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What you have inherited from your forefathers you must first win for yourself if you are to possess it.

--Goethe

Modernity is that which is ephemeral, fugitive, contingent upon the occasion.

--Baudelaire

The project of modernity, formulated in the 18th century by the philosophers of the Enlightenment, consisted in their efforts to develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic. At the same time, this project intended to release the cognitive potential of each of these domains from their esoteric forms. The Enlightenment philosophers wanted to utilize this accumulation of specialized culture for the enrichment of everyday life—that is to say, for the rational organization of everyday social life.

--Jurgen Habermas, Modernity versus Postmodernity

I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives.

--Jean-Francois Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition
The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of the society, is at the same time its intellectual force.

--Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not Make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.

--Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*

Not ideas but interests—material and ideal—directly govern men's conduct. Yet very frequently the “world images” that have been created by “ideas” have, like switchman, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest.

--Max Weber, *From Max Weber, Essays in Sociology*

The religious valuation of restless, continuous, systematic work in a worldly calling, as the highest means to asceticism, and at the same time the surest and most evident proof of rebirth and genuine faith, must have been the most powerful conceivable lever for the expansion of that attitude toward life which we have here called the spirit of capitalism.

--Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

When it is said that history seeks to understand the concrete reality of an “event” in its individuality causally, what is obviously not meant by this…is that it is to “reproduce” and explain causally the concrete reality of an event in the totality of its individual qualities. To do the latter would be not only actually impossible, it would also be a task which is meaningless in principle. Rather, history is exclusively concerned with the causal explanation of those “elements” and “aspects” of the events in question which are of “general significance” and hence of historical interest from general standpoints, exactly in the same way as the judge’s deliberations take into account not the total individualized course of the events of the case but rather those components of the events which are pertinent for subsumption under the legal norms.

--Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*
If the division of labor does not produce solidarity, it is because the relationships between the organs are not regulated, they are in a state of anomie.

--Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*

Without symbols, social sentiments could only have a precarious existence.

--Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Form of the Religious Life*

The culture industry perpetually cheats its consumers of what it perpetually promises...The culture industry does not sublimate, it represses.

--Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*

Power spoke of sexuality and to sexuality.

--Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*

It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology), but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle.

--Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*

**Course Description and Objectives**

Sociology is the development of systematic knowledge about social life, the way it is organized, how it changes, its creation in social action, and its disruption and renewal in social conflict. Sociological theory is both a guide to sociological inquiry and an attempt to bring order to its results. Sociological theory is not simply a collection of answers to questions about what society is like. It offers many answers, but it also offers help in posing better questions and developing inquiries that can answer them. Like all of science, thus, it is a process. It is always under development, responding to changes in our social lives and to improvements in our sociological knowledge.

In most colleges and universities, sociology students who study social theory read texts by Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. These three nineteenth-century European social theorists are considered to have formulated many of the fundamental themes of sociology. They achieved several of sociology’s most distinct approaches and central concepts. Each of these thinkers was contributing to a common intellectual enterprise, what can be termed as the discovery of society. They responded in divergent ways to a shared historical context, which included the rise and transformation of Western
society in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The aftermath of the French Revolution, the industrial revolution, the emergence of the market, and European colonialism opened up social, economic, and cultural opportunities and problems previously unimaginable, from the possibilities of more complex types of social organization (capitalism and socialism) to a novel type of culture based on rationality, social participation, and individualism rather than tradition.

These theorists recognized that these new societies differed in dramatic ways from those that preceded them. They were involved in explaining modernity. This course takes their works as the point of departure by engaging and summarizing the major themes of the classical sociological theory of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. Moreover, it also interprets their thought through the lens of new theoretical concerns that opened up new perspective on the issues in ways that not adequately addressed by Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. In doing so, this course is designed to familiar the students with classical sociological theory by focusing on the selected works of the “founding fathers”—Marx, Weber, and Durkheim—which are indispensable tools for us to grapple with fundamental questions about the rise of capitalism and the formations of modernity.

In addition, classical sociological theory emerged during the nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries as a critical commentary on the major socio-economic and political processes shaping the modern world. In historical sense, classical sociological theory occupies an intermediate position between the pioneering but somewhat diffuse eighteenth century phase of social science development, on the one hand, and contemporary postwar social theory, on the other. The classical period was really the formative period for contemporary social theory. It is the period when previous disparate concerns of post-Renaissance theorists became consolidated into an increasingly interlocking agenda of generic theoretical questions, such as structure and agency, the problem of order, the place of meaning, and the nature of self. These questions continue to dominate the agenda of contemporary social theory. Similarly, the key substantive institution of market, private capital, the democratic state, and race and ethnicity continue to be the focus of many less generic social theories of the middle range.

