

HISTORY OF SOCIAL THEORY

This course will be taught synchronously on Tuesdays and Thursdays 12.30 – 2.00p.m. at <https://berkeley.zoom.us/j/99820545821>

To take this course, you need to be enrolled, you need a Berkeley zoom account and a passcode (to be found on bcourses) to get into the above zoom room. Sections begin on August 31st. There is a waitlist for this course so it is imperative that you turn up to section.

A course on the history of social theory (ST) can be presented with two different emphases -- as **intellectual history** or as **theoretical tradition**. In the first approach the classics are examined in relation to their political, social, economic and particularly their cultural context. In the second approach the classics are systematically compared to one another to show both similarities and differences but also to place them in some developmental sequence. In this course we shall primarily follow the second approach although it will still be essential to situate the ideas of any given writer in his or her historical milieu.

It is the hypothesis of this course that within our field there are essentially three theoretical traditions: a **marxist tradition**, a **sociological tradition** and an emergent **third tradition** that transcends both Marxism and sociology. In this view of theoretical traditions, sociology developed out of a critical dialogue with the writings of Marx and Engels and the Marxists that followed them, while the third tradition, often referred to as postmodernism, seeks to go beyond the optimistic accounts of history and the future shared by marxism and sociology. Accordingly, in the first semester we shall examine the Marxist tradition, beginning with Marx and Engels, passing rapidly through German Marxism (Kautsky, Bernstein, Luxemburg), stopping at Russian Marxism to study Lenin's treatise on the transition from capitalism to communism, moving on to Antonio Gramsci as the foremost "Western Marxist" and from there dealing with "Black Marxism" as represented by W.E.B. Du Bois. Next semester we will continue to work with Du Bois putting him in dialogue with key representatives of the sociological tradition, Durkheim and Weber, followed by the feminism of Simone de Beauvoir, and two successor feminists who have worked in the tradition Beauvoir inaugurated – Catherine MacKinnon and Patricia Hill Collins.

To lend some focus to the discussion and to provide a criterion of selection from the voluminous works of classical theory we shall take a theme that concerned each one of them and that threads through their works. That theme is the division of labor. This semester we begin with the formulations of Adam Smith and proceed to show how Marx and Engels moved both against and beyond Smith and how their theories in turn were advanced by Lenin, Gramsci and Du Bois. Next semester we examine different criticisms of Smith, namely how Durkheim, Weber, Beauvoir, MacKinnon and Collins as well as Du Bois incorporate culture, ideology and politics within an expanded notion of the division of labor. In following this sequence in the study of the division of labor, we end up placing theorists themselves *within* and not outside the division of labor, thereby, questioning the foundations and assumptions of social theory.

While all our theorists agree that the division of labor has increased with the rise of industrialism, they do not agree on the forms it assumes or on the origins, conditions, growth, future

and implications of increased specialization. What have been the responses of the above writers to one another's formulations? Taking each theorist in turn, do they contradict or elaborate the views of others? Can we say that there have been advances in our understanding of the division of labor since Adam Smith?

We shall start by asking Smith, Marx and Engels the following four sets of questions:

1. What are the forms of the division of labor? What are the specific arenas of activity that each theorist refers to when writing about the division of labor? What are the categories of people who engage in the same type of activity (e.g. genders, races, status groups, classes)? Are the different levels of division of labor quantitatively or qualitatively different?

2. What are the origins, mechanisms of development and future of the division of labor? For example does the division of labor appear spontaneously or by design? Does it result from competition among individuals? From struggle between classes? Is its development continuous or discontinuous? What do the writers consider to be the destiny of the division of labor?

3. What are the conditions of existence of the division of labor? For example, is it necessary that it be regulated by force? Is a common set of values necessary? Is some over-arching body required to organize the division of labor?

4. What are the consequences of the division of labor (a) for individuals and (b) for society as a whole? Are the consequences beneficial? Does the division of labor affect the distribution of wealth, the distribution of satisfying work, conflict and disorganization in society, etc?

All the readings are available as a PDF on bcourses. I recommend you buy a reader for \$24.71 plus tax that includes all the readings for the course. Here's the link to the copy shop: <https://readers.replicadigitalink.com/product/Sociology-101-F2020-P> You can order online and pick up the reader at 2138 Oxford St. or you can have it sent to your address for another \$12-15. If you want to buy books, then I recommend the *The Marx-Engels Reader* edited by Robert Tucker (second edition 1978) and W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America* (Free Press 1998 edition with introduction by Levering Lewis). If you rely on PDFs then you should print them out so as to carefully annotate the assigned pages.

