

Explorations in Social Theory (Anth/Soc 275, Fall 2002)

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(C109; #3931 Office hours: MW: 4:00-5:00 or most anytime)

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Course Statement

Social theory is the conceptual backbone of both anthropology and sociology. The purpose of this seminar is to study classic and contemporary contributions to social theory and to explore how these contributions have informed the development and practice of anthropology and sociology. This course is being co-taught by an anthropologist and a sociologist in order to provide the interpretive perspectives of both disciplines. We will take turns lecturing and leading discussions, and participate in all seminar meetings.

Participation in seminar discussions is mandatory and will be one of the criteria for determining your course grade (10%). The seminar will also require the completion of four essay papers (20% each) and a seminar presentation of one essay paper (10%). In addition to meeting on Tuesdays and Thursday we will meet on Monday evenings four times during the semester in order to provide the necessary time to discuss essays and other seminar material.

Required Texts

Riesman, David . 2001 [1961]. The Lonely Crowd. Yale: New Haven, CT.

Goffman, Erving. 1963. Stigma. Simon Schuster: New York.

Farganis, James (ed.) 2000. Readings In Social Theory. 3'd edition. McGraw Hill: Boston.

Jackson, Michael. 1998. Minima Ethnographica. U. of Chicago Press, Chicago

McGee, R. John and Richard L. Warms. (MW) Anthropological Theory. Mayfield Pub. Co.

Taussig, Michael. 1988. The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America.
U. of North Carolina Press.

Grading

Essay #1	.....	20%
Essay #2	.....	20%
Essay #3	.....	20%
Essay #4	.....	20%
Presentation	.....	10%
Class Participation	...	10%

Tuesday	8/29	Overview of course goals and material
Tuesday	9/3	Durkheim and the theoretical genesis of sociology (biographical notes on Durkheim, M & W p. 84 and pp. 58-80 in Farganis)
Thursday	9/5	Durkheim's social epistemology and theory of religion (pp. 80-90 in Farganis and M&W, 7)
Tuesday	9/10	Culture (MW, Ch. 2), Geertz, Wagner
Thursday	9/12	Evolutionism/Neomaterialism (MW, Ch. 22), Steward and Murphy
Tuesday	9/17	Discussion of Riesman's "The Lonely Crowd" (pp. xi-160 in Riesman)
Thursday	9/19	Discussion of Riesman's "The Lonely Crowd" (pp. 163-307 in Riesman)
Tuesday	9/24	Structural functionalism (MW, 13, 15 and 23)
Thursday	9/26	Structuralism of the French variety, Levi-Strauss, (MW, Ch. 27)
Monday	9/30	Seminar meets between 5 and 7pm for presentations and discussion of essay #1
Tuesday	10/1	Marx's theoretical contributions (pp. 27-57 in Farganis)
Thursday	10/3	Marx and Critical Theory (pp. 107-114 and pp. 387-400 in Farganis)
Tuesday	10/8	Taussig, Part I
Thursday	10/10	Taussig, Part II
Tuesday	10/15	Taussig, Part III
Thursday	10/17	Taussig, Part III
Tuesday	10/22	Fall Break
Thursday	10/24	Interactionism and micro social theory (pp. 158-178 and pp. 349-368 in Farganis)
Monday	10/30	Seminar meets between 5 and 7pm for presentations and discussion of essay #2

Tuesday	10/29	Phenomenological social theory (pp. 311-348 in Farganis and handout on Berger and Luckmann)
Thursday	10/31	Weber's theoretical contributions (pp. 102-106 and pp. 114-145 in Farganis)
Tuesday	11/5	Goffman's "Stigma" (pp. 1-104 in Stigma)
Thursday	11/7	Goffman's "Stigma" (pp. 105-147 in Stigma)
Tuesday	11/12	Jackson, Preamble
Thursday	11/14	Jackson, Returns
Monday	10/18	Seminar meets between 5 and 7pm for presentations and discussion of essay #3
Tuesday	11/19	Jackson, Digressions and Assays
Thursday	11/21	Jackson, Here/Now
Tuesday	11/26	Discussion
Thursday	11/28	Thanksgiving break
Tuesday	12/3	Postmodernist social theory (pp. 407-429 in Farganis)
Thursday	12/5	Postmodernist social theory (pp. 432-441 in Farganis and handout on Ryan)
Monday	12/9	Seminar meets between 5 and 7pm for presentations and discussion of essay #4
Tuesday	12/10	Final class meeting: Review for final exam