

Anthro/Soc 275: Explorations in Social Theory [Fall, 2007]

Thomas G. McGowan, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Sociology
Office: C107; #843-3932 Office hrs: T and TR 8:00-9:30am; W 9am-12pm, and by appt.

Teresa E. P. Delfín, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Anthropology
Office: C105; #843-3931 Office hrs: M, W, F 10:00-12:00 and by appt.

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 both disciplines. This course is being taught by a sociologist and an anthropologist in order to provide the interpretive perspectives of both disciplines.

The material for this course has been broken up into the following thematic categories: epistemology and methodology [week 2], the individual and social structure [week 3], the hermeneutic circle [week 4], reification [week 5], critical theory [week 6], interactionism [week 7], deconstructionism [week 9], interrogating power [week 10], standpoint epistemology [week 11], constructionism [week 12], globalization [week 13]. A thematic approach such as this one stands to illustrate connections that reach far outside of the disciplinary boundaries of sociology and anthropology.

Teaching Philosophy

This course will be organized according to a student-centered seminar model, requiring students to look to each other consistently to help make sense of the material. Each week two students will be expected to collaborate with one another and make seminar presentations on the week's assigned material. Presenters will be responsible for synthesizing the week's readings, identifying similarities and differences, and presenting these at the beginning of class each Tuesday. An outline of the presentation must be submitted (prior to the presentation) and will count toward the presentation grade. Your professors will introduce and clarify material, as necessary, but will strive to serve mostly as facilitators for what we expect will be lively class discussion.

Course Policies

Participation is central to the success of the seminar and to your role in it, and will be graded appropriately. You will be expected to come to class prepared to listen and contribute to each class meeting. Students who fail to participate actively or affectively (focused, engaged listening is a minimum participation requirement) will be considered absent for the class period. Each student will be allowed a maximum of 2 absences without negative impact on his or her course grade, provided that coursework is submitted on time. Each additional unexcused absence will result in a 5% drop in the overall course grade.

Texts

Anthropology in Theory (AT), Henrietta L. Moore & Todd Sanders, eds.

Sociological Theory (ST), 7th edition, George Ritzer.

Course Requirements

Grade Breakdown

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| Active participation in each class meeting | 30% |
| Presentations in pairs twice throughout the semester (+ outline) | 20% |
| Mid-semester essay assignment (8-10 pages) | 25% |
| Late-term essay assignment (8-10 pages) | 25% |

Course Schedule

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| <i>Week 1</i> | <i>Introduction</i> |
| 8/23 | Course Intro |
| <i>Week 2</i> | <i>Epistemology and Methodology</i> |
| 8/28 | AT Ch 1: Boas, Ch. 3: Bateson |
| 8/30 | ST Ch 3: Durkheim, AT Ch 4: Durkheim |
| <i>Week 3</i> | <i>The Individual and Social Structure</i> |
| 9/4 | ST Ch 1: Sociological Theory, AT Ch 5: Sapir |
| 9/6 | AT Ch 7: Benedict, AT Ch 13: Lévi-Strauss |
| <i>Week 4</i> | <i>The Hermeneutic Circle</i> |
| 9/11 | AT Ch 16: Bourdieu, AT Ch 21: Robertson |
| 9/14 | ST Ch. 4: Weber, AT Ch 21: Geertz |
| <i>Week 5</i> | <i>Reification</i> |
| 9/18 | ST Ch 2: Marx, excerpts from Marx's <i>The German Ideology</i> (handout) |
| 9/20 | Excerpts from Marx's <i>The Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844</i> (handout) |
| <i>Week 6</i> | <i>Critical Theory</i> |
| 9/25 | ST Ch 8: Neo-Marxian, Excerpts from Adorno and Horkheimer's <i>The Dialectic of Enlightenment</i> (handout) |
| 9/27 | Excerpts from Habermas' <i>Knowledge and Human Interests</i> (handout) |
| <i>Week 7</i> | <i>Interactionism</i> |
| 10/2 | ST Ch 10: Symbolic Interactionism, Ch 11: Ethnomethodology |
| 10/4 | AT Ch 37: Bourdieu |

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| <i>Week 8</i> | | <i>Mid-term Essay</i> |
| 10/9 | In-class peer review: Bring 2 drafts of essay to exchange in class | |
| 10/11 | Mid-term essay due, In-class presentations | |
| Fall Recess: 10/13 – 10/16 | | |
| <i>Week 9</i> | | <i>Deconstructionism</i> |
| 10/18 | TBA | |
| <i>Week 10</i> | | <i>Interrogating Power</i> |
| 10/23 | ST Ch 17: Structuralism, Poststructuralism, Postmodern Social Theory, AT Ch 38: | |
| 10/25 | Foucault, Ch 32: Foucault | |
| <i>Week 11</i> | | <i>Standpoint Epistemology</i> |
| 10/30 | ST Ch 13: Feminist Theory, AT Ch 31: Martin | |
| 11/1 | AT Ch 40: Ortner, Sandra Harding Article (handout) | |
| <i>Week 12</i> | | <i>Constructionism</i> |
| 11/6 | AT Ch 34: Wolf, Edward Said article (handout) | |
| 11/8 | Excerpt from Berger & Luckmann's <i>The Social Construction of Reality</i> (handout), AT Ch 49: Oyewumí | |
| <i>Week 13</i> | | <i>Globalization</i> |
| 11/13 | AT Ch 53: Augé, Ch 54: Latour, ST Ch 15: Modernity | |
| 11/15 | ST Ch 16: Globalization, AT Ch 57: Appadurai, Ch 55: Gupta & Ferguson | |
| Thanksgiving Break: 11/20 – 11/26 | | |
| <i>Week 14</i> | | |
| 11/27 | Debriefing Seminar | |
| 11/29 | In-class peer-review (bring 2 copies of final essay to class) | |
| <i>Week 15</i> | | |
| 12/4 | Final Presentations | |
| Exam Week: 12/7 – 12/12 | | |

Facilitator Schedule

| | Name | Name |
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| Week 2 | | |
| Week 3 | | |
| Week 4 | | |
| Week 5 | | |
| Week 6 | | |
| Week 7 | | |
| Week 8 | | |
| Week 9 | | |
| Week 10 | | |
| Week 11 | | |
| Week 12 | | |
| Week 13 | | |