

223.33 • Sociological Theory I: Classical Theory (3 hrs.)
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Providence College
Fall Session, 2009
Mondays 8:30 – 11:05am

SYLLABUS

A. Calendar Description of the Course

A systematic overview of classical sociological theory, highlighting the contributions of major theorists and emphasizing its applications to contemporary social life.
(Prerequisites: 223.11 and 223.12)

B. Purpose of the Course

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. summarize and characterize the nature of sociological theory and its relationship to other social sciences and the humanities;
2. understand the importance of theoretical logic to sociology in contradistinction to the importance of research methods and empirical findings;
3. compare the various theoretical perspectives within sociology, and demonstrate particular familiarity with several;
4. outline how sociological theory is foundational to and applied within various sub-disciplines of sociology;
5. identify the main contributors to classical sociological theory and describe their main contributions;
6. demonstrate their ability to think sociologically by integrating several selected classical perspectives in the analysis of a contemporary social issue;
7. critique the assumptions and conclusions of theoretical perspectives from a Christian world view, and pursue integration of sociological theory and Christian faith;
8. express encouragement toward his or her own potential for more enlightened and satisfactory human relationships;
9. display an appreciation for and commitment to the well-being of social life and human society.

Note re. Syllabus:

It is the student's responsibility to retain their course syllabi for use as support for possible future applications to other educational institutions for transfer of credit.

C. Textbooks

Required:

Allan, Kenneth. 2007. *The Social Lens: An Invitation to Social and Sociological Theory*. Pine Forge Press.

Kivisto, Peter. 2008. *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*. 3rd ed. Oxford University Press.

Sears, Alan. 2008. *A Good Book, In Theory: A Guide to Theoretical Thinking*. University of Toronto Press.

Recommended:

Garner, Roberta, ed. 2007. *Social Theory: Continuity and Confrontation: A Reader*. 2nd ed. Broadview Press.

Heddendorf, Russell. 2009. *Hidden Threads: Social Thought for Christians*. 2nd ed. Wipf & Stock.

Hurst, Charles E. 2005. *Living Theory: The Application of Classical Social Theory to Contemporary Life*. 2nd ed. Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.

Kivisto, Peter, ed. 2007. *Illuminating Social Life: Classical and Contemporary Theory Revisited*. 4th ed. Pine Forge Press.

Ritzer, George. 2008. *Sociological Theory*. 7th ed. McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

Note: All of these texts, except Sears and Hurst, will also be used in 223.34 Sociological Theory II: Contemporary Theory, taught in the winter semester.

A **Selected Bibliography** for this course is available in your Blackbaud student portal under “Shared Documents” for this course.

The **leading encyclopedias** are

Ritzer, George, ed. 2007. *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*. 11 vol. Blackwell.

Ritzer, George, ed. 2005. *The Encyclopedia of Social Theory*. 2 vol. Sage.

D. Course Requirements

1. Class Attendance and Participation (10%)

Your attendance and participation in class is even more important in this course than in courses that are primarily lecture courses. In upper level seminar courses such as this, you have the opportunity to learn about and from your classmates, not just your instructor, and to develop your own ability and ease in conversing intellectually. The quality of the class experience will be socially constructed by what the members of the class bring to it; the better prepared and more willing to participate each student is, the richer the course will be for all. As part of the final exam, you will be asked to grade your classmates for the overall quantity and quality of their interactions in class during the semester. Your own grade for this component will be the average of the evaluations your classmates give you, with the highest and lowest scores deleted from the calculation.

2. Sears Comments and Questions (10%)

Read the little introductory text by Sears, *A Good Book, In Theory*, writing out several comments, observations, and questions for each chapter. Bring your written notes to class on **September 28** as input for our class discussion of the book, and then hand in your notes at the end of class.

3. Reflection Papers (5 x 5% = 25%)

Write a 2-3 page (double-spaced, 12 point font), informal, personal reaction to each theorist. No further study beyond doing the assigned readings and participating in class discussion is required. The intent is that this regular exercise become a form of journaling that documents the progress of your thinking throughout the semester. Your comments could include a critical assessment of the theorist, implications you foresee, possible integration with Christian perspectives, etc. Your papers will be graded according to the quality of their interaction and reflection. The due dates are as follows:

Marx	Oct. 26
Weber	Nov. 2
Durkheim	Nov. 16
Mead	Nov. 23
Simmel	Nov. 30

4. Elaborations, Applications, and Legacies (2 x 10% = 20%)

Our discussion of each theorist will begin with the instructor leading a 30-45 minute discussion of the reading assigned from the Allan text that all students are expected to complete prior to class. All students will also select one (where there is more than one) of the primary source readings in the Kivisto text from the theorist being discussed, and come to class prepared to summarize and discuss it in 30-45 minutes. Both of the above are the foundational discussions of each theorist, and are ungraded (other than “class participation”) course expectations.

For the graded component, each student will sign up to lead two or more of the following presentations and/or discussions, depending on course enrollment.

