

# Advanced Social Theory

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## COURSE SYLLABUS

### FALL 2011

**Associate Professor** *Gulnara Ibraeva*

Department of Sociology, AUCA

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#### Teaching methods

Two classes per week (T., F.: 9.25)

**Office hours:** by appointment

### Course description

There are distinct periods in the making of social theory, it isn't impossible to view modern social theories as an uninterrupted, smooth flow of ideas. In each period theorists thought of new questions and found new ways to formulate answers to old questions. These new ideas were stimulated by changes in societies, in the intellectual climate, and in the tools available to researchers.

But why we do need theories in contemporary world? Moving away from established conceptualizations of society as a modern phenomenon, the course will allow to us to test postmodern perspectives in order to explain new diversity of the "social" and the society in a globalized and networked, culturalized and asynchronous world.

**Class format and strategy:** There isn't clear distinction between class formats during the semester – neither traditional lecture, nor traditional seminar. Instead every class we will have mini-lecture, reading and writing skills development workshop, group discussions. The readings and in-class-formulate questions are set up to focus the discussions around a question (s), the answers to which are sought out throughout the course.

You will be expected to prepare the readings assignments thoroughly; in addition students will be asked to prepare short presentations, gather material and organize workshop sessions. The key exercise for students in the course will be the realization of a small research project that is used to apply the new theoretical insight on empirical material. The research project, developed and pursued throughout the course, will be assessed based on the mid-term paper (proposal) and the final paper that shall consist of a full research project presentation (description and analysis).

**Course policy:** All readings must be read before the class. No late work is accepted. Plagiarism is a very serious offence and is considered as cheating under University rules.

#### Literature (abbreviated notations):

*Hancock, B.H. & Garner R. Changing theories. New directions in sociology. (ChT)*

*Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Reading edited by Charles Lemert. (L'ST)*

*Theories of Social Order: a Reader edited by Hechter M. & Horne Ch. (TSO)*

*Danermark, B., Ekstrom, M., Jakobsen, L., Karlsson, J.Ch. Explaining Society: Critical realism in the Social Sciences. (ES)*

Seidman S. & Alexander J.C. *The new Social Theory :reader. (NST)*

*Social Theory: Power and Identity in the global Era. A Reader edited by Garner R. (G'ST)*

All readings will be available in electronic form online (Moodle e-course). In some cases you may get printed out copies at the dept.

Additional readings (available in the library):

1. Ritzer, G. (1996) *Sociological Theory*, N.Y.: McGraw-Hill
2. Andersen, H. & Kaspersen, L.B. (eds) (2000) *Classical and modern social theory*.

## Class schedule

23.08 **Introduction to Advanced Social Theory class. Course principles and policies.**

*No readings*

26-30.08 **What is Theory?**

*Readings:* TSO. Pp. 7-10, ES 76-98, 106-114, 117-149

2.09 **How and why have sociological theories changed in the past forty years?**

*Readings:* ChT. pp. 51-61, L'ST pp. 365-375

### GENERAL THEORY

6-9.09 **New critical theory: Jürgen Habermas**

*Readings:* L'ST pp. 380-383

13-16.09 **New critical theory: Jürgen Habermas**

*Readings:* NST. pp. 34-43

20-23.09 **Poststructuralism: Michel Foucault**

*Readings:* L'ST pp. 415-419

27-30.09 **Poststructuralism: Michel Foucault**

*Readings:* NST. pp. 73-79

4-7.10 **Poststructuralism: Pierre Bourdieu**

*Readings:* L'ST pp. 441-446

11-14.10 **Poststructuralism: Pierre Bourdieu**

*Readings:* NST. pp. 80-87 (Research project proposal due 14.10 – in class).

### 18-21.10 FALL BREAK

### SOCIETIES AND WORLD ORDER

25-28.10 **Postmodernity: Jean Baudrillard**

*Readings:* NST, pp. 230-234

1-4.11 **Postmodernity: Andreas Huyssen & David Harvey**

*Readings:* NSL pp 235-243, L'ST pp. 463-467

8-11.11 **Alternatives to postmodernity: Anthony Giddens**

*Readings:* L'ST. pp. 487-493

15-18.11 **Alternatives to postmodernity: Anthony Giddens**

*Readings:* NST pp. 354-361 (Final paper due 18.11)

22-25.11 **Global View: Immanuel Wallerstein**

*Readings:* G'ST pp. 621-626

29.11-2.12 **Rethinking Global world: Arjun Appadurai**

*Readings:* G'ST 643-655

**IDENTITIES**

6-9.12            **Gender and global world: Connell R.W & Narayan Uma**  
*Readings:*        NST. pp. 369-388  
13.12            **Summary class.**

**Assessment and grading:**

25% - Research project proposal (as mid-term paper) – 2000 words + Literature review (1500 words)

35% - Final research paper (5000 words)

15% - Research project presentation (starting from the class on 22.11.2011)

25% - Active participation

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**A = 95-100%**

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**B -=79-77%**

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**D+= 66-64%**

**A -=95-90%**

**C+= 76-73%**

**D = 63-60%**

**B+=89-85%**

**C = 72-70%**

**D -= 59-55%**

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**B = 84-80%**

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**C- = 69-67%**

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**F = 54% and below**

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