

# **SOC111T MODERN SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY**

Spring 2025

Location: Mandeville B-150

Class hours: 11am – 11.50am

Instructor: Professor Charles Thorpe

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Office: SSB 464

Office hours: Mondays 1-3pm

Final exam: TBD

## **Course description**

Classical sociological theory was the theoretical consciousness of the onset of modernity. Classical sociological theory marked the historical peak, and the decline of, Enlightenment rationalism and individualism, a growing sense that a new —social— way of thinking was necessary for an increasingly complex and organized industrial capitalist order. *Modern Sociological Theory* examines the period in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century that was the height of sociology's cultural influence in America and the period of the formation of the core theoretical frameworks that gave form to the discipline and that are the background to sociology today. In particular, the course examines functionalism, psychoanalytic sociology, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, conflict theory, and the idea of mass society. Before postmodernism, this was a period of optimism about the potentialities of science and social reform. Modern sociology marks the peak of the social democratic, Keynesian, social reformist, regulationist, and technocratic impulses with which sociological theory was involved, as inspiration, advocate, and critic. Modern sociological theory saw the development of systems of thought that, in different ways, reflected the restabilization of capitalism after World War Two and the discontents submerged within this stability. Its end was marked by the student revolts of 1968 and the economic crisis of the 1970s. It was the golden age of sociology.

## **Assessment**

Components of assessment and weighting of grade:

Annotations: 50%

Attendance: 10%

Final exam: 40%

## *Annotations*

These must take up at least 1 full page of 12 font per annotation (i.e. per day on which annotations are due no matter the length of the reading set). They may be double-spaced bullet-points, or double-spaced prose. You may write more if you wish.

These annotations are graded on a P/NP basis. They are meant to provide early preparation for your papers and assignments in the course and to self-prepare for lecture and discussion. In order to pass this assignment, you will need to turn in all individual reading outlines that meet the following criteria. You are welcome to use either bullet points or complete paragraphs.

- Two questions that came up for you in the reading and screenings.
  - Consider things you didn't understand or that struck you. You might also think about this portion as a way to start thinking about questions to frame your papers.
- Summarize the academic readings for the week or for the topic heading from the schedule: 1 paragraph/set of bullet points.
- Put the different readings for that week in conversation with one another.

When you turn in your annotations for the week, be sure to include your name and the Annotation #.

Please note that these are not commented on by Professor Thorpe or your TA, unless you specifically ask for feedback by going to office hours.

Grading criteria for annotations

Meeting the requirements = P (you get full points for the assignment)

Not meeting the requirements = NP (you get zero points for the assignment).

If you complete all the annotations satisfactorily, you will receive the full 15% for this portion of the course grade.

*Submitting annotations.* A Canvas portal will be created to turn in annotations.

The first annotations will be due Wednesday of Week 1, on the readings set for that day's class subsequently, annotations will be due each day on which there are readings set (see course schedule below).

You will not receive feedback on annotations except to confirm that you have completed the annotation to the requirements (in which case you get full marks for the annotation). If you do not get this confirmation, you should assume that you have not completed the annotation or not completed it satisfactorily.

You must turn in annotations by 11:59pm on the day for which they are due. Annotations will be accepted up to a week late, but not after.

## *Attendance*

Attendance is mandatory and an attendance list will be taken during each class.

### ***Final exam***

A three-hour in-class final exam will be held during the exam period. You will be expected to write essays in answer to prompts on the course reading. Prompts will be provided on Thursday of Week 10. No notes or electronic devices will be allowed during the exam.

You should bring two blue books to the final exam and more than one pen (not pencil).

If you have OSD accommodations, you should give Professor Thorpe the information at the start of the quarter.

### ***Class discussion***

This class is discussion-based. The professor will not give lectures. It is very important that you do the readings assigned for each day prior to the class meeting so that you are prepared to discuss the reading during the class.

### **Course schedule**

#### **Thursday**

#### **Week 1**

#### **Monday: Introduction and Overview of Course**

#### **Wednesday**

Parsons, *The Social System*, Chapter 1

#### **Friday**

Parsons, *The Social System*, Chapter 2

#### **Week 2**

#### **Monday**

Parsons, *The Social System*, Chapters 3-4

#### **Wednesday**

Parsons, *The Social System*, Chapter 5

#### **Friday**

Parsons, *The Social System*, Chapters 6-7

### **Week 3**

#### **Monday**

Parsons, *The Social System*, Chapters 8-10

#### **Wednesday**

Parsons, *The Social System*, Chapter 11

#### **Friday**

Parsons, *The Social System*, Chapter 12.

### **Week 4: Conflict Theory**

#### **Monday**

Ralf Dahrendorf (1958) "Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis," *American Journal of Sociology* 64(2), 115-127.

Dennis H. Wrong, "The Oversocialized Conception of Man in Modern Sociology," *American Sociological Review* 26 (1961), 183-193.

#### **Wednesday**

Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (Stanford University Press, 1959 [orig. German 1957], Chapters V-VI.

#### **Friday**

Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*, Chapters VII-VIII.

### **Week 5: Elites and Mass Society**

#### **Monday**

C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), Chapter 1 and Chapters 12-13.

#### **Wednesday**

David Riesman with Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denney, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character*, Abridged edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961 [original publication 1950]), Chapters 1-3.

