This course examines important sociological theories of the 20th century. There are three basic objectives for the class: to help you develop the capacity to read and “unpack” complex theoretical texts, to develop a vocabulary of key analytical concepts, and to develop the capacity to use these concepts to interpret a broad range of social and cultural phenomena from multiple perspectives.

Course Readings

The following books are required and can be purchased at the bookstore.

Lewis Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict* (Free Press, 1964)

A number of articles are on e-reserve and are indicated as such in the course schedule. These are available in the course folder, which every student registered in the course will have on her desktop.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Attendance and participation is required of all students and will factor into the grade. Students who miss four or more classes will be asked to withdraw receive no credit for the class, unless they have a written medical excuse. It is absolutely crucial that all readings be done by the date on which they are listed.

All students are required to do short 1-2 page weekly assignments, one per week (as a general rule). These will be distributed on the course conference. These will be used as the basis for class discussions and are to be turned in after class each week as evidence of attendance. These are not to be emailed to me and they will not be accepted late. If you don’t have them in class, they will not be accepted.
Each short assignment receive a grade between 0 and 3, with three being excellent.

There will be two six page essays on topics to be provided. The paper due dates are as follows:

Paper One: March 2 in class
Paper Two: April 23 in class

No late papers or examinations will be accepted, unless by previous arrangement. All students must turn in hard copies of papers: no papers may be submitted as email attachments unless asked for. All emailed papers and assignments will be deleted and considered as not turned in.

Students are responsible for all reading and lecture material on exams. Papers and exams will be graded rigorously according to the highest professional standards and according to the official grade scale as put forth in College Articles of Government (see: http://www.wellesley.edu/DeanCollege/bk2a7.html). Grammar and writing style are considered in the determination of grades on papers.

Grades will be determined as follows:
Short assignments/participation/attendance: 20 %
Paper I: 25%  
Paper II: 25%
Final Exam: 30%

Course Outline and Reading Assignments:

Note: our first class will be on Monday, February 1, and there will be no class on Thursday, January 28. Instead you should do short assignment #1, which can be found on the course conference and which I have sent to you via distribution list.

February 1: Introduction to the Course: What is Theory?

I: From Weberian theory to Neo-Weberian Theory

Read: Max Weber, “Excursus on Markets,” in Economy and Society ©
February 4- February 11: Exercises in Connecting the Classical and Contemporary Traditions of Sociological Theory II: From Durkheimian Theory to neo-Durkheimian Theory


No class February 15, President’s Day

February 16: The Social Construction of Reality, I


February 18-25: The Social Construction of Reality, II

Read: Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality, pp. 129-189

March 1: The Interaction Order: Dramaturgical Analysis I

Read: Erving Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, pp. 1-140

First Paper Due, March 4

March 4-8: The Interaction Order: Dramaturgical Analysis II

Read: Erving Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, pp. 167-256

March 11: Structural-Functionalist Theory I


March 15: Structural-Functionalist Theory II

March 18: Structural-Functionalist Theory III

Read: “Manifest and Latent Functions”, e-reserve

Spring Break March 20-28

Note: There will be no class on Monday, March 29, the day after Spring Break

April 1: Social Conflict, I


April 5: Social Conflict, II

Read: Lewis Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict, pp. 15-66

April 8: Social Conflict, III

Read: Lewis Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict, pp. 67-120

April 12: Social Conflict, IV

Read: Lewis Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict, pp. 121-158

April 15: Modernity Theories, I

Read: Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” e-reserve

Read: Georg Simmel, “Cynicism” and “The Blasé Attitude” in The Philosophy of Money, e-reserve

April 22 (Monday Schedule): Modernity Theories, I

Read: Zygmunt Bauman, Wasted Lives, in entirety

April 26: Modernity Theories, II

Baumann, continued.
April 29:  Cognitive Sociology, I

Read:  Eviatar Zerubavel, *Social Mindscapes*, Chapters 1-4, pp. 1-67

May 3:  Cognitive Sociology, II

Read:  Eviatar Zerubavel, *Social Mindscapes*, Chapters 5-8, pp. 68-114

May 6, Wrap-up, catch up.