from lecture material, one third from topics raised in class discussions, and one-third from material assigned in the readings but not covered in class. We will have an in-class practice round during the last week of classes. This conversational exam will constitute 30% of the final course grade.

Mark Twain once said, "half of life is just showing up," and while I am not as generous as he, I believe attendance and active participation in class discussions (based on careful reading of all assigned texts) should be rewarded. Student attendance (which will be taken every day) will constitute 20% of the final grade (in essence, each class session is worth .5% of the final course grade). If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get copies of any materials handed out and lecture/discussion notes as well as to be apprised of any announcements (about assignments or changes to the syllabus) made during class. I do not provide those to students who are absent. By the same token, I use email to make certain announcements throughout the semester. I expect that you will read any email I send within 24 hours, and I will do the same.

All students, including those taking the course on a pass/fail basis, must complete all course requirements in order to receive a passing grade. The two papers as well as the midterm assignment and the final exam are covered by the Rice Honor System. Violations include, but are not limited to, cheating on exams, having unauthorized knowledge of exam questions, consulting previous years' exams, and plagiarizing the work of another person as your own. Students are not to discuss any aspect of the conversational exam meetings (questions, format) with other students.

To summarize, here are the course requirements and the percent of the final grade they constitute:

Integration Short Paper 1	15%
Midterm Assignment (conversational exam or in-class presentation)	20%
Integration Short Paper 2	15%
Conversational Final Exam	30%
Class attendance and participation	20%
<hr/> TOTAL	<hr/> 100%

The grading scale for this course is as follows

A+	99-100	A	94-98	A-	90-93
B+	87-89	B	84-86	B-	80-83
C+	77-79	C	74-76	C-	70-73
D+	67-69	D	64-66	D-	60-63
F	59 and below				

Course philosophy and structure

Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities will also need to contact Disability Support Services in the Ley Student Center.

The course structure seeks to address these topics with pedagogical variety, active classroom engagement, careful attention to classic and contemporary texts (with eyes toward both appreciation and critique), and theory construction by students themselves on pressing issues.

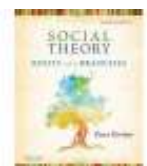
The quality of our time together depends upon all of us. Social theory is dense material; a single page of Marx can take several minutes to read and digest. Theory deals with abstract ideas, much like philosophy. It cannot be memorized and often takes several pages to make a single, important point. I often read theory assignments twice; you might do the same. We will also spend some class time carefully examining particular passages, engaging in textual analysis much like a literature course. Everyone will be expected to participate in class discussions; you may be called upon to refresh our memory of the main ideas of a particular reading or to relate one theorist's ideas with another. That means you have to read consistently and thoroughly. You should bring readings to class everyday and be prepared to answer one another's questions.

Social theory can be boring and tedious, but I find it exciting and extremely rewarding. Think of this course as a gift—never before have you had the chance to think deeply about some of the most important matters facing our society. If you are like most people, the frenetic pace of college and career will keep you from thinking this deeply ever again. This is a time for you to come to your own conclusions, but you can only do that after considering what some of the greatest minds have had to say before you. Emile Durkheim wrote, “If you wish to mature your thought, apply yourself scrupulously to the study of a great master; dismantle a system down to its most secret workings.” That is our aim, and if we're successful, none of us will be the same.

Course materials and logistics

Each student should purchase the following items for the course:

- ◆ One copy of *Social Theory: Roots and Branches* Fourth Edition by Peter Kivisto (New York: Oxford UP, 2011)—available in the campus bookstore
- ◆ One copy of the theoretical text of your choosing (for those opting for the class presentation midterm assignment)
- ◆ Electronic course readings: available free via my website (www.rice.edu/mlindsay)



Course outline

Dates to Remember

- ◆ No Class: Monday, January 17 (Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday)
- ◆ Integration Short Paper 1 Due: Friday, February 18 at the start of class
- ◆ Conversational Midterms: February 23-25 (Wednesday-Friday) and March 7-8 (Tuesday-Wednesday); student chooses meeting time (before or after spring break)
- ◆ Spring Break: February 26-March 6
- ◆ No Class: Wednesday, April 13
- ◆ Spring Recess: March 24-25
- ◆ Integration Short Paper 2 Due/Last Day of Class: Friday, April 22
- ◆ Conversational Finals: April 28-May 4; student chooses meeting time

Week 1: Introduction & Foundations of Social Theory: January 10-14

- ◆ Course overview; syllabus; introductions
- ◆ Philosophical and social foundations of the rise of social theory (Saint-Simon)
- ◆ Adam Smith and the modern world
- ◆ Tocqueville and social analysis

for Friday, January 14:

Read selections from Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (handout)

Volume I: [Author's Introduction \(9-20\)](#); [Chapter 3 \(50-57\)](#), [Chapter 5 \(61-98\)](#)

Volume II, Part 1: [Chapter 2 \(433-436\)](#)

for Wednesday, January 19:

Read selections from Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (handout)

Volume II, Book 1: [Chapter 5 \(442-449; 572-580\)](#), [Chapter 9 \(590-592\)](#), [Chapter 10 \(592-594\)](#), [Chapter 11 \(594-600\)](#), and [Chapter 12 \(600-603\)](#)

Volume II, Part 2: [Chapter 6 \(690-695\)](#)



Week 2: Tocqueville & Marx: January 17-21

- ◆ No Class: Monday, January 17 (Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday)
- ◆ Tocqueville as social observer: religion, politics, gender, community, civic life
- ◆ Marx: labor; means of production; theory of social life (economics at center); alienation; dynamism
- ◆ Historical materialism: theory and praxis; commodity
- ◆ Capital; class structure (bourgeoisie and proletariat); surplus value
- ◆ Social theory today—labor unions and Marx

for Friday, January 21:

Read Karl Marx in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches* “Alienated Labor” and “The German Ideology” (3-16)

for Monday, January 24:

Read Karl Marx in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*

“Manifesto of the Community Party,” and “Commodities” (17-31)
 Read “[The Future of American Labor: Reinventing Unions](#)” by Kim Voss and Rick Fantasia, *Contexts* Volume 3: 35-41 ([pdf file](#))

Week 3: Marx and Social Class; Durkheim: January 24-28

- ◆ *Roger and Me*: social class in America
- ◆ Cross-national comparisons on social class (Erik Olin Wright)
- ◆ Changing societies: organic and mechanical solidarity
- ◆ Development of new academic disciplines: Comte and Spencer
- ◆ Structure v. Agency
- ◆ Schemas and classification



for Wednesday, January 26:

Read “[What Kind of Society is ‘American Society’?](#)” by Erik Olin Wright and Joel Rogers in *American Society: How It Actually Works*. New York: W.W. Norton, Chapter 2, 2010. ([pdf file](#))

Read Karl Marx in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
 “The General Formula for Capital” (32-37)

for Friday, January 28:

Read Emile Durkheim in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
 “On Mechanical and Organic Solidarity,” “What Is a Social Fact,” and “Primitive Classification” (38-48, 56-59)

Read Emile Durkheim in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
 “Anomic Suicide” (49-55)



- ◆ Anomie and society
- ◆ 2 x 2 tables and the sociological method

for Monday, January 31:

Read Emile Durkheim in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
 “The Human Meaning of Religion” (60-67)

Read “[Civil Religion in America](#)” by Robert Bellah, *The Robert Bellah Reader*, 225-245 ([pdf file](#))

Read “[Yoga and Rebirth in America: Asian Religions Are Here to Stay](#)” by Wendy Cadge and Courtney Bender, *Contexts* Volume 3: 45-51 ([pdf file](#))

Week 4: Durkheim and Religion; Weber and Religion: January 31-February 4

- ◆ Sociology of Religion: classical and contemporary approaches

for Wednesday, February 2:

Read Max Weber in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
 “The Spirit of Capitalism” (74-81)



Read "[Religion and Spirituality among Scientists](#)" by Elaine Howard Ecklund, *Contexts* Volume 7: 12-15 ([pdf file](#))

- ◆ Capitalism and religion: Weber's *Spirit*
- ◆ Weber and Marx in conversation on the economy

for Friday, February 4:

Read Max Weber in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*

"Bureaucracy" and "The Nature of Charismatic Domination" (82-94)

Read "[When Public Institutions Fail: Coping with Dysfunctional Government in Post-Soviet Russia](#)" by Theodore P. Gerger, *Contexts* Volume 3:20-28 ([pdf file](#))

Read "[Violent Fatalities in Child Care](#)" by Julia Wrigley and Joanna Dreby, *Contexts* Volume 5: 35-40 ([pdf file](#))

- ◆ Bureaucracy
- ◆ Forms of Authority
- ◆ Modern society and social structures—institutions as organizing frames

for Monday, February 7:

Read Max Weber in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*

"Objectivity' in Social Science" and "Class, Status, Party" (68-73, 95-100)

