

Sociology 7121  
SEMINAR: CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Course Description:

Readings of several of the founders of sociological theory: Adam Smith, Alexis de Tocqueville, Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim. We will concentrate on their substantive analyses regarding the growth of industrialism or capitalism, the emergence of democracy and new role and structure of the state, and the new forms of social relations and value systems under these conditions. Thus, our approach will be historical and comparative, attempting to relate the theories to concrete developments rather than to abstract structures or philosophical considerations. Certain methodological questions will also be discussed concerning theory construction and the character of a sociological account.

Course requirements:

One 15-20 page paper.

The course will consist partly of lectures and partly of discussion. Students should always have read the assignments and come prepared for discussion. Guides to reading and suggested secondary reading (not required: for those who want to pursue things) are included with the syllabus.

Note: You should try to obtain the editions given in the reading list. References will be made in lectures, using the page numbers of these editions.

Also note: My lecture notes and some other materials are available on my website:  
<http://members.cox.net/fweil>

Sociology 7121  
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Reading List\*

\*NB: Most important sections either underlined or in (Parentheses).

WEEK 1): ADAM SMITH

The Wealth of Nations (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1976).

Book I, Chaps.:

- 1, 2,
- 3 (1st par.),
- 4 (1st par., last 2 pp.),
- 5 (1st 3 pp.),
- 6, 7,
- 8 (1st 7 pp.),
- 9 (1st 2 pars.),
- 10 (intro; Part I: 1st par.; Part II: skim),
- 11 (intro; conclusion)

Book III, all.

WEEK 2): ADAM SMITH

The Wealth of Nations (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1976).

Book II, Chaps.:

- Introduction,
- 1 (skim),
- 3 (esp. discussion of prudence)

Book IV, Chaps.:

- Introduction,
- 1 (skim),
- 2 (1st 5 pp.; skim rest)

Book V, Chap. 1, Parts:

- II (1st 3 pp.),
- III, Articles:
  - Introduction,
  - ii (end: pp. 734-40),
  - iii (history of Church: pp. 751ff)

The Theory of Moral Sentiments (Indianapolis, Liberty Classics, 1969).

- Part I, Section I.1, III.2.
- Part II, Section II.3.
- Part III, Chs. 1, 4.
- Part IV, all.
- Part VI, Section I.

WEEK 3): TOCQUEVILLE

Democracy in America (Garden City, New York, Anchor, 1969 - or Harper Perennial 1969/1988).  
Volume One.

Author's Preface to the Twelfth Edition.

Author's Introduction.

Part I, Chs. 2-5.

Part II, Chs.

1-4,

5 (skim),

6 (skim, but read last section),

8, 9

Volume Two.

Author's Preface. (skim)

Part II, Ch. 20.

Part III, Ch. 21.

Part IV, all.

WEEK 4): TOCQUEVILLE

The Old Regime and the French Revolution (Garden City, New York, Anchor, 1955 or U. of Chicago Press, 1998).

Foreword,

Part I, ch. 4

Part II, Chaps. 1, 2, 5, 6, 8-12

Part III: all, esp. chap. 8

## WEEK 5): MARX

"On the Jewish Question," pp. 26-52 in Robert C. Tucker, The Marx-Engels Reader, Second Edition (New York, Norton, 1978). (esp. pp. 42-46)

"Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction," pp. 53-65 in Tucker. (esp. pp. 54, 62-65)

"Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," pp. 66-105 in Tucker. (esp. pp. 70-81, 101-105)

## WEEK 6): MARX

"Theses on Feuerbach," pp. 143-145 in Tucker.

The German Ideology, Part I, pp. 146-200 in Tucker.

"Preface" to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, pp. 3-6 in Tucker.

"Wage Labor and Capital," pp. 203-217 in Tucker.

Manifesto of the Communist Party, pp. 469-500 in Tucker. (esp. pp. 473-83)

## WEEK 7): MARX

Capital, Volume One (New York, Vintage, 1977).

Preface to the First Edition.

Postface to the Second Edition.

Chs. 1 (esp. pp. 125-39, 164-77),

4,

6,

7 (esp. pp. 300-302),

9, part I,

10, part I,

26

27 (1st 2 pp.),

28-30,

31 (esp. 1st 3 pp.),

32.

## WEEK 8): MARX

The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (New York, International Publishers, 1963). All.

Suggested:

Raymond Aron, Main Currents in Sociological Thought I (Garden City, New York, Anchor, 1968), "The Sociologists and the Revolution of 1848," pp. 303-340.

## WEEK 9): WEBER

The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (New York, Scribner's, 1958; or Los Angeles, Calif.: Roxbury Pub. Co., 1996/98).

## WEEK 10): WEBER

"Religious Groups (The Sociology of Religion)," pp. 399-634 in Economy and Society (Bedminster Press, 1968 or U. of California Press, 1978).

You can skim the following sections:

- i. 4, 5, 6
- ii. 3, 5, 6
- iii. 2, 3, 4
- v. easier - can read lightly
- vi. 4
- vii. 4, 5, 7
- xii. 2, 3
- xiv. 2

Read the rest.

Suggested:

"The Social Psychology of the World Religions," and "Religious Rejections of the World and their Directions," pp. 267-301, 323-359 in Gerth and Mills.

## WEEK 11): WEBER

General Economic History (New Brunswick, Transaction Books, 1981). Chs. 4, 6-12, 14, 20-22, 26-end.

## WEEK 12): WEBER

"The Types of Legitimate Domination," "The Distribution of Power within the Political Community: Class, Status, Party," and "Bureaucracy," in Economy and Society, pp. 212-301, 926-940, 956-1005.