However, in the wake of the new social movements of the 1960s, 1970s and 1990s, which centered around issues of civil rights, gender, sexual orientation, the environment, and the decolonization of the European nineteenth- and twentieth-century empires, many new emerging issues challenge the viability of classical sociological traditions to understand contemporary issues and events. And much criticism has been directed at the sociological canon, especially the triumvirate of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. Therefore, this course will explore the classical
sociological theorists through the lens of these contemporary issues and theoretical concerns by reviewing the accomplishments of the classics while pointing to their theoretical limitations. Thus, the theorists to be covered in this course will extend from classical period to modern period and finally to the postmodern period to investigate how contemporary theorists respond to new emerging historical situation. In this sense, this course is in the spirit of a critical reading of classical social theory and concerns with what should be retained and what should be jettisoned from each theorist in order to make sense of today’s world in light of a growing awareness of cultural identities and social differences. This leads to a discussion of how the sociological tradition can be understood in new ways, and includes the contributions of other thinkers such as the Frankfurt School theorists, Foucault and Baudrillard. Encapsulating the current debate on the concepts of modernity and postmodernity, this course attempts to move beyond speculative discussions to explore the idea of postmodernism at two levels: first, by relating the debate over postmodernity back to traditional social theory, and secondly, by demonstrating the application of postmodernity to the nature of modern societies and contemporary politics.

Postmodernism is a difficult term to clearly define, having taken on a variety of meanings depending on who is using the concept. For the purpose of this course, I distinguish modernism from postmodernism as follows:

1) The modern search for a stable community has been replaced by the postmodern attention to social differences.

2) The Enlightenment contention that rationality leads to a discovery of a timeless, placeless truth is criticized by postmodernists, who celebrate a diversity of truths.

3) Modernists argue that the social and natural worlds can be clearly represented by language. Postmodernists contend that language is always metaphorical; it structures our very sense of “reality”, and language itself is always changing.

4) Modernists argue for a coherent, stable self. Postmodernists deconstruct this notion of the individual. They contend that individuality is shaped by class, gender, and racial factors, which are continually in flux.

Overall, combing both theorist-centered and issue-oriented blend of approaches to reclaiming sociology’s rich intellectual past, this course attempts to provide an introductory and analytical guide for beginning graduate student to classical sociological theorists and the “postmodern challenge” they are now facing. And one important implication of revisiting and reclaiming classical sociological theory is that sociological theory thrives and survives best when it is engaged with empirical and/or public issues.
Class Citizenship

In a seminar course of this sort, it is my wish that I want the sessions and discussions to be as stimulating and exciting as possible, with a collegial and supportive atmosphere. Pedagogically, this seminar is dedicated to the proposition that knowledge is a collective product. This intellectual journey is intended to be collective; each participant (including me) is expected to contribute to our discussions and debates. Good seminars depend to a great extent on the seriousness of preparation by students. Let us all be good and responsible class citizens to make contributions as much as possible.

Requirements and Grading:

All participants will be expected to: 1) take an active part in discussions; 2) prepare ten memos on the week’s required readings (1-2 pages each); 3) make at least two presentations on the readings to the seminar during the semester; 4) mid-term and final exams.

Seminar Presentations: Each week two students will serve as discussion leaders. These presentations should be 20-25 minutes long and should try to establish a focused agenda for the discussion which follows. The point of the presentation is not to comprehensively summarize the readings, but to provide a critical evaluation, focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments/analyses, comparing different perspectives, and highlighting the most important issues and questions they raise as a way of launching the day’s discussion.

Weekly Issue Memo: I believe strongly that it is important for students to engage the week’s readings in written form prior to the seminar sessions. These weekly memos are intended to prepare the ground for good discussions by requiring participants to set out their initial responses to the readings which will improve the quality of the class discussion since students come to the sessions with an already thought out agenda.

I refer to these short written comments as “issue memos”. They are not meant to be mini-papers on the readings; nor need they summarize the readings as such. Rather, they are meant to be a think piece, reflecting your own intellectual engagement with the material: specifying what is obscure or confusing in the reading; taking up issue with some core idea or argument; exploring some interesting ramification of an idea.
in the reading. These memos do not have to deal with the most profound, abstract or
grandiose arguments in the readings; the point is that they should reflect what you
find most engaging, exciting or puzzling.

We will arrange to share these memos through e-mail, and the week’s presenters, if
s/he likes, can use other students’ comments to prepare an agenda for discussion. In
order for everyone to have time to read over other’s comments, these will be due on
e-mail by 10:00 pm on Thursday evening (the day before the seminar meets). These
memos are a real requirement, and failing to hand in memos will affect your grade. I
will read through the memos to see if they are “serious”, but not grade them for
“quality”. Since the point of this exercise is to enhance discussions, late memos will
not be accepted. If you have to miss a seminar session for some reason, you are still
required to prepare an issue memo for that session. Since I may not total the number
of memos each student writes until the end of the semester, please keep copies to be
sure of fulfilling the requirements.

