

SOC301: Theory and Society
Fall Semester 2006–Professor Mark Schneider
3:00–4:15pm MW, Parkinson 202

Course Description: This course introduces you to sociological theory and to theorizing. Theories provide us with explanations of how the social world works. In methods and statistics courses, you learn the skills you need to test whether these explanations are correct. In this course, I treat theorizing itself as a skill that can be broken down into steps that can be practiced. I draw illustrations of theorizing primarily from the sociological classics (Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Mead), though I stress and exemplify their connection with contemporary theories. The orientation of the course fits particularly well with SOC308 (Statistics), and I recommend you take both in the same semester, if you can. (Note: this course is no longer required of minors in Sociology. Instead, minors are simply asked to take 15 hours of sociology, including SOC108, *any three* 300 level courses, and another elective at any level. If you are a minor and want to take the course, that's fine. But it's completely voluntary.)

Course Objectives: Students who complete this course should be able to (a) explain how a sociological theory is constructed; (b) construct theories themselves; and (c) describe specific theories formulated by Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, among others *in complex detail*.

Course Requirements: two exams, each covering half of the course, that will test for objective (c) above, plus exercises that will test for objectives (a) and (b). The exams will be closed-book, in-class essay exams on two or three questions that I choose from a list of eight to ten I will provide you with well before the exam. The exams are not cumulative. The exercises, most requiring prior completion of exercises in *Hands-On Sociology*, will help you understand how theories are constructed. These graded exercises are to be kept in a portfolio. If students don't prepare for class by reading beforehand, I'll introduce pop quizzes.

Attendance policy: I won't take attendance, but since the material you must master is conceptually sophisticated, it is *strongly* that advised you attend religiously. Experience indicates that students who skip classes, and who don't apply themselves earnestly over the whole length of the semester, risk a poor grade...or failure. If pop quizzes prove necessary, missed quizzes will be held against you.

Grading: the first and second exams each count 32%. The remaining 36% of your grade will be determined by performance on the exercises. Your average on the exams must be passing for you to pass the course--you cannot be "saved" by a good grade on your exercises. If you score a "D" on the first exam and an "F" on the second, *you'll fail the course regardless of your grade on the exercises*. If pop quizzes prove necessary, I'll count them for 10% (6% from exams and 4% from exercises).

N.B.: Your exercises must be turned in at the *beginning* of the class in which they are due. Please bring *two copies* with you to class, so that you can follow discussion of the exercise after I've collected one of your copies. I will not accept **any** late exercises. If you are unable to attend class you should email me the exercise *before* the start of class. (This means that if you leave an exercise to be done the night before class, and then get sick, you're out of luck.)

Assigned texts: Mark Schneider, *The Theory Primer: A Sociological Guide* (Rowman & Littlefield 2006) and W. Feigelman and Y-J Young, *Hands-On Sociology* (Third Edition, Allyn & Bacon 2006). The latter book will be the basis for the majority of the exercises. It is great fun to work with, and will allow you to

actually do some theorizing and theory evaluation. Furthermore, you'll be able to use the data bases it introduces you to throughout your life. The necessary statistical software is stored on data-base sites, and so you'll be able to do sociology—and even show your parents that you know how to do it—as long as you have Internet access. You should work your way quickly through *HOS*. The exercises there will familiarize you with the software and with statistical analysis. But *these are not the exercises I will be assigning you*. Mine will be in addition to the ones in the book, which I expect you to complete on your own. More than half of my exercises will refer to the ones in *HOS* and depend upon your being very familiar with it. Additional or recommended readings will be available online, mostly from the website Dead Sociologists Society, which is worth exploring on your own (do so at <http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~lridener/DSS/DEADSOC.HTML>). Other readings require you to use the Library's JSTOR facility for electronic copies of journal articles. The reading load for the course is comparatively light, but you are expected to become *thoroughly familiar* with the text and to devote significant time to your exercises. A good place to test your familiarity with the concepts we'll be using is to look at the glossary provided in the text. I expect you to be thoroughly familiar with its contents by the end of the semester.

