

SYLLABUS

SOCI 6101-001 CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS
Thursday 06:00PM-8:50PM
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GAB 406

Description

The following is a higher-level doctoral course that focuses on classical sociological theory. Historically, the course examines most relevant sociological theories and theorists from the second half of the 19th century through the early 20th century (ending with the late 1920s). In accordance with this historical perspective, it specifically embraces around ten crucial classical theories/theorists as defined. Class sessions will be individually organized so that each will revolve around one of these classical theories/ theorists (see the class schedule below).

The course's special attribute is its attempt to connect classical sociological theory to its prior anticipations in social thought and philosophy as well as to its subsequent contemporary and current versions. Students are encouraged and expected, though *not* required, to possess some background in pre-classical as well as contemporary social thought, given these connections between the various strands of sociological theory. The course's organization implies that some prior background in pre-classical and post-classical social theories may be helpful, though not strictly necessary, to a fuller comprehension and mastery of classical sociological theory. As a practical point, the class may assist students in writing and publishing works, including dissertations and articles. In terms of real-life implications and applications, the course is premised on the idea that theory helps better understand, explain, and predict and to some degree change or shape the social world.

The course will combine classroom in-person sessions with online sessions to accommodate diverse students, needs and preferences, as specified in the course schedule (see below). Note that the majority of class sessions (10 out of 15 semester weeks) will be in-person, so students should plan accordingly with respect of classroom attendance (see below).

Objectives

The following goals will be endeavored to attain in this class:

- a. Presentation of the emergence, development and types of classical sociological theory within Western society from the late 1800s to the early 1900s.

- b. Understanding and comparison of the principal strands and representatives of classical sociological theory during the above period of time.
- c. Examination of the conceptual and methodological relationships of classical sociological theory to pre-classical social thought on the one hand and to contemporary and current social theory on the other, notably (dis)continuities between them.
- d. Exploration of inter-disciplinary relations of classical sociological theory to other modes of theorizing within social science, e.g. anthropology, social psychology, political science, economics, etc.
- e. Appraisal of the empirical relevance as well as practical applications of major classical sociological theories in contemporary society.
- f. Stimulation of students' interests in further studies of sociological theory, assistance in their attempt at connecting theory to their and social reality as well as in their activities regarding doctoral dissertations and publishing.

Requirements

The first and major course requirement is writing 1 term paper that must be 15 pages long that is the minimum length to be considered complete (15 fully written pages, not counting references, double-spaced, font size 12, margins 1). Papers that fall short of this minimum of completeness will be considered accordingly, as incomplete and inappropriate. The due date for the term paper is the last class session specified by the course schedule.

The professor will formulate the topics at least one week prior to the respective deadlines (see below). The paper should be written in a journal form in accordance with the format of a sociological journal. A natural and preferred choice in this regard is the format of *Sociological Theory* (available in the library and from the professor), the official theory journal of the American Sociological Association, although any other sociological journal might be used for that purpose (e.g. American Journal of Sociology, American Sociological Review, Current Sociology, etc.).

Another course requirement is to prepare weekly typed assignments or assignments that must be 4 pages long as the minimum length and formatted as described above (4 fully written pages, not counting references, double-spaced, etc.). An assignment focuses on a particular readings for each class session. Weekly assignment are due for the class session when the assigned book is covered (see class schedule below), with some flexibility in justified cases.

These assignments should be presenting and interpreting the main arguments of the readings and, when possible and desirable, addressing their empirical significance and practical applications—or lack thereof—as students understand them. The assignments are to be submitted prior to the discussion of readings in class rather than afterwards, except in some extra-ordinary situations beyond students' control (e.g. justified absence). Another requirement is a critical oral presentation of a theory/theorist of one's own choice; no written papers needed and no reading from prepared texts is permitted (more to be said in class). Finally, active class participation is required and strongly encouraged and emphasized as the way to improve performance and grade.

Important note: As a separate requirement, the paper is an article-like analysis of a single topic and different/independent from assignments as general summaries of readings. A paper is not a sum of assignments. Papers that incorporate ('copy-and-paste') or compile assignments regardless of the purpose and justification will receive a failing grade and treated as academically dishonest behavior. Also, *only* the specific readings for this course (see below) may be used for paper (and report) writing, no extraneous sources (books and papers) are allowed to use for the sake of this course (but can be used paper further improvement and publication after the course).

Summary of term paper instructions.

Minimum length—the term paper must satisfy minimum length requirement.

Author/theory coverage--The term paper must cover all theorists in both explicit and implicit theories or statements.

Textual support and proper citations—The term paper must provide textual support and citations with page numbers.

Organization--The term paper must be properly organized with introduction, main text and conclusion, and around parts of the subject (for example, causes, forms, trends, effects, etc.) rather than individual writers (as in weekly reviews).

Comparative analysis of similarities and differences. The term paper must engage in a compare/contrast analysis by identifying similarities and differences between theorists.