Exams: Every student is required to take two exams (mid-term and final). These
exams are meant to help you check how well you digest the materials and serve to
give you an “impetus” to do the required reading carefully and to participate the class
discussion actively. There are two main types of questions in the exam: 1) translating
the English text into Chinese; and 2) essay questions.

Your final grade is based on:

Class Participation and Discussion: 20%
Presentation: 20%
Weekly issue memo: 20%
Mid-term exam: 20%
Final exam: 20%

Books Recommended for Purchase

中譯：張君玫，2003，《社會理論與現代性》。台北：巨流
Marx, Karl and Frederic Engles. 1991. The German Ideology. New York:
International Publishers.
Marx, Karl. 1963. The Eighteenth Brumaire of the Louis Bonaparte. New York:
International Publishers.
Information about Reading Assignments

The readings in each section are grouped under three categories. These should be interpreted as follows:

BACKGROUND READINGS. These readings generally provide a quick and simple overview of a general topic area. They are frequently not as analytically rigorous as the main readings, but may be useful to get a general sense of concepts and issues, especially for people with little or no background in the particular topic.

CORE READINGS. These are the readings which all students are expected to read as part of the normal work in the course. The lectures will presuppose that students have read of these core readings prior to the lecture.

SUGGESTED READINGS. In some sections of the syllabus we include additional references for students interested in pursuing a particular topic in depth. The suggested readings are listed for your reference only. There is no expectation that students will read these items during the course.

SEMINAR SESSIONS & READING ASSIGNMENTS

PART I. CLASSICAL SOCIAL THEORY: MARX, WEBER, AND DURKHEIM

Week 1.  (9/17)  Course Introduction
Week 2.  (9/24)  Karl Marx (I): The German Ideology
Week 3 (10/1)  Karl Marx (II): The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte
Week 4. (10/8)  Karl Marx (III): The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte
Week 5  (10/15)  Weber (I): The Protestant Ethic And The Spirit of Capitalism
Week 6  (10/22)  Weber (II): The Protestant Ethic And The Spirit of Capitalism
Week 7  (10/29)  Weber (III): The Methodology of Social Sciences
       Guest Speaker: Prof. Chih-Chen Cheng
Week 8  (11/5)  Weber (IV): The Methodology of Social Sciences
       Guest Speaker: Prof. Chih-Chen Cheng
Week 9  (11/12)  Mid-term exam (No Class)
Week 10 (11/19)  Durkheim (I): The Division of Labor in Society
Week 11 (11/26)  Durkheim (II): The Division of Labor in Society
Week 12 (12/3)  Durkheim (III): The Division of Labor in Society

PART II. MODERN SOCIAL THEORY

Week 13 (12/10)  The Frankfurt School : Horkheimer and Adorno,
       Dialectic of Enlightenment
Week 14 (12/17)  Foucault (I): The History of Sexuality: An Introduction
Week 15 (12/24)  Foucault (II): The History of Sexuality: An Introduction

PART III. POSTMODERN TURN: BAUDRILLARD

Week 16 (12/31)  Baudrillard (I): Simulations
       Guest Speaker: Hung-Chao Huang
Week 17 (1/7)  Baudrillard (II): Simulations
       Guest Speaker: Hung-Chao Huang
Week 18 (1/14)  Final Exam (No Class)
PART I. CLASSICAL SOCIAL THEORY: MARX, WEBER, AND DURKHEIM

Week 1 (9/17) Introduction (No Required Readings for This Week; Listed Readings for Suggestions Only)

How I Define and Design This Course
Dilemma: Breadth or Depth? (Brain-storming and Any Suggestions Welcome!)
Language Issues
Theory as Tool and Theory as End-Product
The Rise and Fall of Classical Social Theory
Conceptual Pragmatism
Learning *about* vs. Learning *from* Social Theory
Theoretical Understanding vs. Theorization
Consuming vs. Constructing Theory
Text vs. Context of Social Theory: History of Ideas or Sociology of Knowledge?

* Critical Issues in Social Theory

  Holism vs. Methodological Individualism
  Structure vs. Agency
  Level of Abstraction vs. Unit of Analysis
  Positivism vs. Anti-Positivism: The Philosophy of Science Debate
  Explanation vs. Interpretation
  Forms of Explanation: Causal, Functional, Intentional
  Meta-theoretical vs. Substantive
  Conceptualization vs. Labeling (or Renaming)

The Types of Sociological Theorizing

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<th>Nature of Constitutive Elements</th>
<th>Subjective</th>
<th>Objective</th>
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<td>Terms of Explanation</td>
<td>Individualistic</td>
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### A Mapping of Some Sociological Theories in a Two-Dimensional Space

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*The Core Concepts That Sociological Theory Must Address and Attempt to Reconcile:*

- **Agency** – Meaning and Motives in Social Arrangements
- **Rationality** – The Maximization of Individual Interest
- **Structure** – Secret Patterns Which Determine Experience
- **System** – An Overarching Order

*The Main Phenomenon That Sociological Theory Seeks to Explain:*

- Culture and Ideology
- Power and the State
- Differentiation and Stratification

**Sociology at Large**

**Background Readings:**

Core Readings:

Suggested Readings:

* The Rise of Social Theory

* Political Formations of Modernity

* Economic Formations of Modernity

* Social Formations of Modernity
Polity.