N.B.: While I understand that students are sometimes strapped for cash, you *must* purchase Hands-On Sociology, or find classmate to share with, immediately. *HOS* requires you to have access to a computer.

Course Website: This course will have a WebCT website. It will have links to some readings and I'll put some of the exercises on it. You need to log on and establish a WebCT account by the second week of class. To do so, go to <http://webct.lib.siu.edu> and follow the instructions. Note: When you sign up for your general WebCT account, you need to remember the ID and password you select for yourself. If you don't remember it, you can't get back into the facility and I can't help you with the problem (you'll have to contact JP Dunn, the WebCT administrator). But you only have to log in for SOC 301 once. Thenceforward, you'll have automatic access through your WebCT account.

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Course Schedule: The reading is to be done before the class for which it is assigned. (If I'm not satisfied that a sufficient percentage of the class is doing so, I'll introduce pop quizzes.) I'll begin each class period by asking if you have questions about the day's reading. I certainly hope you do, because the material is quite difficult! This will also be the time to clear up any confusion caused by the previous class. I expect you to be active participants in acquiring the skills this course is designed to convey.

Note: An asterisk* below designates recommended readings.

Aug. 21M: Orientation to theorizing as an intellectual skill.

Aug. 23W: Read: *The Theory Primer*, Preface & Chapter 1 (pp. xv-xviii; 1-8)
A DEFINITION OF THEORY
THEORY AND EXPLANATION

Aug. 28M: Read: *The Theory Primer*, Chapter 1 (pp. 8-20)
THEORIZING AS A PROCESS, Phases 1 & 2

- Aug. 30W: read: ***The Theory Primer***, Chapter 1 (pp. 20-40)
 THEORIZING AS A PROCESS, Phase 3
 THEORIES, CAUSAL NARRATIVES, AND DESCRIPTIVE NARRATIVES
 THEORIES AND PARADIGMS
 CONCLUDING REMARKS
- Sept. 4M: read: ***The Theory Primer***, Chapter 1 (pp. 20-40)
 THEORIES, CAUSAL NARRATIVES, AND DESCRIPTIVE NARRATIVES
 THEORIES AND PARADIGMS
 CONCLUDING REMARKS
 INTERLUDE (pp. 41-45.)
- Sept. 6W: read: ***The Theory Primer***, Chapter 6 (pp. 195-216)
 THE DIVISION OF LABOR
 DURKHEIM ON SUICIDE
 *Durkheim, Division of Labor
 At <http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~lridener/DSS/Durkheim/DIVLABOR.HTML>
- Sept. 11M: read: ***The Theory Primer***, Chapter 6 (pp. 216-229)
 EVALUATING DURKHEIM'S THEORY OF SUICIDE
 CONCLUDING REMARKS
 *Chris Girard, Age, gender and suicide: A cross-national analysis
American Sociological Review 58:4 August 1993
 At http://www.lib.siu.edu/cgi-bin/encore2/site_search enter JSTOR
- Sept. 13W: read: ***The Theory Primer***, Chapter 7 (pp. 231-248)
 THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF CRIME
 FUNCTIONALISM AS A PARADIGM
 *Durkheim, What is a Social Fact?
 At <http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~lridener/DSS/Durkheim/SOCFACT.HTML>
- Sept. 18M: read: ***The Theory Primer***, Chapter 7 (pp. 248-255)
 FUNCTIONAL EXPLANATIONS OF STRATIFICATION AND POVERTY
- Sept. 20W: read: ***The Theory Primer***, Chapter 7 (pp. 255-269)
 STRUCTURALISM: DURKHEIM ON THE ORIGINS OF RELIGION
 CONCLUDING REMARKS
- Sept. 25M: read: Microsociology: A Theory of Obedience
 Stanley Milgram, *Obedience* (video to watch in class)
- Sept. 27W: read: Discussion of the Milgram's theory
- Oct. 2M: Review for Exam
- Oct. 4W: First-half Exam

