



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

National Catholic School of Social Service

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SSS 883

Seminar in Social and Behavioral Science Concepts

Fall 2008

(3 credits)

Instructor: Dr. Lynn Milgram Mayer

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I. COURSE PURPOSE

This course examines theoretical perspectives drawn from the social sciences that are useful in examining various issues of concern to social workers. The purpose of this course is to familiarize the student with social and behavioral science theories and to encourage the application of selected concepts to social work.

The theoretical perspectives are examined in terms of their assumptions regarding human nature, the nature of the social order, their historical roots, and their application to contemporary social issues.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To acquire knowledge of selected social and behavioral science theories and concepts.
2. To apply social science concepts to social work issues.
3. To be aware of one's own value assumptions, including biases in the selecting of theoretical and conceptual approaches to social work issues.
4. To identify the values underpinning theory.
5. To develop skill in conceptual thinking and the application of theories and concepts to social work problems.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts

Farganis, J. (2007). *Readings in Social Theory* (5th ed). NY:McGraw-Hill.

Hughes, J.A., Sharrock, W.W., & Martin, P.J. (2003). *Understanding classical sociology: Marx, Weber, Durkheim*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

O'Brien, J.O. (2006). *The production of reality: Essays and readings on social interaction* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

B. Recommended Texts

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American psychological association* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

C. Other Recommended Resources and Media

National Catholic School of Social Service <http://ncsss.cua.edu/>

Thyer, B.A. (2005). A note from the editor: A comprehensive listing of social work journals. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 15(4), 310-311.

D. Course Assignments

Students are required to write three essays. Students will be given a question to which they are to respond by developing an essay. The essay should be 8 to 10 pages in length and should follow APA style.

Assignment 1: Essay 1 **Class 7 (10/7/08)**

Assignment 2: Essay 2 **Class 9 (10/28)**

Assignment 3: Essay 3 **Class 13 (11/25)**

E. Grading Policy

Assignment 1: Essay 1	30%
Assignment 2: Essay 2	30%
Assignment 3: Essay 3	30%
Attendance and Participation:	10%

F. Course and Instructor Evaluation
NCSSS requires electronic evaluation of this course and the instructor. At the end of the semester, the evaluation form may be accessed at <http://evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations> using your CUA username and password. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to requests.

G. Attendance and Participation
Students are required to classes and are expected to participate meaningfully in class discussions. The grade for attendance and participation will be lowered unless the student notifies the instructor and requests an excused absence before the class.

IV. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

A. Scholastic Expectations
Please refer to NCSSS Announcements, or appropriate Program Handbook for Academic Requirements, including scholastic and behavioral requirements. All written work should reflect the original thinking of the writer, cite references where material is quoted or adapted from existing sources, adhere to APA format, and should be carefully proof read by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

B. Academic Honesty
Joining the community of scholars at CUA entails accepting the standards, living by those standards, and upholding them. Please refer to University Policy and appropriate Program Handbooks.

C. Accommodations
Students with physical, learning, psychological or other disabilities wishing to request accommodations must identify with the Disability Support Services (DSS) and submit documentation of a disability. If you have documented such a disability to DSS that requires accommodations or an academic adjustment, please arrange a meeting with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.

Class Schedule

Class	Topics and Readings
1	<p>Introduction to Sociological Theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sociology as a multi-paradigmatic science• Sociology's intellectual character• Social theory as perspective• Sociology as science• The theory-research connection <p>Readings: Hughes, Sharrock, & Martin: Chapter 1</p> <p>O'Brien: Part 1 (1-43)</p>
2 & 3	<p>Karl Marx</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biographical Background• Hegalian philosophy and Marxian theory• The critique of political economy• The concept of alienation• The material basis of social organization• The shaping of consciousness• The sources and nature of social change• The economic structures of social change• Social revolution <p>Readings: Hughes, Sharrock, & Martin: Chapter 2</p> <p>Paolucci, P. (2001). Classical sociological theory and modern social problems: Marx's concept of the camera obscura and the fallacy of individualistic reductionism. <i>Criminal Sociology</i>, 27(1), 77-120.</p> <p>McKinnon, A.M. (2005). Reading 'opium of the people:' Expression, protest, and the dialectics of religion. <i>Criminal Sociology</i>, 31(1/2), 15-38.</p> <p>Harvey, D.L. (1998). The practical contradictions of Marxism. <i>Criminal Sociology</i>, 24(1/2), 1-36.</p>
4 & 5	<p>Max Weber</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biographical Background• Weber and modern capitalism• Religion and social organization• The organization of society• Rationality and social change• The concept of bureaucracy• Weberian methodology

Readings:

Hughes, Sharrock, & Martin: Chapter 3

Buss, A. (1999). The concept of adequate causation and Max Weber's comparative sociology of religion. *British Journal of Sociology* 50 (2) 317-329.

