

**Department of Sociology
Dartmouth College
Winter 2009**

Sociological Classics (Sociology 15)

Professor: Marc Dixon
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Course Information:
MWF, 12:30-1:35, 013 Silsby
X-period: Tuesday 1:00-1:50
Office hours: Monday & Tuesday 2-3, or by
appointment

Course Description:

This course offers an introduction to sociological theory through the works of Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber, three seminal writers whose ideas are still of enormous significance in shaping perspective and framing terms of argument among many major contemporary social and political thinkers. It fulfills the theory requirement for majors in the Department of Sociology. Among specific subjects to be covered are the following: class and class conflict; culture and ideology; forms and symbols of social solidarity; and questions of how shared ideals or divisive interests affect not just the study of human society, but the course of history itself.

Evaluation:

Grades are based on daily participation, reading questions submitted throughout the quarter, a brief and class presentation on an individual theorist, and three exams. The composition of final grades and grading scale are as follows:

Course Requirements

Participation & Reading Questions– 10%
Class Presentation and Theory Brief – 14%
Two in-class exams – 24% each
Final Exam – 28%

Grading Scale

A 93-100
A- 90-92.99
B+ 87-89.99
B 83-86.99
B- 80-82.99
C+ 77-79.99
C 73-76.99
Etc.

Class Participation & Reading Questions: While I will lecture on certain materials, students are required to attend and be active participants throughout the course. I take roll at each class meeting, mainly for the purpose of learning students' names and assessing students' participation. However, if you miss more than two classes, I begin to deduct points from your grade. Typically Mondays and Wednesdays will feature more lecture and Fridays will be reserved for class discussion. To facilitate discussion, students will submit reading questions to the course blackboard site prior to our Friday meetings (questions are due by 4AM on Fridays). Students must submit questions for at least five Friday sessions. Successfully completed questions are scored 1 point, and students can accumulate a maximum of 5 points towards their final grade. Questions can take a number of forms, *but they should convey that the student has*

carefully read and thought about the assigned material. There are six regular Friday sessions with readings (e.g., not an exam day, presentation day, etc.) for which students can submit questions. Students may submit more than five times. However, late submissions are not accepted.

Presentation and Theory Brief:

During the quarter, students will research an individual theorist culminating in a theory brief and class presentation on Friday, March 6 or Monday, March 9. Details on the assignment and scheduling will be covered during the first week of class.

Exams:

Students will take in-class exams on Monday, January 26 and Wednesday, February 11, and a take-home final to be turned in no later than March 15th at 11:30am. Exams are open book, but you will **not** be permitted to discuss them with anyone else. You may bring your laptop to write the essay portion of the mid-terms if you choose. If you do choose this option, you must be able to submit the essay via blackboard at the end of the exam and it is your responsibility to make sure it arrives “postmarked” no later than the end of the class period. Exams will be graded for an integration and deep understanding of course material, coherent and well-reasoned arguments, and professional writing skills (more so for the final). The exams will be fairly evenly divided between readings and lecture/discussion. *Exam dates are firm.* Only in extraordinary circumstances may you turn in an exam late without penalty. In such a circumstance you must convince the instructor that you have a good reason for doing so, such as proof from a physician or dean that you have been ill.

Required Readings:

Students will want to purchase the following books, which are available at the Dartmouth bookstore.

Marx, Karl. 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader* (2nd edition edited by Robert C. Tucker).
Norton & Co. ISBN 0-393-09040-X

Durkheim, Emile. 1979. *Suicide*. The Free Press. (translated by John A Spaulding and George Simpson). ISBN 0-684-83632-7

Weber, Max. 2002. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Stephen Kalberg Translation). Roxbury Publishing Co. ISBN 1-891487-43-4

Blackboard: Additional required readings are posted on the course blackboard site (marked by BB in the course schedule). I will occasionally update readings or place other documents and announcements on Blackboard for your edification. It is your responsibility to check the blackboard course site regularly.

