Course Statement:

Though we might not recognize it, we are all social theoreticians. We all utter such statements (or their opposites) as: “It is human nature to want to dominate others;” “The egalitarian ethics of traditional gatherers-and-hunters ultimately resists forms of alienation known in state-organized societies;” “Violence on television is responsible for increased levels of violent crimes in today's society;” “It is ultimately a question of the bottom line;” “Native Americans lived in harmony with their natural environments;” “Human rights are linked to the spread of democracy and the free market.” This is to say, we all hold various views of how the social world is organized -- how it operates now, how it operated then, how it operates elsewhere, what we can or cannot do about it, and even what we should do to improve it.

The major goal of this course is to help you identify and understand explanations of the social world and social actors that have become elevated to the status of social theory. (Theoreticians have done this by making explicit the basic assumptions and logical arguments that underpin these various world views and subjecting them to various tests of empirical verification and/or experiential veracity given events and phenomena in our own society as well as in other societies.) We hope to accomplish this goal by using lectures to present certain “classical” directions of thought in sociology and anthropology, having you undertake “critical” (in the original sense of the term) analyses of assigned readings of primary sources bringing your questions to each seminar based on your reading, and having you write a series of reflective essays on your intellectual engagement with theoretical schools and their principal theoreticians.

You will note that this is a 4 hour credit course. In addition to our Tuesday and Thursday meetings, we will also meet on 5 occasions on Monday evenings from 5:30 to 7:30 during the semester to discuss course material in more detail using your essay assignments as the key source of this discussion.

The reading assignments are essential to this course. According to the honor code the instructors ask that these assignments be completed with care and on time.

Course Requirements:

Your grade will depend on the quality of 5 papers (minimum 7-10 pages each) as well as your participation in class discussion. Late papers will not be accepted. In the case of very extenuating circumstances permission to turn in a late paper needs to be obtained before the paper is due and grade reductions may be imposed.

Failure to adequately complete any assignment (both reading assignments and writing assignments) could result in a failing grade for the course. Several unexcused absences and/or failure to participate in class can lower your grade by up to a full letter grade. In the case of a
significant number (more than 3) of unexcused absences (absences lacking medical documentation) a failing grade will be assigned for the course. You are asked to self-report on any absence in written form the day you return to class from an absence(s).

Incompletes are not normally given in this class. In the rare case where an incomplete may be in order, the student must obtain permission from the instructors and complete all paper work for the Registrar before the last day of class.

**Grading**

Class participation........................... 10%
Discussion leadership........................ 10%
5 paper assignments @ 20% each
lowest grade to be dropped............ 80%
(Students must complete all five papers)

**DATE** | **TOPIC** | **READINGS**
--- | --- | ---
Aug 24 | Introduction to Course |  
Aug 29 | The history of the disciplines | M&W (Introduction, 2), Moore (1)
Aug 31 | History of the disciplines (cont.) | Farganis (Introduction), C.W. Mills
Sept 5 | Durkheim and the genesis of sociology | Moore (4), Ritzer on Durkheim
Sept 7 | Durkheim’s theory and practice | Farganis (2)
Sept 12 | “Franz Boas” -- film | M&W (10,16), Moore (3, 6)
Sept 14 | American Anthropology and the evolutionary paradigm of culture | M&W (3, 18, 19, 22), Moore (2, 13, 14, 15)
Sept 19 | British Anthropology and society’s static equilibrium | M&W (13, 14, 15) Moore (10, 11, 12)
Sept 21 | Marx and dialectical materialism | Ritzer on Marx
Sept 25 * | Paper due/ Discussion meeting on structural functionalism (5:30-7:30 pm) |  
Sept 26 | Marx, reification and alienation | Farganis (1)
Sept 28 | French Anthropology and the application | Godelier
of Marxism to Non-State societies

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<tr>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>References</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Base and superstructure rethought</td>
<td>M&amp;W(24, 33) Moore (16)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Mead and symbolic interactionism</td>
<td>Farganis (6,13)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Paper due/ Discussion on Marx’s concepts</td>
<td>(5:30-7:30 pm)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Phenomenological sociology</td>
<td>Farganis (12) and Berger and Luckmann</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Human as symbol user; Structuralism</td>
<td>M&amp;W (25, 35, 37) Moore (19, 20)</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>FALL RECESS</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Symbolic efficacy</td>
<td>M&amp;W (29, 36), Fernandez, Moore (18, 21)</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Gender (sociology)</td>
<td>Farganis (14) Butler, McGowan</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Gender (anthropology)</td>
<td>(M&amp;W 32 &amp; 34), Lutz</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Paper due/ Discussion on the symbolic construction of engendered reality</td>
<td>(5:30-7:30 pm)</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Archaeology as anthropology and matters material</td>
<td>Hodder</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Sensuous human practice and material culture</td>
<td>M&amp;W (28), Glassie</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Weber, religion and culture</td>
<td>Ritzer on Weber, Farganis (4)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Capitalist culture and rationality</td>
<td>Farganis (15)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Paper due/ Discussion on material culture</td>
<td>(5:30-7:30 pm)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Postmodern social theory</td>
<td>Farganis (16)</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Postmodern social theory (cont.)</td>
<td>Farganis (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Senses, sensibility and incommensurability</td>
<td>M&amp;W (38), Basso</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>THANKSGIVING RECESS</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Anthropology as “knowing” and as “doing”</td>
<td>M&amp;W (40), Schep-Hughes</td>
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Nov 30 * Paper due/ Discussion on postmodernism and the body (12:30-2:30 pm) -- PLEASE NOTE EARLY START OF CLASS

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Dec 4 Taking stock ... over pizza ! --- (5:30 - 7 pm)

Dec 5 Summary remarks and discussion on suggestions for next year’s seminar

**Required Reading:**

**Texts:**

Farganis, James
*Readings in Social Theory: The Classic Tradition to Post-Modern.*

McGee, R. Jon & Richard L. Warms

Moore, Jerry D.
*Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists.* Walnut Creek, California: Altamira, 1997.

**Reserved:**


