Overview: Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) was the greatest sociologist since the classical generation of Max Weber and Emile Durkheim. This seminar surveys his life’s work. It centers on a close reading of original texts.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will demonstrate a broad understanding of major theories, methodologies, and research findings in the sociological literature.
2. Students will develop an understanding of the field of sociology through coursework. 4.3. Students will evaluate social science literature and employ most appropriate methods and practices in their own research.
3. Students will develop analytical thinking skills that enable them to evaluate information pertinent to their research question.
4. Students will communicate in a clear, organized engaging manner, using language, methods, and critical tools appropriate to the social sciences.

In addition to the substantive goal of imparting knowledge about a classical thinkers who has contributed greatly to the development and self-understanding of modern society, this course has another important set of learning objectives: to help students develop skills in reading lengthy, original texts carefully and thoroughly; skills in grasping complex analytic arguments presented therein; and skills in thinking about and critically assessing and evaluating complex analytic arguments. At the course website are some tips on reading and underlining, which should help at least with some of these learning objectives. Our weekly class discussions also aim to foster an ability to engage thoughtfully, critically, and in a well-informed manner with complex arguments. And the final required paper is entirely aimed at cultivating skills in developing and substantiating (logically, textually, as well as empirically) analytic claims informed by the various readings and topical subject matters covered in this course.

Is This a Theory Course? Despite the fact that this course is offered under the rubric of Sociology 915—that is, as a sociological theory seminar—it is not a theory course. Pierre Bourdieu was a sociologist, not a sociological theorist. This course is a close examination of his contributions to the sociological enterprise.

Reading Load: The reading load in this course is 165 pages/week. I have taken great pains to keep it within this limit. Please note that these 165 pages do not include photographs, box insets, tables, graphs, figures, endnotes, bibliographies, appendices, or Bourdieu’s trademark amplifications in
small font, which often go on for several pages and ordinarily would appear as footnotes in other authors’ writings. To do well, students must be prepared to complete their reading assignments in full and consistently across the entire semester.

Readings: Books are on sale at University Bookstore and on reserve at College Library. See the complete list of books for purchase on p. 5 of this syllabus. Some additional readings also are available electronically through Learn@UW—but not on sale or on reserve in hard-copy form, so students will have only this electronic-reserve option.

Note About Printing Electronic Reserve Materials: Please conserve paper in whatever ways possible! Use double-sided printing and perhaps even try to fit multiple pages on each side. Many students are enrolled in this course, and I have prepared a good many e-reserves. It adds up.

Grading Format: Students’ grades for this course will be based on two different requirements, each of which contributes 50% to the final grade. First, students will be evaluated on a final paper. Second, they will be graded on their class attendance and participation. More on each below.

Final Paper: One week after the final class meeting of the semester (at 5 p.m. that day), a final paper will be due. This paper can be either (1) a work of original empirical research in a Bourdieuan mode; (2) an empirical research proposal in a Bourdieuan mode; or (3) a theoretical essay. Students must clear their topic with me in person by the end of Week 10. An unusual requirement: I ask that each student submit his or her paper to me in two formats simultaneously: electronic and hardcopy, the same paper in both formats. Upon receiving the paper, I shall go to MS Word and check that it is within the specified word count range. Papers must be between 5,750 and 6,250 words in length, according to MS Word’s word count function. Even one word less or more, and the paper will be returned to the student—with an Incomplete for the course. Please note that 5,750-6,250 words is around 10 single-spaced pages. Caring so much about the word count may be idiosyncratic, but working under such constraints will help to make students’ work more tightly focused and better edited. If there are going to be constraints, they might as well be clear and unequivocal. Here is yet another set of requirements for the paper: I ask that its format be the one I happen to prefer for reading papers (since I will be the one reading them): single spacing, normal margins, 12-point font, skipped lines between paragraphs. Students should be sure to follow these formatting requirements. I have been known to return improperly formatted proposals to students and to give them an Incomplete for the course. Extensive reviews of the secondary literature are discouraged for this assignment, since I am looking for ideas and research, not a demonstration of library skills. This is the case even for empirical research proposals, for which I want a “think piece” that specifies the empirical object of study and that indicates, in as much detail as possible, how the student would go about studying it, the kinds of sources s/he would use, the kinds of cases s/he would select, and, in general, how s/he would deploy ideas or methods covered in this course when addressing that empirical problem.