Suggested:

"Socialism," pp. 191-219 in J. E. T. Eldridge, Max Weber: The Interpretation of Social Reality (Scribner's, 1971; or Schocken, 1980).

"Politics as a Vocation," pp.77-128 in Gerth and Mills.

"Parliamentary Government and Democratization," pp. 1442-1462 in Economy and Society

WEEK 13): DURKHEIM

The Division of Labor in Society (New York, Free Press, 1984), pp. TBA.

Suggested:

Socialism and Saint-Simon (Yellow Springs, Ohio, Antioch, 1958), ch. 1-2, pp. 5-44.

WEEK 14): DURKHEIM

The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (New York, Free Press, 1995)

Introduction

Book 1: ch. 1, 4

Book 2: ch. 1, 3, 6, 7

Book 3: ch. 3

Conclusion.

Suggested:

"The dualism of human nature and its social foundations," pp. 149-163 in Robert Bellah, ed., Emile Durkheim on Morality and Society (University of Chicago Press, 1973).

## Sociology 7121

## SEMINAR: CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

## Suggested Secondary Reading (not required)

1. General Works or Studies of More Than One Theorist

Jeffrey Alexander, Theoretical Logic in Sociology.

Raymond Aron, Main Currents in Sociological Thought, Vols. I and II.

Anthony Giddens, Capitalism and Modern Social Theory.

Geoffrey Hawthorne, Enlightenment and Despair: A History of Sociology.

E. J. Hobsbawm, The Age of Revolution: 1789-1848.

E. J. Hobsbawm, The Age of Capital: 1845-1875.

H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society.

Robert Nisbet, The Sociological Tradition.

Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action.

Gianfranco Poggi, Images of Society.

Steven Seidman, Liberalism and the Origins of European Social Theory.

Neil Smelser, Comparative Methods in the Social Sciences.

Peter Winch, The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy.

2. Adam Smith

Gerald O'Driscoll, ed., Adam Smith and Modern Political Economy.

Andrew S. Skinner, Adam Smith and the Role of the State.

Andrew S. Skinner and Thomas Wilson, eds., Essays on Adam Smith.

Thomas Wilson and Andrew S. Skinner, eds., The Market and the State: Essays in Honour of Adam Smith.

Donald Winch, Adam Smith's Politics.

### 3. Tocqueville

Raymond Aron, Main Currents in Sociological Thought, Vol. I, ch. 4.

Reinhard Bendix, Nation-building and Citizenship, ch. 2-3.

Seymour Drescher, Tocqueville and England.

Richard W. Krouse, "'Classical' images of democracy in America: Madison and Tocqueville," ch. 5 in Graeme Duncan, ed., Democratic Theory and Practice.

Seymour Martin Lipset, The First New Nation, ch. 2-4, 6.

John Stuart Mill, "Tocqueville on Democracy in America" (reviews of Vols. 1 and 2) ch. v-vi in G. Himmelfarb, ed., Essays on Politics and Culture.

Robert Nisbet, The Sociological Tradition.

Giovanni Sartori, Democratic Theory, ch. 6, 15.

Arthur Stinchcombe, Theoretical Methods in Social History, ch. 2.

John Stone and Stephen Mennell, eds., Alexis de Tocqueville on Democracy, Revolution, and Society, introduction.

Jeff Weintraub, Virtue, Community, and the Sociology of Liberty: The Notion of Republican Virtue and its Impact on Modern Western Social Thought, (forthcoming), ch. v.

Irving M. Zeitlin, Liberty, Equality, and Revolution in Alexis de Tocqueville.

Marvin Zetterbaum, Tocqueville and the Problem of Democracy.

### 4. Marx

Jeffery Alexander, Theoretical Logic in Sociology, Vol. 2. The Antinomies of Classical Thought: Marx and Durkheim.

Raymond Aron, Main Currents in Sociological Thought, Vol. I, ch. 3.

Shlomo Avineri, The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx.

Leszek Kolakowski, Main Currents of Marxism, Vol. I: The Founders.

George Lichtheim, Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study.

Georg Lukacs, History and Class Consciousness.

Robert Nisbet, The Sociological Tradition.

Joseph Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, Parts I-III.

## 5. Max Weber

Reinhard Bendix, Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait.

Thomas Burger, Max Weber's Theory of Concept Formation.

Randall Collins, Weberian Sociological Theory.

Susan Hekman, Weber, The Ideal Type, and Contemporary Social Theory.

Toby E. Huff, Max Weber and the Methodology of the Social Sciences.

Stephen Kalberg, "Max Weber's Types of Rationality: Cornerstones for the Analysis of Rationalization Processes in History," AJS 85, 5 (1980): 1145-1179.

Donald N. Levine, "Rationality and Freedom: Weber and Beyond," Sociological Inquiry 51, 1 (1981): 5-25.

Georg Lukacs, The Destruction of Reason.

Gordon Marshall, In Search of the Spirit of Capitalism.

Wolfgang Mommsen, Max Weber and German Politics, 1890-1920.

Wolfgang Mommsen, The Age of Bureaucracy: Perspectives on the Political Sociology of Max Weber.

Wolfgang Schluchter, The Rise of Western Rationalism: Max Weber's Developmental History.

Otto Stammer, ed., Max Weber and Sociology Today.

Johannes Winckelmann, ed., Max Weber: Kritiken und Antikritiken - Die protestantischen Ethik II.

## 6. Durkheim

Robert Bellah, Introduction to Emile Durkheim on Morality and Society.

Steve Fenton, Durkheim and Modern Sociology.

Anthony Giddens, Emile Durkheim.