## **Friday**

Riesman, Glazer, Denney, *The Lonely Crowd*, Chapters 6-7.

Joseph R. Gusfield, "Mass Society and Extremist Politics," *American Sociological Review* 27(1) (February 1962): 19-30.

## **Week 6**

### **Monday**

Herbert Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction" (1962) in Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer eds, *Symbolic Interactionism: A Reader in Social Psychology* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), 148.

Herbert Blumer, "Sociological Analysis and the 'Variable'" (1956) in Manis and Meltzer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 84-94.

Charles D. Bolton, "Is Sociology a Behavioral Science?" (1963) in Manis and Meltzer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 95-108.

### **Wednesday**

Erving Goffman, "Presentation of Self to Others" extract from *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) in Manis and Meltzer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 220-231.

### **Friday**

Howard S. Becker, "Outsiders" extract from *Outsiders* (1963) in Earl Rubington and Martin S. Weinberg eds, *Deviance: The Interactionist Perspective* (New York: Macmillan, 1978), 11-14.

Howard S. Becker, "Becoming a Marihuana User" (1953) in Manis and Meltzer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 411-422.

Erving Goffman, "The Moral Career of the Mental Patient" (1959) in Rubington and Weinberg, *Deviance*, 120-130.

Erving Goffman, "The Management of Spoiled Identity" (1963) in Rubington and Weinberg, *Deviance*, 427-431.

Martin S. Weinberg, "The Nudist Management of Respectability" (1976) in Rubington and Weinberg, *Deviance*, 342-351.

## **Week 7: Theories of Ethnicity and Race**

### **Monday**

Georg Simmel, "The Stranger" (1908) in Werner Sollors ed., *Theories of Ethnicity: a Classical Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 37-42.

Robert E. Park, "Human Migration and the Marginal Man" (1928) in Sollors, *Theories of Ethnicity*, 156-167.

Louis Wirth, "The Sociological Significance of the Ghetto" Chapter XIV of Wirth, *The Ghetto* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1928).

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965 [orig.in French 1946]), read from p. 13 "The anti-semiter has chosen to hate" to bottom of p. 18 "It is a thing."

### **Wednesday**

W.E.B. DuBois, "A Reply to Stone" (1908) in Thomas F. Pettigrew ed., *The Sociology of Race Relations: Reflection and Reform* (New York: The Free Press, 1980), 28-32.

W.E.B. DuBois, "Race Relations in the United States, 1917-1947," *Phylon* 9 (3) (1948): 234-247.

Robert E. Park, "Racial Assimilation in Secondary Groups with Particular Reference to the Negro" (1914) in Pettigrew, *Sociology of Race Relations*, 33-44.

Gunnar Myrdal, "Selection from An American Dilemma" (1944) in David A. Hollinger and Charles Capper eds, *The American Intellectual Tradition, A Sourcebook Volume 2: 1865 to the Present*, Third Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 235-243.

### **Friday**

Oliver C. Cox, "The Modern Caste School of Race Relations" (1942) in Pettigrew, *Sociology of Race Relations*, 134-142.

Charles S. Johnson, "The Present Status of Race Relations in the South" (1944) in Pettigrew, *Sociology of Race Relations*, 143-150.

E. Franklin Frazier, "Race Relations and Sociological Theory" (1947) in Pettigrew, *Sociology of Race Relations*, 151-158.

E. Franklin Frazier, "A Review of Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*" (1945) in Pettigrew, *Sociology of Race Relations*, 159-162.

Talcott Parsons, "Full Citizenship for the Negro American? A Sociological Problem," in Talcott Parsons and Kenneth B. Clark eds, *The Negro American* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965/1966), 709-754.

### **Week 8: Ethnomethodology**

## **Monday**

Hugh Mehan and Houston Wood, *The Reality of Ethnomethodology* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975), Chapters 1-2.

## **Wednesday**

Mehan and Wood, *The Reality of Ethnomethodology*, Chapters 3-8

## **Friday**

Mehan and Wood, *The Reality of Ethnomethodology*, Chapters 9-12

## **Week 9: Alvin Gouldner and the Crisis of Sociology**

**Monday: Memorial Day: NO CLASS**

## **Wednesday**

Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (New York: Avon, 1970), Chapters 9-10.

## **Friday**

Gouldner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*, Chapter 13.

## **Week 10: Second Wave Feminism and Sociology**

## **Monday**

Simone de Beauvoir, "Woman: Myth and Reality" extract from *The Second Sex* (1949/1953), in Lee A. Jacobus ed., *A World of Ideas: Essential Readings for College Writers*, Seventh Edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2006), 781-795.

Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1963), Chapter 1: "The Problem that Has No Name."

## **Wednesday**

Jo Freeman, "The Building of the Gilded Cage" (1971), in Anne Koedt, Ellen Levine and Anita Rapone eds, *Radical Feminism* (New York: Quadrangle, 1973), 127-150.

Juliet Mitchell, "Women: The Longest Revolution" (1966) in Karen V. Hansen and Ilene J. Philipson eds, *Women, Class, and the Feminist Imagination* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1990), 43-73.

## Friday

Nancy Chodorow, "Oedipal Asymmetries and Heterosexual Knots," *Social Problems* 23 (4) (1975-1976): 454-468.

Carol Gilligan, "Woman's Place in Man's Life Cycle," extract from *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (1982), in Jacobus, *A World of Ideas*, 797-819.