Week 5: Weber, Simmel, Freud, and Mead: February 7-11

- ◆ Empirical sociology; *verstehen*
- ◆ Forms of social power: economic, political, social
- ◆ Marx and Weber on power/domination
- ◆ Class and social institutions: social clubs
- ◆ *People Like Us*

for Wednesday, February 9:

Read Georg Simmel in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*

"Fashion" and "The Stranger," (101-106, 119-122)

- ◆ Simmel: leisure and consumption
- ◆ Forms of social differentiation: gender and ethnic relations
- ◆ Toennies: community and association



for Friday, February 11:

Read Sigmund Freud in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*

"Civilizations and Its Discontents" (172-178)

Read George Herbert Mead in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*

"The Fusion of the 'I' and the 'Me' in Social Activities" (179-183)



- ◆ Relations between sociology and psychology (culture and cognition; culture as analog to personality)
- ◆ Social understandings from different perspectives (Freud v. Marx)

◆ Objective and subjective social perspectives (I/Me)

for Monday, February 14:

Read W.E.B. Du Bois in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*

“The Conservation of Races” (134-138)

Read “[Black Public Intellectuals: From Du Bois to the Present](#)” by Patricia Hill Collins, *Contexts* Volume 4: 22-27 ([pdf file](#))

Read “[Race as Class](#)” by Herbert J. Gans, *Contexts* Volume 4:17-21 ([pdf file](#))

Week 6: Du Bois, Addams, and Theory in Conversation with Research: February 14-18

- ◆ Race, Religion, and Urban Life
- ◆ Assimilation and cultural pluralism
- ◆ Urban sociology: the Chicago (Houston) School of Sociology
- ◆ Du Bois and social theory



for Wednesday, February 16:

Read Jane Addams in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*

“Utilization of Women in City Government” (147-152)

- ◆ Early treatments of gender relations
- ◆ Marriage as a social institution

for Friday, February 18:

Integrative Short Paper 1 due at start of class

for Monday, February 21:

Read Robert K. Merton in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*

“The Unanticipated Consequences of Social Action” (187-194)

Read Talcott Parsons in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*

“The Subsystems of Society” (195-200)

Read Jeffrey Alexander in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*

“After Neofunctionalism” (207-215)

Week 7: Functionalism and Conflict Theory: February 21-25



- ◆ Parsons: personality, social system, culture; AGIL
- ◆ Merton
- ◆ Micro v. macro theories of social action
- ◆ Structural functionalism
- ◆ Review of first seven weeks of course
 - ❖ Philosophical and social forerunners to the rise of social theory
 - ❖ Tocqueville
 - ❖ Marx
 - ❖ Durkheim
 - ❖ Weber
 - ❖ Simmel
 - ❖ Du Bois, Addams

- ❖ Freud, Mead
- ❖ Functionalism

for Wednesday, February 23:

Read Lewis Coser in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
 “The Function of Social Conflict” (216-219)
 Read C. Wright Mills in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
 “Culture and Politics” (220-225)
 Read Randall Collins in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
 “The Basics of Conflict Theory” (234-241)



- ◆ Social Conflict (Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Simmel, Parsons, Coser)
- ◆ History as ongoing story of conflict
- ◆ Mills and radical sociology

for Friday, February 25:

Read Herbert Blumer in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
 “Society as Symbolic Interaction” (242-248)
 Read Erving Goffman in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
 “Performances” (249-254)
 Read “[Out-of-Frame Activity](#)” by Erving Goffman in *Frame Analysis*, London: Penguin Books, 1975 (105-112) ([pdf file](#))
 Read “[The Balinese Cockfight as Play](#)” by Erving Goffman in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973 (113-121) ([pdf file](#))



- ◆ Symbolic Interactionism
- ◆ Dramaturgic Approach to Social Life; impression management; front stage vs. back stage
- ◆ Goffman: everyday life as drama (winks point to symbol systems)

for Monday, March 7:

Read Alfred Schutz in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
 “Indirect Social Relationships” (255-260)
 Read Alfred Schutz, “[The Phenomenology of the Social World](#),” pages 32-41 ([pdf file](#))
 Read “[Why Are There So Many ‘Minorities?’](#)” by Mitch Berbrier, *Contexts* Volume 3: 38-44 ([pdf file](#))

Conversational Midterm Exams (by appointment) Wednesday, February 23-Friday, February 25

Spring Break: February 26-March 6

Conversational Midterm Exams (by appointment) Monday, March 7-Tuesday, March 8

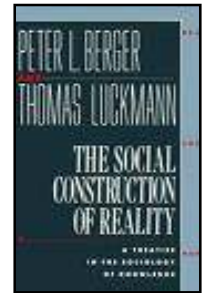
Week 8: Phenomenology, Social Constructionism, and Ethnomethodology: March 7-11

