

University of Georgia
Fall Semester 2009
Sociology 3220: Development of Sociological Theory
Wednesday 5:45-8:45
Baldwin 322

Dr. David Smilde, 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 have required classes devoted to it, the American Sociological Association even has a section 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 difference. 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. 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.

A classic is a classic because 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. This semester we will be looking at this history under the guise of "four traditions," as described by Randall Collins. We will also read excerpts from original texts, collected by Collins. I feel it necessary to include original texts in this class because only in this way will you be able to fully take advantage of their multivocality. Furthermore, as future professionals in an increasingly globalized and diverse world, the ability to interpret forms of communication that arise from social, cultural and temporal contexts other than your own is essential. Learning how to figure out where an author is coming from by looking at his (unfortunately we will cover no female authors) context and how to see through odd forms of expression are key abilities you should hone in this class.

Evaluation

This class is part of the Franklin College's Writing Intensive Program. This means we get to have a TA and a smaller class size so that we can focus on writing. Note that it is writing *intensive*, not *extensive*. It is not that you will be doing a lot of writing but rather we will be focusing closely on the writing process as part of learning about sociological theory. You will be keeping journals, writing drafts of papers and commenting on each other's drafts. And there will be three days taught by the TA that will be dedicated to elements of the writing process.

Double-entry journals

Twenty percent of your grade will derive from the double-entry journals you will be keeping on the twenty reading assignments. For each Wednesday you will need to write a journal entry for each half-class in which we discuss readings. Each of these journal entries will have the following characteristic: you will transcribe four sentences or more from the text and then write 200 words or more reflecting on that passage. You will write and submit these by e-mail starting Wednesday, August 26. Simply compose an e-mail message to the following address: soci3220@gmail.com. Whether you need to write two journal entries (most days) or one (9/23, 10/28, 11/18), only send one message per Wednesday class. Write your two journal entries in the message (not as an attachment) clearly demarked one from the other, and send it off *before* class starts. If your e-mail has been sent correctly, you will immediately receive an acknowledgement of receipt. **Note that gmail will only send this message once every four days. So if, for some reason you send more than one message within four days you will only get one acknowledgement.**

This is "low stakes" writing. This means that if you simply do the assignment and have obviously made an effort you will get a four. If you simply do not do it you will get a 0. Grades such as 1, 2, 3 will represent intermediates between these poles. You will write these and send them as e-mail. Mary Bond will randomly pick four Wednesdays this semester to grade these journals (we use a random numbers table to choose the days so don't bother trying to calculate it. When she does she will return your message to you with the grade. At the end of the semester we will take the top five grades of the six or eight journals corrected.

All readings and journal entries must be completed *before* the class date they are listed on the syllabus. In this way you will be prepared to participate in class discussion. Journal entries that are chosen for grading will be graded on the same day they are due. If the time on your e-mail message is later than the start time of your class (5:45pm) on the day they are due, you will receive a zero for it.

Five-page papers

You will produce two five-page papers during the semester **each worth forty percent** of your grade. We have four thematic divisions in this class. You will have to produce a five page paper on the first two (utilitarian tradition and conflict tradition) as well as on the second two (durkheimian tradition and micro-interactionist tradition). For each paper you will use the two traditions to understand any current social or political issue (for example, the utilitarian tradition vs. the conflict tradition on violence). This class will focus on not only on writing but on the art of giving and receiving feedback on writing. For each paper, we will dedicate three half-classes to this process.

1. We will have a "paper topic discussion session" in which we will get around in a circle. Students will describe the topic they are considering writing about and the two faculty members will provide suggestions and orientation.
2. The day the first drafts are due you will bring to class three hard copies of your papers. In the first half Dr. Smilde will grade three or so of them. In the second half you will each be responsible for reading and commenting two of your peer's papers in small groups. Then you will take these papers home to write-up your comments. The following week you need to bring two copies of each of these comments: one for the author, one for Dr. Smilde.

Please note that the first draft will be worth ten percent of your final grade. It is not optional. If you do not hand it in on time, you will get a zero for that ten percent. If you hand in a page full of preliminary reflections you will get a bad grade that cannot be revised. Mary Bond will get your first draft back to you in one week, and you will submit your final draft (worth twenty percent) one week later to soci3220@gmail.com. The same pattern will be followed for the final papers (see session calendar below). Please send your final draft of each paper as a .doc, .rtf or .odt file; not as a Mac or MS Works file. If you have a PC that did not come with MS Word, you can download OpenOffice which is a free and legal copy of MS Office 2003 created by Sun Microsystems which works very well. Go to: <http://www.openoffice.org/>.

