

SOC 475: Classical Sociological Theory

SPRING 2021

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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

Classical Social Theory and Modern Society by Edward Royce
Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
Selected supplemental 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:

3 EXAMS (25% each; 75% total)

- Each exam consists of a timed portion (15%) and an untimed essay assignment component (10%)

WEEKLY QUIZZES/SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (25% total)

- Each Thursday, you will alternate between taking a short (timed) quiz one week and handing in a short writing assignment the next week. Both are based largely on that week's READING ASSIGNMENT and are due BEFORE Thursday's 2:30 lecture

SYNCHRONOUS/RECORDED LECTURE SCHEDULE

There are two identical sections of this course (Sections 2 and 3). Section 2 is officially listed as 2:30-3:45 MW; Section 3 is officially listed as 2:30-3:45 TTH. Each section will attend one LIVE lecture via BBCollaborate each week and will watch one RECORDED lecture each week. The breakdown is as follows:

SECTION 2: Attend live lecture on Monday (2:30-3:45); watch recorded lecture on Thursday

SECTION 3: Watch recorded lecture on Monday; attend live lecture on Thursday (2:30-3:45)

TOPICS AND READINGS

WEEK 1 (Jan. 25, 27) Classical Sociological Theory: A Tool for Understanding Modern Society

WATCH: *The Social Dilemma* (Netflix)

WEEK 2 (Feb. 1, 3): The Sociology of Karl Marx

Royce, pp. 21-47

Cohen and Delong, "Shaken and Stirred"

WEEK 3 (Feb. 8, 10): Karl Marx (cont'd)

Royce, pp. 48-53; 130-38

Marx and Engels "Manifesto of the Communist Party"

WEEK 4 (Feb. 15, 17): Karl Marx (cont'd)

Royce, pp. 168-177

Phillips-Fine, "Why Workers Won't Unite"

Thompson, "How Capitalism Broke Young Adulthood"

WEEK 5 (Feb. 22, 24): EXAM WEEK

WATCH: *American Factory* (Netflix)

WEEK 6 (March 1, 3): The Sociology of Emile Durkheim

Royce, pp. 55-77

WATCH: *The Devil's Playground*

WEEK 7 (March 8, 10): Emile Durkheim (cont'd)

Royce, pp. 78-85; 139-48

March, "Is Facebook Making Us Lonely?"

Twenge, "Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?"

WEEK 8 (March 15, 17): Emile Durkheim (cont'd)

Royce, pp. 85-89; 177-85

Durkheim, excerpt from *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, pp. 50-52; 56-63

Serazio, "Just How Much is Sports Fandom Like Religion?"

WEEK 9 (March 22, 24): EXAM WEEK

Rosin, "The Silicon Valley Suicides"

WEEK 10 (March 29, 31): The Sociology of Max Weber

Royce, pp. 91-108

Brave New World, Chapters 1-3

WEEK 11 (April 5, 7): Max Weber (cont'd)

Royce, pp. 108-115; 148-58

Brave New World, chapters 4-6

WEEK 12 (April 12, 14): Max Weber (cont'd)

Royce, pp, 185-94

Foucault, excerpt from "Discipline and Punish"

Brave New World, chapters 7-10

WEEK 13 (April 19, 21): Missing Voices in Classical Theory: Race and Gender

Dubois, excerpt from "The Soul of Black Folk"

De Beauvoir, excerpt from "The Second Sex"

Brave New World, chapters 10-14

WEEK 14 (April 26, 28): EXAM WEEK

Finish *Brave New World*

PRIVACY OF STUDENT RECORDS and the USAGE of AUDIO RECORDED LECTURES

See information about [privacy of student records and the usage of audio-recorded lectures](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

Usage of Audio Recorded Lectures Statement

Lecture materials and recordings for [insert class name] are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

STUDENTS' RULES, [RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

During the global COVID-19 pandemic, we must prioritize our collective health and safety to keep ourselves, our campus, and our community safe. As a university community, we must work together to prevent the spread of the virus and to promote the collective health and welfare of our campus and surrounding community.

UW-MADISON [FACE COVERING GUIDELINES](#) [\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

While on campus all employees and students are required to [wear appropriate and properly fitting](#) [\(Links to an external site.\)](#) face coverings while present in any campus building unless working alone in a laboratory or office space.

Face Coverings During In-person Instruction Statement (COVID-19)

Individuals are expected to wear a face covering while inside any university building. Face coverings must be [worn correctly \(Links to an external site.\)](#) (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose) in the building if you are attending class in person. If any student is unable to wear a face-covering, an accommodation may be provided due to disability, medical condition, or other legitimate reason. Students with disabilities or medical conditions who are unable to wear a face covering should contact the [McBurney Disability Resource CenterLinks to an external site.](#) or their Access Consultant if they are already affiliated. Students requesting an accommodation unrelated to disability or medical condition, should contact the Dean of Students Office. Students who choose not to wear a face covering may not attend in-person classes, unless they are approved for an accommodation or exemption. All other students not wearing a face covering will be asked to put one on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear face coverings appropriately or adhere to other stated requirements will be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct and Community StandardsLinks to an external site.](#) and will not be allowed to return to the classroom until they agree to comply with the face covering policy. An instructor may cancel or suspend a course in-person meeting if a person is in the classroom without an approved face covering in position over their nose and mouth and refuses to immediately comply.

QUARANTINE OR ISOLATION DUE TO COVID-19

Student should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 [symptomsLinks to an external site.](#) and get [testedLinks to an external site.](#) for the virus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. Student should reach out to instructors as soon as possible if they become ill or need to isolate or quarantine, in order to make alternate plans for how to proceed with the course. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with their instructor concerning their illness and the anticipated extent of their absence from the course (either in-person or remote). The instructor will work with the student to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.

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/>

[Links to an external site.](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

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>

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/>