**SOCILOGY 475: CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY**

Fall 2016

**Instructor:** Dr. Anna Paretskaya  
**Lectures:** Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00–2:15 PM  
**Classroom:** Van Vleck Hall, Room B115

**Office:** Sewell Social Sciences Building, Room 8135  
**Office Hours:** Monday 1:30 PM–2:30 PM, Tuesday 11:30 AM–12:30 PM, or by appointment  
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**Overview**
The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the work of four thinkers foundational to the discipline of sociology: Alexis de Tocqueville, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber. Even though these scholars wrote in response to social changes and conflicts of the nineteenth-century Europe (and, to a lesser extent, the United States), their general concerns revolved around issues that still matter to us today: capitalism as a form of social order, the interplay between democracy and bureaucracy, the role of religion in the face of the rise of scientific thought, and the concept of the individual, to give just a few examples. Tocqueville, Marx, Durkheim, and Weber were among the first thinkers to try to explain the nature of society in a scientific way. Many contemporary debates in sociology build on—or at the very least are informed by—the ideas, concepts, methods, and approaches of these theorists. For those who study sociology, not being familiar with their work is like not knowing your grandparents. The course will focus on the themes of freedom, revolutions, inequality, rationality, individuality, and solidarity. In addition to contextualizing these works in social changes of the times when they were produced, we will think about their contemporary significance.

**Departmental learning objectives**
Beyond the specific substantive content we cover in this class, I have designed it to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities by the Department of Sociology:

- **Critically think about society and social processes.** Sociology graduates can look beyond the surface of issues to discover the “why” and “how” of social order and structure and consider the underlying social mechanisms that may be creating a situation, identify evidence that may adjudicate between alternate explanations for phenomena, and develop proposed policies or action plans in light of theory and data.

- **Critically evaluate published research.** Sociology graduates will be able to read and evaluate published research.

- **Communicate skillfully.** Sociology majors write papers and make oral presentations that build arguments and assess evidence in a clear and effective manner.

- **See things from a global and historical perspective.** Sociologists learn about different cultures, groups, and societies across both time and place. They are aware of the diversity of backgrounds and experiences across space and time. They understand the ways events and processes in one place and time are linked to those happening in other places and times.
Requirements and expectations

Readings
This course involves intensive reading of primary sources rather than textbooks. On average, you will be required to read close to 100 pages per week. If you are unable or unwilling to do this much reading, you should drop the course right now (or check out other sections of this class where reading assignments might be not as heavy). Since there will be no other regular assignments, my expectation is that you devote maximum of your study time to reading and comprehending the texts—and do so ahead of each class. Many of the texts (or parts of them) will be very difficult to grasp on only one read, so you are encouraged to read them several times. Hence, budget at least twice as much time as you normally would to read the same number of pages in a textbook or a book of fiction. You are not required to memorize everything, but I expect you to identify and develop a fair understanding of key ideas and themes. To help you understand the texts, I will circulate reading questions for each selection beforehand. Since we will be very frequently consulting with texts in class, please bring the relevant readings to class with you.

Attendance and participation
Attendance is mandatory, but three absences are allowed over the course of the semester; any more absences, or repeatedly coming late and/or leaving early, will result in a lower attendance/participation grade. I will note attendance every day. The class format will be a combination of lecture and discussion with proportion of each varying from day to day depending on the material covered in class. Because the readings are so difficult, I will spend a good amount of time lecturing to explicate and explain them. But at the same time, I cannot emphasize enough that the more you ask questions, make comments, and critically assess the readings and ideas, the more you will learn. Once again, the readings in this class will be quite complex and the issues they cover even more complex, therefore if you don’t understand what’s going on in the text (or lecture for that matter), in all probability you are not the only one in the classroom. Thus, don’t hesitate to raise your hand and demand clarification!

Written assignments/exams/quizzes
I have designed the assignments that I give out in this class with the intention that each would test and evaluate a different aspect of your progress in this course. With the pop quizzes I want to give an extra incentive for you to do the readings; the two tests will assess how good of a grasp of the material you have; the final paper will give you a chance to showcase your analytical and critical skills.

Pop quizzes: Every once in a while I will give a quiz at the beginning of class to be sure that you are completing the readings. There will be at least six quizzes (more if necessary) during the semester. Quizzes will be short and pretty easy for those who’ve done the homework, but nearly impossible for those who have not. Each quiz will be given PASS or FAIL; they will count toward the combined grade for attendance/participation/quizzes (for grade breakdown, see below).