Active participation in class will put you in good shape to write the papers efficiently and intelligently. If you attend and participate in the feedback sessions and write a serious first draft, you should have no problem getting a good grade on these papers, and a scholarship-renewing or athletic-eligibility-maintaining grade in this class.

Double-entry journals	20%
-20 journal entries	
-7 randomly graded, 4pt scale	
-5 keepers x 4pts = 20	
Midterm paper	40%
-first draft = 10 pts	
-peer grading 5 x 2 = 10pts	
-final draft = 20 pts	
Final paper	40%
-first draft = 10 pts	
-peer grading 5 x 2 = 10pts	
-final draft = 20 pts	

Policies

Laptops

You are not allowed to use your laptop during class. I fully realize that many students now take their notes in class on their laptop. However, beyond the temptation of checking your e-mail, chatting or researching hotel packages for the GA-FL game during class, the use of laptops breaks the flow of the university class room. Too often I have had excellent students that do not participate because they have their noses in their laptops trying to transcribe every word of our discussion.

The goal of an upper-level class like this is not to take copious notes but rather to think, discuss and use the ideas we are working with. If you keep a register of your classes in word processing files, you can take this opportunity to develop your skills in jotting down notes and keywords that can be elaborated later at your computer. In any case, this class has no midterm or final exam in which you will have to reproduce facts and details from class. Rather, you should spend your time working with the ideas in class to get a feel for them to the point that you can work with them in your papers.

Class participation

The immense logistic difficulty and expense of getting thirty-odd adults in the same place at the same time can only be justified by us interacting over the topic of this class. Thus this class will be a mixture of lecture and discussion. Participating actively in class will be the best way for you to get a handle on the concepts and to stimulate participation; I will provide the following incentive structure.

Enthusiastic participation	+ 2pts
Strong participation	+ 1pts
Average participation	no points
Irregular or substandard participation	- 1pt
Negative or uncooperative participation	- 2pts

“Enthusiastic participation” means you actively contribute to the collective realization of this thing called SOCI 3220. Negative or uncooperative participation means you arrive late, leave early, say inappropriate things, treat others disrespectfully, or are lost when I call on you.

I will frequently use my name cards to call on people when I ask a question. I will keep track of whether it seems you are thinking about the issues, are lost, not present, etc. The idea of class participation is for us to learn to work with ideas verbally. This is a university which means discussion is open. All political perspectives and cultural beliefs are legitimate objects of discussion, even if they are yours. One object of this class is to make clear that beyond the world of cable TV news, the issues confronting contemporary society cannot be broken down into conservative vs. liberal, red state vs. blue state. In this class there are no “politically correct” positions, and you do not even have to believe the position you are promoting or defending. In fact I recommend you try on an unpopular idea and take it for a spin. Both policies of calling on people and open discussion can sometimes cause uncomfortable moments. But that is what universities are about: freely working with ideas so that you’re ready when you’re in the “real world.”

Listserv

This class has a listserv: SOCI3220-L@listserv.uga.edu that Mary and I will frequently use for announcements. You can also use it for any pressing concerns, problems, issues or discussion. In fact useful discussion on the listserv is something I will consider when assigning participation points.

Attendance

Class will begin promptly at 5:45 pm and end at 8:30 pm. Please do not arrive late. Attendance will be taken by sign-up sheet at some point during the class (usually the beginning). Good attendance will be encouraged through the following incentive structure.

- 0-1 classes missed = 2 points added to final grade
- 2-3 classes missed = 1 points added to final grade
- 5-6 classes missed = 1 point subtracted
- 7-8 classes missed = 2 points subtracted
- > 8 classes missed = automatic withdrawal

I assume that when adults miss commitments—such as a class they are signed up for—it is for good reasons. I do not distinguish between “good” reasons, for example a job interviews, and “bad” reasons, for example an argument with your significant other. I have neither any interest nor the available time to make judgments regarding how you use your time. This position has several consequences

1. I give every student four freebies. You can miss four half-classes before you get any penalty.
2. There are no excused absences beyond these four freebies.
3. You do not need to bring me a medical or any other excuse (except in the rare case that it accounts for five or more absences in which case we would need to talk about your dropping)
4. You do not need to send me an e-mail or call me to explain why you missed or will miss class.

It is your responsibility to see to it that you have signed the sign-up sheet. Anyone signing for someone else is guilty of academic dishonesty, and will be dealt with through the Office of the Vice President for Instruction.

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

Please note that since bonus points are so easy to earn, I will not round up fractional points; that means, for example, that if a student has a final point score of 86.99, the student will receive a final grade of a B.

Required Texts

In the bookstore you will find two texts you must purchase:

Randall Collins. 1994. *Four Sociological Traditions*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Randall Collins (ed.). 1994. *Four Sociological Traditions: Selected Readings*. New York: Oxford University Press.