Class Attendance and Participation: The other 50% of the final grade for this seminar will be determined—subjectively, by me—on the basis of overall contributions to weekly class meetings.
Regarding attendance: Attendance all the way through each class meeting is required. I do not like it when students get up and leave early. Missing more than two or three class meetings during the semester is okay exclusively in cases of extended, sustained, several-weeks-long illness or family emergency. No need to contact me about the occasional missed class. In some cases, I will make an exception, but the student needs to speak with me first. Regarding participation: I expect that each student will do extensive reading each and every week of the course. Students will not be tested on that reading, but I do want to see evidence that they have read carefully, thoughtfully, and thoroughly—and on a consistent basis—throughout the semester. This does not mean they must know and understand everything when they walk in the door to start the class meeting. It does not mean their judgments as to what is most important in the readings always must be the same as my judgments. What it does mean is that, if a student gives me a sense that s/he is not doing extensive and consistent reading for this course, that s/he is not putting in a serious effort, it will bode poorly for (this portion of) their final grade. I expect students to take part actively in class discussions. If I ask a student a question at a moment when he or she seems not to be paying attention, and the student answers, “Can you please repeat the question?”, this will be taken into account. If a student’s comments do not reflect serious preparation for class discussion, this too will be noticed. And if a student takes the class discussion onto irrelevant tangents, raises issues of interest only to him or herself, deflects attention from the important issues raised by me in class or by the readings, this also will be taken into consideration. I do not ask for frequent interventions. Some students are talkative; others are quiet. All I ask for are a few—just a few—substantive, thoughtful, and well-informed contributions per class meeting. There is no court of higher appeal for this portion of the final grade. It is based entirely on my subjective evaluation of a student’s class performance (combined with class attendance).

Why Do I Insist on Attendance All the Way Through Class Meetings? I insist on this policy because I have found that, whenever I do not require it, students trickle out of the classroom one by one during the final several minutes, and they do so in a way that destroys our collective focus. I wish to discourage that as much as possible.

On the Use of Laptops in Class: Unless approved by me beforehand, laptops and other electronic devices may not be used during class discussions, no matter how much more convenient it may be for students to type notes directly into their computers. I am implementing this policy because, in the past, abuse of laptops by some students has proven extremely distracting to others in the classroom. It also has detracted from the overall quality of our class discussions. Notes always can be typed into one’s computer later.

Academic Misconduct (Cheating): Students who cheat or attempt to cheat in their final term paper automatically will receive an F for the course. In addition, the incident will be reported in writing to the Dean of Students Office for further disciplinary action. A clear definition of plagiarism as well as information about disciplinary sanctions for academic misconduct may be found at the Dean of Students Office website. Knowledge of these rules is each student’s responsibility, and lack of familiarity with the rules does not excuse misconduct.
Sexual harassment and misconduct: Professional conduct and appropriate behavior are critical to create a safe learning environment for students and instructors alike. Here is a statement about sexual harassment from the University:

What is Sexual Harassment?

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- submission to such conduct is a condition of employment, academic progress, or participation in a university program; or
- submission to or rejection of such conduct influences employment, academic or university program decisions; or
- the conduct interferes with an employee's work or a student's academic career, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work, learning, or program environment.

Tangible Action or Quid Pro Quo (This for That) Sexual Harassment and Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment are both illegal and unacceptable.

The Emirbayer Rules

(1) When you speak in class, please refer exclusively to authors and texts we happen to be reading that day (or read earlier in the semester). Please do not attempt to show off your intellectuality by dropping names such as Wittgenstein, Althusser, or Hegel’s *Phenomenology*. Let’s stay focused.