* Cultural Formations of Modernity

* The West and the Rest

Why Classical Sociological Theory?

Background Readings:

Core Readings:

Suggested Readings:
KARL MARX: THE PRIMACY OF PRODUCTION

Driving Impulses

Key Issues:
- A Materialist Social Ontology
- Historical Materialism
- Critique of Capitalism
- Class as a Social Relation
- The State and Politics

Seeing Things Differently
Legacies and Unfinished Business

Background Readings:


General Analyses of Marx’s Works

McLellan, David. 1972. The Thought of Karl Marx: An Introduction. New York:
Harper and Row.

Philosophical Aspects of Marx’s Thought

Marxist Economics

Suggested Readings:

Collections of Marx/Engels’ Works
Week 2 (9/24) Karl Marx (I): The German Ideology

Like much else of the modern world, the concept of ideology is a child of enlightenment. And ideology has never been so much in evidence as a fact and so little understood as a concept as it is today. From the left it can often be seen as the exclusive property of ruling classes, and from the right as an arid and totalizing exception to their own common sense. For some, the concept now seems too ubiquitous to be meaningful; for others, too cohesive for a world of infinite difference. Not so long ago, the term “ideology” was in considerable disrepute. Its use had become associated with a claim to know a truth beyond ideology, a radically unfashionable position. What then explains the sudden revival of interest in grappling with the questions that “ideology” poses to social and cultural theory, as well as to political practice?

Karl Marx (1818-83) and Frederic Engels (1820-95) were the founders of historical materialism, the key doctrine of which is that the conflict between exploiting and exploited classes throughout history is closely linked to the rise, development and demise of modes of material production. Marx and Engels never produce a fully-fledged theory of ideology; but their writings on other matters contain suggestive ideas in this direction and their early work The German Ideology (1845-46) engages the topic directly. The book was written in opposition to the so-called young Hegelians, who in Marx and Engel’s view gave undue prominence to the power of ideas in society. Against the idealism of Hegel, Marx, and Engels want to assert that all human consciousness is rooted in material conditions, and can be changed only by transforming these conditions. However, the concept of ideology—traditionally one of Marxism’s most persuasive ideas has recently been subjected to devastating criticisms. In this section we will read carefully the classical Marxist texts on the subject of ideology, The German Ideology. We’ll also touch briefly upon whether a reconstructed Marxist version of “ideology” is still defensible. An extended annotated bibliography about the subject of ideology will be provided as well.

Background Readings:
中譯：張君玫，2003，《社會理論與現代性》。台北：巨流。第1章

Core Readings:
(If time allows, also refer to Marx’s chapter on commodity fetishism in Capital
Extended Further Readings on Ideology

*A short and useful introductory book to the subject of ideology.

*For those who looking for an excellent book-length introduction to the topic of ideology, this book is difficult to match in historical scope and analytical power.

*Terry Eagleton unravels the many different definitions of ideology, and explores the concept’s tortuous history from the Enlightenment to postmodernism. A quite lucid interpretative work.

*This collection of readings on the concept of ideology is a useful complement to Eagleton’s above book. The readings cover writings from the Enlightenment via Hegel and Marx, with particular emphasis on Marx and Engels themselves. The concept is taken through to Althusser and beyond. The text then goes on to discuss recent debates about ideology as a cultural system and Marxism and literary history.

*This book is a particularly elegant, rigorous study of the question, with special reference to the Frankfurt School. Guess sets out the fundamental claim that Habermas and earlier members of the Frankfurt School have presented critical theory as a new form of Knowledge. It is differentiated from the natural sciences as essentially “reflective”: the knowledge it provides guides us towards enlightenment as to our true interests, and emancipation from often unsuspected forms of external and internal coercion.

*This book examines some of the outstanding contemporary contributions to the study of ideology ranging usefully from Castoriadis to Habermas from a position broadly sympathetic to the latter.

*In this book, Thompson develops a distinctive new account of the theory of ideology and relates it to the analysis of culture and mass communication in modern societies.

Therborn, Goran. 1980. The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology. London:
Verso.

*Probably, Therborn’s best book ever written. This is an excellent examination and analyses of all the different approaches to ideology, bridging the two prominent European modes of interpretation of phenomenology and Marxism. This book can also be seen as a reconstructed version of Marxist approach to ideology.


*This excellent collection presents a comprehensive sampling of the most important contemporary writing on the subject. An invaluable guide to what is now the most dynamic field of cultural theory.