Exams: The two closed-book exams will take place during class time (there will be no exam during the exam week in December). The first one will cover Tocqueville and Marx, and the second—Durkheim and Weber. Each exam will consist of concept IDs and guided essay
questions. A week ahead of each exam I will provide you with a study guide to help prepare for the test.

Final paper: The last graded assignment of the course will be a 6–8 double-spaced page paper. You will be asked to compare on a specific issue or set of issues at least two theorists we will have covered. I will formulate several topics/questions for the paper from which you will be able to choose one. If you prefer, you can come up with a question of your own, but it must involve a comparison of two authors and has to be approved by me. More information about writing the papers will be distributed in early December, and the papers will be due on December 22. (The final paper requirements will be slightly different for undergraduate students taking the class for honors and for graduate students.) Late papers are accepted at my discretion; under no circumstances will extensions be given after the deadline.

Final grade will be calculated according to the following formula:
Attendance, participation, quizzes – 15%
First exam – 25%
Second exam – 25%
Final paper – 35%

You cannot get a passing grade for the class without turning in both of the exams and the final paper.

Office hours and email
I hold regular office hours and will also be happy to see you by appointment at other times if you cannot make the office hours. Given the difficulty of the material covered in class you are encouraged to take advantage of consultations with me. You are also welcome to bring up any issues relevant to the class to my attention.

You also can use email to communicate with me. I will try to respond to messages promptly, but you should always allow 24 hours (and up to 48 during weekends) for my replies. Therefore, do not wait till the last minute with a pressing question or an important concern! Emails should be limited to questions of clarification that can be answered in a sentence or two. For anything requiring a detailed response or a back-and-forth dialogue, please attend my office hours. However, I’d like to encourage you to email me specific questions about the readings the day before class, so that I can incorporate/address them during the lecture.

Peer communication
For some types of questions (like due dates or how to use the course website) or to obtain notes for a missed class it is often best to check with a peer first. (And I am always happy to step in if fellow students can’t answer your questions.) Please exchange contact information (see next page) with two students sitting near you on the first day.
Required texts
The books listed below have been ordered to the University Book Store and placed on reserve at College Library. You can find cheap(er) copies online or in used bookstores. Many texts have been published many times and in different translations. I do not object if you use a different edition of the text but I strongly urge you not to use a different translation. Keep in mind that page selections of the course readings were made from the specific editions listed below, and if you are using a different edition (even if it’s by the same translator) consult with me to make sure you are reading the correct pages.

In addition to the books, there are a few more required readings posted on the course’s website at Learn@UW as pdf files. If there is a problem with any of the readings in the store, library reserve, or Learn@UW, please email me immediately.


Academic misconduct
I consider plagiarism and cheating more generally to be very serious offenses; academic misconduct of any sort will not be tolerated. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, you must consult [http://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/](http://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/). University’s Writing Center has a lot of helpful information regarding plagiarism, in particular: [http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html). You are expected to be familiar with these guidelines before you submit any written work in this course; lack of familiarity with these rules in no way constitutes an excuse for acts of misconduct. Any instance of misconduct will be dealt with strictly according to university policy.

Final papers will be run through Turnitin.com to check for originality/plagiarism.
Electronics
I do not allow audio or video recording of lectures without my written permission. Under no circumstances can students post audio or video recordings on the internet. Furthermore, the use of computers, tablets, or phones is not permitted in class, unless you do your readings electronically. However, even in this case all note taking should be by hand. Make sure your phones are ON SILENT (not vibrate) and PUT AWAY.

Special considerations
Students who require special accommodations for in-class exams (or any other assignments) due to disabilities, religious observances, or participation in athletic events need to let me know about them as early as possible, preferably before the end of the second full week of the semester.

Departmental notice of grievance and appeal rights
The Department of Sociology regularly conducts student evaluations of all professors and teaching assistants near the end of the semester. Students who have more immediate concerns about this course should report them to the instructor or to the department chair, 8128 Social Science (jraymo@ssc.wisc.edu).

I reserve the right to make any changes to the syllabus as deemed necessary over the course of the semester.

