This course introduces the classic works of social theory. By "classical social theory" I mean an explanation of the origins, internal dynamic, and fate of modern society. Marx, Durkheim and Weber reacting to industrialization and the rise of the nation-state all held modern societies to be sharply different from pre-modern ones. They further asked, "What were the causes and consequences of this distinctiveness"? In answering this question, each thinker developed a set of concepts that have proven to be of enduring relevance in grappling intellectually with our present circumstances. These concepts divide into four main clusters: a set of descriptions of key elements of the condition of living in modern society, a set of concepts useful for understanding the role of ideas in modern society, a set of concepts useful for explaining historical change, and a set of concepts useful for analyzing modern systems of stratification. In this class you will learn to understand, contrast, and evaluate these different concepts and their relationship to the broader theoretical visions in which they are embedded.

Your grade is based on five pieces of work.

Quiz (multiple choice and short answer x2): 20%
Section participation including paper drafts: 20%
Mid Term: 15%
Final Paper: 25%
Take Home Final Exam: 20%

1 - The quizzes are meant to assess your understanding of basic concepts. Sociology,
like other sciences, rests on a conceptual language that needs to be mastered in order to be useful. Often this involves the specification of terms that are relatively common in "lay" or everyday language but have a specific meaning in sociology. Indeed the relationship between lay language and sociological language is itself a major topic of sociological theory and research. Some example of terms that you will be learning to use in a different way in this class are, "alienation", "solidarity", "bureaucracy", and "rationality". The ability to break with everyday usage and thereby to group phenomena in a new way is one major of purpose of sociological theory and quizzes are a useful way of assessing how successfully you are doing this.

2 - Section participation is an essential part of your work in the course. You need to attend each section and be prepared to actively participate in the work that goes on there. This mainly means careful reading of the assigned material. Each of three major figures we will study together has generated oceans of commentary both in print and on the Internet. Your task however is to deal directly with the texts you have been assigned: not to do web or library research on the theorists themselves. This is because there is no substitute for reading what these men wrote. Only when you actually engage with their work directly will you, grasp not only their ideas, but, just as important, their style of thought. The three drafts of your research paper (about which more below) will also form part of your section grade.

3 - The mid-term will be similar in format to the quiz, but will include some slightly longer essay questions as well. Attendance in lecture and section, and reading the assigned material will be the best preparation for this exercise.

4 - The fourth piece of your grade is based on an independent research project. For this exercise you will need to identify a topic, collect five newspaper or journal articles about it, and analyze the topic through a Marxian, Durkheimian and Weberian lens. You will develop this piece of work in close consultation with your GSI. This exercise will allow you to use the tools you have acquired in the course to come to an understanding of the world around you. Your paper will be turned-in in three drafts in addition to the final draft, due on May 13th. Each draft of your paper will be graded, and will form a portion of your section grade.

5 - The fifth piece of your grade is based on a take home final exam. This exam will require you to write three tightly structured comparative essays of about 750 words each. The exam will ask you to compare and contrast specific arguments from specific passages of the readings. It will be passed out at the course review on May 7th, and will be due together with your final paper on May 13th.

The readings are included in six books that you need to purchase for the class. The books are:

Emile Durkheim *The Division of Labor in Society*. Translated by W.D. Halls. (Hereafter referred to as DOL).
Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religions Life*. Translated by
Carol Cosman. (Hereafter referred to as EFRL).
Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*. Edited by Lawrence H. Simon. (Hereafter referred to as SW).

**Classical Social Theory**

January 22
What is classical social theory? Why should one study it?

**Karl Marx (1818-1883): Historical Materialism**

January 24
"On the Jewish Question." Pp. 1–26 in *SW*. What is the relationship between political emancipation and human emancipation?

January 29
"Alienated Labor." Pp.58–79 in *SW*. What is alienated labor?

January 31

February 5
Marx, Karl. 1994 [1845]. "The German Ideology." Pp. 103–156 in *SW*. What is the general mechanism of historical development?

February 7

February 12

February 14

**Quiz 1**

February 19
What is primitive accumulation?

First Draft of Final Paper

Émile Durkheim (1885-1917): Differentiation and Solidarity

February 26

February 28

March 5
Durkheim, Émile. "Chapter II. The Causes" Pp. 201–222 and 277–308 in DOL. What are the causes of the division of labor and what are its abnormal forms?

March 7
Durkheim, Émile. "Introduction: The Subject of Study Sociology of Religion and Theories of Knowledge" and "Preliminary Questions" Pp. 3–83 in EFRL. What is Durkheim's question and method of answering it?

March 12

Second Draft of Final Paper

March 14
Mid-Term

Max Weber (1864-1920): Rationalization and Charisma

March 19

March 21

April 2
Research Break
April 4
Research Break

April 9

April 11

Final Rough Draft of Final Paper

April 16

April 18

April 23

April 25

April 30

May 2

Quiz 2

May 7
Course Review

May 13
Final Paper and Take Home Final Exam Due 4pm