Stephen Lukes, Emile Durkheim: His Life and Work.

Robert Nisbet, The Sociology of Emile Durkheim.

Social Forces, 59, 4 (June 1981): a special issue on Durkheim.

Themes for Week 1): Adam Smith

Be sure to understand his basic picture of free market operation in Book I.

- In what sense are the division of labor and the market "natural" phenomena, and to what extent products of intention, government policy, etc? What is the relationship between "natural" development or operation of the system and policy?
- How do economic dynamics differ in "that early and rude state of society" (or "that original state of things") from those in an "improved society," and what accounts for the differences? How do they differ in partly developed and fully developed societies? Note his theories of development in Book I.
- Is class inequality greater in a "rude" or an "improved" society?
- What are the component parts of price, and how do they correspond to the different social classes? What determines wages, and does the market guarantee a subsistence?
- Which class' interests most closely correspond with the "interests" of the whole society - or with its increasing wealth? Is Smith an apologist for the capitalist class? for capitalism?

There seem to be two divergent views of the development of the market system in Books I and III - which is the "real" Smith, and why are there two accounts?

- What does he mean by the "natural course of things" and the "natural inclinations of man" and how does this differ from what happened? What is the ideological content of the term "natural?"
- What holds the system together; what are the motives of the actors?
- What is the nature of "liberty" for Smith and how does it arise?
- Be sure to trace out the interests, values, conflicts, and alliances of the various classes in Book III in sufficient detail that you can follow his account: it will be very important to compare this account to those of Tocqueville, Marx, and Weber.

Look for hints of his impressions of what the common people experience in the new market order and under the division of labor; compare it to his picture of the old order.

Note the recurrent use of unintended consequences in Smith's accounts of social structure and historical development: how does this contrast to other possible theoretical strategies?

- How does social harmony emerge from the pursuit of self-interest?
- How does a market economy and civil peace result from struggles between social classes, each with different and conflicting goals and outlooks?

Themes for Week 2): Adam Smith

Note his characterization of the values (or "virtues," as he calls them) of the various classes - esp. the nobility, the bourgeoisie, the common people.

- How do these virtues propel socioeconomic development? Compare private virtues with the behavior of government and princes.
- How are accumulation or productivity related to the different types of virtue and motivation? What is productive labor as against unproductive labor? How does Smith characterize the latter?
- Are there limits to societal "reason," to planning?

What is the nature of the social bond: what are the interpersonal ties which hold society together?

- Are there different accounts in different books? (Cf. esp. Books I and III, WN; TMS)
- Are there different ties in different societies?
- What are - the Invisible Hand, the Impartial Spectator, the Man within the Breast - and how do they function in Smith's theory?

What are the effects of the division of labor on the laborer? What remedies exist, and how sufficient are they?

- How does the education of youth affect this problem? What effect does such education have on the worker? What effect does an educated worker have on the state and capitalist society? Can you detect roles for nationalism, patriotism, or public spirit here?
- In the section of WN on the instruction of people of all ages, Smith discusses primarily religion. What role does religion play, compared to the education of youth?

What is the role of the following in Smith's theory?

- The Church. Compare its history with the history of feudalism with respect to socioeconomic development and liberty.
- The nation-state. What is its relationship to socioeconomic development? Compare it to feudalism and the Church.
- Justice. What is its relationship to property? Note the class interests of justice; the role of justice in socioeconomic development.
- The philosopher or social analyst. Compare his role to the role of the government.

What are the reasons or ends of society? Note the answers of classical liberalism (peace and prosperity): the higher goals are deflected to the private sphere (e.g., religion), partly for the sake of civil peace. Is the only reason for this economic?

Themes for Week 3): Tocqueville

Be sure to understand the following key concepts. What are his views of them?

- Democracy, equality; aristocracy.
- Liberty or freedom; despotism or tyranny.
- Is he justified in making an analytical distinction between democracy and liberty? In these and later readings, note what theoretical use he makes of the distinction.
- Politics or the political; the social. Does he make a distinction between these two ideas?

What is Tocqueville's causal model for the development and maintenance of a particular regime form or political culture?

- Work carefully through his historical accounts of France and the United States, pp. 9-49, and his account of the maintenance of democracy in America, pp. 277-315. Are his accounts of historical transition and of dynamic equilibrium equally convincing?
- Be sure to understand his discussion of local government thoroughly, esp. the township (concentrate on the principles, not the empirical detail). Why does he make a distinction between government and administration, and how does this fit into his theory of liberty?
- Weigh the importance of the following in Tocqueville's account: mores, institutions and associations, laws, participation, class (or estate) structure, religion. Can one say that he assigns greater importance to material or cultural causes, or can one not make this distinction in his theory?
- He has ambivalent views about parties, the press, and political associations. What are they? Compare his theories to Madison's Federalist 10 and to Durkheim on secondary associations, if you can.
- As Tocqueville's work matured, he developed his comparative-historical method of analysis further. Look for the beginnings of it in the readings for this week. Pay particular attention to the way he uses different cases (nations, regions, cultures, etc.).

What are the dangers to freedom and democracy, and what are the disadvantages of them?

- Tocqueville makes a distinction between liberty and democracy; does he posit a contradiction between them?
- Be sure to understand why centralization poses a danger to liberty and democracy.
- What is tyranny of the majority, and how is it possible? What can prevent it?
- Do aspects of economic growth or social class present problems? What prevents the formation of social class in America? Is there a danger of a rise of an aristocracy?
- What is the fate of cultural and social independence in a democracy?

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(Tocqueville Themes, cont.)

Tocqueville draws a graphic picture of mores and social relations in democratic America, and always contrasts them implicitly or explicitly with France. Be sure to follow his characterizations and causal analyses.

