I. COURSE PURPOSE

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

These classical 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 classical 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

1. Required Texts


Recommended Texts


Other readings as assigned for each class.

2. Course Assignments

Students are required to write 3 essays. Students will be given a question to which they are to respond by developing an essay. The essay should be 7 to 10 pages and follow the APA style.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment Date</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
<td>10/23/2012</td>
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<td>Essay 2</td>
<td>12/4/2012</td>
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<td>Essay 3</td>
<td>12/11/2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>As assigned</td>
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3. Grading Policy

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<td>Essay 2</td>
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<td>Essay 3</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
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<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
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4. **Grading Policy**

Grades are based on the University grading system as described in the catalog.

5. **Course and Instructor Evaluation**

The NCSSS doctoral program requires evaluation of this course and the instructor. At the end of the semester, an evaluation form will be distributed in class. Results will not be given to the instructor until grades are submitted. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to requests.

IV. **CLASS EXPECTATIONS**

1. **Scholastic Expectations**

Please refer to *NCSSS Announcements* or appropriate Program Handbook (available on the NCSSS web page) 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 proofread by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

**Additional Behavioral Requirements:**

Students are expected to maintain accepted standards of professional conduct and personal integrity in the classroom. Students should:

- Attend all classes and contribute constructively to the classroom culture
- Recognize and avoid behavior that jeopardizes the learning/teaching environment of other students or the instructor
- Demonstrate competence in planning academic activities and in following through on those plans
- Reasonably respond to and respect others’ reactions to one’s comments or actions in the classroom
- Use an appropriate level of class time and instructor’s time and attention in and out of class
- Behave in a manner that is consistent with the ethical principles of the social work profession.

2. **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.

3. **Accommodations**

Students with physical, learning, psychological or other disabilities wishing to request accommodations must identify with the Disability Support Services (DSS)
http://disabilityservices.cua.edu/ or 202-310-5211, 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 1  
**Introduction to the Course – 8/27/2012**
- Paradigms and Social Theory
- Social Science’s intellectual character
- Social theory as perspective
- The nature of science
- The theory – research connection

**Required Readings:**


Ritzer. Chapter 1. Introduction.

**Recommended Readings:**

Hughes, Sharrock and Martin, Chapter 1. Introduction

Class 2 & 3  
**Karl Marx – 9/4/2012 & 9/11/2012**
- Biographical Background
- Hegelian 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 sources of social change
- Social revolution

**Required Readings:**

Farganis, Chapter 1. Karl Marx: Alienation, class struggle and class consciousness.
- From Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*.
- From Karl Marx: *Economic and Philosphic Manuscripts of 1844*.
- From Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: *The German Ideology*.
- From Karl Marx: *The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof*.

Ritzer. Chapter 2, Classical Grand Theories.
Recommended Readings:

Hughes, Sharrock and Martin, Chapter 2. Karl Marx

Class 4 & 5  
Emile Durkheim – 9/18/2012 & 9/25/2012
• 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

Required Readings:

Farganis, Chapter 2. Emile Durkheim: Anomie and Social Integration.
• From Emile Durkheim: The Rules of Sociological Method.
• From Emile Durkheim: Egoistic Suicide and Anomic Suicide.
• From Emile Durkheim: The Elementary Forms of Religious Life.

Ritzer, Chapter 2. Classical Grand Theories.

Recommended Readings:

Hughes, Sharrock and Martin, Chapter 4. Emile Durkheim

Class 6 & 7  
Max Weber – 10/2/2012 & 10/16/2012
• Biographical background
• Weber and modern capitalism
• Religion and social organization
• The organization of society
• Rationality and social change
• The concept of bureaucracy
• Weberian methodology

Required Readings:

• From Max Weber: The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.
• From max Weber: Bureaucracy
• From Max Weber: Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy.
• From Max Weber: Class, Status, Party.

Ritzer, Chapter 3. Classical Theories of Everyday Life.

Recommended Readings:

Hughes, Sharrock and Martin, Chapter 3, Max Weber.
Class 8 & 9  Symbolic Interactionism – 10/23/2012 & 10/30/2012

- George Herbert Mead
- Herbert Blumer
- Erving Goffman
- Humans as symbol-using creatures
- Producing social order through interaction
- Producing social selves
- The social construction of reality
- Ambiguity, complexity and conflict in social interaction

Required Readings:

Farganis, Chapter 5. George Herbert Mead: The Emergent Self.
  - From George Herbert Mead: *Mind, Self and Society.*
Farganis, Chapter 11. Symbolic Interaction
  - From Herbert Blumer: *Society as Symbolic Interaction*
  - From Erving Goffman: *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*
  - From Arlie Hochschild: *Exploring the Managed Heart.*


- John Watson
- B.F. Skinner
- George C. Homans
- Peter Blau
- James S. Coleman

Required Readings:

Farganis, Chapter 9. Exchange Theory and Rational Choice
  - From George C. Homans: *Social Behavior as Exchange.*
  - From Peter Blau: *The Structure of Social Associations*
  - From James S. Coleman. *Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital.*

- The structure of the mind
- The structure of the personality
- Ego defense
- Sexuality
- Psychosexual development
- Group psychology
- The social

Required Readings:

Berzoff et al, Chapter 1, 2, 3.