*This book explores the challenges to a Marxist theory of ideology posed by post-structuralist theories. Michele Barrett shows that Marx’s own writings offer a confusing array of possible approaches to “ideology”, which the classical Marxist tradition consolidated as “mystification that serves class interests.” Barrett locates Gramsci and Althusser as key figures in the breakdown of this model—Gramsci’s work presaging the separation of class, politics and ideology found in Laclau and Mouffe, and Althusser’s failing to deliver an adequate approach to subjectivity. In urn, Foucault—replacing Marxism’s “economics of untruth” with his own “politics of truth”—is examined as an examplar of post-structuralist critiques of ideology.

Week 3 (10/1) Karl Marx (II): The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte

The study of the events in The Eighteenth of Brumaire of the Louis Bonaparte leading to the coup de’tat of “Napoleon the Little” on December 2, 1851, written within a few weeks after the coup, is one of the first works by Marx in which he states his theory of history. It has become a classic object lesson in applied historical materialism. Marx demonstrates how the class struggle in France created circumstances and relationships that made it possible for a grotesque mediocrity to play a hero’s part. This book is Marx’s most important works on politics. Besides carrying the story of French political events up to Louis Bonaparte’s coup d’etat in December 1851, it contains important observations on the relation between class, politics, and ideology. This book introduces Marx’s blow-by-blow account of the political events in France in 1848 and 1851 with a sweeping historical overview. And what is perhaps the main analytical point of this work lies in: Louis Bonaparte’s access to power, although apparently a blow to the interests of the bourgeoisie, was in reality the only way in which they can
be safeguarded.

In addition, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, an eloquent analysis of the rise to power between 1848 and 1852 of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte and of the way power accumulated in the hands of the executive at the expense of, in the first instance, both civil society and the representatives of the capitalist class (the bourgeoisie), is his most interesting work on the state. The study highlights Marx’s distance from any view of the state as an “instrument of universal insight” or “ethical community” for he emphasized that the state apparatus is simultaneously a “parasitic body” on civil society and an autonomous source of political action. Thus, in describing Bonaparte’s regime he wrote,

This executive power, with its enormous bureaucratic and military organization, with its ingenious state machinery, embracing wide strata, with a host of officials numbering half a million, beside an army of another half million, this appalling parasitic body…enmeshes the body of French society like a net and chokes all its pores.

The state is portrayed as an immense set of institutions, with the capacity to shape civil society and even to curtail the bourgeoisie’s capacity to control the state. Marx granted the state a certain autonomy from society: political outcomes are the result of the interlock between complex coalitions and constitutional arrangements.

**Core Readings:**

**Week 4 (10/8) Karl Marx (III): The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte**

**Core Readings:**

**MAX WEBER (1864-1920): THE PRIMACY OF SOCIAL ACTION**

**Driving Impulses:** Life and Orientation

**Key issues:**
On the Relationship between Religion and Economics
The Disenchantment of the World and the Rationalization of Life
Method and the Philosophy of Science
Authority or “Legitimate Domination”

Seeing Things Differently
Weberian Legacies

Background Readings:

General Analyses of Weber’s Works
Weber on Politics

Weber on Methodology

Weber on Economics

Weber on Religion

Suggested Readings:
Week 5 (10/15) Weber (I): The Protestant Ethic And The Spirit of Capitalism

The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism undoubtedly ranks as one of the most renowned, and controversial, works of modern social sciences. The issue underlying the often misunderstood Protestant ethic thesis, published in 1904-5, was not how to explain economic acquisitiveness but rather how to explain the rational social psychology of modern capitalism. How was it that economic traditionalism with its restrictions on market freedom gave way to the relentless pursuit of profit, through rational technique and organization, as a way of life, pushing aside community controls? For Weber part of the answer lay in the affinity between religious types of “this-worldly asceticism” characteristics of certain Protestant sects, and the worldly asceticism of the emergent capitalist entrepreneur. A sense of religious vocation demanding self-discipline and strict accountability for one’s actions was translated into a sense of economic vocation motivated by similarly relentless inner drive for worldly achievement.

This argument was subsequently extended between 1911 and 1914 from an argument about Protestantism in Western Europe into a general sociology of world religion. Weber argued that the absence of this-worldly asceticism in most of the other world religions of Asia and the Middle East helps explain why it was only in the West that Rationalization developed. While reading this important work, we will focus on the background, context, themes, arguments, and controversy of this book.

Background readings:
中譯：張君玫，2003，《社會理論與現代性》。台北：巨流。Ch.2

Core readings:

Week 6(10/22) Weber (II): The Protestant Ethic And The Spirit of Capitalism

Core Readings:
Ambivalence characterizes Weber’s view of rationalization process, which extends to his understanding of science. In a manner reminiscent of Nietzsche, Weber argues that science cannot justify ultimate values, even its own existence. Science cannot answer why and how we should live, nor what we should do. It cannot even prove that studying social or natural life is worthwhile. Science explains things empirically and causally, and should have no regard whatsoever for the political implications of its findings. Because science cannot tell people how to act or what values to follow, politics is out of place in the classroom.

