

**SOCIOLOGY 611
FALL 2012**

CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Instructor: Hiro Saito
Office: Saunders 206
Office hours: Tue 3-5pm
Email: hs9@hawaii.edu

Seminars: Thu 1:30-4:00pm
George 214

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Knowing a lot of good theories does not automatically make you good at constructing one by yourself; however, thorough knowledge of historical developments and conceptual mechanics of good theories is essential for becoming a good theorist. Such knowledge helps you not only avoid reinventing the wheel but also acquire good theoretical intuition—how to identify conceptual problems in the existing literature as well as construct new concepts and explore their implications.

Thus this first-year theory seminar has two objectives. The first is to help you understand historical developments of good theories between the nineteenth and the mid-twentieth centuries. The second—and this is the ultimate objective—is to train you as a theorist who can wield sociological concepts to construct cogent explanations of empirical phenomena that you are interested in.

CLASS FORMAT

At the beginning of each class, I give a short lecture (10-15 minutes) to provide you with historical and theoretical contexts of the assigned readings. In the remainder of the class, we discuss your questions and reactions to the readings (as well as mine).

GRADING

Analytic Papers (20% x 3)	60%
Final Paper	40%

** Submit all your papers electronically at Laulima by using the “Drop Box” feature. I will then comment on your papers at Laulima.

Analytic Paper (6 pages, doubled-spaced)

For each of the three sections of the course (“Classics,” “Interaction and Self,” and “System and Structure”), you will write an analytic paper. Pick (at least) one reading

from each theorist assigned in the section. Then write a critique on each of the three readings (i.e. three theorists) by including the following two elements:

- (1) *Problem*—You state what is problematic about the theorist’s argument; for example, a logical contradiction, conceptual inadequacy, or empirical implausibility can be defined as a problem. Articulate the problematic as precisely as possible by using direct quotes;
- (2) *Solution*—You propose and elaborate a solution to the stated problem. What would be the most effective way to solve the stated problem? How does your solution improve or extend the theorist’s argument? Be as specific as possible.

Final Paper (9 pages, doubled-spaced)

For your final paper, you will pick one empirical phenomenon that you are interested in researching while in graduate school. Then, pick one reading (that you did not use in your analytic paper) from each of the three sections and do the following:

- (1) *Question*—Based on the theorist’s argument, you formulate a research question about the phenomenon that you are interested in. Since we cover nine theorists, you will have nine different research questions in total;
- (2) *Rationale*—You elaborate how the research question you have formulated derives logically from the theorist’s argument. By using at least one direct quote, justify the connection between the research question and the theorist;
- (3) *Evidence*—You explain what kind of data you will need to answer the research question. Specify which method(s) you will choose to collect the data and justify your choice.

REQUIRED READINGS

All required readings are either uploaded on Laulima or electronically available from the UHM Library.

COURSE SCHEDULE

08/23: What Does It Mean To Construct a Theory?

Andrew Abbott. “Ideas and Puzzles.” Pp. 211-248 in *Methods of Discovery*

Charles Ragin. “The Process of Social Research: Ideas and Evidence.” Pp. 55-76 in *Constructing Social Research*

Classics

08/30: Karl Marx

Karl Marx. "The German Ideology" & "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844." Pp. 82-95 in *Classical Sociological Theory*; "Manifesto of the Communist Party" & "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louise Bonaparte." Pp. 473-500 & 594-617 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*

09/06: Karl Marx and Max Weber

Karl Marx. "Capital, Volume One." Pp. 302-361 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*

Max Weber. "Part I: The Problem." Pp. 35-92 in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

09/13: Max Weber

Max Weber. "Basic Sociological Terms." Pp. 3-62 in *Economy and Society*; "Class, Status, Party." Pp. 180-195 in *From Max Weber*; "Status Groups and Classes." Pp. 302-307 in *Economy and Society*; "Bureaucracy." Pp. 264-273.

09/20: Emile Durkheim

Emile Durkheim. "The Determination of Moral Facts." Pp. 35-62 in *Sociology and Philosophy*; "The Division of Labor in Society," "The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life," & "Suicide." Pp. 158-192 in *Classical Sociological Theory*;

09/27: Emile Durkheim + How to Construct a Cogent Argument

Emile Durkheim. "Civic Morals." Pp. 42-75 in *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals*

Wayne C. Booth, et al. "Making a Claim and Supporting It." Pp. 105-168 in *The Craft of Research* (electronically available from the UHM Library)

** The first analytic paper is due in class on 10/04 (Thu).

Interaction and Self

10/04: Georg Simmel

Georg Simmel. "Group Expansion and the Development of Individuality" & "Fashion." Pp. 251-293 & 294-323 in *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms*

10/11: George Herbert Mead

George Herbert Mead. "Mind" & "The Self." Pp. 61-90 & 135-164 in *Mind, Self, & Society*

10/18: Erving Goffman

Erving Goffman. "Teams," "The Arts of Impression Management," & "Conclusion." Pp. 77-105, 208-237, & 238-255 in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*

** The second analytic paper is due in class on 10/25 (Thu).

10/25: How to Theorize Mechanisms

Andrew Abbott. "What Do Cases Do?" Pp. 129-160 in *Time Matters*

Peter Hedstrom and Petri Ylikoski. "Causal Mechanisms in the Social Sciences." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36: 49-67.

System and Structure

11/01: Talcott Parsons

Talcott Parsons. "An Outline of the Social System" & "Culture and the Social System: Introduction." Pp. 30-60 & 963-993 in *Theories of Society*

11/08: Robert Merton

Robert Merton. "On Sociological Theories of the Middle Range" & "Patterns of Influence" Pp. 39-72 & 441-474 in *Social Theory and Social Structure*; "Social Structure and Anomie." *American Sociological Review* 3 (5): 672-682

11/15: Harold Garfinkel

Harold Garfinkel. "Studies of the Routine Grounds of Everyday Activities." Pp. 35-75 in *Studies in Ethnomethodology*; "Ethnomethodology's Program." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 59 (1): 5-21; "Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies." *American Journal of Sociology* 61 (5): 420-424

** The third analytic paper is due in class on 11/29 (Thu).

11/22: Thanksgiving

Reflection

11/29: Historicity of Sociological Theory

R. W. Connell. "Why Is Classical Theory Classical?" *The American Journal of Sociology*
102 (6): 1511-1557.

Andrew Abbott. "The Chaos of Disciplines." Pp. 3-33 in *Chaos of Disciplines*

12/06: Tutorials & Preparing for a Final Paper

Andrew Abbott. "Explanation." Pp. 3-40 in *Methods of Discovery*

** A final paper is due on 12/13 (Thu).