- What is "self-interest properly understood" and its relation to egoism, to individualism? Note his comments on altruism and traditional morality. How is social isolation related to democracy, to centralization, to despotism? Note how associations function to reduce isolation in a democracy.
- How do social ties differ in different regime forms? What are the differences in interpersonal relations in an aristocracy, in a democracy? What are the influences on mores; the relations between status levels, between family members, between sexes?

What is Tocqueville's attitude toward Adam Smith?

- What are the effects of capitalism, commercial society, industry; of corporations, free associations?
- Compare their concepts of freedom, of individualism, of the moral effects of egoistic pursuit of self-interest, of the common good.
- Compare their attitudes on centralization of administration vs. national policy for encouraging industry (e.g., by providing infrastructure).

Part IV of Volume II of DIA is a sustained analysis of the disintegration of liberal democracy into democratic despotism. Be sure to understand the elements of Tocqueville's analysis.

- How does his analysis of egoism fit into his theory of breakdown? His distinction between liberty and equality?
- What is the future of revolutions and of reform in a democracy? Why is there such a great desire for public tranquility? Why does he say indifference is a greater danger to democracy than anarchy?
- Is he clear about how centralization comes about historically or developmentally?
- Note the relationship between centralization and the stability of a regime form. He seems to enjoy the paradox that although centralized regimes are more powerful, they are more brittle, less resilient.
- He discusses the relative chances of various countries for success in maintaining liberal democracy. Note his theory in ch. 4 of the significance of historical sequence in development, whether freedom or equality comes first.
- What is the character of democratic despotism (see esp. ch. 6)? Do you see any resemblance to descriptions of life under fascism? Can you see why theorists of totalitarianism (and mass society) were so eager to claim Tocqueville as an antecedent?

### Themes for Week 4): Tocqueville

In Democracy in America, Tocqueville calls for a "new political science" which will educate democracy in political liberty. The democracy he wants to educate is, of course, his own France; but he did not investigate America as a model for France, but rather as a source for general principles. We might consider The Old Regime and the French Revolution (and its planned sequel) as Tocqueville's application of his new political science. In contemporary language, we might also call it one of the earliest examples of a thorough comparative-historical account of the causes of a major sociopolitical transformation.

Tocqueville writes in the Forward of the Old Regime that he still adheres to everything he wrote in Democracy in America. Make sure you understand the major "variables" he uses in his analyses.

- Liberty, despotism, democracy, aristocracy.
- Centralization of government and administration, local self-rule, the institutional framework for free political participation.
- Individualism, egoism, social isolation.

In developing his causal analysis of the downfall of the Old Regime, Tocqueville always uses a comparative method; and he considers comparisons across time in one nation as valid as those between nations. He always says that superficial conditions were the same in France as in other European nations, but that some crucial factor(s) differed - usually one or more of the variables listed above.

- As you read, try to accumulate an overall impression of the cases Tocqueville uses in his comparative account: medieval France, absolutist France, Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary France; England, Germany, America (he also mentions China briefly).
- Part Two is an examination of the remote causes of the Revolution. Be sure to understand how the following factors differed in pre-Revolutionary France from other cases: the condition of feudalism and the peasantry, administrative centralization, social stratification and fragmentation, the relation of equality to freedom.
- Part Three is an examination of the immediate causes of the Revolution. Be sure to understand how the following factors differed in pre-Revolutionary France from other cases: the role of intellectuals, the position of the Church, the question of reform and of rising expectations - and of the rate of change.

One of the pleasures of Tocqueville's Old Regime is his delight in paradox and irony. Don't neglect this in attempting to understand the systematic aspects.

Themes for Week 5): Marx

Interpretations of Marx sometimes differ over the question whether Marx decisively broke with his early formulations around the time of the German Ideology or immediately thereafter. Those who argue that there is no break in Marx's development claim that much of his later theory is inherent in his earlier formulations; and those who argue that there was a break infer that Marx saw such problems in his early formulations that he gave them up as unworkable. Since I think the second interpretation is closer to the truth (although Marx seems largely to have adhered to the research program he set for himself early on) one may ask why we read arguments which Marx himself later rejected. The reason is that, by their later absence, they highlight the nature of Marx's mature arguments; and this incompatibility in turn helps us see why certain neo-Marxist accounts have not held up well.

- The main arguments which Marx excludes from his later formulations center around the concepts of estrangement (Entfremdung), alienation (Entäusserung), alienation/state of being sold (Veräusserung), and objectification (Vergegenständlichung). Be sure to work carefully through the steps of his account.
- Is estranged labor unique to capitalism? Is objectification? What would non-estranged labor be?
- What is man's nature, his "species being?" (Don't get too stuck on this term.) What are real human needs? What is Marx's objection to money? What are the true relations of men to each other?

There are a large number of arguments in Marx's early writings which he most definitely did not give up, and some which we may infer he did not give up, although he did not return to them in his later writings. It is interesting to read some of these theories in their original, rough cut.

- Note his critique of all aspects of liberalism in "On the Jewish Question." How does it compare to Tocqueville's critique of egoism? What does "emancipation" mean? Note also his use of crude anti-Semitic expressions (e.g., his linking of Judentum, through "commerce" to huckstering [Schacher], a standard pejorative phrase for Jewish trade). Is he anti-Semitic? What is Marx's general attitude toward religion?
- Note that the proletariat and the proletarian revolution first appear in Marx's theory as the historical means by which society overcomes liberalism's dualism (or reconciles estrangement). Try to follow his various treatments of the problem of estrangement and reconciliation with respect to religion, philosophy, civil and political society, the economy, property, history and social classes. Why is it necessary for him to postulate a new, social human nature as requisite for these reconciliations? a reunification of man with his essence in labor (species being)? the construction of a revolutionary class with more than partial emancipatory power? What is communism?

