Explorations in Social Theory (Anth/Soc 275, Fall 2004)

Thomas G. McGowan, Ph. D., Associate Professor of Sociology
(C107; #3932 Office hours: M, W 10am-12noon; T, TR 10:45 –12:30pm

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


Grading

Essay #1 …………. 20%
Essay #2 …………. 20%
Essay #3 …………. 20%
Essay #4 …………. 20%
Presentation …………. 10%
Class Participation … 10%
Thursday 8/26  Overview of course goals and material

Tuesday 8/31  Overview of Sociological Theory  
                       Discuss chapter 1 in Ritzer (historical overview)

Thursday 9/2  Overview of Sociological Theory  
                       Discuss chapter 6 in Ritzer (contemporary overview)

Tuesday 9/7  Durkheim  
                       Discuss chapter 3 in Ritzer (Durkheim)

Thursday 9/9  Durkheim  
                       Discuss chapter 2 in Farganis (Durkheim)Murphy

Tuesday 9/14  Marx and Conflict Theory  
                       Discuss chapter 2 in Ritzer (Marx)

Thursday 9/16  Marx  
                       Discuss chapter 1 in Farganis (Marx)  
                       **Essay assignment #1 is distributed**

Tuesday 9/21  Seminar Discussion of paper drafts

Thursday 9/23  Varieties of neo-Marxian Theory  
                       Discuss chapter 8 in Ritzer (Marx)  
                       **Seminar meets between 5 and 7pm to discuss essay #1**

Tuesday 9/28  Critical Theory  
                       Discuss chapter 13 in Farganis (Critical Theory)

Thursday 9/30  Human rights, health and liberation theology  
                       Discuss handout on Farmer

Tuesday 10/5  Human rights and radical anthropology  
                       Discuss handout on Binford  
                       **Essay assignment #2 is distributed**

Thursday 10/7  Seminar does not meet/ McGowan at Conference

Tuesday 10/12  Discussion of pp. xi-69 in Taussig

Thursday 10/14  Discussion of pp. 70-139 in Taussig

Tuesday 10/19  Fall Break

Thursday 10/21  Seminar discussion of essay drafts
Tuesday 10/26  Symbolic Sociology
Discuss chapter 10 in Ritzer
**Seminar meets between 5 and 7pm to discuss essay #2**

Thursday 10/28  Symbolic Sociology continued
Discuss chapter 5 in Farganis

Tuesday 11/2  Ethnomethodology
Discuss chapter 11 in Ritzer
**Essay assignment #3 is distributed**

Thursday 11/4  Phenomenology
Discuss chapter 10 in Farganis

Tuesday 11/9  Weber
Discuss chapter 4 in Ritzer
**Seminar meets between 5 and 7pm to discuss essay #3**

Thursday 11/11  Weber
Discuss chapter 3 in Farganis

Tuesday 11/16  Feminist Theory
Discuss chapter 13 in Ritzer

Thursday 11/18  Feminist Theory continued
Discuss chapter 12 in Farganis

Tuesday 11/23  Postmodernist social theory
Discuss chapter 17 in Ritzer;
and Ritzer’s the Globalization of Nothing
**Essay assignment #4 is distributed**

Thursday 11/25  Thanksgiving break

Tuesday 11/30  Jackson and post-modernism

Thursday 12/2  Jackson continued

Tuesday 12/7  Jackson continued
**Seminar meets between 5 and 7pm for presentations and discussion of essay #4**