

# UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Sociology 506  
Theories and Practices of Sociology II  
Mark Mizruchi  
Winter 2008

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This course is the second portion of the two-semester theory sequence required of all sociology department graduate students. The goals of this course are:

- (1) to examine, compare, and contrast the ways different classical and contemporary theorists approach several core problems in the discipline, including the nature of society, the individual-society relation, culture, and social structure;
- (2) to explore how theories are put into practice by examining how different theorists approach key substantive areas in sociology, including organizations, collective action, and various forms of inequality; and
- (3) to introduce students to classical and (in particular) contemporary works, theories, and traditions that were not covered in the first part of the course.

Whereas the focus of the first semester was on sociological traditions, the focus of the second semester is on the relation between theories and the practice of sociology. We shall devote two class sessions to each topic. The first session will consist primarily of lecture and commentary by the instructor. The second session will consist of a discussion led by students, probably in groups of two. Student participation will also be encouraged during the lecture sessions.

## Requirements

Requirements for this course include ten required reaction papers on the readings, a presentation along with leading a given week's discussion, and class participation. Each week students will prepare at least one question for discussion, based on the readings. These questions will be circulated to that week's discussion leaders, who will use the questions to help plan their discussion. There is no primary text for the class. The readings come from three sources: three books (listed below), available at the Shaman Drum Bookstore; a coursepack, available at Dollar Bill Copying, on Church, just below

South University; and the class Ctools site. All articles from scholarly journals are on the Ctools site. The Ctools site also includes a few brief selections from published books (all subject to the "fair use" rule). The remaining readings are either in the three ordered books or the coursepack. I have ordered the following books:

Durkheim, Emile, *Suicide*  
 Freud, Sigmund, *Civilization and Its Discontents*  
 Wilson, William Julius, *The Truly Disadvantaged*

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **January 3: Introduction to the course**

### **January 8, 10: How is society possible?**

Readings: Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, pp. 1-13; Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action*, Volume II, pp. v-xx, 697-726; Harold Garfinkel, "Studies of the Routine Grounds of Everyday Activities," pp. 35-75 in *Studies in Ethnomethodology*; Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, pp. 108-114; Durkheim, *Suicide*, pp. 152-276.

### **January 15, 17: Individual and society: Agency and structure, micro and macro**

Readings: Dennis H. Wrong, "The Oversocialized Conception of Man in Modern Sociology," *American Sociological Review* (hereafter *ASR*), 1961, 26:183-193; William H. Sewell, Jr., "A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation," *American Journal of Sociology* (hereafter *AJS*), 1992, 98:1-29; Pierre Bourdieu, "Structures, *Habitus*, Practices," in *The Logic of Practice*, pp. 52-65; Randall Collins, "On the Micro-foundations of Macro-sociology," *AJS*, 1981, 86:984-1014; Aaron V. Cicourel, "Notes on the Integration of Micro and Macro Levels of Analysis," pp. 51-80 in Karin Knorr-Cetina and Cicourel (eds.), *Toward an Integration of Micro and Macro Sociologies*; James S. Coleman, "Social Theory, Social Research, and a Theory of Action," *AJS*, 1986, 91:1309-1335; Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, pp. 64-112.

### **January 22, 24: Social interaction and language**

Readings: Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, pp. 1-20; Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, pp. 1-34, 234-255; Melvin Pollner, *Mundane Reason*, pp. ix-xvi; Emanuel Schegloff, "Notes on a Conversational Practice: Formulating Place," pp. 75-99 in David Sudnow (ed.), *Studies in Social*

*Interaction*; Elijah Anderson, *Streetwise*, pp. 163-189; William F. Whyte, *Street Corner Society*, pp. xv-xx; also review the Garfinkel reading from two weeks ago. Recommended: John C. Heritage, "Ethnomethodology," pp. 224-271 in Anthony Giddens and Jonathan H. Turner (eds.), *Social Theory Today*.

### **January 29, 31: Culture and cultural analysis**

Readings: Clifford Geertz, "Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example," pp. 142-169 in Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*; Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action," *ASR*, 1986, 51:273-286; Jeffrey C. Alexander and Philip Smith, "The Discourse of American Civil Society: A New Proposal for Cultural Studies," *Theory and Society*, 1993, 22:151-207; Michel Foucault, "Sexual Discourse and Power," pp. 199-204 in Jeffrey C. Alexander and Steven Seidman (eds.), *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*; Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, pp. 1-7; Michael Schudson, "How Culture Works," *Theory and Society*, 1989, 18:153-180.

### **February 5, 7: Social structure and structural sociology**

Readings: Georg Simmel, "The Expansion of the Dyad," pp. 135-144 in Kurt H. Wolff (ed.), *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*; Mark S. Mizruchi, "Social Network Analysis: Recent Contributions and Current Controversies," *Acta Sociologica*, 1994, 37:329-343; Mark Granovetter, "Threshold Models of Collective Behavior," *AJS*, 1978, 83:1420-1443; John F. Padgett and Christopher K. Ansell, "Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400-1434," *AJS*, 1993, 98:1259-1319; Steven Brint, "Hidden Meanings: Cultural Content and Context in Harrison White's Structural Sociology" and Harrison C. White, "Social Grammar for Culture: Reply to Steven Brint," *Sociological Theory*, 1992, 10:194-213.