Recommended Readings:


Class 14  Theoretical Integration & Bridge to Contemporary Theories – 12/4/2012

- Paradigms revisited
- Race and social theory
- Gender and social theory

Required Readings:

Farganis, Chapter 12. Feminist Theory.
- From Dorothy Smith: Women’s Experience as a Radical Critique of Sociology.
- From Patricia Hill Collins: Is the Personal Still Political.

Thomas, J.E. & Kukulan, 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.
Essay 1

This essay examines classic sociological theories. The objective is to deepen understanding of the theories and to critique their relevance to social work. The essay should go beyond class readings and discussions.

Marx, Durkheim, and Weber are classical social theorists. Compare and contrast these three theorists in terms of their:

• Assumptions regarding human behavior
• Assumptions regarding society
• Usefulness for furthering knowledge of contemporary social concerns/problems
• Relevance to social work

Your response should be a maximum of 8 to 10 pages double spaced.

The Doctoral Program Handbook specifies that the reference list should be equal or greater in number than the number of pages in the paper. If the essay is 8 pages, it should have a minimum of 8 references.

Use APA style, 6th edition, for referencing.
Essay 2

Overview

This essay examines classic behavioral science theories. The objective is to deepen understanding of the theories and to critique their relevance to social work. The essay should go beyond class readings and discussions.

Directions

Symbolic Interaction, Behavioral, Exchange Theory, Rational Choice, and Psychoanalytic are classic behavioral science theories. Compare and contrast three of these theories in terms of their:

- Assumptions regarding human behavior
- Assumptions regarding society
- Usefulness for furthering knowledge of contemporary social concerns/problems
- Relevance to social work

Your response should be a maximum of 8 to 10 pages double spaced.

The Doctoral Program Handbook specifies that the reference list should be equal or greater in number than the number of pages in the paper. If the essay is 8 pages, it should have a minimum of 8 references.

Use APA style, 6th edition, for referencing.
Essay 3: Application of a Theory to a Psychosocial Issue

Overview

This paper takes a classic theory and ties it to your professional area of interest. The objective of the paper is to critically analyze the suitability of the theory for application to a specific psychosocial issue of concern to social work.

Directions

Review the literature in social work and related disciplines on a problem/issue/challenge/need that relates to your professional area of interest. Select one theory from the classic theories discussed in class – the theory selected could be a sociological or a behavioral science theory. Apply the theory to the problem as described below.

- **Describe the nature of the problem/issue/challenge/need:** Present the classic and contemporary literature in social work and related fields. Clearly identify the unit of attention – who is affected by this problem? Individuals, groups, families, communities, etc? Describe the scope of the issue/problem.
- **Apply the theory as an explanatory theory to the problem:** How does the theory explain this problem for the population? Use a minimum of 3 concepts from the theory to guide your application. Define each concept before you apply it.
- **Apply the theory as a change theory to the problem:** How does the theory explain the nature of change and/or guide intervention? Is change directed toward the person, environment, or combination?
- **Discuss the strengths and limitations in relation to applying this theory to this problem or population:** Does the theory include internal and external factors?
- **Discuss the application in relation to social work mission, values, and ethics:** How does this theory support the mission, values, or ethical basis of social work practice?

Your response should be a maximum of **10 pages** double spaced.

The *Doctoral Program Handbook* specifies that the reference list should be equal or greater in number than the number of pages in the paper. If the paper is 10 pages, it should have a minimum of 10 references.

Use APA style, 6th edition, for referencing.
Presentation Outline

Overview

The formal class presentation is an examination of a classic theory. The goal of the presentation is to provide a framework for lively discussion that aids in analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of a theory for knowledge development and scholarly research.

Directions

Develop a one page handout to be distributed to classmates as part of the presentation. Prepare a one hour presentation on the theory selected. The presentation should then lead to a class discussion of the theory.

The presentation should follow the following outline:

- **Introduction:** Discuss the basic premises of the theory.
- **Background:** Discuss the development of the theory, including
- **Philosophical Base:** Discuss the ontology and epistemology of the theory.
- **Theory:** Discuss the theory in regards to
  - Assumptions about human behavior
  - Assumptions about society
  - Key concepts that explain human behavior
  - Key concepts that guide change
  - Empirical support
- **Contemporary Issues:** Discuss different pathways from the classic theory to the contemporary
- **Congruence with Social Work Practice:** Discuss the strengths and limitations of the theory in relation to the mission, values, and ethics of professional social work.