Science cannot tell a person how she should live because the values of the world are in irreconcilable conflict. Weber departs from this Nietzschean sentiment, however, as he tries to hold on to an ideal of scientific objectivity. While science cannot teach people what values to believe, it can give people critical methods of thinking and tools and training for thought. Science can clarify thinking for the individual.

Weber, like Nietzsche, believes that reality is infinite. Values have no purely objective basis, but retain an independence and immanent logic of their own. When a social scientist observes reality in order to study it, she chooses her data on the basis of her own subjective values. Social science is necessarily partial, retaining an element of subjectivity in any study. Weber states that social science searches for laws only in particular circumstances:

Nothing should be more sharply emphasized than the proposition that the knowledge of the cultural significance of concrete historical events and patterns is exclusively and solely the final end which, among other means, concept-construction and the criticism of constructs also seek to serve.

Social life is characterized by a plurality of causal elements, with no universal laws or absolute meanings.

Weber’s methodology involves ideal-types, which simplify rather than mirror reality in some objective way. The ideal-type methodology is a response to those dilemmas posed by the inability of reason to fully comprehend the social world. Since social science is invariably one-sided and subjectively based, the social scientist constructs ideal-types in order to study reality. These concepts are not given in the data itself, but are conceptualized by social scientists out of their own interests for specific purposes in order to facilitate research. Weber states:

An ideal-type id formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of
view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sided emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct. In its conceptual purity, this mental construct cannot be found anywhere in reality.

As we discussed in the last weeks, when Weber examines the Protestant ethic he explores just those aspects of Protestantism that contribute to the rise of capitalism and modern rationality. The full complexity of the religious experience of Protestantism escapes his, and indeed any, theoretical purview. Ideal types are used by any discipline when it attempts to explain social phenomenon. For example, economists often posit an ideal image of the person as a rational economic agent in order to explain economic activity, leaving aside the many irrationalities that invariably influence human action.

Weber reflects on the problems and pitfalls of attempts to maintain objectivity in social research in a more sophisticated way than does Marx or Durkheim. He is up-front about how his bourgeois background and belief in German nationalism influenced his research agenda and values. Weber might have taken this argument further, reflecting on the social position of the researcher in terms of gender and race and how it influences her research. He did not take this more radical step, as such issues remain outside of his theoretical domain.

Core Readings:

Week 8 (11/5) Weber (IV): The Methodology of Social Sciences (Guest Speaker: Prof. Chih-Chen Cheng)

Core Readings:

Week 9 (11/12) Mid-term exam
EMILE DURKHEIM (1858-1917): THE DISCOVERY OF SOCIAL FACTS

Driving Impulses

Key Issues:
Legitimating the Discipline: Sociology, Science, and Emergence
The Relationship between the Individual and Society: Images of Society
Three Studies of Social Solidarity
The Division of Labor in Society
Suicide
The Elementary Form of the Religious Life

Seeing Things Differently

Legacies and Unfinished Business

Background Readings:
*This book remains the most complete study of Durkheim.

General Analyses of Durkheim’s Works

**The Philosophical Dimensions of Durkheim’s Thought**

**Durkheim and Religion**

**Durkheim and the Law**

**Suggested Readings:**

**Week 10 (11/19) Durkheim (I) The Division of Labor in Society**
The center of attention in The Division of Labor in Society is on the evolutionary change in society from one form of social cohesion to another and in particular the role of individualism in modern societies. Durkheim argued that, despite the apparent collapse of traditional communities and the growth of individualism, modern society was not falling apart. It was being held together not by shared beliefs, as were traditional societies, but by the division of labor, our economic dependence on each other. Durkheim, like Marx, recognizes that the market economy has unprecedented importance in the modern world. The Division of Labor in Society addresses the relationship between the economy and society. Durkheim is influenced by the widespread distinctions between traditional and modern societies prevalent in his time.
He develops two different types of solidarity corresponding to these distinct types of social organization. The first type of solidarity, characteristic of premodern societies, he designated as mechanical solidarity. In this type of solidarity the common consciousness is strong and individuals are similar to one another, sharing the same beliefs and ideas. The individual is directly linked with society. Indeed, it is a misnomer to even speak of individualism, in the sense of autonomy, as we understand it now. These premodern societies are clan-based, each clan performing political and economic functions as well as familial ones. Rules are often repressive, imposing uniform, strict punishments on all members of society. This punishment reinforces shared beliefs and values. The type of consciousness characterizing this society is traditional and often very religious, in a fundamentalist way.

As the division of labor emerges, a new type of organic solidarity arises. In organic solidarity the collective conscience becomes diffuse and there is more room for individual and personal differences. The division of labor becomes the source of this new solidarity, as it binds people together, each having her own task or special function. The individual depends upon the different parts of society, as each person has a specific sphere of activity. There is a high degree of interdependence among distinct institutions and persons. Societies become more complex; legal rules are based on restitution rather than strict punishment, for they must regulate new roles and occupations. Societies are rational secular, as science becomes a more important method of understanding society and nature. These societies still need a sense of shared morality and sacredness. Individualism provides such a shared consciousness, as the rights and dignity of the individual achieve an almost sacred status in modern societies. Ideals tied to the republic and the nation also become powerful moral forces binding people together.