(2) Please try whenever possible to respond to the person who spoke right before you, rather than offering something entirely disconnected. Let’s have a genuine conversation. If you aren’t able to maintain this continuity, then temporarily cede your place in line; we’ll return to you a bit later.

(3) Please be relatively succinct and to-the-point in your remarks. Let’s be dialogic. It’s okay to be confused when confronting such challenging material, but I’ve found that confusion can most effectively be addressed when your comments are kept fairly brief, so that others can respond.

One further comment: Sometimes a student has a point to make that’s so urgent, so necessary, so compelling, that he or she can’t bear to wait in line. If and when this happens, raise both your hands at once, and I’ll (probably) call on you. Don’t overuse this privilege. Let’s limit it to (at most) one time per student per class meeting. (By the way, I say I’ll *probably* call on you because, sometimes, in the interest of moving the discussion along, I ignore upraised hands. It’s nothing personal!)
Books on Sale at University Bookstore

Sketch for a Self-Analysis   The State Nobility
Homo Academicus            An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology
Distinction                The Rules of Art
Practical Reason           Masculine Domination
The Logic of Practice      Science of Science and Reflexivity
Pascalian Meditations      Language and Symbolic Power

Some Recommended Overviews of Bourdieu (in English)


Some Works by Your Instructor About or Influenced by Bourdieu

Emirbayer, Mustafa, and Victoria Johnson. 2008. “Bourdieu and Organizational Analysis.” *Theory and Society* 37: 1-44. (See also, in the same issue, responses to this paper by David Swartz, Frank Dobbin, and Diane Vaughan.)
Emirbayer, Mustafa, and Matthew Desmond. 2012. “Race and Reflexivity.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 35: 574-99. (See also, in the same issue, responses to this paper by Howard Winant, Stephen Steinberg, Wendy Leo Moore, Mary Pattillo, Kimberly DaCosta, Sudhir Venkatesh, and John Jackson, Jr.)
Outline of the Course

1 – No class meeting today (September 7, 2017)

There will be no class meeting today. Next week we’ll determine which date and time (during the week of December 11-15) will work best for making up the missed class. In the meantime, please read the opening pages of this syllabus carefully. Let’s all be on the same page as far as course requirements and expectations are concerned.

Even though we aren’t having a class meeting this week, please also read the following (auto) biographical overviews of Pierre Bourdieu’s life and career, together with the selection on Bourdieu as engaged public intellectual. One of the assignments below is a short book by Bourdieu entitled Sketch for a Self-Analysis. The others are brief articles.

Finally, please view a film documentary on Bourdieu entitled Sociology is a Martial Art. It’s easily available for viewing online at https://vimeo.com/92709274. You’ll enjoy it.

Sketch for a Self-Analysis: entire.
E-Reserve: Craig Calhoun and Loic Wacquant, “Everything is Social.”
E-Reserve: Loic Wacquant, “An Inventive and Iconoclastic Scientist.”
E-Reserve: Pierre Bourdieu, “For a Scholarship with Commitment.”
E-Reserve: Franck Poupeau and Thierry Discepolo, “Scholarship with Commitment.”

2. Early Ethnographies of Rural Algeria and Rural France (1958-62)

Today we begin with an overview of Bourdieu’s early ethnographic ventures in rural Algeria and rural France. Then we discuss representatives selections from each of these ventures. It might be helpful to scan Wikipedia’s article on “The Algerian War of Independence” for historical background on the events discussed in today’s reading.

E-Reserve: Loic Wacquant, “Following Pierre Bourdieu into the Field.”
E-Reserve: Algeria 1960 (read through p. 94; the rest is recommended only).

Note on Algeria 1960: Here as elsewhere, please feel free to skim or not read at all the material in small font.

