

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

- Farganis, James (ed.) 2004. Readings In Social Theory. 4'th edition. McGraw Hill: Boston.
- Jackson, Michael. 1998. Minima Ethnographica. U. of Chicago Press, Chicago
- Ritzer, George 2004. Sociological Theory 6'th edition. McGraw Hill: Boston.
- Ritzer, George 2003. The Globalization of Nothing. Pine Forge Press.
- 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%

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