

CLASSICAL SOCIAL THEORY—FALL 2009

CRN: 12491 - SOC 371 - 002

12:00 pm - 12:50 pm MWF

Dane Smith Hall 229

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Instructor: Colin Olson

Office: Social Science Building 1094

Email: colino@unm.edu

Office Hours: W. 1:00-2:00 and by appointment

Class Website: vista.unm.edu

The web page for the course can be found at vista.unm.edu. I will try to post handouts, assignments, announcements, etc., on the web page. However, if something is announced or distributed in class but not on the web, you are still responsible for its content.

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this class we attempt to outline some of the major theoretical traditions in sociology: conflict, rational/utilitarian, Durkheimian, and microinteractionist traditions. We will be using Randall Collins's *Four Sociological Traditions* as a guide through this endeavor, although at times we will be pulling in models from other writers who have studied the classic thinkers in sociology.

It seems that authors writing about classical theory fall along two discursive models. The first model is storytelling, of which Collins is representative. In this model the authors take us on a journey through time and through theoretical development, noting personalities, biographies, parallel developments in other realms of society, and theoretical traditions. This "tour guide" approach can be very useful as it can make the material more pleasant to students new to the theories and theorists. Along with Collins's readability, this is the reason I chose his book. The second model, or approach, is more formal, using block models to highlight the core theoretical insights of a particular theory, theoretical tradition, or theorist. This model is more typical of Jonathan Turner and David Held. We will draw upon their models of the sociological theories that Collins discusses to help round out his discussion.

III. TEXTBOOK/MATERIALS

Collins, Randall. 1994. *Four Sociological Traditions*. Oxford University Press.

Collins, Randall. 1994. *Four Sociological Traditions: Selected Readings**. Oxford University Press.

****Course Readings are subject to change***

IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES

My goal in this class is to help you make sense of what you are reading. I don't approach the class with the expectation that we all must reach our own conclusions about what theorist X, Y, or Z was really talking about. Rather, I hope that we, as a class, can come to some collective understanding by first having me give you a "formal" presentation of the major tenets of the theoretical traditions, then by discussing in small groups as well as a class, the selected readings in the accompanying reader (*Four Sociological Traditions: Selected Readings*).

The goal of this class is to give students a more sophisticated understanding of social theory, its development, and what questions the various traditions seek to address.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS / ATTENDANCE

It is not required, but strongly recommended that you attend class. Your grade in this course will consist of your ability to critically read both texts.

Reading Presentation (10%): You will be required to present a detailed outline to me and presentation to the class for one reading. Your outline should fully capture the skeletal structure of the reading. Your presentation is not like the outline, in that it should pose interesting and thoughtful questions to engage students in discussing the reading. The outline will be turned in at the end of your presentation and will be typed. Your presentation will be graded based on your attention to the general point(s) of the reading.

Reading assignments (70%): You will be given assignments for most of the selected readings text (not the textbook) that will need to typed and turned in for the following class. These will consist of several questions pertaining to the readings material assigned for the following day. These assignments constitute 50% of your grade. Assignments will be announced in class, so be sure to attend.

Final Exam (20%): A test of your overall comprehension of the four traditions, cumulative and applied, and take-home.

VI. GRADING

All grades are final grades are final, unless a calculation error was made.

		Semester Grades	
Reading Presentation:	10%	A+ = 98-100	B - = 80-82
Reading Assignments:	70%	A = 93-97	C+ = 77-79
Final Exam:	20%	A - = 90-92	C = 73-76
Total:	100%	B+ = 87-89	C- = 70-72
		B = 83-86	D = 60-69

Policy on Academic Dishonesty from *The Pathfinder*:

The University reserves the right to take disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, against any student who is found guilty of academic dishonesty or who otherwise fails to meet the expected standards. Any student judged to have engaged in academic dishonesty in course

work may receive a reduced or failing grade for the work in question and/or for the course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, dishonesty in quizzes, tests, or assignments; claiming credit for work not done or done by others; or hindering the academic work of other students.

Student Support Services

Any student who, because of a disability, may require some special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary accommodations. It is the responsibility of the student to request accommodation for individual learning needs. For further information, contact the Accessibility Resource Center at 277-3506. Also, please inform me as soon possible of any needs.

