

# Sociology 116 / Anthropology 115 // History of Sociological Thought

FALL 2016 // Mondays & Wednesdays 11:00AM-12:15PM // GSB 125 - Mills College

Professor Jasmine Hill // jahill@mills.edu

Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 1:00-2:30PM (Vera Long 113; drop in or by appointment)

## Course Description + Goals

Most of our ideas about why social phenomenon occur (i.e. hegemony, love, corruption, friendship, etc.) are rooted in theory, whether we know it consciously or not. Social theory most basically answers the questions “how?” and “why?” when it comes to human interaction.

We will study classical social theories that work to understand our most basic human phenomena. Students will learn to more comfortably read and interpret theoretical texts, familiarize themselves with core ideas in anthropology and sociology, and develop theoretical inquiries of their own.

As opposed to following a particular canon of authors, this course is framed broadly around understanding human behavior and the making of social order. We will not be able to read all significant anthropologists or sociologists – instead, our focus will leave many authors out in order to allow the examination of theoretical concepts in relation to contemporary issues.

*By the end of this course, we will:*

1. Understand and deconstruct the components of theoretical claims,
2. Build a vocabulary of key sociological concepts,
3. Interpret modern phenomenon using classical social theory,
4. And, strengthen critical thinking, interpretive reading, and oral presentation skills.

## Accommodations

5. This course is designed to be universally accessible. Students with needs for alternative materials or resources will be enthusiastically accommodated. Please contact [Services for Students with Disabilities](#). For parents, I welcome children to non-disruptively join class if childcare is unavailable. Finally, the cost of materials may inhibit participation for some. If this is the case, feel free to contact me; there is a limited supply of materials that can be loaned out if needed.

## Course Structure + Expectations

\*(Student expectations in blue.)

- **Attendance & Participation:** Students will attend each class, having read the assigned texts and prepared to discuss. Students will come to class with a question prepared from the reading and questions

will be encouraged by the professor/presenter. One absence is allowed for any reason (including illness, work, mental health day), after which 3% of the final grade will be deducted per absence. Entrance more than 15 minutes late is considered an absence.

- **Academic Integrity:** Students will adhere to Mills Honor Code guidelines on academic integrity. Any form of cheating or plagiarism will lead to an immediate failure.
- **Technology:** Laptops are allowed in class for note-taking purposes. I reserve the right to revoke these privileges at any time if abused. Please turn off cell phones during class.
- **Late policy:** All assignments will be turned in online, on time.
- **Feedback:** Students and the instructor approach the course with curiosity, space to learn, & a desire for feedback. One of the results of this orientation is that course content is subject to change. *Fair warning will be given for any changes made to course content.*
- **Email:** I will respond to emails within 24 hours or less. The day before deadlines or exams, I stop responding to emails at 8:00PM.
- **Respect:** Students will engage in challenging and well-intentioned discourse during class discussions. This includes using inclusive language and respecting the gender pronouns of others. *Students will make and take space in discussion to allow equitable participation. The professor will respect students equally, without favoritism to any particular student or group.*
- **Open Dialogue:** If a student experiences serious academic difficulty, unexpected personal circumstances, or ongoing challenges with the material, they will flag the instructor.
- **Well-being & Triggers:** Students will take necessary steps to attend to their personal well-being and mental health needs. This includes seeking out help when needed from myself or other resources.
- **Lecture Style:** *Professor will be open and gentle receiving student opinions, will address readings in class, and make every attempt to keep discussions on topic.*
- **Grading:** *Grades are entered within 2 weeks of the assignment being completed.*
- **Presentation Format:** *Professor and presenters will use visual learning formats and group work whenever, and as much as possible.*
- **Adherence:** Students understand and agree to these expectations as signaled by their enrollment in the course. *The instructor will conduct anonymous feedback sessions at points throughout the quarter to ensure student expectations are upheld.*

## Course Requirements

### Course Participation and Attendance

10%

Students will receive full credit by attending all classes, contributing to each class, actively participating in class activities, and turning all assignments in on time.

### Weekly Critical Posts – by Tuesday at 6:00PM on Blackboard

10%

In no more than 450 words (and no less than 200) post a text-based critique of one or more of the readings. This should not be a summary of the text, rather, an argument on shortcomings or inconsistencies of the chosen source. Posts should include quotes from the text and engage with the critiques of others. Posts are not due during weeks of quizzes, your presentation, or memo deadlines (9 total).

**Presentation****20%**

Each student will lead an in-class presentation. The goal of the presentation is to get your classmates thinking and talking about the reading. You should spend some time summarizing the texts and making connections to previous readings. Strong presentations will be interactive, include a connection to a contemporary issue, bring in outside sources, and/or mount a critique. Presentations should be 10-15 minutes long followed by a discussion you will lead.

