Professor: Dylan Riley  
Course: 102 Contemporary Social Theory  
Semester: Fall 2012  
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Contemporary Social Theory: From Social Change to Social Reproduction

Marx, Durkheim, Weber and Mosca offered contrasting theories of social change. Yet each thinker understood modern society as dynamic, and transitional. In contrast to this classical tradition focusing on change, most contemporary social theories explain the reproduction of modern society: i.e. the reasons for its remarkable stability. In accounting for social stability contemporary theorists have creatively used the classical tradition. In this course we will review four main traditions of contemporary social theory: Western Marxism, Neo-Durkheimian Theory, Critical Theory, and Postmodernism/Post Structuralism.

Reader:

All the readings are available in the course reader that can be purchased from Copy Central at 2560 Bancroft Way. Copy Central’s phone number is: 848-8649.

Your grade is based on four pieces of work.

Quiz (Multiple Choice): 10%  
Section Participation: 20% (see handout)  
Mid Term: 30%  
Mini-Research Project: 20%  
Final: 20%

Reading: The reading is very difficult. You should treat the readings with the same level of seriousness that you would say a physics textbook. You need to go over and over the

September 11

September 13

September 18
Wrap up on Western Marxism.

September 20
Mid-Term

*Neo-Durkheimian Theory*

Talcott Parsons (1902-1979)

September 25

September 27

Ernest Gellner (1925-1995)

October 2

William Kornhauser (1925-2004)

October 4
November 1
Research Break

Post-Modernism/Post-Structuralism

Daniel Bell (1919-Present)

November 6
Mini Research Project Due. Wrap up on critical theory.

November 8

November 13

Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007)

November 15

Michel Foucault (1926-1984)

November 20

November 27

November 29
Course wrap up

December 3-7