A note on the readings: It is expected that you will have done the reading by the time class meets on the date for which the assignment is due. These are original works and will be difficult to get through on the first try. *It is in your interest to keep up.* I will help put these works in context and

there are several texts with additional materials on individual theorists that you may find useful. The following are on reserve at Baker Library:

- Coser, Lewis A. 1971. *Masters of sociological thought: ideas in historical and social context*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. <http://libcat.dartmouth.edu/record=b2203114~S1>
- Aron, Raymond. 1965. *Main currents in sociological thought, volumes 1&2*. New York: Basic Books. <http://libcat.dartmouth.edu/record=b1341929~S1>
- Zeitlin, Irving M. 1981. *Ideology and the development of sociological theory*. Prentice-Hall sociology series. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall. <http://libcat.dartmouth.edu/record=b1558290~S1>

Course Policies:

Honor Principle: Examinations and assignments will be conducted in accord with the principles of academic honor detailed in the Dartmouth Organization, Regulations and Courses. I also encourage students to read Dartmouth's statement on Sources and Citations: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/sources/>

Students with disabilities: Students with disabilities enrolled in this course and who may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me as soon as possible. All discussions will remain confidential, although the Student Accessibility Services office may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation of any accommodation requested.

Religious Holidays: Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me as soon as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Electronic Devices: I understand that students are increasingly using laptops to take notes, but the internet is also a formidable distraction. I will allow laptops in class, but be warned that I have a pet peeve about students surfing the web in class. If you are spending time on the internet, your class participation grade will suffer considerably. So, if you can't resist responding to blitzmail, you're probably best off leaving your laptop at home. Also, please turn off your cell phones while in class.

Classroom Etiquette:

I expect everyone to show up to class on time. It is crucial for our class sessions to be comfortable and conducive to learning for all participants. This means listening while other people are talking and taking their ideas seriously. Personal attacks, yelling, or other threatening behaviors are not acceptable.

Course Schedule

I. Why sociological classics?

1 (1-5) *Course Introduction and Overview*

Craig Calhoun, “What Passes for Theory in Sociology?” (BB)

2 (1-7) Readings (all on BB):

C. Wright Mills, Excerpt from *The Sociological Imagination* (skim)

Jeffery Alexander, “The Centrality of the Classics” (especially pp. 12-32)

Optional: Robert Merton, “On the History and Systematics of Sociological Theory.”

3 (1-9) Begin readings for next week

II. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

4 (1-12) Readings (from the Marx & Engels Reader):

Friedrich Engels, “Working Class Manchester,” pp.579-586

Karl Marx, Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, pp.3-6

5 (1-14) Readings:

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, pp.469-500

Optional: *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, pp.66-105

6 (1-16) Readings:

Karl Marx, *Thesis on Feuerbach*, pp.143-45

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, pp.146-200

Optional: *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, pp.594-617

****1-19 Martin Luther King Holiday – No Class****

7 (1-21) Readings:

Karl Marx, Selections from *Capital*, pp.302-08; 319-61

8 (1-23) Readings:

Excerpts from Kevin Leicht and Scott Fitzgerald’s *Post-Industrial Peasants* (BB)

****9 (1-26) Exam #1 in Class****

III. Emile Durkheim

10 (1-28) Readings:

Begin excerpts from Durkheim’s *Rules of Sociological Method*

“What is a Social Fact?” (BB)

“Rules for the Observation of Social Facts” (BB)

11 (1-30) Readings:

Finish excerpts from *Rules of Sociological Method*
Begin Durkheim's *Suicide* (skim book 1)

12 (2-2) Readings:

Suicide, through book 2

*Preliminary statement for theory brief due in class

13 (2-4) Readings:

Suicide, book 3 chapters 1&2

14 (2-6) Readings:

Finish *Suicide*

Robert D. Baller and Kelly Richardson, "Social Integration, Imitation and the Geographic Patterning of Suicide." (BB)

15 (2-9) Readings:

Andrew Abbott, "Transcending General Linear Reality." (BB)

X-Period (2-10) Wrapping up Durkheim & Review

****16 (2-11) Exam #2 in Class****

****2-13 Winter Carnival – No Class****

IV. Max Weber

17 (2-16) Readings:

Max Weber, "Basic Sociological Terms" (BB)

Skim Kalberg's introduction to *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

18 (2-18) Readings:

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Part I.

19 (2-20) Readings:

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Part II

Optional: Jack Goldstone, "The Rise of the West—Or Not?"(BB)
Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action" (BB)

20 (2-23) Readings:

Max Weber, excerpts on Bureaucracy (BB)

21 (2-25) Readings:

Max Weber, excerpts on Authority (BB)

22 (2-27) Readings:

Max Weber, excerpts on Class and Status (BB)

Charles Kurzman et al., “Celebrity Status” (BB)

23 (3-2) Readings:

TBA

24 (3-4) Readings:

TBA, wrap-up Weber

25 (3-6)

Class Presentations

26 (3-9)

Course Wrap-up and Presentations

Take home final distributed in class

X-Period (3-10) *If Needed*

Final exam due by March, 15 at 11:30AM