Class Schedule

INTRODUCTION

September 6 – The rise of modernity and the emergence of social theory
Course syllabus
Robert A. Nisbet, “The Two Revolutions,” The Sociological Tradition (PDF FILE ON LEARN@UW)

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE (1805–1859)

September 8 – “The social condition of the Americans is eminently democratic”
Democracy in America, Vol. I, Author’s Introduction (pp. 3–16), ch. 3–5 (pp. 46–68)
Democracy in America, Vol. II, Book III, ch. 5 (pp. 177–185)

September 13 – Perils of individualism; taste for material well-being
Democracy in America, Vol. II, Book II, ch. 1–8 (pp. 94–124), ch. 10–11 (pp. 128–133), ch. 13–14 (pp. 136–142), ch. 20 (pp. 158–161)

September 15 – Tyranny of the majority; democratic despotism
(please read in this order)
*Democracy in America*, Vol. II, Book IV, ch. 2–6 (pp. 289–321)
*Democracy in America*, Vol. I, ch. 5 (pp. 86–97)

**September 20 – Religion and gender in the reproduction of civic virtue**
*Democracy in America*, Vol. II, Book I, ch. 5 (pp. 20–28); Book III, ch. 9–12 (pp. 198–214)

**September 22 – Race and American democracy**
**Recommended:** *Democracy in America*, remainder of Vol. I, ch. 18

**KARL MARX (1818–1883)**

**September 27 – Early writings: critiques of religion and private property**
In *The Marx-Engels Reader* (please read in this order):
“Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*: Introduction” (first six paragraphs only, pp. 53–54, end with “…does not revolve about himself.”)
“On the Jewish Question” (pp. 26–46)

**September 29 – Materialist theory of history**
(please read in this order)
“Marx on the History of His Opinions” (pp. 3–6) in *The Marx-Engels Reader*
“The German Ideology” (PDF FILE ON LEARN@UW)
“The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State” (PDF FILE ON LEARN@UW)

**October 4 – The critique of capitalism I**
*Capital*, pp. 302–343 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*

**October 6 – The critique of capitalism II**

**October 11 – The critique of capitalism III**
*Capital*, pp. 384–411, 419–438 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*

**October 13 – Revolutionary program and political writings I**
“The Manifesto of the Communist Party” (pp. 469–500) in *The Marx-Engels Reader*
**Tocqueville/Marx exam study guide distributed**

**October 18 – Revolutionary program and political writings II**
“The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louise Bonaparte” (pp. 594–617) in *The Marx-Engels Reader* and additional excerpts (PDF FILE ON LEARN@UW)

**October 20 – EXAM ON TOCQUEVILLE AND MARX**
EMILE DURKHEIM (1858–1917)

October 25 – Functions of the division of labor
*The Division of Labor in Society*, pp. 1–7, 24–29, 38–44, 60–64, 68–72, 83–86, 101–106 (PDF FILE ON LEARN@UW)

October 27 – Causes and consequences of the division of labor
*The Division of Labor in Society*, pp. 118–123, 200–205, 208–212, 291–294, 301–308, 310–316, xxxi–xxxix, xlvi–lvi (please read in this order) (PDF FILE ON LEARN@UW)

November 1 – The social logic of suicide I
*Suicide*, pp. 35–39, 46–52, 152–170, 197–216

November 3 – The social logic of suicide II

November 8 – NO CLASS – CIVIC DUTY DAY

November 10 – Religion and social solidarity I

November 15 – Religion and social solidarity II
*The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, pp. 141–149, 418–448

MAX WEBER (1864–1920)

November 17 – The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism I
*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Author’s Introduction (pp. xxviii–xlii), ch. 2 (pp. 13–38)

November 22 – The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism II
*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, ch. 3 (pp. 39–50), ch. 4 (pp. 53–72), ch. 5 (pp. 102–125)

November 24 – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

November 29 – Protestant sects in America
“The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism” (pp. 302–322) (PDF FILE ON LEARN@UW)

December 1 – Classes, status groups, and political parties
“Class, Status, Party” (pp. 180–195) (PDF FILE ON LEARN@UW)
Final paper topics distributed
December 6 – Politics and legitimacy in a rationalized world
“The Types of Authority and Imperative Coordination” (pp. 324–329, 341–345, 354–373) (PDF FILE ON LEARN@UW)

December 8 – Bureaucracy
“Bureaucracy” (pp. 196–216, 221–235, 240–244) (PDF FILE ON LEARN@UW)
Durkheim/Weber exam study guide distributed

December 13 – Rationalization and disenchantment
“Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions” (pp. 323–359) (PDF FILE ON LEARN@UW)

December 15 – EXAM ON DURKHEIM AND WEBER

December 22 by 12:00 PM – FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE