

EMORY UNIVERSITY

Sociology 457W

DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Fall 2018
Monday/Wednesday/Friday
2:00 – 2:50
111 Tarbutton Hall

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociological theory sometimes has the unfortunate reputation of being (a) removed from empirical matters and (b) done by people who are now long dead. That reputation cannot be further from the truth. In fact, sociological theory remains vibrant in the present and, in both its classical and contemporary formulations, it has remained tied to understanding the world in which we live.

One thread that runs through sociological theory is the concern with inequality – both in terms of understanding why it occurs and what needs to be done to eliminate it. To that end, sociologists have put forward theories that address inequality by emphasizing race, gender, class, status and the like (as well as the interplay and intersections found between them).

We take that thread as the organizing principle of this theory class. Indeed, we focus on sociological theory on the mechanisms by which inequality is produced and reproduced, as well as sociological theory that offers solutions about those mechanisms. In the process, we will show, on the one hand, how sociological theory is firmly linked to empirical research and, on the other hand, how sociological theories are formulated and refined by people addressing the present world – both in understanding and improving it.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A) Attendance

You are strongly encouraged to attend class, especially because we use class time to integrate the assigned readings and to present additional information not found in the readings. Regular attendance, moreover, will raise your final grade. If you miss only one class during the semester, I will add two points to your final grade. If you miss only two classes, I will add one point.

B) Electronic Device Policy

Electronic devices, such as laptops and tablets, can be very useful in terms of taking notes. However, when students use them in class to do other things (e.g., surf the Internet, order from

online stores, check social media posts) that proves detrimental both to student participation and discussion. Note that using devices in a non-curricular way will, most definitely, affect your final grade in a negative fashion.

C) Written Assignments

You are required to complete four short assignments (i.e., “memos”). In these 3- to 4-page memos, you will synthesize the readings and the issues that emerge as the class progresses. The due dates for the memos, as well as the dates for when I distribute memo questions, are listed below. These four memos comprise 60% of your final grade (15% per each of the four memos).

Note that these four memos will also form an important part of the other requirement: a final paper that deals with sociological theory (worth 40% of your final grade). Indeed, you will use the memos to work out and refine in cumulative fashion this final paper. I will circulate initial instructions and options regarding this paper in class on February 8th. This theory paper is due May 6th. In between those two dates, you will meet with me on the substance and progress of your paper.

D) Honor Code

The Emory University honor code applies fully to this course. When you submit your assignments, you are pledging to the honor code. For reference, please consult: <http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html>.

COURSE RESOURCES

As the semester progresses, class materials (e.g., syllabus, overheads) will be posted on the Canvas site for SOC 343 (see <http://classes.emory.edu/>).

The assigned readings are drawn from many sources, so there is no textbook. Instead, the required readings will be available at both our Canvas site and at the Woodruff electronic reserves (see <https://ereserves.library.emory.edu/index.php>).

If you have any special needs, please contact me at the beginning of the semester and we will discuss the necessary arrangements. For additional information, visit the Emory Office of Accessibility Services website (see <http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/index.html>).

THREE POINTS ABOUT THE COURSE READINGS

Please keep in mind two points regarding the readings below. (1) Sociological theory is found across a sprawling and wide body of scholarship. There is far too much theorizing to address in this course. Thus, the readings below constitute the “tip of the iceberg,” so to speak. Yet, at the same time, I have picked readings that help us grapple with key ideas and lessons. (2) The readings below provide a mixture of classics, “modern classics,” and brand new articles. Both types of classics matter because they put forward important theoretical formulations and provide

an important comparison with contemporary situations. Meanwhile, the newest articles help us keep apprised of the latest developments. (3) Some of these articles are written for specialists. Consequently, they sometimes make use of jargon and sophisticated techniques of analysis. But, have no fear! My job will be to translate those articles for you and, in the process, show you the usefulness of those articles for making sense of mass media and their social implications. Put another way, we will use class-time both to ground and go beyond the readings below.

COURSE SCHEDULE

(subject to revision)

January 16: Introductions

SOUNDS AND INEQUALITY

January 18: Jon Cruz. 2002. "Nineteenth Century US Religious Crisis and the Sociology of Music." *Poetics* 30: 5-18.

January 21: **NO CLASS (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Observance)**

January 23: W.E.B. Du Bois. 1905. *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*. London: Archibald Constable & Co. Selections.

January 25: Damon J. Phillips and David A. Owens. 2004. "Incumbents, Innovation, and Competence: The Emergence of Recorded Jazz, 1920-1929." *Poetics* 32: 281-295.

January 28: Wei-Ting Lu. 2013. "Confucius or Mozart? Community Cultural Wealth and Upward Mobility among Children of Chinese Immigrants." *Qualitative Sociology* 36: 303-321.

January 30: Joseph C. Ewoodzie, Jr. 2017. *Break Beats in the Bronx: Rediscovering Hip-Hop's Early Years*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press. Selections.

February 1: Section Set-Up

February 4: Jason Rodriguez. 2007. "Color-Blind Ideology and the Cultural Appropriation of Hip-Hop." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35: 645-668.

February 6: Section Wrap-Up

CREDENTIALS AND INEQUALITY

February 8: Dialika Sall and Shamus Khan. 2017. "What Elite Theory Should Have Learned, and Can Still Learn, from W.E.B. Du Bois." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40: 512-514.

February 8: **IN-CLASS DISCUSSION OF FINAL PAPER**

February 11: Shamus Khan. 2011. *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Selections.

February 13: Yi-Lin Chiang. 2018. "When Things Don't Go as Planned: Contingencies, Cultural Capital, Parental Involvement for Elite University Admission in China." *Comparative Education Review* 62: 503-521.

February 15: Byun, Soo-yong, Evan Schofer and Kyung-keun Kim. 2012. "Revisiting the Role of Cultural Capital in East Asian Educational Systems: The Case of South Korea." *Sociology of Education* 85: 219-239.

February 18: Tressie McMillan Cottom. 2017. *Lower Ed: The Troubling Rise of For-Profit Colleges in the New Economy*. New York: The New Press. Selections.

MEMO #1 ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED

February 20: Natasha K. Warikoo & Janine de Novais. 2015. "Colour-Blindness and Diversity: Race Frames and Their Consequences for White Undergraduates at Elite US Universities." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38: 860-876.

February 22: Lauren A. Rivera. 2012. "Hiring as Cultural Matching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms." *American Sociological Review* 77: 999-1022.

February 25: Section Wrap-Up

MEMO #1 DUE

COMMODIFICATION AND INEQUALITY

February 27: Oliver C. Cox. 1959. *Caste, Class, & Race: A Study in Social Dynamics*. New York: Monthly Review Press. Selections.

March 1: Viviana A. Zelizer. 2011. *Economic Lives: How Culture Shapes the Economy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Selections.

March 4: Cheris Shun-Ching Chan. 2009. "Creating a Market in the Presence of Cultural Resistance: The Case of Life Insurance in China." *Theory and Society* 38: 271-305.

March 6: Hung Cam Thai. 2014. *Insufficient Funds: The Culture of Money in Low-Wage Transnational Families*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Selections.

March 8: Monica Liu. Forthcoming. "Devoted, Caring, and Home Loving: A Chinese Portrayal of Western Masculinity in Transnational Cyberspace Romance." *Men and Masculinities*.

MEMO #2 ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED

March 11-15: **NO CLASS (Spring Break)**

March 18: Jordanna Matlon. 2016. "Racial Capitalism and the Crisis of Black Masculinity." *American Sociological Review* 81: 1014-1038.

March 20: Section Wrap-Up

MEMO #2 DUE

WORK AND INEQUALITY

March 22: Evelyn Nakano Glenn. 1985. "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 18: 1-43.

March 25: Milian Kang. 2003. "The Managed Hand: The Commercialization of Bodies and Emotions on Korean-Immigrant-Owned Nail Salons." *Gender and Society* 17: 820-839.

March 27: Sergio Chávez, Heather B. Edelblute, and Elizabeth Korver-Glenn. 2016. "Life on the Edge: Balancing Gendered and Occupational Identities among Unauthorized Mexican Migrant Roofers." *Qualitative Sociology* 39: 125-146.

March 29: Adia Harvey-Wingfield. 2013. *No More Invisible Man: Race and Gender in Men's Work*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. Selections.

MEMO #3 ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED

April 1: Karen Ho. 2009. *Liquidated: An Ethnography of Wall Street*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Selections.

April 3: Devah Pager. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology* 108: 937-975.

April 5: Section Wrap-Up

MEMO #3 DUE

CONNECTIONS AND INEQUALITY

- April 8:* Martin Luther King, Jr. 2002 (1968) "World House." Pages 177-202 in *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* Boston: Beacon Press.
- April 10:* Mustafa Emirbayer. 1997. "Manifesto for a Relational Sociology." *American Journal of Sociology* 103: 281-371.
- April 12:* Francisco Vieyra. 2016. "Pickup Basketball in the Production of Black Community." *Qualitative Sociology* 39: 101-123.
- April 15:* Corey D. Fields. 2014. "Not Your Grandma's Knitting: The Role of Identity Processes in the Transformation of Cultural Practices." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 77: 150-165.

MEMO #4 ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED

- April 17:* Mario L. Small and Christopher Sukhu. 2016. "Because They Were There: Access, Deliberation, and the Mobilization of Networks for Support." *Social Networks* 47: 73-84.
- April 19:* Omar Lizardo. 2006. "How Cultural Tastes Shape Personal Networks." *American Sociological Review* 71: 778-807.
- April 22:* Section Wrap-Up

MEMO #4 DUE

CODA: CONCEPTS AND INEQUALITY

- April 24:* Hae Yeon Choo and Myra Marx Ferree. 2010. "Practicing Intersectionality in Sociological Research: A Critical Analysis of Inclusions, Interactions, and Institutions in the Study of Inequalities." *Sociological Theory* 28: 129-149.
- April 26:* Tomás R. Jiménez, Corey D. Fields, and Ariela Schachter. 2015. "How Ethnoraciality Matters: Looking Inside Ethnoracial 'Groups.'" *Social Currents* 2: 107-115.
- April 29:* Class Wrap-Up
- May 6:* **FINAL PAPER DUE (5:00 pm)**