

University of Georgia  
Fall Semester 2007  
**Sociology 6220: Development of Sociological Theory**  
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Office hours:  
(stop by whenever I'm in Baldwin 115  
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It's interesting, if you think about it, that there exists a domain of knowledge referred to as "sociological theory." Most academic sociology programs—including this one—have required classes devoted to it, the American Sociological Association has a section and an entire journal devoted to it. Isn't all sociological writing guided by theory either implicitly or explicitly? Doesn't all social theory make ample use of empirical examples? So what is the difference? Indeed, there is little. Many of the classic works in social theory we are going to study were considered empirical treatments in their day. Certain works are selected out as works of "sociological theory" because they have become foundational treatments defining the most basic sociological questions and perspectives still used today. In this class we will be focusing on the very first stages of the development of sociological theory. The hope is that this will give you knowledge of the derivation and history of the concepts, discourses, and dilemmas still current in social scientific debate. Such knowledge will facilitate your ability to analyze social problems and assimilate sociological research.

One of the reasons a classic is a classic is that it continues to engage the attention of readers through different periods and contexts. The classic text is, in other words, multivalent, having various possible meanings depending on how it engages with the reader. As such, there is no objective "development of sociological theory," there are only different perspectives on this development. These different perspectives may be contradictory, but more often they are complimentary or simply distinct. My version traces this history based on national traditions. That is the way I learned it, and it seems to me like a useful conceptualization with which to keep it all straight.

This class is one of the two theory classes that sociology graduate students can take to fulfill their theory requirement. It is designed to expose graduate students to some of the main debates and perspectives in the history of sociology. This course is something between a survey and a seminar. We will be surveying the six national traditions in sociological theory and the structural functional synthesis. But we will really only be getting our feet wet in each of these traditions. The goal is not for you to memorize the details of these traditions, but rather to butt up against central sociological dilemmas and questions time and again from different perspectives.

I will rarely engage in anything similar to a lecture. The substance of most classes will be discussion led by me but carried by you, the students. Without student participation in discussion, individual classes will be nasty, brutish and short. My emphasis on discussion might be disappointing for those who hope to be told what to think. But it is not our goal in this class to construct a mental catalogue of ideas which can then be used to deduce reality. Rather, it is our goal to develop dispositions, habits and abilities in analyzing social issues. Put differently, when you think about Sociology 6220, think not of filling your basket with berries to be consumed at a later date. Think rather in terms of basketball practice. In our discussions we will, in effect, be running drills, repeating plays, and playing endless games of pick-up in order to learn by doing. The goal will be for you to develop your "sociological imagination"--your ability to construct concepts that render social phenomena intelligible--to the point that it feels like a second nature.

### *Evaluation*

Your grade for this class will be primarily based on three five to seven page papers. We have six thematic divisions in this class corresponding to six national traditions in sociology. You must submit a paper comparing the British & German tradition (due the day of class 13), one comparing the French and American tradition (due the day of class 21), and one comparing the Marxian and Italian tradition (due exam day). For each paper you can compare any two theorists from the two traditions, or the tradition in general on the theoretical or empirical issue of your choice. Each paper will count for 30% of your grade. Class participation will account for the other 10%.

If you do the readings *before* class (not after) and participate actively in class, you should have no problem writing the papers. The best modus operandi for you would be to read Levine first for each section (he was my teacher and the way I think about these issues and constructed this class all come from that book), and then do the individual readings shortly before class. These readings will give you a conceptual apparatus to hang the individual readings on and will put you in good shape to write the papers intelligently and efficiently.

### *On Electronic Submission*

All papers should be submitted by midnight of the due date to [dsmilde@uga.edu](mailto:dsmilde@uga.edu). This will reduce mad dashes to campus, misplaced papers, and printer mishaps, not to mention saving the lives of innocent trees. However, new privileges always entail new responsibilities.

#### Please do:

- send me exactly one message with exactly one .doc or .rtf file.
- use the following format to name the file: 6220 lastname paper1.doc

#### Please do not:

- send me the paper, bibliography and title page as separate files; send it as one file.
- send me your paper several times with minor changes; be absolutely sure what you send me is the final copy.
- send me messages asking me if I got your paper; I will send an acknowledgement when I successfully open it. I will contact you if I do not get a paper from you.

### *On Class Participation*

Given our goal of developing enduring dispositions and habits of analysis through discussion, I will be grading your participation. There is a challenge here for everyone. Some people have a tendency to talk a lot. Many others have a tendency to listen but not speak. Avoid the extremes of talking so much you diminish broad participation or of talking so little that you become a passive bystander. Do what you can to contribute to the collective achievement of a brisk and stimulating discussion that includes everyone. Encourage or provoke others. Take positions you might not even believe in just for the sake of argument. Remember that we are enjoying the privilege of being in a face-to-face university classroom and therefore bear the historical burden of promoting dynamic and open-ended discussion.

The final grading scale will be the following

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D	60-69
F	0-59

### *Required Texts*

In the bookstore you will find one text you must purchase:

\*Donald Levine. 1995. *Visions of the Sociological Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

All other readings are in the packet that is available at Bel-Jean.

## Class Schedule

1. Introduction: Why study the history of sociological theory? (Levine, *Visions of the Sociological Tradition*. Ch.5)

### **THE SOCIOLOGICAL TRADITION**

#### **British Tradition:** (Levine. *Visions of the Sociological Tradition*. ch.7)

2. Thomas Hobbes, *Man and Citizen*  
Of Man, chs.11-12, Citizen, prefaces, ch.s 1-3  
pp.45-62, 89-152
3. Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*  
pp.1-48
4. Jeremy Bentham *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*.  
Pp.1-7 and J.S. Mill *On Liberty* ch.1 pp.475-489

#### **German Tradition** (Levine ch.9)

5. Immanuel Kant on conceptual categories, Kolenda pp.128-40; Immanuel Kant on ethics, Kolenda pp.159-69
6. Wilhelm von Herder, J.G. *Reflections on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*. pp. 3-13, 33-78
7. G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*.  
pp.124-151
8. Georg Simmel *On Individuality and Social Forms* ch.s 2-4
9. Georg Simmel *On Individuality and Social Forms* 6, & 20
10. Max Weber *Selections in Translation* ch.s 4 & 1
11. Max Weber *Selections in Translation* ch. 7; and "Conclusions: Confucianism and Puritanism".
12. Max Weber "Religious Rejections of the World and their Directions."

#### **French Tradition** (Levine ch.8)

13. Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte* pp.25-50 (skip 451-485.)

14. Emile Durkheim *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* pp.1-18
15. Emile Durkheim *EF* pp.207-241, (skip 313-321)
16. Emile Durkheim *EF* pp.418-448

#### **American Tradition** (Levine ch.12)

17. Charles S. Peirce *Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition Vol.3.* pp.242-276
18. George H. Mead *On Social Psychology* Part I, pp.3-42
19. George H. Mead *On Social Psychology* pp.199-246
20. John Dewey TBA

#### **Marxian Tradition** (Levine ch.10)

21. Karl Marx *The Marx-Engels Reader* pp.12-52
22. Karl Marx *The Marx-Engels Reader* pp.147-200.
23. Karl Marx *The Marx-Engels Reader* pp. 204-219, 443-465
24. Karl Marx *The Marx-Engels Reader* pp. 439-441, 718-727

#### **Italian Tradition** (Levine ch.11)

25. Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class*. Ch.II, Ch.XI (pp271-93).
26. Robert Michels, *Political Parties*. Pp. 21-40, 49-59, 80-90, 277-92.
27. Antonio Gramsci *Selections from Cultural Writings*, pp.342-385.