An **elaboration** consists of reading the extra material on the theorist from the Ritzer text on reserve in the library, selecting material that supplements the material from the Allan text, and presenting that material to the rest of the class, facilitated by a one-page outline handout prepared by the presenter. The student presenter will have 30-45 minutes to present the material and lead the class discussion of it.

An **application** consists of reading the article based on the theorist from the Kivisto 2005 text on reserve in the library, and presenting that material to the rest of the class, facilitated by a one-page outline handout prepared by the presenter. The student presenter will have 30-45 minutes to present the material and lead the class discussion of it.

A **legacy** consists of selecting one of the articles based on the theorist (where there is more than one) from the Garner text on reserve in the library, and presenting that material to the rest of the class, facilitated by a one-page outline handout prepared by the presenter. The student presenter will have 30-45 minutes to present the material and lead the class discussion of it.

Sign-up is on a first come, first served basis, but will be finalized by September 28. Your grade for this component of the course will be based on all your leaderships combined.

5. Integrative Application (20%)

Select one of the chapters from Hurst, *Living Theory*, on reserve in the library. Each chapter addresses a contemporary social problem from the perspective of what Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Simmel might say about it. Summarize how Hurst synthesizes their perspectives, and then extend it with additional analysis of your own, based on what you think the four classical theorists might say about the topic. You should also include some perspectives from other contemporary theorists on the problem you are addressing. Your paper should be a 6-7 page analysis that you can also present orally to the class in 15-20 minutes on

December 7. The chapters from which you may select are:

Ch.3 Private Lives and Public Connections

Ch.4 Separatism and Status

Ch.5 Cynicism, Distrust, and Corruption

Ch.6 Commodification and the Value of Human Life

Ch.7 The Polarization of Economic Resources

Sign up is on a first come, first served basis.

6. Final Exam (15%)

You will write one final, comprehensive exam on **December 14**. The short answer questions will basically ask you to match the theorists with their general ideas. The long answer questions will ask you to summarize concepts, evaluate perspectives, and explain your personal preferences.

E. Grading Summary

1. Grade Components

Class Participation	10%
Sears Comments	10%
Reflection Papers	25%
Elaborations, etc.	20%
Integrative Application	20%
Final Exam	15%

Note: The last date for **Voluntary Withdrawal** from this course is Friday, Nov. 13.

2. Grading Scale

Final course letter grades and their Grade Point equivalents will be calculated using the following scale:

<i>Percent</i>	<i>G.P.</i>	<i>Quality</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>G.P.</i>	<i>Quality</i>
91 – 99 = A+	4.0	Exceptional	67 – 69 = C+	2.5	Satisfactory
85 – 90 = A		Excellent	63 – 66 = C	2.0	Adequate
80 – 84 = A-			60 – 62 = C-		
77 – 79 = B+	3.5	Superior	57 – 59 = D+	1.0	Marginal
73 – 76 = B	3.0	Good	53 – 56 = D		Poor
70 – 72 = B-			50 – 52 = D-		
			< 50 = F	0.0	Failure

F. Course Policies

In addition to the policies outlined in the *Student Handbook*, the complete academic policies, procedures, and regulations of Providence College can be found online at http://prov.ca/college/ac_pol-proc-reg.aspx.

1. Class Attendance

As described above, full attendance at all classes is expected, because active listening, thinking and discussing are primary learning experiences in this course. Class attendance will be recorded, and one mark subtracted for every absence after the second. Students who find themselves struggling with course material are welcome to seek additional individual assistance from the instructor outside the classes, but only if they have demonstrated the self-discipline to attend all the classes they possibly can.

2. ICTs in Class

Student use of information and communication technologies for purposes other than class note-taking is not allowed in the classroom, as students are expected to give their total attention to class activities. Use of cell-phones or ipods is never appropriate in the classroom, and use of laptop computers to play games, write blogs, chat with others, browse the internet, or engage material not related to the class is always distracting to classmates and disrespectful to the instructor. Unlike some other post-secondary institutions, Providence has not yet found it necessary to ban laptops from the classroom, or prevent wireless internet access in classrooms. Only judicious use of them will keep it that way.

3. Plagiarism

Students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity in all its various forms, and will be held accountable for doing so by the policy on Academic Conduct in the Providence College “Academic Policies, Procedures, and Regulations” (http://prov.ca/college/ac_pol-proc-reg.aspx), as well as the policy on Academic Dishonesty in the Student Handbook (<http://prov.ca/studentLife/pdf/Student%20Handbook.pdf>). One particularly problematic breach of academic integrity is plagiarism, which is stealing from the ideas and writings of another person and passing them off as one’s own. For an elaboration of the nature, types, and prevention of plagiarism, see the document entitled “Academic Dishonesty: The Problem of Plagiarism in Academic Writing” in your Blackbaud student portal under “Shared Documents” for this course.