There will be two sets of short "take-home" papers – one mid-semester and the other a final – each based on questions distributed two weeks before the due date. Each set will count for 40% of the final grade and the section grade will count for 20%.

Your Graduate Student Instructors are: Audrey Augenbraum, David Joseph-Goteiner, Adriana Ramirez, Emily Ruppel and Miranda Smith. It is essential that you attend sections if you wish to pass the class.

My office hours are Tuesdays, 3-5p.m. Sign up at <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/cnkxn/> to meet me in [https://zoom.us/meeting/96374328008](https://zoom.us/join/96374328008). I will also hold a special extra seminar, "Anything Goes," open to all students. Starting September 3, it meets Thursdays 3-5p.m. in <https://berkeley.zoom.us/j/95261423707>. Come along, speak your mind, ask your questions, join in the discussion or just listen.

One of the most fruitful ways of learning ST is by forming study groups that supplement the excellent work of your GSIs. These groups become a stimulating way to become adept in social theory, and to help you prepare for the mid-term and final papers. As Marx and Engels said of communism, people develop their rich and varied abilities in *community with others*. These groups have formed the basis of life-time friendships. They become a way of living ST and making ST live. We encourage you to create your own groups but you can also contact your GSIs to help put you in touch with others similarly looking for companionship. Learning theory is like learning a foreign language, often best accomplished by practicing it collectively. When it comes to the writing of assignments and examinations, however, you must author your own work.

COURSE SCHEDULE

8/27 Introduction. What is social theory? What is the division of labor?

ADAM SMITH (1723-1790)

9/1 **What are the Meaning, Forms, Origins, Conditions of the Division of Labor?** (*The Wealth of Nations*, Book I, pp.7-25)

9/3 **What are the Consequences of Division of Labor for Individual and Society?** (*The Wealth of Nations*, Book I, pp.7-25; Book III, pp.411-3; Book V, pp.302-5)

KARL MARX (1818-1883) AND FREDERICK ENGELS (1820-1895)

9/8 **Background:** *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp.512-9; 577-8; 579-85; 681-2

9/10 **What are the Premises of All History?** (*The German Ideology*, pp.146-163)

9/15 **What are the two components of the Division of Labor? In the family? What are Classes?** (*The German Ideology*, pp.158-64; *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, pp.738-40).

9/17 **What are the Natural and Voluntary Divisions of Labor?** (*The German Ideology*, pp.160-1).
What is Communism? (*The German Ideology*, pp.160-5, 191-3, 197-200; *Capital*,

Vol.III, p.441)

- 9/22 **History as succession of Modes of Production.** (*The German Ideology*, pp.151-5; 163-175). **What is the Feudal Mode of Production?** (*The German Ideology*, pp.151-5)
- 9/24 **What is the Capitalist Mode of Production? What is the Source of Profit?** (*Wage Labour and Capital*, pp.203-18)
- 9/29 **What are the Origins, Dynamics and Future of capitalism?** (*The German Ideology*, pp.176-86; *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, pp.700-717; and pp.718-724).
- 10/1 Continued.
- 10/6 **What are the dynamics of Class Struggle under capitalism?** (*The Communist Manifesto*, pp.469-83)
- 10/8 **What is the State? What is its relation to classes?** (*The German Ideology*, pp.186-8; *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, pp.711, 713; *The Communist Manifesto*, p.475).
- 10/13 **German Marxism: Orthodoxy, Revisionism, and Revolution** (Kautsky, Bernstein, Luxemburg. For context see, Engels, *The Tactics of Social Democracy*, pp.556-573.)

LENIN (Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov) (1870-1924)

There are 45 thick volumes of Lenin's Collected Works, but we shall be reading only one treatise, his most famous *State and Revolution* which elaborates Marx's theory of the transition from capitalism to communism.

- 10/15 **Film: Introduction to Lenin**
- 10/19 **MID-SEMESTER TAKE HOME EXAMINATION DUE**
- 10/20 **What is the State, the Capitalist State, and Capitalist Democracy?** (*State and Revolution*, pp.311-325; 342-3; 360; 382).
- 10/22 **What is The Dictatorship of the Proletariat? What is its purpose?** (*State and Revolution*, pp.335-346; 367-384).
- 10/27 **What is Communism? How will it appear?** (*State and Revolution*, pp.371-384).