E-Reserve: “Making the Economic Habitus.”
3. The Craft of Sociology (1968)

In this week’s assignment, we cover ideas from Bourdieu’s *The Craft of Sociology*, a textbook and reader he authored (and co-edited) relatively early in his career. Students have a choice between reading selections from the work itself or reading a much shorter piece, “Thinking About Limits,” which presents the main ideas of *Craft* in more accessible form. We also read brief selections outlining the key working concepts in Bourdieu’s approach: field, habitus, and capital. Finally, we examine two selections that illustrate that approach in action: one on religion and another on sports.

E-Reserve: “Thinking About Limits.”

—or–

Learn@UW: selections from *The Craft of Sociology*

Learn@UW: “Some Properties of Fields.”
Learn@UW: “Haute Couture and Haute Culture.”
Learn@UW: Loic Wacquant, “Habitus.”
Learn@UW: “The Forms of Capital.”
Learn@UW: “Legitimation and Structured Interests in Weber’s Sociology of Religion.”
Learn@UW: “Programme for a Sociology of Sport.”


Today we discuss *Homo Academicus*, Bourdieu’s most important work on the university field (and one also containing his most important analysis of historical change). It might be helpful to scan Wikipedia’s article on “May 1968” for historical background on the events discussed in today’s reading. The Wikipedia article also provides useful references to films and novels dealing with these events.

Learn@UW: “Passport to Duke.”

*Homo Academicus*: see notes below.

Notes on *Homo Academicus*: (1) Here as elsewhere, please feel free to skim or not read at all the various items in small font (and their accompanying tables), with the exception of the material on pp. 4-5, 7, 8-9, 16-17, 20-21, 25-26, 75-77, and 94, all of which I would like you to read. (2) Please read the Preface to the English Translation. (3) Don’t read the Postscript, as we shall cover this same material elsewhere. (4) Skim the Appendices.
5. Distinction (1979)

In Sociology 773, many of you read (or will read) Chs. 5-7 of *Distinction*. Here we read the rest of *Distinction*, Bourdieu’s most famous work—preceded by a brief selection on methodological issues. We also read a brief piece on how Bourdieu’s analyses in *Distinction* might be generatively extended to other cases. If you are not in the sociology program and the above reference to Sociology 773 means nothing to you, I strongly suggest you take an extra few hours this week and read Chs. 5-7 of *Distinction* on your own. They are not necessary for an adequate understanding of the week’s required readings, but they certainly will help—and they are important, illuminating chapters.

Learn@UW: “Statistics and Sociology” (pp. 1-6 are recommended; please read the rest). *Distinction*: Appendix 1, Preface to the English-Language Edition, Introduction, Chs. 2-4.

Note on *Distinction*: Here as elsewhere, please feel free to skim or not read at all the various items in small font (and their accompanying tables), as well as the various box insets, photographs, and diagrams, with the exception of the material appearing on pp. 128-29 and 171, which I would like you to examine.

*Practical Reason*: Ch. 1 (read the Appendix only).

6. Distinction (continued)—and Other Writings in Political Sociology

Today we conclude our examination of *Distinction*. Also included in this week’s assignment are important writings by Bourdieu on the political field, the field of political identities (e.g., regionalism), the field of power, and the state, conceptualized here as a field of bureaucratic powers.

*Distinction*: Ch. 8; Conclusion.

Note on *Distinction*: Here as elsewhere, please feel free to skim or not read at all the various items in small font (and their accompanying tables), as well as the various box insets, photographs, and diagrams, with the exception of the figure appearing on pp. 452, which I would like you to examine.

*Language and Symbolic Power*: Part III (Chs. 8, 10-11). *Practical Reason*: Ch. 2 (read the Appendix only). *Practical Reason*: Ch. 3 (including the Appendix). Learn@UW: “From the King’s House to the Reason of State” (recommended only).

Note on the above selections: Here as elsewhere, the same rule applies regarding material in small font.
Note on Bourdieu’s book, *On the State*: I might replace some or all of the chapters above from *Language and Symbolic Power* and *Practical Reason* with selections from *On the State*. Stay tuned! If I make this change, I will place photocopies of the new assigned readings on the Learn@UW course website.