Background readings:
中譯：張君玫，2003，《社會理論與現代性》。台北：巨流。Ch.1

Core Readings:

Week 11 (11/26) Durkheim (II) The Division of Labor in Society
Core Readings:
Week 12. (12/3) Durkheim (III) The Division of Labor in Society
Core Readings:

PART II. MODERN SOCIAL THEORY
THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL

THEODORE ADORNO (1903-69)
The Driving Impulses
Key Issues
Authoritarian Personality
Culture Industry
Kulturkritik
Negative Dialectics
Non-identity Thinking
Unintentional Truth
Seeing things Differently
Legacies and Unfinished Business

MAX HORKHEIMER (1895-1973)
The Driving Impulses
Key Issues
Critical Theory
Ideology Critique
Eclipse of Reason
Science and Technology as Oppressive
Dialectic of enlightenment
Seeing things Differently
Legacies and Unfinished Business

Week 13 (12/10) Frankfurt School: Horkheimer and Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment

The Frankfurt School, including Max Horkheimer, Theodore Adorno, Herbert
Marcuse, Jurgen Habermas, and Claus Offe, rooted in the thought of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Sigmund Freud. They began writing in the 1930s, and became popular in the 1960s. These authors criticized the conformity and standardization of modern societies, in which corporate capitalism, uncontrolled technology, and the mass culture industry reduced the scope of freedom and critical thinking.

In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno moved away from the Marxian emphasis on the primacy of political economy to stress the importance of the project of domination of nature, from the Greeks and Christians to the present. Consequently, they placed technology and what they called “instrumental rationality” at the center of their new socio-cultural theory, displacing the primacy of class struggle as well as the Marxian theory of crisis. They sounded a pessimistic note about the Enlightenment reason.

In this book, Horkheimer and Adorno developed a theory of the culture industry that produced the first systematic Marxian critique of mass culture and communication. Horkheimer and Adorno argued that although mass culture purported to be mere entertainment it was a vehicle of ideology that served as a powerful instrument of social control; from this perspective, mass culture was eminently political, and the critique of a society’s dominant ideologies should focus serious attention on mass culture. On Horkheimer and Adorno’s conception, mass culture produced a system of products that idealized the existing society and suggested that happiness could be found through conformity to its institutions and way of life. The culture industries that provided contemporary capitalism, and fascism and state communism, with powerful instruments of domination that secured the power of hegemonic institutions over individuals and contributed to the decline of the individual through their growing control of thought and behavior.

**Background readings:**

**Core Readings:**

**Suggested Readings:**


General Secondary Works on Critical Theory


MICHEL FOUCAULT (1926-84)

Driving Impulses: The Enthusiasm for Experiment

Key Issues: Critiques of the Subject

Knowledge as power

Governmentality

Surveillance

Bio-power

Discourse

Discipline

Sexuality
The Dangerous Individual
Ethics
The Genealogy of the Present
Seeing Things Differently
Legacies and Unfinished Business: Governmentality and Conflict

Foucault’s Major Writings:

Further Readings:
What strikes one most immediately about the work of Michel Foucault is its intellectual breadth. The broad sweep of his work interests the sociological audiences first because of the persistence with which it crosses the themes, both central and minor, of sociological teaching. In the main Foucault’s works may be grouped under three headings: (1) analyses of branches of knowledge and discourse; (2) genealogies of institutions of internment—asylums, hospitals, and prisons; (3) investigations of power relations and sexuality.

Under the first heading fall above all The Order of Things and The Archaeology of Knowledge. Under the headings of genealogies of institutions of internment one can group Madness and Civilization, The Birth of the Clinic and Discipline and Punish. Relations of power, which can be seen in retrospect as the subject of Madness and Civilization and The Birth of the Clinic, become the explicit focus of Foucault’s later writings, beginning with Discipline and Punish. The History of Sexuality, published in French in 1976, was to be the introductory volume in a six-volume history of power and sexuality. Three substantial volumes have appeared after Foucault’s death; all three seem more exploratory than well finished. But, in combination with Discipline and Punish and his later interviews and earlier case studies, these texts exhibit Foucault’s political as well as intellectual magnetism for the critical contemporary reader.

