

SOC 475: Classical Sociological Theory

Fall 2019

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Course Description

The social sciences generally, and sociology in particular are still young intellectual traditions. Not until around the early 1900s did academic thinkers begin to systematically analyze the social world as an object of study itself. Since then, and continuing to the present day, scholars from a variety of disciplines have built, developed, and refined social “theories” that seek, in some form or another, to identify and explain the broader social forces that influence individuals, groups, and entire societies. Many undergraduates begin with a built-in bias against theory courses such as this one. After all, *who cares?* What possible relevance can the mumbo-jumbo of a bunch of ivory-tower academics (most of whom are dead European men) possibly have for my life aside from having to complete the class in order to graduate? In this course, I’m going to do my best to show why social theory is relevant to your life by providing you with much of the conceptual and critical thinking tools that will allow you to see deep connections between social theory, your individual lives, and the nature of modern society more generally.

Learning Objectives

This course is designed for students to achieve three basic learning objectives:

1. Achieve deep understanding of the core arguments of sociological theory and its most important theorists;
2. The ability to analyze current social issues and controversies through the conceptual lenses provided by social theory;
3. The ability to communicate objectives 1-2 through clear and succinct writing; in particular, the ability to summarize and apply the challenging ideas and implications posed by social theory.

Required Materials

Royce, Edward, *Classical Social Theory and Modern Society*

Brave New World by Aldous Huxley

Selected readings (posted to Canvas)

Videos/movies (either available on Netflix or posted to Canvas)

Grading

Your grade in this course is made up of the following components:

IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM: 15%

TAKE HOME MIDTERM EXAM: 10%

IN-CLASS FINAL EXAM: 15%

TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM: 10%

QUIZZES/READINGS SUMMARIES: 20%

Most weeks you will have either 1) an in-class quiz; or 2) a short summary of the readings for that week. The quizzes are open note and WILL ONLY COVER THE READINGS FOR THAT WEEK.

FINAL PAPER ON *BRAVE NEW WORLD*: 20%

The final paper will be due at the very end of the semester and will be based on the novel *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley. Further details/requirements for the paper will be provided later in the semester.

ATTENDANCE: 10%

Attendance (10%): Everyone gets one unexcused absence with no penalty; after that you lose 12% of your attendance grade for each additional unexcused absence.

ACADEMIC POLICIES



ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison's community of scholars in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/>



ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

McBurney Disability Resource Center syllabus statement: "The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is

confidential and protected under FERPA.”

<http://mcburney.wisc.edu/facstaffother/faculty/syllabus.php>

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DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Institutional statement on diversity: “Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.” <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>

TOPICS AND READINGS

WEEK 2 (Sept. 10, 12): Karl Marx

Gomez, “10 Marxist Ideas that Define the 21st Century”

Royce, pp. 21-40

Cohen and Delong, “Shaken and Stirred” (from *The Atlantic*)

WEEK 3 (Sept. 17, 19): Karl Marx (cont’d)

Royce, pp. 41-53; 130-38

Marx, “Manifesto of the Communist Party”

WEEK 4 (Sept. 24, 26): Karl Marx (cont’d)

Royce, pp. 168-77; 204-13

Phillips-Fine, “Why Workers Won’t Unite” (from *The Atlantic*)

WEEK 5 (Oct. 1, 3): Extending Marx: Race and Gender Theory

Gimenez, “Marxism and Class, Gender and Race,”

DuBois, “The Dawn of Freedom,” (from *The Souls of Black Folk*) pp. 13-35

WEEK 6 (Oct. 8, 10): Emile Durkheim

Royce, pp. 55-77

March, “Is Facebook Making us Lonely?” (from *The Atlantic*)

VIDEO: *The Devil’s Playground*

WEEK 7 (Oct. 15, 17): Emile Durkheim (cont’d)

Royce, pp. 78-90; 139-48

Rosin “The Suicide Clusters at Palo Alto High School” (from *The Atlantic*)

WEEK 8: (Oct. 22, 24): Emile Durkheim (cont’d)

Royce, pp. 214-223

Rauch, “The Great Secession” (from *The Atlantic*)

Serazio, “Just How Much is Sports Fandom Like Religion?” (from *The Atlantic*)

VIDEO: *The Lost Children of Rockdale County*

WEEK 9 (Oct. 29, 31): EXAM WEEK

WEEK 10 (Nov. 5, 7): Max Weber

Royce, 91-115

Brave New World, chapters 1-2

WEEK 11 (Nov. 12, 14): Max Weber (cont'd)

Royce, pp. 116-25; 148-58

Brave New World, chapters 3-5

WEEK 12 (Nov. 19, 21): Max Weber (cont'd)

Royce, pp. 185-94; 260-70

Brave New World, chapters 6-8

WEEK 13 (Nov. 26): Weber Extended: The "McDonaldization of Society,"

Ritzer, "Introduction to McDonaldization," pp. 1-26

God

Brave New World, chapters 9-11

WEEK 14 (Dec. 3, 5): Weber Extended: Michel Foucault, Power, and Surveillance

VIDEO: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*

Brave New World, finish book

WEEK 15 (Dec. 10, 12): EXAM WEEK

FINAL BRAVE NEW WORLD PAPER DUE WEDNESDAY, DEC. 18