7. The Logic of Practice (1980)

Today we begin with a few short essays that continue exploring themes introduced in previous weeks. Then we turn to an important presentation of Bourdieu’s ideas at mid-career: *The Logic of Practice*. Please note that this work is a later, revised version of *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, which we shall not be reading in this course.

*Language and Symbolic Power*: Part II (Introduction on pp. 105-06; Chs. 3-5).
*The Logic of Practice*: Preface; Book I.

Notes on *The Logic of Practice*: (1) The same rule applies here as elsewhere: Please feel free to skim or not read at all the various items in small font. (2) However, please do read the material on pp. 59, 63-64, 83, 102-03, 130, 133, 136, 137, 141.

8. The State Nobility (1989)

The assignment for this week is one of Bourdieu’s major studies in educational and political sociology: *The State Nobility*. The first third of the work is a part-ethnographic, part-documentary analysis of French preparatory courses (boarding schools). The middle third is a field analysis of French institutions of higher education. And the final third is an analysis of the French field of power and the French state.

*The State Nobility*: see notes below.

Notes on *The State Nobility*: (1) This seemingly massive assignment reduces to the same length as the others once you delete the following material: Foreword (by Loic J.D. Wacquant); pp. 198 (middle)-214 (top); all Appendices; all Tables; all material in small font. (2) You may find the following material useful, however,: pp. 133-35, 145, 146, 149, 156-57, 172, 173, 191, 192, 232-44, 267, 268, 269, 302, 303. (3) Please notice the useful Glossary and Chart on pp. 390-93.


Today we discuss Bourdieu’s most popular work, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, the bulk of which consists in a dialogue between Bourdieu and Loic J.D. Wacquant. In *Invitation*, Bourdieu presents in highly accessible terms the fundamental contributions—theoretical, methodological, and substantive—of his life’s work.
An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology: Parts II-III (The Chicago and Paris Workshops).
Learn@UW: “Participant Objectivation.”

Note on An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology: Without the lengthy, detailed footnotes by Loic J.D. Wacquant, the assignment reduces to roughly our average weekly length.


In this week’s assignment, we examine historical field analyses of nineteenth-century French painting and literature (featuring Manet and Flaubert, respectively). The former is an adumbration of a much longer study on which Bourdieu worked the last ten years of his life, soon to appear (probably next year) in English-language translation. The latter is presented in two selections: a brief essay and then a monograph-length empirical study (Part I of The Rules of Art). The assignment concludes with a summary by Bourdieu of the main principles of his cultural sociology (Part II of The Rules of Art).

Learn@UW: The Field of Cultural Production: Chs. 9, 4. (Please read in that order.)
Learn@UW: Two Figures. (Please have a look at these two figures before beginning to read The Rules of Art.)
The Rules of Art: Preface; Prologue; Parts I-II.

Notes on The Rules of Art: (1) Here as elsewhere, please feel free to skim or not read at all the material in small font, with the exception of the material appearing on pp. 5-7, 133, 204-05, 225, 228, 233, 250. (2) Please feel free to skim or not read at all the Appendices scattered throughout the work, with the exception of Appendices 1 and 3 in the Prologue, which I would like you to read. (3) Please feel free to skim or not read at all the material on pp. 252-61, 270-77.


Featured in this week’s assignment is Bourdieu’s critique of neo-liberalism and the retrenchment of the welfare state. The primary reading is selections from The Weight of the World, a massive collaborative ethnography (directed by Bourdieu) on “social suffering in contemporary society.” We also read selections from The Social Structures of the Economy—a field analysis of the modern economy and global economic order—and several short essays on politics, culture, the media, and intellectuals.

Learn@UW: “The Left Hand and the Right Hand of the State.”
Learn@UW: selections from The Weight of the World.
Learn@UW: selections from The Social Structures of the Economy.