The final grade will be determined/calculated from the term paper's grade (letter grade A, B, C, D, F), weekly assignments' summary descriptive grade (pass or fail). and critical oral presentation's descriptive grades (pass or fail). Students are encouraged to submit and, upon return, keep a complete portfolio of weekly assignments submitted, since failure to prepare a weekly assignment will result in a failing grade for that particular assignment and used to calculate the summary grade. Incomplete report portfolios will result in an incomplete grade, even if the paper has been completed. The same holds if the paper has not been completed, despite a full portfolio of weekly assignments. To take one example of grade calculation, if a student has received A (b) for the term paper, summary grade 'pass' for weekly assignments and critical oral presentation's graded 'pass', the final grade will be A (B), and so forth. However, if weekly assignments' summary grades and/or critical oral presentation's grades are 'fail', then the final grade will be lowered accordingly by one grade (e.g., from A to B, B to C, etc.).

Attendance Policy. Class attendance is mandatory, 2 or more absence results in a student being dropped from class.

COVID-19 impact on attendance

While attendance is expected as outlined above, it is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about COVID-19. Please contact me if you are unable to attend class because you are ill, or unable to attend class due to COVID-19 including symptoms, potential exposure, pending or positive test results, or if you have been given specific instructions to isolate or quarantine from a health care provider or a local authority. It is important that you communicate with me prior to being absent so I may make a decision about accommodating your request to be excused from class.

If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Hotline at 844-366-5892 or COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.

Statement of academic integrity. In light of this being a doctoral graduate class, academic integrity and honesty is strongly expected and strictly enforced. In particular, academically dishonest behavior such as plagiarism (for the definition see The Student Code of Conduct) will result in a failing grade for the entire course, a likely disciplinary action and further adverse consequences. In general, feel free to discuss whatever matters you might have with professor in and outside class.

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

ADA Accommodation Statement. UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

Readings

Comte, Auguste. *Auguste Comte and Positivism*. Any edition.

Durkheim, Emile. *The Rules of Sociological Method*. Any edition.

Mannheim, Karl. *Ideology and Utopia*. Any edition. (for Ph.D. students only)

Marx, Karl and Engels Friedrich. *The German Ideology*. Any edition.
The Communist Manifesto. Any edition.

Pareto, Vilfredo. *The Rise and Fall of Elites*. Any edition.

Simmel, Georg. *Conflict. The Web of Group Affiliations*. Any edition.

Spencer, Herbert. *Social Statics*. Any edition. (for Ph.D. students only)

Tönnies, Ferdinand. *Community and Society (Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft)*. Any edition.

Weber, Marx. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Any edition.

Course Schedule

(Tentative assignments and readings by weeks subject to change when necessary--
based on professor edition, students are encouraged to read as much as possible)

September 01-08, 2022	Introduction to Classical Sociological Theory in-person session
September 08-15, 2022	Comte, Auguste. <i>Auguste Comte and Positivism</i> especially pp. 71-101, Introduction, Chapter 1. Account of the aim of the work. pp. 195-252, Book VI. Social Physics, Chapter 1. Necessity and Opportuneness of This New Science, Chapter 2. Characteristics of the positive method in its application to social phenomena. in-person session
September 15-22, 2022	Spencer, Herbert. <i>Social Statics</i> especially pp. 3-44; Introduction, 367-426, Part IV. online session on Canvas

September 22-29, 2022 <i>Manifesto</i> (entire book)	Marx, Karl and Engels Friedrich. <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> in-person session
September 29-October 06, 2022 <i>Ideology</i>	Marx, Karl and Engels Friedrich. <i>The German Ideology</i> especially pp. 27-102, Part I: Feuerbach. Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlook concluding with Forms of Social Consciousness. online session on Canvas
October 06-13, 2022	Tönnies, Ferdinand. <i>Community and Society</i> especially pp. 17-91, Book One. A General Classification Of Key Ideas in-person session
October 13-20, 2022	Simmel, Georg. <i>Conflict</i> pp. 13-123, Chapter 1. The sociological nature of conflict, Chapter 2. Competition, Chapter 3. Conflict and the structure of the group. online session on Canvas
October 20-27, 2022	Simmel, Georg. <i>The Web of Group Affiliations</i> pp. 125-189, the Web of Group Affiliations in-person session
October 27- November 03, 2022	Durkheim, Emile. <i>The Rules of Sociological Method</i> especially pp. 48-118, Chapter 1 What is a Social Fact? , Chapter 2 Rules for the observation of social facts, Chapter 3 Rules for the distinction between the normal and the pathological, Chapter 4 Rules for the constitution of social types. online session on Canvas
November 03-10, 2022 <i>Capitalism</i>	Weber, Marx. <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> pp. 35-92. Chapter I. Religious affiliation and social stratification, Chapter II The spirit of capitalism, Chapter III Luther's conception of the calling in-person session
November 10-17, 2022 <i>Capitalism II</i>	Weber, Marx. <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> pp. 92-183, Chapter IV. The religious foundations of worldly asceticism, Chapter V Asceticism and the spirit of capitalism.

	online session on Canvas
November 17, 2022	Mannheim, Karl. <i>Ideology and Utopia</i> especially pp. 1-83, Chapter 1. Preliminary approach to the problem, Chapter 2. Ideology And Utopia. in-person session on Canvas
November 24, 2022	No classes, Thanksgiving Break
December 01-08, 2022	Pareto, Vilfredo. <i>The Rise and Fall of Elites</i> pp. 25-101, all parts written by Pareto. in-person session Paper Topics Given
December 08, 2022 theorist	Student critical written presentations of a selected in-person session
December 15, 2022	Term Papers Due