

SOC 211

Contemporary Social Theory; Tuesday/Thursday 9.25; Room # 220 (Tues)-#230 (Thurs)

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Office Hours (by appointment)

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Course description

This course will familiarize students with the central concepts in sociological theory and see how they are deployed by various contemporary sociologists and social theorists. The course reviews key aspects of Enlightenment which have influenced the development of hierarchy of knowledge in general and the nature of sociological theory in particular. There are three other broad themes in the course. The first concerns with the nature of "society" or "social reality" as an "objective reality" and what that means for sociological theorizing. The second concerns with "subjective reality" of social world. The third concerns with the interrelationship of those two aspects of social reality and social construction of reality-with the integration of structure and agency, macro and micro, and object and subject. Issues of power, social inequality, social stability and changewill be addressed through the discussion of modernity and progress.

Teaching Methods and Course Requirements:

- Structurally the course will combine lecturing and seminar style discussions. The lecture will introduce the general topic of the specific week and give an overview of specific debates related to it. In the seminar, we get a chance to discuss and address more specific questions. Students are expected to read both for lecture and seminar classes.
- Students have to complete all the assigned readings before the class (available through AUCA e-learning website or hard-copies distributed in class), bring the readings to the class and come to the seminar prepared for a discussion. Every week students are expected to write a short (200 words) response paper/discussion questions for assigned readings which will be evaluated as a part of participation. The first week of the semester is an exception.
- Five 5-uninformed in class quizzes will take place during the semester and will be evaluated as a part of participation.
- The seminar will also give space for short, 15-20 minutes student presentations (one per student). These presentations are accompanied by one 1-page response paper critically analyzing the reading chosen by the student. The response paper has to be submitted to the instructor via e-mail by Sunday noon. The response paper will serve as a basis for the student's 10-15 minute oral presentation during the seminar. I do not give any credit for a simple summary, without a critique. Half of the presentation should be a summary and half should be a critique. The student will also be

responsible for co-leading the discussion of the readings during their chosen week. If Wikipedia is your main source, you will get an F. You are not allowed to present the topic on a different week, therefore please plan accordingly.

- Attendance and active participation are thus required in order to ensure maximum learning outcomes. Students are allowed one unexcused absence during the semester. Any additional unexcused absence will result in lowering of the final grade by one grade (e.g. from B+ to B). In order to qualify for an excused absence (besides medical certificate) please make sure you contact the instructor via email at least 12 hours before the beginning of the semester. More than 4 excused/unexcused absences will result on automatic failure from the course.
- Final Exam
- Papers (needs to be written by Mariya)

Grade Composition:

8% Attendance

30% Participation: short response papers, quality of submitted discussion questions, quizzes, active participation in the class

12% Presentation: 1-page response paper, oral presentation and discussion leading

15% Final exam

25% Final Paper (up to Mariya)

15% Paper (up to Mariya)

The grade scale for the course is:

100-93: A	76-73: C
92-90: -A	72-70: -C
89-87: +B	69-67: +D
86-83: B	66-63: D
80-82: -B	62-56: -D
79-77: +C	<55

Topics and Readings:(Note! This syllabus is subject to change. You are responsible for any changes announced during the lectures/seminars despite your absences)

Week 1.Course Introduction. The Enlightenment and Human Knowledge

Week 2.3.4 Theme: Modernity

Marshall Berman. “Faust, the first developer”; pp. 73-85 (Book: Post-development Reader, copies will be distributed in class)

Marshall Berman. “Introduction: Modernity-Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow”; pp. 15-37

Marshall Berman. “All That is Solid Melts into the Air: Marx, Modernism and Modernization”; pp.87-120

Kate Crehan. Gramsci.Culture and Anthropology; (pages will be indicated)

Zigmunt Bauman. “Liquid Modern Life and its Fears”; pp. 5-27 (Book: Liquid Times in an Age of Uncertainty)

PoulPoder. Bauman on Freedom: Consumer Freedom as the Integration Mechanism of Liquid Society; pp.75-97

TeodorShanin “ The Idea of Progress”; pp. 65-73

Mark Davis: Bauman on Globalization-The Human Consequences of Liquid World pp. 115-137

Manni Crone. Bauman on Ethics-Intimate Ethics for a Global World?pp41-59

Week 5.6.7.8 Hierarchy of Knowledge

Ernst Cassirer. Introduction: Problem of Knowledge; pp. 1-19 (Book: The Problem of Knowledge: Philosophy, Science and History since Hegel)

Ernst Cassier.Darwinism as a Dogma and as a Principle of Knowledge pp.151-160

Vandana Shiva. Western Science and Its Destruction of Local Knowledge; pp. 152-161

Jeseoph Ki-Zebro, MajidRahnema. Education as an Instrument of Cultural Defoliation: A Multi-Voice Report; pp. 143-152

Ignacio Ramonet. The One and Only Way of Thinking; pp. 168-179

Eduardo Galeano. To Be Like Them; pp.207-214 (Book: Post-Development Reader)

Michel Foucault. Structuralism, Knowledge/Power, Panoptic; (Pages will be indicated soon)

Michel Foucault. Madness and Civilization. (Pages will be indicated soon)

Week 9.10.11.12

Bourdieu.Field/Habitus, and Capital/s, Society and Subjective Reality, Structure and Agency; (pages will be indicated soon)

Latour.We Have Never Been Modern; (pages will be indicated)

Derrida.On Deconstruction.<http://youtu.be/7s8SSilNSXw> (part 1/2/3/4)

Zizek.On Ideology. (videos will be shown)

Week 13.14.15

Depending on how we move with main readings the course will/might integrate the following authors (it is good to know about them):

Tolkott Parsons, Robert Merton, Berger, Peter and Thomas Luckmann; Schutz, Alfred "On Phenomenology of Social Relations"; Cassirer, Ernst. "En Essay on Man; Crisis of Man's Knowledge of Himself"; Benedict Andersen

Movies to Watch:

Home

They Live

Matrix

Gandhi

Up to the Air