Notes on The Social Structures of the Economy: (1) This time, please do scan the material in small font on pp. 187-88 and 189-91. (2) No need to read the material in small font in
the rest of the e-reserve, with the exception of the following, which I would like you to read: pp. 198-99 (first two sentences only); 210 (first two sentences only). (3) No need to read Appendices I and II—although those of you who are interested in rational choice theory will find the latter especially stimulating and engaging.

Learn@UW: “All Racism is Essentialism.”
Learn@UW: “On the Cunning of Imperialist Reason.”
Learn@UW: “Culture is in Danger.”
Learn@UW: “The Chokehold of Journalism.”
Learn@UW: “For an International of Intellectuals.”


In this week’s reading, we encounter the most profound and challenging summary of the core insights of Bourdieu’s life’s work: *Pascalian Meditations*. The discussions here of reflexivity, the body, and symbolic violence are especially noteworthy.

*Pascalian Meditations*: see notes below.

Notes on *Pascalian Meditations*: (1) This seemingly massive assignment reduces to the same length as the others if you delete the material on pp. 25-32, 33-48, 81-83, 85-92, 117 (top)-18 (one-third down), 132-33 (the long parenthetical paragraph), 137-38, 178 (bottom)-79, 191-205, 213-31, 237-45. (2) Please read, however, the parenthetical paragraph on p. 41.


Today we discuss important writings by Bourdieu on intellectual production. We begin with a brief selection on Heidegger. Although printed in *Language and Symbolic Power*, it originally was published as a chapter in *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger*. Then we read two field analyses of social science: *Science of Science and Reflexivity* and “On the Possibility of a Field of World Sociology.” Finally, we read Bourdieu’s acceptance speech upon receiving France’s most prestigious science prize.

*Language and Symbolic Power*: Ch. 6

Note on *Language and Symbolic Power*: Ch. 6: Here as elsewhere, please feel free to skim or not read at all the material in small font.

*Science of Science and Reflexivity*: Foreword; pp. 1-9 (bottom); 32-116.

Notes on *Science of Science and Reflexivity*: (1) Here as elsewhere, please feel free to skim or not read at all the material in small font. (2) However, a caveat: Perhaps because
it is about sociology, this material is especially interesting. If you read through the small-font material of any week, it should probably be this material. (3) Also extremely interesting is the small-font material in the pages I am not asking you to read. It, too, merits being read on its own, even if you do not read the actual text on those pages.

Learn@UW: “On the Possibility of a Field of World Sociology.”
Learn@UW: “In Praise of Sociology.”
Learn@UW: “The Force of Law” (recommended only).

14. Masculine Domination (1998)—and Writings on Linguistic Domination

This is the class meeting we will be scheduling for sometime during the week of December 11-15. It makes up for the class meeting we will have missed at the start of the semester.

Today we read Bourdieu on masculine and linguistic domination. The first selection is his well-known analysis of “The Kabyle House,” an early work in which the theme of gender-based domination is highly prominent. That selection is followed by Masculine Domination and then by two essays summarizing Bourdieu’s views on the linguistic field, linguistic habitus, and the symbolic violence of linguistic dispossession.

*The Logic of Practice*: Appendix.
*Masculine Domination*: entire

Notes on *The Logic of Practice*: Appendix and on *Masculine Domination*: (1) The same rule applies here as elsewhere regarding material in small font. (2) However, the small-font material in *Masculine Domination* is much less detailed and of more general interest than most such material one finds in Bourdieu. For that reason, I recommend it highly.

*Language and Symbolic Power*: Chs. 1-2

Note on *Language and Symbolic Power*: Chs. 1-2: The same rule applies here as elsewhere regarding material in small font, with the exception of the material on pp. 46-48, 58-59, 75-76, and 77-78, which I would like you to read.

Learn@UW: “The Odyssey of Reappropriation.” (This actually is a eulogy by Bourdieu of his colleague Mouloud Mammeri.)