In spite of the vastness of the topic, there are three important themes which can be distilled from The History of Sexuality and we’ll engage these themes seriously which reading/discussing the book. First, we can learns that relations of power have affected even what we take to be our innermost experience of ourselves, our “secret” desires. However, contrary to the repressive hypothesis, the character of this effect is not that of a prohibition, but that of a mobilization, an incitement, and an organization of our sexual experience. As a second theme, Foucault traces the multitudinous practices of confession by which we have been obliged to render our desires in speech and subject ourselves to interpretation. Beginning with the early Christian monastery, and progressively dispersed throughout law, psychiatry, medicine, pedagogy, family relationships, and so on, “it is in the confession that truth and sex are joined, through the obligatory and exhaustive expression of an individual secret.” (p.61) Our
twentieth-century calls for self-expression, liberation, or fulfillment are no doubt variations on the imperative to subject ourselves to the disclosure of our inner truths. However, this endless interpretation of ourselves as subjects of desire, as though our individual truth originated in this inner nature, occludes the extent to which the very practices of self-interpretation and self-disclosure have a political history.

Finally, then, it is through a certain political history that Foucault accounts for the highly charged network of relations which enlivens and orders the Western sexual experience. Beginning in the eighteenth century, governments perceived that they were not dealing simply with subjects, or even with a “people”, but with a “populations”, with its specific phenomena and its peculiar variables: birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, and so on (p.25). In this way one may understand the importance sex has assumed in Western culture over the last three centuries, for it was at the pivot of the two axes along which developed the entire political technology of life, namely, the disciplines of body, and the regulation of populations (p.145).

Background readings:
中譯：張君玫，2003，《社會理論與現代性》。台北：巨流。Ch.4

Core Readings:

Week 15 (12/24) Foucault (II): The History of Sexuality: An Introduction
Core Readings:

Suggested Readings:
PART III. POSTMODERN TURN: BAUDRILLARD

Although there are various understandings of what postmodernity is, a key notion deriving from the work of Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard, is that postmodernity involves a questioning of a modernist epistemology based on a clear distinction between subject and object. Other things said in describing postmodernity concern the “incredulity toward metanarratives” (Lyotard)—meaning that no global explanation of conduct is credible in an age of purposive rationality. Moreover, technology is seen to lead to a focus on reproduction, in contrast to the modern paradigm of production. Or again, postmodern thought takes the implications of modernity absolutely seriously. For instance, if signs and language are the result of differential relations rather than an essential quality, and if, following Foucault, power has no essential quality, postmodernity follows through some of the radical implications of this.
Jean Baudrillard is one of the most controversial and stimulating figures in contemporary philosophy and cultural criticism. Whether embraced or reviled for his reflections on “hyperreality”, he never fails to evoke strong reactions. In this course, we begin with Marx who emphasizes the primacy of “production” in his political economy writings. And we would draw a close to this course by engaging Baudrillard, who is the supreme theorist of “consumption”.

In a society dominated by production, Jean Baudrillard argues, the difference between use-value and exchange-value has some pertinence. Certainly, for a time, Marx was able to provide a relatively plausible explanation of the growth of capitalism using just these categories. The use-value of an object would be its utility related in Marx’s terms to the satisfaction of certain needs; exchange-value, on the other hand, would refer to the market-value of a product, or object measured by its price. The object of exchange value is what Marx called the commodity form of the object.

Starting with a re-evaluation and critique of Marx’s economic theory of the object, especially as concerns the notion of “use-value”, Jean Baudrillard develops the first major phase of his work with a semiotically based theory of production and the object, one that emphasizes the “sign-value” of objects.

In Simulations Baudrillard extends, some would say hyperbolizes, his theory of commodity culture. No longer does the code take priority over or even precede the consumer object. The distinctions between object and representation, thing and idea are no longer valid. In their place Baudrillard fathoms a strange new world constructed out of models or simulacra which have no referent or ground in any “reality” except their own. According to the interpretation of Mark Poster, a simulation is different from a fiction or lie in that it not only presents an absence as a presence, the imaginary as the real, it also undermines any contrast to the real, absorbing the real within itself. Instead of a “real” economy of commodities that is somehow bypassed by an “unreal” myriad of advertising images, Baudrillard now discerns only a hyperreality, a world of self-referential signs. He has moved from the TV aid which, however, never completely erases the commodity it solicits, to the TV
newscast which creates the news if only to be able to narrate it, or the soap opera whose daily events are both referent and reality for many viewers.

**Core Readings:**

**Baudrillard'd Major Writings:**

**Further Readings:**
Week 17 (1/7) Baudrillard (II): Simulations (Guest Speaker: Hung-Chao Huang)

Background readings:
中譯：張君玫，2003，《社會理論與現代性》。台北：巨流。Ch.6,7

Core Readings:

Week 18 (1/14) Final Exam (No Class)

PART V. APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL ISSUES NOT COVERED IN THIS COURSE

* Critical Appraisal of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim

Background Readings:

Core Readings:

* Reconstruction of Social Theory

Background Readings:
Stinchcombe, Arthur. 1968. Constructing Social Theories. Chicago: University of
Core Readings:

Suggested Readings:

* The Postmodern Turn

Background Readings:

Core Readings:

Suggested Readings:
Best, Steven and Douglas Kellner. 1997. The Postmodern Turn. New York:
Guilford.