### **February 12, 14: The sociology of organizations**

Readings: Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," *ASR*, 1983, 48:147-160; Melville Dalton, "Men Who Manage," pp. 315-344 in Mark Granovetter and Richard Swedberg (eds.), *The Sociology of Economic Life*; Neil Fligstein, "The Spread of the Multidivisional Form Among Large Firms, 1919-1979," *ASR*, 1985, 377-391; Mark S. Mizruchi and Lisa C. Fein, "The Social Construction of Organizational Knowledge: A Study of the Uses of Coercive, Mimetic, and Normative Isomorphism," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 1999, 44:653-683; Renee R. Anspach, "Everyday Methods for Assessing Organizational Effectiveness," *Social Problems*, 1991, 38:1-19. Recommended: Glenn R. Carroll, "Concentration and Specialization: Dynamics of Niche Width in Populations of Organizations," *AJS*, 1985, 90:1262-1283.

### **February 19, 21: Economic sociology and the sociology of markets**

Readings: Mark Granovetter, "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness, *AJS*, 1985, 91:481-510; Frank Dobbin, *Forging Industrial Policy*, pp. 1-27; Brian Uzzi, "The Sources and Consequences of Embeddedness for the Economic Performance of Organizations: The Network Effect," *ASR*, 1996, 61:674-698; Patrick McGuire, Mark Granovetter, and Michael Schwartz, "Thomas Edison and the Social Construction of the Early Electricity Industry in America," pp. 213-246 in Richard Swedberg (ed.), *Explorations in Economic Sociology*; Linda Brewster Stearns, "Economic Behavior in Institutional Environments: The Corporate Merger Wave of the 1980s," *ASR*, 1996, 61:699-718.

### **March 4, 6: Occupations and the professions**

Readings: Talcott Parsons, *The Social System*, pp. 428-479; Eliot Freidson, *Profession of Medicine*, pp. 71-84, 185-201; John B. McKinlay and John D. Stoekle, "Corporatization and the Social Transformation of Doctoring," pp. 175-186 in Peter Conrad and Rochelle Kern (eds.), *The Sociology of Health and Illness: Critical Perspectives*; Andrew Abbott, *The System of Professions*, pp. 86-124. Recommended: Bonalyn J. Nelsen and Stephen R. Barley, "For Love or Money? Commodification and the Construction of an Occupational Mandate," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 1997, 42:619-653.

### **March 11, 13: Social status and inequality**

Readings: Max Weber, "Class, Status, and Party," pp. 21-28 in Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds.), *Class, Status, and Power*; Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore, "Some Principles of Stratification," *ASR*, 1945, 10:242-249; Peter M. Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan, *The American Occupational Structure*, pp. 1-10, 163-177, 238-241; Mark Granovetter, *Getting A Job*, pp. 3-50; Paul DiMaggio, "Cultural Capital and School Success: The Impact of Status Culture Participation on the Grades of U.S. High School Students," *ASR*, 1982, 47:189-201; Ronald S. Burt, "The Gender of Social Capital," *Rationality and Society*, 1998, 10:5-46. Recommended: Paula England and Dana Dunn, "Evaluating Work and Comparable Worth," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 1988, pp. 227-248.

### **March 18, 20: Social class**

Readings: Erik Olin Wright and Luca Perrone, "Marxist Class Categories and Income Inequality," *ASR*, 1977, 42:32-55; Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts*, pp. 4-26; Frank Parkin, *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique*, pp. 3-28; Paul W. Kingston, *The Classless Society*, pp. 1-14, 101-119, 209-213; David B.

Grusky and Kim A. Weeden, "Decomposition Without Death: A Research Agenda for a New Class Analysis," *Acta Sociologica*, 2001, 44:203-218.  
 Recommended: Aage B. Sorensen, "Toward a Sounder Basis for Class Analysis," and Wright, "Class, Exploitation, and Economic Rents: Reflections on Sorensen's 'Sounder Basis'," *AJS*, 2000, 105:1523-1571.

### **March 25, 27: Race and ethnicity**

Readings: Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "Racial Formation in the United States," pp. 181-213 in Robert Bernasconi and Tommy L. Lott (eds.), *The Idea of Race*; Edna Bonacich, "A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market," *ASR*, 1972, 37:547-559; John L. Comaroff, "Of Totemism and Ethnicity: Consciousness, Practice, and the Signs of Inequality," *Ethnos*, 1987, 52:302-323; Frank Parkin, *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique*, pp. 29-73; William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, pp. vii-xi, 3-62, skim 63-106, 109-139; Douglas S. Massey, "American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass," *AJS*, 1990, 96:329-357.

### **April 1, 3: Gender and feminist theory**

Readings: Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, pp. 134-149; Candace West and Don Zimmerman, "Doing Gender," *Gender and Society*, 1987, 1:125-151; Nancy Chodorow, "Gender as a Personal and Cultural Construction," *Signs*, 1995, 20:516-544; J. Richard Udry, "Biological Limits of Gender Construction," *ASR*, 2000, 65:443-457; critiques of Udry by Miller and Costello, Kennelly, Merz, and Lorber, and Risman; response by Udry, *ASR*, 2001, 66:592-618; Claudia Goldin and Cecilia Rouse, "Orchestrating Impartiality: The Impact of 'Blind' Auditions on Female Musicians," *American Economic Review*, 2000, 90:715-741.

### **April 8, 10: Group solidarity and collective action**

Readings: Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*, pp. 1-16; John R. Bowman, "When Workers Organize Capitalists," *Politics and Society*, 1985, 14:289-327; Doug McAdam, "Recruitment to High-Risk Activism: The Case of Freedom Summer," *AJS*, 1986, 92:64-90; Mark S. Mizruchi, "Cohesion, Structural Equivalence, and Similarity of Behavior: An Approach to the Study of Corporate Political Power," *Sociological Theory*, 1990, 8:16-32.

### **April 15: What is social science?**

Readings: none