- ◆ Schutz as philosophical forerunner for social constructionism
- ◆ “Minority” status as a socially-constructed category

for Wednesday, March 9:

Read Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann “[The Social Construction of Reality](#),” 42-50 ([pdf file](#))

Read “[Rating the Rankings](#)” by Wendy Espeland and Michael Sauder, *Contexts* Volume 8: 16-21 ([pdf file](#))



- ◆ Social Constructionism
- ◆ Sociology of Culture

for Friday, March 11

Read Harold Garfinkel in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
“Studies of the Routine Grounds of Everyday Activities” (268-272)

Read “[The Politics of Small Things, Left and Right](#)” by Jeffrey C. Goldfarb, *Contexts*
Volume 5: 26-32 ([pdf file](#))

- ◆ Garfinkel and ethnomethodology: how social order is shared
- ◆ Conversation analysis
- ◆ Microsociological analysis



created and

for Monday, March 14:

Read George Homans in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
“Social Behavior as Exchange” (273-282)

Read Peter Blau in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
“Formulation of Exchange Theory” (310-317)

Read “[Who Do Taxi Drivers Trust?](#)” by Heather Hamill and Diego Gambetta, *Contexts*
Volume 5: 29-33 ([pdf file](#))

Week 9: Rational Choice Theory and Foucault: March 14-18

- ◆ Behaviorism
- ◆ Individualism
- ◆ Exchange theory (Blau) and the rise of rational choice in social science

for Wednesday, March 16:

Read James Coleman in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
“Human Capital and Social Capital” (295-301)

Read “[Six Lessons of Suicide Bombers](#)” by Robert J. Brym, *Contexts* Volume 6: 40-45.
([pdf file](#))

- ◆ Rational choice and forms of capital: social, cultural, human, political, economic

for Friday, March 18:

Read Michel Foucault in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
“Panopticism” (497-502)

Read "[Can the Police Be Reformed](#)" by Ronald Weitzer, *Contexts* Volume 4: 21-26
([pdf file](#))

for Monday, March 21:

Read Michel Foucault, "[Truth and Power](#)," 203-210 (reprinted from *Power/Knowledge*)
([pdf file](#))

Read "[Controlling the Media in Iraq](#)" by Andrew M. Lindner, *Contexts* Volume 7: 32-38
([pdf file](#))

Week 10: Foucault and Feminist Theory: March 21-25

- ◆ Postmodernism
- ◆ Post-structuralism and social theory
- ◆ Foucault: Power, discipline, subjectivity
- ◆ Sociology of knowledge (case of Jacques Derrida)



for Wednesday, March 23:

Read "[Class and Feminine Excess: The Strange Case of Anna Nicole Smith](#)" by Jeffrey A. Brown, *Feminist Review*, Volume 81: 74-94 ([pdf file](#))

Read Judith Butler in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
"Subversive Bodily Acts" (326-333)

Read "[Feminist Critiques of the Separative Model of Self: Implications for Rational Choice Theory](#)" by Paula England and Barbara Stanek Kilbourne, *Rationality and Society* Volume 2: 156-171 ([pdf file](#))

- ◆ Guest presentation on feminist and queer theory
- ◆ Foucault and sociology of gender and sexuality
- ◆ Relating gender issues to other social theories

Spring Recess: March 24-25

for Monday, March 28:

Read Dorothy E. Smith in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
"Sociology from Women's Experience: A Reaffirmation" (344-354)

Read "[The Sanctity of Sunday Football: Why Men Love Sports](#)" by Douglas Hartmann,
Contexts Volume 2: 13-21 ([pdf file](#))

Read "[I Can't Even Think Straight: Queer Theory and the Missing Sexual Revolution in Sociology](#)" by Arlene Stein and Ken Plummer, *Sociological Theory* Volume 12:
178-187 ([pdf file](#))

Week 11: Cultural Analysis: Douglas and Bourdieu: March 28-April 1

- ◆ Bourdieu: fields, structure, capital, classifications
- ◆ Reflexive sociology and the sociology of cultural tastes

- ◆ Connecting contemporary theoretical branches with classical roots (Tocqueville, Weber, Durkheim, Marx, Simmel)

for Wednesday, March 30:



Read Pierre Bourdieu in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*

“The Correspondence between Goods Production and Taste Production” (483-490)

Read “[Rethinking Classical Theory: The Sociological Vision of Pierre Bourdieu](#)” by Rogers Brubaker, *Theory and Society* Volume 14: 745-775

for Friday, April 1:

Read “[Chess, Cheerleading, Chopin: What Gets You Into College](#)” by Jay Gabler and Jason Kaufman, *Contexts* Volume 5: 45-49 ([pdf file](#))

Read Pierre Bourdieu, “[Social Space and Symbolic Space](#),” 627-638 (reprinted from *Poetics Today*) ([pdf file](#))

Read “[As American as Apple Pie: Poverty and Welfare](#)” by Mark R. Rank, *Contexts* Volume 2: 41-49 ([pdf file](#))

- ◆ Social systems and classification: the case of higher education
- ◆ Modes of distinction: the upper class from bourgeois tastes; the middle class from the poor

for Monday, April 4:

Read “[Symbolic Pollution](#)” by Mary Douglas, 155-159 (reprinted from *Purity and Danger*) ([pdf file](#))

Read “[Food as a System of Communication](#)” in *In the Active Voice*, Boston: Routledge, 1982 [1978], 82-124 ([pdf file](#))



- ◆ Douglas: dirt and pollution
- ◆ Symbol systems and cultural analysis

Week 12: Habermas and Critical Theory: April 4-April 8

- ◆ Communication and social analysis
- ◆ A theory of the public sphere
- ◆ Civil society
- ◆ Lifeworld



for Wednesday, April 6:

Read Jurgen Habermas in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*
“Three Normative Models of Democracy” (442-450)

Read, “[Civil Society and the Political Public Sphere](#),” by Jurgen Habermas, 358-376 (reprinted from *Between Facts and Norms*) ([pdf file](#))

for Friday, April 8:

Read "[The Tasks of a Critical Theory of Society](#)" by Jurgen Habermas, 377-400 (reprinted from *The Theory of Communicative Action*) ([pdf file](#))

- ◆ Critical Theory
- ◆ Gramsci, Adorno, and dominant ideology—connections with conflict theory

for Monday, April 11:

Read *The McDonaldization of Society* by George Ritzer, 12-19 and other selection TBA, Newbury Park, CA: Pine Forge Press, 1993

Read "[Arnold Schwarzenegger, Ally McBeal and Arranged Marriages: Globalization on the Ground in India](#)" by Steve Deane, *Contexts* Volume 2: 12-18 ([pdf file](#))

Week 13: Globalization and Network Theory: April 11-15

- ◆ Interconnectedness of social systems
- ◆ The sociology of global trends: demography, health, commerce, and political systems
- ◆ Macrosociological analysis
- ◆ No Class: Wednesday, April 13th



media,

for Friday, April 15:

Read Manuel Castells in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*

"Materials for an Exploratory Theory of the Network Society" (588-5982)

Read "[The Strength of Weak Ties](#)" by Mark S. Granovetter, *American Journal of Sociology* Volume 78: 1360-1380.

Read "[The Ties That Bind Are Fraying](#)" by Miller McPherson et.al., *Contexts* Volume 7: 32-36. ([pdf file](#))



- ◆ Network theory: rise of three world philosophies
- ◆ Theory meets praxis: Getting a job and network theory

for Monday, April 18:

Read "[Sports Violence](#)" by Randall Collins in *Violence: A Micro-Sociological Theory*, Selections from Chapter 8. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008. Pages 282-307; bottom of page 332-4.

Week 14: Collins, Neoinstitutionalism and Systems Theory: April 18-22

- ◆ Interaction Ritual Chains and Emotional Energy

for Wednesday, April 20:

Read "[The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields](#)," by Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell. *American Sociological Review* Volume 48: 147-160.

Read "[The Nation as Babbitt: How Countries Conform](#)" by John W. Meyer, *Contexts* Volume 3: 42-47.

- ◆ Organizations and social networks
- ◆ Institutions—Weberian antecedents and contemporary applications
- ◆ Nation-states: institutionalization and social conformity
- ◆ Neoinstitutionalism and in-class analysis of social institutions influencing the lives of Rice undergraduate students

Last Day of Class: Friday, April 22

for Friday, April 22:

Integrative Short Paper 2 due at start of class

Read "[The Tipping Point](#)" by Malcolm Gladwell, *The New Yorker*, June 3, 1996: 32-38 ([pdf file](#))

Read "[Is the Tipping Point Toast?](#)" by Clive Thompson, *Fast Company*, January 28, 2008. ([pdf file](#))



- ◆ Society as a Complex System
- ◆ Complexity and postmodernism
- ◆ Simmel (dyad-triad): early articulation of "tipping point"

Conversational Final Exams (by appointment): April 28-May 4