Themes for Week 6): Marx

The "Theses on Feuerbach," The German Ideology, and the "Preface" to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy contain Marx's theory of history and historical change, and also some elements of a theory of the concrete, empirical course of history (the Communist Manifesto and Capital contain more material on the latter). Be sure to understand both aspects.

- On his theory of history, note especially these features: the basis of human activity in labor; the relationship of the forces of production to the relations of production and how their interaction drives history forward (Marx's terminological consistencies may cause some confusion here, but see pp. 4-5, 180, 192-6); the sources of consciousness in this dynamic; and the progressive cycle of revolutions which results from this process - and Marx's teleological predictions of the ends of history.
- His empirical history may be found mainly on pp. 151-4 and 176-86. How do changes in property relations and class relations fit into his general theory referred to above? Follow the stages of development closely.
- What are the precise reasons Marx gives for predicting a proletarian revolution? (See pp. 161f, 172f, 192f, 197f, and the
- Communist Manifesto. Note his sketch of communist society (p. 160), which is unique in his writings. Why is the State an illusory community?

"Wage Labor and Capital" contains Marx's first formulation of his microeconomic theory, which would be much elaborated on in Capital I.

- Note Marx's theories of value (in use and in exchange) and of commodities, although they are not well developed here: they will reappear in Capital.
- What is the nature of wages and capital, and what is their relation to each other? In what sense is labor power a commodity, and why is the worker forced to sell it if the market is nominally free - and what is the difference between a wage-worker and a slave? How does competition drive wages and prices down?
- If productivity is constantly rising, then why is the worker driven to the point of subsistence faster than his share of the product falls? Part of the answer to this was unfortunately cut out of the Tucker text (see the ellipsis on p. 210: you can find the missing text in
- Marx-Engels Selected Works, 1970, pp. 84-5), but we will also find an answer in Capital.

The Communist Manifesto contains only a few additional features not previously noted, but it is especially graphic since it was written for general readership.

- What is Marx's theory of the State, and what is the importance of politics? What is his attitude toward capitalism?
- Note again his reasons for predicting a proletarian revolution. Why does he also predict class polarization, and what are his characterizations of other classes?

Themes for Week 7): Marx

We will be trying to understand three things, primarily, in Volume 1 of Capital: (1) Marx's "microeconomic" theory of the origin of value in a market- or capitalist society; (2) certain immediate consequences of the microeconomics for wage and employment rates, population dynamics, capital accumulation, and class relations; and (3) Marx's account of the empirical historical development of capitalism. We will examine the first two features this week, and the third in week 9. (We will not read such "macroeconomic" predictions as the theory of cyclical crises and falling profit rates, which appear in other volumes of Capital and elsewhere.)

Marx was extremely proud of his "microeconomics," for he felt that he had used classical political economics - without violating its laws in any way and satisfying all its conditions (see p. 301) - to derive his own highly unorthodox results. Perhaps there is something in this claim, inasmuch as neoclassical economics seems to have abandoned the classical foundations.

- The selections we are reading in ch. 1-7 contain Marx's account of the origins of value, or more particularly "exchange-value." Be sure to understand how he uses the distinction between use-value and exchange-value, together with the characterization of labor-power as a commodity, to explain the creation of surplus-value (this comes to a head in the second part of ch. 7).
- Note further his arguments about the origins of surplus-value, from its "micro" origins in the production process itself (ch. 7), to his analyses of the length of the working day, to his discussions of the sources of higher worker productivity (use of more capital, different work organization, and in general more advanced "modes of production"). What is the relationship between labor-power, capital, and productivity?

How does Marx use the results of his theories of the production of value and surplus-value to explain: the creation and re-creation of social classes and class relations, the rate of wages, the extent of unemployment and the relationship of wages to unemployment?

What has become of the themes of Marx's early writings in this, his most finished mature work?

- How is commodity fetishism a re-expression of his early quest for human relations unmediated by abstract economic categories?
- Note the variety of ways his concepts of estrangement and alienation have survived, but in more precise or formal form. Note how the concepts of use-value and exchange-value are used here. How is labor itself described? What happens when labor-power is controlled by a capitalist, by a feudal lord? In what sense is capital itself estranged labor which attains power over the worker? How is the worker and the working class fragmented?

If production rises nationally and the worker still gets the same share, why in Marx's theory is he still emiserated?

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## (Marx Themes, cont.)

It is interesting to compare Marx's historical account of original [ursprüngliche, translated as "primitive"] accumulation of capital to his earlier accounts of socioeconomic development in the Communist Manifesto and the German Ideology, to his theories of history in those works and in the "Preface," to his account of the 1848 Revolution in France in the Eighteenth Brumaire, which we will read next week, and finally, to Adam Smith's history in Book III of The Wealth of Nations.

Pay very close attention to agency and causation: which historical actors (generally, but not always, classes) were doing what to whom and with what effect.

- Exactly what role did the newly emerging industrial capitalist mode of production play in making the landed masses available as industrial workers?
- Compare Marx's account of the forcible expropriation of the peasantry (the "clearing of the estates") to Smith's account of the end of "rustic hospitality" with the dismissal of retainers. Were the intentions of the landowners the same in both accounts? were the results?
- Marx says in the Communist Manifesto that the state is controlled by the ruling class. In whose interests was legislation enacted against vagabondage? In whose interests were colonial, debt, tax, and protection policies (p. 915ff) carried out? Where was the capitalist class at this time? What is the role of force?
- What is the relationship of agricultural growth to industrial growth? Where do domestic markets come from? Where do consumers come from? How does Marx's account compare to Smith's account of the development of domestic markets and commercial agriculture from foreign trade?

Contrast his theory of colonization with Smith's. Note in both cases how the laws of market- or capitalist society do not come into play as long as there is an open frontier. Recall that Tocqueville also remarked on this.

Contrast Marx's paeans to the bourgeois mode of production in The Communist Manifesto with his characterizations of industrial production in ch. 15 of Capital I.

Note how Marx's predicted role for the proletariat in ch. 32 of Capital I developed from his "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel," through the Communist Manifesto and the German Ideology. What is the importance of the concentration of workers in one place, of the development of a world market, of the constant reduction in the number of capitalists? And what is the expropriation of the expropriators, the negation of the negation? Is this scientific description or a program for political action - or both?

Themes for Week 8): Marx

Does Marx's concrete history contradict his theory?

What are classes and how are they defined? What is their historical role?

- What about the polarization of society into two classes?
- What does Marx mean by comparing the peasantry to a sack of potatoes?
- What is the role of politics and antagonism in class formation?

What is the state? Does it have its own interests separate from those of the "ruling" class?

- What is the role of bureaucrats, of the army, of the executive, of the legislature, etc.?
- What is the relation of class to party?
- How does the bourgeoisie rule without ruling?

Note the political positions of the following historical actors.

- What is the historical role of the proletariat, of the lumpenproletariat?
- What are the dilemmas of the republican bourgeoisie? How are the questions of the franchise and of civil rights problems for them?
- Note how Bonaparte grants or withholds order and disorder.
- What is the place of the peasants?

Themes for Week 9): Max Weber

- What is the nature of the form of capitalism Weber is trying to characterize in The Protestant Ethic? Consider the following concepts.
  - \* Acquisitiveness.
  - \* Rationality: formally free labor, separation of business and household, book-keeping, organization of labor, continuous calculation. Compare these to other forms of rationalism.
  - \* Modern vs. traditional capitalism: note that the former had to fight its way in the world.
  - \* What is the "spirit of capitalism" in this sense? Does it persist today?
  
- What are the importance of religious denomination and social stratification to his central argument? What is the importance of the Calling (Beruf)?
  
- What is worldly asceticism? Note that Weber specifies two routes to it, Calvinism and Baptism. What are their doctrines, practices, and psychological effects?
  - \* For Calvinism, note these factors: predestination, inner loneliness, no confession, disenchantment of the world, signs of election, works and systematic organization of life-activity. Compare these to the emotionalism of Pietism and Methodism.
  - \* For Baptism, note these: no predestination but rebirth, systematic organization of life to be ready to receive grace.
  - \* Compare the Protestant organization of the world to other-worldly asceticism - monastic rationalism and retreat from the world.
  - \* Note the paradox of worldly asceticism and the Protestant ethic: they are in favor of acquisition (accumulation), but against wealth which weakened religiosity.
  
- Note Weber's image of the Iron Cage in the creation of capitalism through systematic work and accumulation, together with the corruption of religion.
  - \* What are the alternatives to continued life under capitalism? Note bureaucracy, tradition, charisma and routinization of charisma.

Themes for Week 10): Max Weber

Themes for Week 11): Max Weber

- In reading Weber's General Economic History, it is helpful to keep two contrasts in mind, that with his own Protestant Ethic, and that with the writings of Marx. In relation to the former, he generalizes his account based exclusively on religion, and in relation to the latter, he continues his argument against a strictly economically-based interpretation of the development of capitalism: in both cases political causes play a primary role.
- Be sure to follow closely his ideal typical accounts of land-based and urban economies, and the principles of production, power relations, and value orientations on which they are based. There is no need for present purposes to follow every detail of the variety of agricultural production.
- The second and third parts of the book concern the development of industrial production and forms of trade, respectively.
  - \* Weber's account of industrial production constitutes his description of urban feudalism. Note the role of the guilds and of traditionalism in relation to the modern capitalist mode of production, and the factors involved in the rise of the factory system.
  - \* On trade, note especially the in-group/out-group double standards in trading ethics, especially between different ethnic groups. Compare this account to the descriptions of the pariah peoples (Indians and Jews) from his Sociology of Religion and the parallel account in part IV of the present work.
- Part IV is the most important part of the book. In his definition of capitalism, note especially the distinction he makes at the outset between wants and needs, and the six defining characteristics of the capitalist mode of production: how does this definition differ from Marx's? How does the distinction between wants and needs differ from ancient and medieval social thought? What is his causal argument about the development of capitalism?
  - \* How important is the development of industrial technique, of colonial policy?
  - \* What is the exact importance of political factors? Why are citizenship and urbanism so important politically, and how does his description of forms of warfare fit in here? In general, how important were war and conquest in spurring capitalistic development? What is the role of the state, of rational law, of mercantilist economic policy? How do these relate to a free market economy? What role did the production of luxury goods for the court and aristocracy play?
  - \* Review his coda on ethical factors and the capitalist "spirit" in the last chapter. Does he add anything new we haven't already seen in the Protestant Ethic and the Sociology of Religion?

