SURVEY OF SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Instructor: Hiro Saito
Lectures: Tues/Thurs 12:00-1:15am
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COURSE OBJECTIVES

If you are not planning to go to graduate school in sociology, why do you have to study sociological theory? (Is sociological theory relevant to your life?) This simple but profound question motivates objectives of the course.

The first course objective is to understand how sociology has evolved historically. Having a sense of how sociology has developed helps you contextualize what you learn in other sociology courses. To accomplish this objective, you are going to read classical and contemporary sociological theories to understand core questions and controversies that generations of sociologists have grappled with.

The second and more important objective is to master theoretical concepts in sociology as heuristics to understand and explain phenomena in your everyday life. You are going to read sociological theories not simply to understand the history of sociology but also to acquire an intuition of what good sociological theories look like, so that you can start constructing your own.

GRADING

Four Response Papers 4 x 25% = 100%

Over the course of the semester, you are going to write a short paper (4 pages, double-spaced) for each of four sections of the course: “Classics,” “Self & Society,” “Structure & Agency,” and “Critical Theory.” In your response paper, you will do the following: (1) summarize briefly the gist of arguments made by theorists in the section by focusing on how their arguments relate to each other (e.g. do they corroborate, complement, or contradict each other?); (2) assess strengths and weaknesses of their arguments in light of
specific and real examples from current events found in local, national, or world news; and (3) attach copies of newspaper/magazine articles that you used for your paper.

When you write a response paper, you must quote at least one specific passage from each theorist covered in the section. This is a crucial requirement. For the proper citation format, follow instructions regarding “references in the main text” at Quick Style Guide: http://www.asanet.org/page.ww?name=Quick+Style+Guide&section=Sociology+Depts

ACCOMMODATIONS

If you feel you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, please notify me privately or contact the KOKUA Program (808-956-7511) in room 013 of the Queen Lili‘uokalani Center for Student Services. I would be happy to work with you and the KOKUA Program to ensure reasonable accommodations in my course.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is representing the work of others as your own (including copying other students’ work or using Internet resources without proper citation). Those who plagiarize will receive an F, and any sanctions imposed by the university. For more details, review the UH-Manoa Student Conduct Code (1992).

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Turn off cell phones during class.

REQUIRED TEXT


Recommended Texts


COURSE SCHEDULE

Introduction

January 12: Introduction (no class reading)


Classics

January 19: Karl Marx. “The German Ideology” and “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844.” Pp. 82-95 in CST


**Response paper #1 is due in class on February 11 (Thursday)**

Self & Society


February 16: Preschool in Three Cultures: Japan, China and the United States (55 min)


March 4: The Slanted Screen (61 min)

**Response paper #2 is due in class on March 9 (Tuesday)**

Structure & Agency


March 30: Jay MacLeod. “Social Immobility in the Land of Opportunity” and “Social Reproduction in Theoretical Perspective.” Pp. 3-24 in Ain’t No Makin’ It (ANMI) [Laulima]

April 1: Jay MacLeod. “Leveled Aspirations.” Pp. 113-136 in ANMI [Laulima]

April 6 and 8: City of God (133 min) [Extra credit]

**Response paper #3 is due in class on April 13 (Tuesday)**

Critical Theory


April 20: Jurgen Habermas. “Civil Society and the Political Public Sphere.” Pp. 388-402 in Contemporary Sociological Theory [Laulima]


Wrap-up

May 4: TBA

**Response paper #4 is due 4PM on May 7 (Friday)**