

This syllabus is subject to change, but it's more or less set.

Contemporary Social Theory
Tuesday and Thursday: 2 pm – 3:15 pm
Bunche 1209B

Professor Guhin

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 1 pm to 2 pm.

Welcome and Overview

Hello students! This is going to be a great class. We'll be reading some of the most important theorists since, more or less, the second World War. It's going to be a lot of work, but by the time it's done, you should have a good sense of some important ongoing intellectual conversations. A few things are worth pointing out:

1. While this course emphasizes sociology, it is very much a course on social theory. It draws from philosophy, literary theory, the history of science, anthropology, and other disciplines. However, each of the thinkers we're reading is cited by and engaged by sociologists.
2. There is obviously a lot more that could have been in this course, which is true for any quarter-length course. Please do ask me about other readings if there's something you'd like to learn more about!
3. It's a lot of reading, but I cut a lot too. You'll have about 50 pages a session, which should be about two to at most three hours per class of outside work. If it's much more than that, please do let me know. I want to be fair in how much of your time my class demands.

Attendance and Absences

I'm not taking attendance at lecture. However, there will be a final exam that will draw from the reading and from lecture.

Teaching Assistants will take attendance at section. If you miss two sections, it's not a big deal, but after that it will affect your grade.

Contacting Me and Office Hours.

My office hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 1 pm to 2 pm, Haines 296. Come on by! I'm also available most days by appointment.

Papers and Final Exam

You will write two (short) papers comparing any two texts of your choice. You will also have a final exam.

Papers

The papers should be no shorter than four pages (Garamond, double space, 1 inch margins) and no longer than seven pages. They should compare two authors of your choice that we read in the course. The first paper must use authors from the first five weeks of the course and the second paper must use authors from the second five weeks of the course. You do not need to use any secondary sources. Paper should be e-mailed to teaching assistants before midnight on the day the

paper is due. Late papers will be deducted one letter grade each day. Your papers will be due, via e-mail to your teaching assistant, on Saturday February 11 at noon and Saturday March 11 at noon.

Papers will be graded as follows:

A+/- (100/95/91 percent): A coherent, well-organized argument with original insights into meaningful differences and similarities between the authors and texts. Expands significantly beyond lecture and session discussion. Superior use of primary sources to make arguments. No errors, minor or major. Excellent (though not necessarily perfect) style, grammar, and form.

B +/- (90/85/81): A good though imperfect argument with a capable description of similarities and differences between the authors and texts. Expands beyond lecture and section discussion. Good style, grammar, and form.

C +/- (80/75/71): A simple comparison that might not necessarily be an argument, but nonetheless adequately describes the similarities and differences between the texts. Expands at least slightly from discussion in lecture. Inconsistent use of primary sources to make arguments. No major errors though more minor. Adequate style, grammar, and form.

D +/- (70/65/61): An adequate description of similarities and differences that does not significantly advance beyond what was discussed in lecture. Inadequate use of primary source citations. Major errors. Poor style, grammar, and form.

F (60): An inadequate description with no argument. Very poor style, grammar, and form. No primary sources.

Incomplete: (0 percent): Not turned in or plagiarized.

Final

The final will be a combination of multiple choice and essays. If you do the reading and attend lecture, you should be fine. The final exam for this course will be Friday, March 24, 2017
11:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Grading

See the paper rubric above for how percentages turn into letter grades.

Paper 1: 30%

Paper 2: 30%

Final Exam: 30%

Section Attendance and Participation: 10%

Academic Honesty

If you're caught plagiarizing, you get an automatic 0 on the paper (which is a 0, making it pretty hard to pass my class). I'll also report you to the Dean.

Difficult Material

Some material in this class might be hard for some students. If you're worried that's the case, please contact me beforehand.

Week One: Introduction: What's Social in Social Theory?

Tuesday, January 10

Introduction

Thursday, January 12

Hannah Arendt: "The Public and The Private Realm" *The Human Condition*. pp. 22-78.

Honors Seminar

Hannah Arendt: "The *Vita Activa* and the Modern Age" *The Human Condition*. pp. 248-325.