ANTONIO GRAMSCI (1891-1937)

Gramsci is difficult! The collection of writings from prison (1929-1935) is not easy to decipher not only because Gramsci had to write in code to escape his censors but because his physical condition made it difficult for him to write more than notes. The writings should be understood as his reflections on the failed revolution in Italy of which he was a leading participant and the mixed success of the Russian revolution. Revolution in the West cannot follow the Bolshevik path to power. Rather than follow "war of movement" the "party" (The Modern Prince) must first adopt a war of position. Throughout Gramsci uses military metaphors to analyze politics. We will read only a small portion of *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. The selected sections contain what I regard to be Gramsci's core ideas. Within each section I have indicated particular paragraphs you should concentrate on understanding.

pp.3-21:	"The Intellectuals"
Pp.123-4:	Introduction to "The Modern Prince"
Pp.125-133:	"Brief Notes on Machiavelli's Politics"
Pp.175-185:	"Analysis of Situations. Relations of Force"
Pp.229-245:	"Political Struggle and Military War", "Transition from War of Maneuver to War of Position," "Politics and Military Science", "Sociology and Political Science"
Pp.257-66:	"The State"

10/29 **Introduction to Gramsci.** "Revolution Against 'Capital'"

11/3 **State and Civil Society**

What is the State? (p.161, first new paragraph; p.80, footnote 49; p.56 footnote 5; p.244, line 7-14).

What is Civil Society? (pp.179, first new paragraph; p.243, first paragraph; p.238, first new paragraph).

11/5 **War of Position and War of Movement**

(p.243, first paragraph; p.235, new paragraph beginning line 8; p.233, first two full paragraphs; pp.238-9, the entire section; p.265, first new paragraph.)

The Party (p.133; p.265).

The Regulated Society (pp.257-65).

11/10 **Class Formation, Ideology and Intellectuals**

What are the three stages of class formation? (Last paragraph on p.180 to section end on p.185, particularly pp.180-182)

What is Ideology? (p.125 last line - p.126 line 4; p.9 last line - p.10, line 13).

What is an Intellectual? What are the differences between Organic and Traditional Intellectuals? (pp.3-10; 14-16).

WILLIAM EDWARD BURGHARDT DU BOIS (1868-1963)

W.E.B. Du Bois was one of the great intellectuals of the twentieth century with a truly global and historical vision. As a scholar his writings included the founding of urban sociology, the innovative examination of race, and the reconstruction of US history from the standpoint of African Americans. He was educated at Fisk University, then Harvard, spending time at the University of Berlin. He twice held a position as sociology professor at Atlanta University. He was also a poet, novelist and dramatist. He was a founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909, the editor of NAACP's monthly magazine, *The Crisis*, a pioneer of Pan-Africanist Movement beginning in 1900, inveterate campaigner for world peace after World War Two, and emigrating to the newly independent West African country of Ghana.

We will read Du Bois' magnum opus, *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935), which argues that the Civil war would never have been won were it not for the opposition of Southern Blacks to slavery and their enlistment as soldiers on the side of the North. Furthermore, he shows that the period of Reconstruction (after the Civil War) was not the utter disaster painted by historians. Where the latter tried to demonstrate that African Americans were not ready for Emancipation, Du Bois argues that Reconstruction was a lost opportunity for radical democracy. The North abdicated its responsibilities, handed the South back to the defeated Planter Class who in turn reasserted slavery in a new form as well as disenfranchising African Americans.

11/12 **Film: *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Biography in Four Voices***

11/17 ***Black Reconstruction – The Dominated Class***

I. The Black Worker (pp.3-16)

II. The White Worker (pp.17-31)

11/19 ***Black Reconstruction – The Dominant Class***

III. The Planter (pp.32-54)

11/24 ***Black Reconstruction –***

IV. The General Strike (pp.55-83)

11/26 **Thanksgiving Holiday**

12/1 ***Black Reconstruction***

XVI. Back Toward Slavery (pp.670-711)

12/3 ***Black Reconstruction***

XVII. The Propaganda of History (pp.711-730)

12/8 & 12/10 **TWO REVIEW SESSIONS**

12/14 **FINAL EXAMINATION DUE NO LATER THAN NOON**