

Sociology 406-1

Classical Theory in Sociological Analysis

Instructor: Charles Camic
1808 Chicago Avenue, Room 103
c-camic@northwestern.edu

Office Hour: Friday 3:00 - 4:00
(or by appointment)

Course Description. Against the backdrop of Cartesian reservations about the possibility of a "science" of the social world, this course will examine four of the major justifications that have been offered historically for constructing such a science, as well as the conceptions of the nature of the social world that have accompanied such justifications. The justifications considered are those of Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, and Max Weber.

Requirements. All participants are expected to stay abreast of the assigned readings and to take active part, during class meetings, in the analysis and discussion of these readings. Participants are also required to write three preliminary commentaries and to take a final examination.

- *Preliminary Commentaries.* The first class period on Durkheim is scheduled for Thursday, September 29; the first period on Marx for Tuesday, October 18; and the first period on Weber for Tuesday, November 8. In advance of the class meeting on each of these dates, participants are expected to have completed the reading assignment associated with each thinker. In light of each reading assignment, participants are to submit, at the beginning of class on each of the three dates, a short (2-3 page, double-spaced) commentary that speaks to the following question: *To what extent and in what ways does Durkheim's [or Marx's, or Weber's] argument on behalf of social science differ from the kind of argument a sociologist writing in 2005 might make on behalf of social science?*
- *Final Exam.* The final will be a 48-hour take-home exam. The exam will be handed out at 3:30 on Tuesday, November 29 and due on Thursday, December 1 at 3:30. (There will be no regular class meeting on these two dates.) The final exam will be cumulative, covering the material for the entire quarter. The exam will present two questions and ask participants to write on both of them, with the limit for both answers *combined* not to exceed 15 (double-spaced) pages.

Grading: The three preliminary commentaries will constitute 15% of the course grade (5% per commentary), 25%, and the final exam 60%.

Readings: The majority of reading assignments will be found in one of the following five books.

Emile Durkheim. *The Rules of Sociological Method, and Selected Texts on Sociology and Its Method*. Edited by Steven Lukes. (Hereafter abbreviated: **SM**)

G.W.F. Hegel. *Hegel: Texts and Commentary*. Edited by Walter Kaufman. (**HTC**)

Karl Marx. *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*. Edited by David McLellan. Second edition. (**MSW**)

Max Weber. *Economy and Society*. (**ES**)

Max Weber. *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*. (**MSS**)

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| September 22 | Introduction |
| September 4 | The Cartesian Challenge <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assignment Selections from <i>Rules for the Direction of the Mind</i>; <i>Discourse on Method</i>; and <i>Principles of Philosophy</i>. (Handout.) |
| September 27 | Auguste Comte (1798-1857) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assignment Selections from <i>Cours de Philosophie Positive</i>. (Handout.) |
| September 29- October 4 | Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assignments<ul style="list-style-type: none">i) Selection from <i>Montesquieu and Rousseau</i>. (Handout.)ii) Selection from <i>The Division of Labor in Society</i>. (Handout.)iii) SM, pp. 31-150 |

October 6-13

The Idealist Challenge

- Assignment
HTC, pp. 6-110 (even numbered pages)

October `18-
November 3

Karl Marx (1818-1883)

- Assignment
MSW, pp. 46-120, 146-208, 212-233, 245-262, 380-480,
530-544, 563-64

November 8-22

Max Weber (1864-1920)

- Assignments
 - i) **MSS**, pp. 49-188
 - ii) **ES**, pp. 3-28