**3 Reading Quizzes** (Sept. 28, Nov. 2, Dec. 5)**30%****2 Analytic Memos** (Oct. 12, Dec. 15 at midnight)**30%**

In ~1,500 words, analytic memos should apply 2-3 social theories to a contemporary issue of your choice. The memo should 1) display a clear understanding of the selected theories, 2) interpret the contemporary issue through the theories, 3) present evidence from the readings, and 3) offer your own analysis of the theory in application/suggest new insights on your topic. Strong papers will be well-organized, true to the text, insightful and argument driven. You may choose 2 brand new topics each paper, stick to one, and/or provide further analysis on a topic drawn from your presentation.

**“Serendipitous Sociology”****1 point** A

“bonus” point will be awarded for reporting any instance in which you stumble upon theory in action (up to three points available). Post your serendipitous discoveries to the designated thread in the discussion forum and be prepared to briefly discuss in class.

## Class Sessions + Reading Schedule

All readings from Hechter, M., & Horne, C. (2009). *Theories of social order* or Blackboard (\*).

### Week 1 // What is theory? What is social order?

- Hechter & Horne, Part I: "The Problem of Social Order" pp. 1-5
- Abend, Gabriel. 2008. "The Meaning of 'Theory.'" *Sociological Theory*. 26: 173- 199.\*
- H&H "What is TheoryT?" pp. 7-11
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. "Women and Economics."\*

### Week 2 // How does theory work? (M September 5: No class – Labor Day)

- H&H "Motives and Mechanisms" pp. 17-22
- Swedberg, Richard. 2014. *Coming Up with an Explanation*. Pp. 98-123.\*
- Thagard, Paul. "Why Astrology is a Pseudoscience..\*"

### Week 3 // The Self

- Emile Durkheim. "The Origin of Beliefs."
- Mead, George H. "The Self as Social Structure."\*
- Cohen & Vandello – "Meanings of Violence"

### Week 4 // The Self

- Hochschild, Arlie. - "Feeling Management"\*
- DuBois, W.E.B. – *Strivings of the Negro People*\*
- West & Zimmerman - "Doing Gender."\*

### Week 5 // Groups (W September 28: Reading Quiz)

- Durkheim, Emile. "Egoistic Suicide"
- Horne, Christine. "Group Cohesion and Metanorms"
- Freud, Sigmund. "Civilization and its Discontents"

### Week 6 // Groups (W October 5: No class - Conference Travel)

- Durkheim, Emile. "Anomic Suicide"
- De Tocqueville, Alexis. 1848. "Individualism and Free Institutions."
- Centola, Damon, Robb Willer, and Michael Macy. "The Emperor's Dilemma"

### Week 7 // Networks (W October 12: Memo #1 Due)

- Granovetter, Mark S. 1973. "The Strength of Weak Ties"
- Gellner, Ernest. 1987. "Trust, Cohesion, and the Social Order"
- Simmel, Georg. 1922. "The Web of Group-Affiliations"

### Week 8 // Networks

- Varshney, Ashutosh. "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society."
- Gluckman, Max. "The Peace in the Feud."
- Zimmer, Carl. "From Ants to People, and Instinct to Swarm"

### **Week 9 // Power**

- Bourdieu - "The Forms of Social Capital"\*
- Weber, Max – Class, Status, Party\*
- Weber, Max - The Types of Legitimate Domination"

### **Week 10 // Power (W November 2: [Reading Quiz](#))**

- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*. \*
- Ridgeway, C. "Status in the Norton Street Gang." Pp. 162-163\*
- Stoler, Ann Laura (1991). *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*\*

### **Week 11 // Domination & Inequality**

- Marx, Karl. "Alienated Labor"
- Marx, Karl. "Wage Labor and Capital"\*
- Hobbes, Thomas. "Leviathan"

### **Week 12 // Domination & Inequality**

- Molm, Linda D. "Coercive Processes in Social Exchange Relations."\*
- Simmel, Georg. "The Philosophy of Money."\*
- Gramsci, Antonio. *Hegemony, Relations of Force, Historical Bloc*.

### **Week 13 // Resistance**

- Parsons, T. (1937) *The Structure of Social Action*. (Pp. 727-775).\*
- Silbey, Susan S. "Let Them Eat Cake: Globalization, Post-modern colonialism and the Possibilities of Justice."\*
- Giroux, Henry. "Theories of Reproduction and Resistance in the New Sociology of Education"\*

### **Week 14 // Resistance**

- Scott, James. "Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance."\*
- Wells, Ida B. "The Red Record" (*The Case Stated, The Remedy*)\*
- Fanon, Franz. "Concerning Violence"\*