Schroeder, R. & Swedberg, R. (2002). Weberian perspective on science, technology and the economy. *British Journal of Sociology* 53 (3) 383-401.

6 & 7 Emile Durkheim

- Biographical background
- The study of social action
- The reality of society
- Mechanical and organic solidarity
- The study of suicide
- The study of religion
- The division of labor

Readings:

Hughes, Sharrock, & Martin: Chapter 4 & 5

Etzioni, A. (2000). Toward a theory of public ritual. *Sociological Theory*, 18(1), 44-59.

Pederson, J.E. (2001). Sexual politics in Comte and Durkheim: Feminism, history, and the French sociological tradition, *Signs*, 27(1), 229-263.

8 Resource Mobilization

Readings:

McCarthy, J.D., & Zald, M.N. (1977). Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82(6), 1212-1241.

McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., & Zald, M.N. (1988). Social movements. In Smelser, N.J. (Ed.), *Handbook of sociology*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Thompson, N. (2002). Social movements, social justice and social work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 32, 711-722.

9 & 10 Symbolic Interactionism

Readings:

O'Brien: Part 2 (63-126) and Part 3 (127-234)

Symbolic Interactionism as Defined by Herbert Blumer. Accessed at <http://www.cdharris.net/text/blumer.html>

Athens, L. (2005). Mead's lost conception of society. *Symbolic Interaction* 28(3) 305-325.

Forte, J.A. (2004). Symbolic interactionism and social work: A forgotten legacy, part 2. *Families in Society*, 85(4), 521-530.

Forte, J.A. (2004). Symbolic interactionism and social work: A forgotten legacy, part 1. *Families in Society*, 85(3), 391-400.

Rosenberg, M. (1984). A symbolic interactionist view of psychosis. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 25 (September) 289-302.

11 Theories of Self and Identity

Readings:

O'Brien: Part 4 (235-332) and Part 5 (381-398)

Callero, P.L. (2003). The sociology of the self. *Annual Review of Sociology*. 29:115-133.

Howard, J. (2000). The social psychology of identities. *Annual Review of Sociology*. 26(4):501-503.

Wiley, N. (2003). The self as self-fulfilling prophecy. *Symbolic Interaction*. 26(4):501-513.

12 Role Theory

Readings:

Role Theory. Accessed at

<http://www.auburn.edu/~backmcb/socy1000/lectures/roleTheory.htm>

Asforth, B. E., Kreiner, G. F., & Fugate, M. (2000). All in a day's work: Boundaries and micro role transitions. *Academy of Management Review*. 25(3):472-491.

Landry-Meyer, L. & Newman, B. M. (2004). An exploration of grandparent caregiver role. *Journal of Family Issues*. 25(8):1005-1025.

Recommended Readings:

Biddle, B.J., & Thomas, E.J. (1966). Role theory: Concepts and research. NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Deasy, L.C. (). Social role theory: Its component parts, and some applications. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press.

Perlman, H.H. (1968). *Persona: Social role and personality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

13 Race and Social Theory

Readings:

Winant, H. (2000). Race and race theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*. 26:169-185.

Quillian, L. (2006). New approaches to understanding racial prejudice and discrimination. *Annual Review of Sociology*. 32:299-328.

14 Gender and Social Theory

Readings:

O'Brien: Part 5 (399-424)

Campbell, R. & Wasco, S. (2000). Feminist approaches to social science: Epistemological and methodological tenets. *American Journal of Community Psychology*. 28(6):773-791.

Kushner, E. A. & Morrow, R. (2003). Grounded theory, feminist theory, critical theory: Toward theoretical triangulation. *Advances in Nursing Science*. 26(1):30-43.

Thomas, J.E., & Kukulian, A. (2004). Why don't I know about these women? The integration of early women sociologists in classical theory courses. *Teaching Sociology*, 32(3), 252-263.