Themes for Week 12): Max Weber

- You will remember the image of the Iron Cage from the last pages of The Protestant Ethic, which referred to the trap of rational compulsion under modern capitalism. It is clear that Weber was also thinking of such compulsion under a rational state - and a modern political party or movement: bureaucracy is the feature common to both. This theme pervades his writings on political sociology.
- "The Types of Legitimate Domination," as a chapter in Part I of Economy and Society, is highly schematic and not, strictly speaking, meant to be read as an essay - but unfortunately, we do not have time to read all the later chapters which expand on these themes. What we will miss most by not reading the other chapters on forms of legitimate domination and law is a fuller sense of what Schluchter calls Weber's "developmental history."
  - \* What is the nature of legitimacy? Does it refer to the rulers or the ruled? How is power different from authority? And how can one empirically decide what domination is legitimate? (Do the forms of social action or the principles of sociological method help at all here?)
  - \* Try to think of the three types of legitimate domination not only as an abstract typology but also as categories to be applied to an historical analysis.
  - \* What are Weber's views of revolution, of bureaucracy, of democracy?
  - \* In Weber's chapter on "Bureaucracy" note especially the relations of this form of domination to capitalist and socialist economic forms, and to feudal and democratic regime types. In terms of a developmental-historical scheme, how does Weber present bureaucratic domination as inescapable - or as only subject to charismatic outbursts?
- "Class, Status, and Party" and the essay on "Socialism" treat certain specialized topics, especially in Weber's contemporary society; and they are as close as we can come here to his topical political writings.
  - \* How much of Marx's theories does Weber accept in these essays, how much does he criticize, and how much does he incorporate into his own perspective and to his own purposes? Note the distinction between critiques based on empirical grounds - that Marx's predictions have not been borne out - and those on theoretical grounds, especially objections stemming from Weber's theories of bureaucracy, of intellectuals, and of the nature of leadership in a democracy (i.e., this form of legitimate domination).
  - \* Note the principles on which each category of stratification in "Class, Status, and Party" is based. If you know Montesquieu, you might compare them to the principles on which he based his typology of regimes (fear, honor, virtue). Can you find a proto-theory of "human capital" in this essay?

Themes for Week 13): Durkheim

- You should read the Preface to the second edition of The Division of Labor in Society, "Occupational Groups," after you read the rest of the book, in part because it was written later, and in part because it is meant to address certain problems developed in the body of the text.
  - \* How are occupational groups a solution to the problem Durkheim sees, and what problems do they raise?
  - \* How do they compare to State action, and can you imagine them without State action? In this regard, what is their relation to medieval corporatism, to so-called "neo-corporatism" (see works edited by Philippe Schmitter and Gerhard Lehmbruch), to fascism? What would Durkheim's position on these constructions be? (His nephew, Marcel Mauss, asserted he would have been horrified by fascism - but what are his arguments against it in anticipation?)
- Be sure to understand Durkheim's concept of social solidarity and his distinction between the two main types, mechanical and organic. Is this distinction tenable? (He later seems to have partially dropped it.)
  - \* Don't get caught up in the discussion of law for its own sake, but rather, as it elucidates the types of social bond.
  - \* Why does Durkheim say that every society is a moral society? What is morality?
  - \* What does the growth of the population have to do with social solidarity?
- What are "Abnormal Forms" and why does he call them "abnormal?" We will see a good deal more about the concept of normality in his more methodological writings next meeting. The concept of normality, of course, is related not only to moral concepts but also to notions of (biological) health and (bio-statistical) average; do you see a connection to the older notion of "the natural" (e.g., Natural Law, State of Nature)?
  - \* What is Anomie, and what is its relation to industrialization and social classes? What might social justice be?
  - \* What is the social function of sanctions? Their relation to freedom, to morality?
  - \* What is the role of individualism? (This concept attracted Durkheim's attention almost as much as those of "society" and "normality.")
- The set of lectures on "Socialism" is vintage Durkheim, strangely apolitical and ahistorical (although he demonstrates that he is as capable as any scholar of conducting a political and historical analysis), and with his best bedside manner.
  - \* In what way is socialism a symptom of an unhealthy society - and what do you think of the medical imagery here?
  - \* What is the role of the State, of industry, of the economy in general?
  - \* What is the difference between socialism and communism?

Themes for Week 14): Durkheim

- The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life must be considered the most important work in Durkheim's corpus, and the culmination of his theoretical development. In it he moves directly to an analysis of the central bonds or forces which hold societies together and give them their character.
- What is Durkheim's definition of religion? Be sure to understand the distinction between sacred and profane. How is a Church important?
  - \* Why does Durkheim insist that all important elements of the most advanced religions can also be found in the most primitive religions - and in the most primitive societies?
  - \* What is totemism and its relation to religion? How do clans fit into this relationship? What is the role of symbolism or emblems? This nexus of issues - in which totems externalize the central values of a social group - is one of the most valuable insights Durkheim provides.
  - \* What is the origin or source of religious belief - and of much else? What is the role of Mana or Force here, and what are their origins? His answer can be found in Book 2, chapter 6, which probably contains the central discussion of the book: note his very literal-minded approach. What, then, is the nature of the collective effervescence he mentions on p. 250? Is it limited to primitive societies?
  - \* How does Durkheim differ from Weber in the way he defines religion? Can one say that Weber refrained from providing a definition in the sense that Durkheim did? Why might Weber have done this, and what does that imply about Durkheim's effort?
- Is his theory of knowledge tenable? What is the source of concepts, of our ideas of time and space? How does he attempt to overcome the radical relativism embedded in his approach (see p. 493)?
  - \* What is the status of collective representations, of categories, and their relation to his theory of knowledge?
  - \* What is the relation of religion to science? What are their common social bases? Are they in conflict?
  - \* Consider the other realms of social life which Weber discusses in his "Sociology of Religion" and his "Religious rejections of the world and their directions." Durkheim writes in a footnote on p. 466 that economic life is the one realm which "has not yet been expressly attached to religion," with certain exceptions, and that its relation to religion "has not yet been studied [!]" How, then, do Durkheim and Weber differ on the relation of religion to the other realms of social life? (In addition to economics, think of political, military, aesthetic, erotic life.)
- "Dualism of Human Nature" expands certain themes from the Elementary Forms.
  - \* What are the different forms of dualism?
  - \* How does Durkheim expand on the notion of the sacred?