4. Late Assignments

Late assignments will be accepted up to one week after their due date, but their grades will be reduced by 10%, which equals one letter grade. Late papers will **not** be accepted more than one week after their due date, and students who do not submit a paper by at most one week after the due date will receive a grade of zero for that component of the course. The instructor will not receive requests for extensions. If you feel an extension is warranted, attach a cover letter to your assignment when you hand it in, explaining why it is late, and a decision will be made by the instructor when your paper is graded. A waiving of the 10% late reduction, or the one week deadline, will be granted only in the cases of personal or medical emergencies as detailed in the cover letter. Computer problems, conflicts with co-curricular activities, competition for library resources, and/or long weekends before or after due dates do not constitute such emergencies. Failure to plan ahead, or to maintain a margin of time for unforeseen events prior to the due date, does not warrant an extension either.

5. Missed Exams

Students who miss the exam are responsible to contact the instructor within one week of the exam date if they still wish to write the exam. Permission to do so will be given to only those students who present evidence, acceptable to the instructor, of medical reasons for having missed the exam. The format of the exam will be at the discretion of the instructor, with essay questions likely. Students who do not write the exam by at most two weeks after the exam date will receive a grade of zero for that component of the course.

G. Class Schedule

This course employs a seminar format of learning, wherein the large majority of class time will be given to discussion of readings and only a small minority of time given to lecture. Therefore it is imperative that students complete the readings assigned **prior** to class, and come prepared to discuss them.

Students are expected to purchase the Allan and Kivisto texts. The Ritzer, Kivisto 2005, Garner, and Hurst texts are on reserve in the Learning Resource Centre. Ask for them by title at the front desk.

Each theorist will be studied using the following categories:

Discussions: All students will do all the assigned readings from the Allan text and come to class prepared to discuss them.

Elaborations: One student will be assigned to read the Ritzer text on the theorist being studied and present supplementary information to the class.

Summaries: Each student will select one of the primary source articles from the theorist being studied and prepare a summary of the article to present to the rest of the class.

Applications: One student will be assigned to read the application article from the Kivisto 2005 text and present a summary to the rest of the class.

Legacies: One student will be assigned to select and read one of the legacy articles from the Garner text and present a summary to the rest of the class.

Summary: Discussions – all students do all the readings from the Allan text

Summaries – each student selects one article from the Kivisto text

Elaborations, Applications, and Legacies:

- single students present to the rest of the class

The instructor reserves the right to assign additional readings during the course of the term or to alter the schedule of topics as he sees fit.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Sept. 14	Orientation to the Course Introduction to Sociological Theory – Lecture	
Sept. 21	Historical Overview of Classical Theory – Lecture	Theory Discussion: Allan “Prelude” & pp.1-8 Ritzer, “Norbert Elias” (PDF) Martineau Summary: Kivisto text #21
Sept. 28	<i>A Good Book, In Theory: A Guide to Theoretical Thinking</i>	Theory Discussion: Sears Sears Notes due
Oct. 5	Karl Marx	Marx Discussion: Allan ch.1 Marx Elaboration: Ritzer ch.2 Marx Summary: Kivisto text #1-5 Marx Application: Kivisto 2005 ch.1
Oct. 12	Thanksgiving Day (classes cancelled)	
Oct. 19	Karl Marx & Max Weber	Marx Legacy: Garner ch.6 & 7 Weber Discussion: Allan ch.2 Weber Elaboration: Ritzer ch.4
Oct. 26	Max Weber	Marx Reflection due Weber Summary: Kivisto text #11-15 Weber Application: Kivisto 2005 ch.2 Weber Legacy: Garner ch.11 & 12
Nov. 2	Emile Durkheim	Weber Reflection due Durkheim Discussion: Allan ch.3 Durkheim Elaboration: Ritzer ch.3 Durkheim Summary: Kivisto text #6-10
Nov. 9	Emile Durkheim and Outside Voices	Durkheim Application: Kivisto 2005 ch.3 Durkheim Legacy: Garner ch.9 Outside Voices Summary: Kivisto text #24, 26, 27, 28

Nov. 16	George Herbert Mead	Durkheim Reflection due
	Mead Discussion:	Allan pp.105-118
	Mead Elaboration:	Ritzer pp.351-364
	Mead Summary:	Kivisto text #29
	Mead Legacy:	Garner #16
Nov. 23	Georg Simmel	Mead Reflection due
	Simmel Discussion:	Allan pp.119-136
	Simmel Elaboration:	Ritzer ch.5
	Simmel Summary:	Kivisto text #16-20
	Simmel Application:	Kivisto 2005 ch.4
	Simmel Legacy:	Garner ch.14
Nov. 30	Charlotte Perkins Gilman & W. E. B. Du Bois	Simmel Reflection due
	Gilman Discussion:	Allan pp.137-151
	Gilman Summary:	Kivisto text #23
	Du Bois Discussion:	Allan pp.151-166
	Du Bois Summary	Kivisto text #22
	Discussion:	The Dead Grandmother Exam Syndrome (PDF)
Dec. 7	Integrative Application Presentations	
Dec. 14	FINAL EXAM	