About the Instructors:

David Smilde is Associate Professor of Sociology at UGA. He received his Ph.D in sociology from the University of Chicago in December 2000. Besides UGA, he has taught at the Universidad Católica Andres Bello, the Universidad Central de Venezuela, University of Chicago, and Notre Dame University. His current research is on religion and political conflict during the presidency of Hugo Chavez. Dr. Smilde forthcoming book is *Participation, Politics and Culture in Venezuela's Bolivarian Democracy*, Duke University Press.

Mary Bond Edmond is a graduate student in UGA's Sociology Department. Her MA thesis focused on how the relationship between individual romantic capital and African American men's dating status and quality is moderated by sex ratio. Her current research interests focus on how sex ratio compositions interact with individual level characteristics to influence the interpersonal lives of African American men and women. Her area of concentration is criminology, and she will be expanding her research to encompass interpersonal acts of crime.

Class Schedule

I. Introduction

Wednesday 8/18.

1. First day shop keeping: roll, syllabus, expectations. "The Rise of the Social Sciences" *Four Sociological Traditions* pp.3-46.

II. The Rational / Utilitarian Tradition

2. "The Rational / Utilitarian Tradition" *Four Sociological Traditions* pp.121-153
Tuesday 8/26

Wednesday 8/26

1. George Homans "Social Exchange among Equals and Unequals" pp.135-144; and Mancur Olson "Public Goods and the Free Rider Problem" pp.162-170 *FST: Selected Readings*

2. "The Rational / Utilitarian Tradition" *Four Sociological Traditions* pp.153-180.
Tuesday 9/2

Wednesday 9/2

1. James March and Herbert Simon "Bounded Rationality and Satisficing" and Thomas Schelling "Tacit Coordination" *FST: Selected Readings* pp.145-161.
2. James Coleman "The Realization of Effective Norms" *FST: Selected Readings* pp.171-189.

III. Conflict Tradition

Wednesday 9/9

1. "The Conflict Tradition" *Four Sociological Traditions* pp.47-81.
2. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels "History as Class Struggle," and "Materialism and the Theory of Ideology," *FST: Selected Readings* pp.4-17.

Wednesday 9/16

1. Karl Marx "The Class Basis of Politics and Revolution" *FST: Selected Readings* pp.17-35.
2. "The Conflict Tradition" *Four Sociological Traditions* pp.81-118.
Thursday 9/25

Wednesday 9/23

1. Max Weber "Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism" *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* [packet].
2. Paper topic discussion Session.

IV. Midterm Papers

Wednesday 9/30

1. Writing Instruction I: How to Research your Topic
2. Writing Instruction II: Sources, Citation and Academic Honesty

Wednesday 10/7

[3 hard copies of first draft must be brought to class]

1. Draft grading session
2. Draft discussion session.

V. Durkheimian Tradition

Wednesday 10/14

[get drafts back]

1. "The Durkheimian Tradition" *Four Sociological Traditions* pp.181-224
2. Emile Durkheim "The Progressive Preponderance of Organic Solidarity" [Packet].

Wednesday 10/21

[Submit final version of paper to soci3220@gmail.com by 5pm.

1. Emile Durkheim "Social Rituals and Sacred Objects" *FST: Selected Readings* pp.206-18.
2. "The Durkheimian Tradition" *Four Sociological Traditions* pp.224-241.
[After class: special withdrawal decision reading]

Wednesday 10/28

1. Erving Goffman "The Nature of Deference and Demeanor" *FST: Selected Readings* pp.244-261
2. Writing Instruction III: Reviewing, Commenting and Revising

VI. Microinteractionist Tradition

Wednesday 11/4

1. "The Microinteractionist Tradition" *Four Sociological Traditions* pp.242-260.
2. Charles Horton Cooley "Society Is in the Mind" *FST: Selected Readings* pp.283-289

Wednesday 11/11

1. George Herbert Mead "Thought as Internalized Conversation" *FST: Selected Readings* pp.290-303.
2. "The Microinteractionist Tradition" *Four Sociological Traditions* pp.260-290.

Wednesday 11/18

1. Herbert Blumer "Symbolic Interactionism" *FST: Selected Readings* pp.304-321.
2. Paper Topic Discussion

VII. Final Papers

Wednesday 12/3

[3 hard copies of first draft must be brought to class]

1. Draft grading session
2. Draft discussion session.

Wednesday 12/9

Drafts returned

Tuesday 12/15

Final drafts must be submitted to soci3220@gmail.com by 8am

Student responsibility agreement

I have closely read the syllabus and fully understand what is expected of me in Sociology 3220, Fall Semester, 2009, and agree to the terms

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

[You have until the second class 8/26 to hand this in, or you will be automatically withdrawn]