Seminar: Classical Sociological Theory  
Suggested Paper Topics

Choose one of the following topics for a paper, or propose another topic to me for approval. Papers should be 15-20 pages.

- 1) The theorists all have very different understandings of the concept of "freedom" or "liberty." For any one or two, but not all, of the theorists, discuss critically (a) how they define the concept, (b) their accounts of the social and historical origins of freedom or liberty, and (c) the conditions which maintain freedom or liberty.
- 2) Write on the same question, but with regard to the concept of "democracy."
- 3) For any one or two, but not all, of the theorists, write an essay clarifying how each theorist treated the question, "What is the nature of the social bond?" You may use any or all the following subsidiary questions to construct your analysis, or you may develop your own: What ties of interest or sympathy hold society together? Does conflict of interest tend to strengthen or weaken social bonds? Does the type of social bond vary for different classes of people and/or different societies or historical periods? Are some forms of the social bond "natural" or perversions of the "natural" (and what is "natural"), and are some beneficial or harmful to people?
- 4) One could characterize the goals of historical sociology as (1) the identification of the most important underlying structural variables, (2) the provision of the most efficient causal explanations and the deepest interpretive understanding, and (3) the development of the most reliable means of forecasting future changes. Modify this definition if necessary and use it as the basis for a critical discussion of one or two (not more) of the theorists. You may either discuss their methodology or a substantive topic (e.g., origins of capitalism, religion, social bases of democracy).
- 5) There seem to be at least three accounts of society and societal development in the writings of Adam Smith, each grounded on different principles: (a) The peaceful pursuit of individual self-interest combined with "a certain propensity in human nature...to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another," leads to a harmonious market society, as long as the government, corporations, etc. do not interfere (see esp. Book I, Wealth of Nations). (b) The political, military, and perhaps commercial struggle of various historical social classes or estates, eventually led or is leading to the triumph of the capitalist class and their market organization of society (see esp. Book III and parts of Book V, Wealth of Nations). And (c) the characteristic of Sympathy in human nature, when combined with bourgeois virtues of prudence, hard work, etc. (but also with a measure of unwarranted ambition), "changed the whole face of the globe" by introducing a capitalist society, even against the obstacles put up by aristocratic vanity, prodigality, etc. (see esp. Moral Sentiments and parts of Book II, Wealth of Nations). Are these three accounts compatible or contradictory, and why? And as a result, how adequate is Smith's account overall?
- 6) In both The Old Regime and the French Revolution and Democracy in America, Tocqueville observes that people will generally love equality more than they love freedom, and he also writes, "in the dawning centuries of democracy, individual independence and local liberties will always be the products of art. Centralized government will be the natural thing" (Democracy in America, p. 674). What is Tocqueville's conception of "democratic despotism?" How and why did America and France follow such different paths, according to Tocqueville? What measures would Tocqueville prescribe to revive the passion for freedom in the France of his day or for preserving it in the America of his day? If you want, comment briefly on the continuing applicability of Tocqueville's theory for certain contemporary societies.

- 7) What, for Marx, are the motor forces of historical change? How does Marx describe the history of civil society, and how does he explain the transition from one mode of production to another? Consider whether he offers more than one account, especially in his theoretical writings on one side (including the Communist Manifesto) and in his historical writings on the other side (esp. the Eighteenth Brumaire).
- 8) Consider Weber's main classifications of "legitimate domination." The bulk of his text deals with the forms of organization of domination and with its claims for legitimacy; yet Weber also insisted that these claims must be accepted if domination is not to be simply force. What would acceptance of legitimacy consist in for Weber? What processes operate to facilitate this acceptance? How might an analysis of the various beliefs (e.g., religion, culture) and of various segments of the population (e.g., classes, castes) help this analysis?
- 9) Weber clearly saw the development of the modern state as of central importance to the development of capitalism. Write an essay regarding the effects of political forms on economic action. For instance, to what extent does Weber argue that rational economic forms can co-exist comfortably only with rational forms of domination? How does his analysis of citizenship bear on this question?
- 10) On the basis of your reading in Weber's sociology of religion, how would you characterize his understanding of the role of ideas in social life and social change? Discuss, with particular reference to Weber's analysis of the role played by ideas in the development of capitalism.
- 11) Discuss Weber's and Durkheim's theories of the relationship between religion and science; between religion and one other sphere in society of your choice. What do these relationships tell us about Weber's and Durkheim's respective theories of the place of religion in society and in history. You may answer this question with reference to one of the two theorists.
- 12) What does Durkheim mean by "normal" and "pathological" in his sociology? What, for him, are the pathological elements of modern society, and what remedies does he propose to alleviate such malaise? Do you find Durkheim's concepts and analyses persuasive? (Durkheim's books, Suicide and Rules of the Sociological Method are relevant. See me if you want reading suggestions.)
- 13) All of Durkheim's works pertain to the origins, content and effects of morality. (1) Establish the connection between Durkheim's perspective on morals and his critique of methodological individualism. And (2) write on one of the following:
  - a) With reference to Durkheim's Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, show why society is the "necessary condition" for the existence of moral life.
  - b) With reference to The Division of Labor in Society, discuss the major forms of social solidarity and how moral life "varies with this solidarity."