Week Two: How Should We Think about Society?

Tuesday, January 17

Jurgen Habermas: "Preliminary Demarcation of a Type of Bourgeois Public Sphere" and "Social Structures of the Public Sphere" *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. pp. 1-56

Thursday, January 19

Philip Gorski: "Civil Religion in America"

Honors Seminar

Jurgen Habermas: Approaches to the Problem of Rationality" Sections 1-3. *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 1*. pp. 1-101.

Week Three: What Does It Mean to Call Something Wrong?

Tuesday, January 24

Mary Douglas: "Ritual Uncleaness" and "Secular Defilement" *Purity and Danger*. pp. 8-50.

Thursday, January 26

Michel Foucault: Parts One and Two, *The History of Sexuality*. pp. 1-50.

Honors Seminar

Finish *The History of Sexuality*.

Week Four: How Do We Relate to Each Other?

Tuesday, January 31

Erving Goffman: "Introduction" and "The Arts of Impression Management" *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. pp. 1-16; 208-255

Thursday, February 2

Art Garfinkel: "What is ethnomethodology?" and "Studies of the routine grounds of everyday activities" *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Pp. 1-75.

Honors Seminar

Chapter five of Garfinkel's *Studies in Ethnomethodology*: "Passing and the achievement of sex status in an intersexed person" pp. 116-185.

Week Five: How is Social Life Reproduced? (first paper due noon, Saturday Feb. 11)

Tuesday, February 7

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann: *The Social Construction of Reality*. pp. 53-104.

Thursday, February 9

Pierre Bourdieu: *The Logic of Practice*. pp. 52-97.

Honors Seminar

Pierre Bourdieu: "The Historicity of Reason" *Pascalian Meditations*. pp. 93-127.

Week Six: What Does Colonialism Do?

Tuesday, February 14

Frantz Fanon: "The Man of Color and the White Woman"; "The So-Called Dependency Complex of the Colonized" *Black Skin, White Masks*. pp. 45-88

Thursday, February 16

Gayatri Spivak: "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

Honors Seminar

Edward Said: *Orientalism*, pp. 1-29.

Week Seven: What Does Science Do?

Tuesday, February 21

Thomas Kuhn: "Introduction"; "The Nature and Necessity of Scientific Revolutions"; "Revolutions as Changes of World View" *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. pp. 1-10, 92-135.

Thursday, February 23

Sandra Harding: "What is Feminist Epistemology?"; "'Strong Objectivity' and Socially Situated Knowledge." *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?: Thinking from Women's Lives*. pp. 105-163.

Honors Seminar

Thomas Kuhn: "The Road Since Structure"; Sandra Harding: "Postcolonial and feminist philosophies of science and technology: convergences and dissonances"

Week Eight: How Does Racism Work?

Tuesday, February 28

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva: *Racism Without Racists*. "The Strange Enigma of Race in Contemporary America"; "The Central Frames of Color-Blind Racism" pp. 1-52.

Thursday, March 2

Patricia Hill Collins: *Black Feminist Thought*. "Distinguishing Features of Black Feminist Thought"; "The Sexual Politics of Black Womanhood" (pp. 24-48; 133-160)

Honors Seminar

Tukufu Zuberi: *Thicker Than Blood: How Racial Statistics Lie*. pp. 58-97.

Week Nine: How Does Gender Work?

Tuesday, March 7

Judith Butler: *Gender Trouble*. "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire." pp. 1-46.

Thursday, March 9

Michael Warner: "Public and Private"; "Something Queer about the Nation State" pp. 21-63; 209-223

Honors Seminar

Judith Butler. *The Psychic Life of Power*. pp. 1-30.

Week Ten: What Does Liberalism Do? (second paper due Saturday, March 11 at noon)

Tuesday, March 14

John Rawls: "Justice as Fairness" pp. 3-46.

Thursday, March 16

Carole Pateman: *The Sexual Contract*. "Contracting In"; "Patriarchal Confusions"; "What's Wrong with Prostitution?" pp. 1-38; 189-218.

Honors Seminar

Alasdair MacIntyre: *After Virtue*, pp. 1-50.