- Oct. 9M: : read: ***The Theory Primer***, Chapter 2 (pp. 46-60)
 CAPITALISM AS A PROBLEM
 *Marx, Preface and Estranged Labor from *Economic And Philosophic Mss.*
 At <http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~lridener/DSS/Marx/MARXMANU.HTML>
- Oct. 11W: read: ***The Theory Primer***, Chapter 2 (pp. 60-69)
 CREATING A THEORY TO EXPLAIN THE CHANGE
 *Marx, Bourgeois and Proletarian from *The Communist Manifesto*
 At <http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~lridener/DSS/Marx/COMMMAN.HTML>
- Oct. 16M: read: ***The Theory Primer***, Chapter 2 (pp. 69-86)
 EVALUATING MARX'S THEORY
 APPENDIX: THE DIALECTIC
- Oct. 18W: read: ***The Theory Primer***, Chapter 3 (pp. 87-101)
 THE PARADIGM OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM
 THE LEGACY OF MARX
 The Conflict Paradigm
 A Theory of Gender Relations
 *Marx, 1859 Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*
 At www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/preface.htm
- Oct 23M: read: ***The Theory Primer***, Chapter 3 (pp. 101-109)
 The Paradigm of Cultural Materialism
 Explaining Sacred Cows
 CONCLUDING REMARKS
 *Harris, "The Cultural Ecology of India's Sacred Cattle"
 (Current Anthropology, Vol. 33, No. 1 February 1966)
 At http://www.lib.siu.edu/cgi-bin/encore2/site_search Enter JSTOR
- Oct. 25W: read: ***The Theory Primer***, Chapter 4 (pp. 111-135)
 WEBER'S PROGRAM: THEORETICAL MODESTY AND ANALYTIC
 TYPOLOGIES
 WEBER'S PROTESTANT ETHIC ACCOUNT OF CAPITALISM
 *Weber, Spirit of Capitalism
 At <http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~lridener/DSS/Weber/PECAP.HTML>
- Oct. 30M: read: ***The Theory Primer***, Chapter 4 (135-146)
 EVALUATING THE PROTESTANT ETHIC THESIS
 WEBER AND HISTORICAL IDEALISM
 WEBER AND VERSTEHEN
- Nov. 1W: read: ***The Theory Primer***, Chapter 5 (pp. 147-164, 186-187)
 WHAT IS AN ANALYTIC TYPOLOGY?
 WHAT MAKES FOR A GOOD TYPOLOGY?
 WEBER'S TYPOLOGIES and APPENDIX A

- Nov. 8M: read: ***The Theory Primer***: Chapter 5 (164-174)
 CHARISMATIC AUTHORITY AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF CHARISMA
 BUREAUCRATIC AUTHORITY AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF
 BUREAUCRACY
 *Weber, Characteristics of Bureaucracy
 At <http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~lridener/DSS/Weber/WEBERW8.HTML>
- Nov. 10W: read: ***The Theory Primer***: Chapter 5 (174-186, 187-189)
 RATIONALIZATION AND HISTORICAL CHANGE
 STRATIFICATION AND CONFLICT
 APPENDIX B
 Bethany Bryson, Anything but heavy metal: symbolic exclusion and
 musical dislikes,” *American Sociological Review* 61 (1996) 884-899
 Required: access through JSTOR)
- Nov. 13M: read: ***The Theory Primer***, Chapter 8 (pp. 271-281)
 MEAD AND SOCIAL BEHAVIORISM
 *Mead, Mind as the product of social interaction
 At <http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~lridener/DSS/Mead/MINDSELF.HTML>
- Nov. 15W: read: ***The Theory Primer***, Chapter 8 (pp. 281-294)
 GOFFMAN AND SYMBOLIC INTERACTION
 *E. Goffman, “Embarrassment and Social Organization”
American Journal of Sociology 62:3 November 1956
 At http://www.lib.siu.edu/cgi-bin/encore2/site_search enter JSTOR
- Nov. 17-26: Thanksgiving break
- Nov. 27M: read: ***The Theory Primer***, Chapter 8 (pp. 294-299)
 THE AFFECT CONTROL SUBPARADIGM
- Nov. 29W: read: ***The Theory Primer***, Postscript (pp. 303-307)
 Course evaluation
- Dec. 4M: Review
- Dec. 6W: Second-half Exam.