VII. SCHEDULE OF READINGS ASSIGNMENTS -- to be assigned the first week of the semester

Readings	Student Presenter
1. Marx and Engels: <i>History of Class Struggle</i>	1.
2. Marx and Engels <i>Materialism and the Theory of Ideology</i>	2.
3. Marx: <i>The Class Basis of Politics and Revolution</i>	3.
4. Weber: <i>The Origin of Modern Capitalism</i>	4.
5. Dahrendorf: <i>Power Divisions as the Basis of Class Conflict</i>	5.
6. Lenski: <i>The Theory of Inequality</i>	6.
7. Homans: <i>Social Exchange among Equals & Unequals</i>	7.
8. March and Simon: <i>Bounded Rationality and Satisficing</i>	8.
9. Schelling: <i>Tacit Coordination</i>	9.
10. Olson: <i>Public Goods and the Free Rider Problem</i>	10.
11. Coleman: <i>The Realization of Effective Norms</i>	11.
12. Durkheim: <i>Precontractual Solidarity</i>	12.
13. Durkheim: <i>Social Rituals and Sacred Objects</i>	13.
14. Hubert and Mauss: <i>The Social Circulation of Sentiments, Magic, and Money</i>	14.
15. Levi-Strauss: <i>Kinship as Sexual Property Exchange</i>	15.
16. Goffman: <i>The Nature of Deference & Demeanor</i>	16.
17. Douglas: <i>Grid and Group</i>	17.
18. Cooley: <i>Society Is in the Mind</i>	18.
19. Mead: <i>Thought as Internalized Conversation</i>	19.
20. Blumer: <i>Symbolic Interaction</i>	20.
21. Mehan and Wood: <i>The Ethnomethodology of the Human Reality Constructor</i>	21.
22. Goffman: <i>Frame Analysis</i>	22.
23. Collins: <i>A Conflict Theory of Stratification</i>	23.

August 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
23	24 Course introduction	25	26 What is theory?	27	28 What is theory?	29
30	31 Textbook: Pp. 47-120					

September 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 1. Marx and Engels: <i>History of Class Struggle</i>	3	4 2. Marx and Engels <i>Materialism and the Theory of Ideology</i>	5
6	7 Labor Day--no classes	8	9 3. Marx: <i>The Class Basis of Politics and Revolution</i>	10	11 Marx models	12
13	14 Marx models	15	16 4. Weber: <i>The Origin of Modern Capitalism</i>	17	18 Weber cont.	19
20	21 Weber cont.	22	23 Video: "The Corporation"	24	25 Video: "The Corporation"	26
27	28 Video: "The Corporation"	29	30 Discussion of video and rationalization			

October 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 5. Dahrendorf: <i>Power Divisions as the Basis of Class Conflict</i>	3
4	5 Dahrendorf model	6	7 6. Lenski: <i>The Theory of Inequality</i>	8	9 Conclusion of Conflict Theory: Implications	10
11	12 Textbook: Pp. 121-180	13	14 7. Homans: <i>Social Exchange among Equals & Unequals</i>	15	16 Fall Break--no class	17
18	19 8. March and Simon: <i>Bounded Rationality and Satisficing.</i>	20	21 9. Schelling: <i>Tacit Coord.</i>	22	23 10. Olson: <i>Public Goods and the Free Rider Prob.</i>	24
25	26 11. Coleman: <i>The Realization of Effective Norm</i>	27	28 Conclusion of Utilitarian Tradition: Implications	29	30 Textbook: Pp. 181-241	31

November 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 12. Durkheim: <i>Precontractual Solidarity</i>	3	4 13. Durkheim: <i>Social Rituals and Sacred Objects</i>	5	6 Durk cont.	7
8	9 Durk cont.	10	11 Durkheim models	12	13 Durkheim models	14
15	16 Durkheim models	17	18 14 Hubert and Mauss: <i>The Social Circulation of ...</i>	19	20 15. Levi-Strauss: <i>Kinship as Sexual Property Exchange</i>	21
22	23 16. Goffman: <i>The Nature of Deference & Demeanor</i>	24	25 17. Douglas: <i>Grid and Group</i>	26	27 Thanksgiving--No class	28
29	30 Textbook: Pp. 242-290					

December 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 18. Cooley: <i>Society Is in the Mind</i> 19. Mead: <i>Thought as Internalized Conversation</i>	3	4 20. Blumer: <i>Symbolic Interaction</i>	5
6	7 21. Mehan and Wood: <i>The Ethnomethodology of the Human Reality Constructor</i>	8	9 22. Goffman: <i>Frame Analysis</i>	10	11 23. Collins: <i>A Conflict Theory of Stratification</i>	12
13	14 Take Home Final Exam due	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		