HISTORY OF SOCIAL THEORY

This is the second semester of our two-semester course devoted to the history of social theory. Last semester we studied the development of Marxism beginning with the writings of Marx and Engels followed by Lenin, Gramsci and Fanon. This semester we will study various critical responses to Marxism, beginning with Durkheim and Foucault, and then moving on to Weber and Beauvoir, followed by MacKinnon and Collins. Although attacking Marx and Marxism has loomed large in classical sociological theory as it will in this course, we shall also construct a critical dialogue among Durkheim, Foucault, Weber and Feminism. Thus, we will see how Foucault’s ideas are both continuous with and hostile to Durkheim, how Foucault also engages Weber, and how Weber’s social theory provides some surprising anticipations of Beauvoir, who in turn lays the foundations for MacKinnon and Collins. More generally, we will see how both Foucault and Feminism (here represented by Beauvoir, MacKinnon, and Collins) assimilate, reject and move beyond the sociological canon (Marx, Weber and Durkheim).

As last semester, we will study our theorists through the lens of the division of labor and the inspiration this gives to their different conceptions of history. We will see how the major historical divide is not, as it was for Marxism, between a communist future and a pre-communist past, but between “modern,” “rational-legal,” ”industrial” and ”disciplinary” society on the one side and ”traditional,” ”patrimonial,” ”feudal,” and ”repressive” society on the other. The communist future is denied in different ways. The optimistic Durkheim argues that “socialism,” or something like it, is almost already with us whereas the pessimistic Weber argues that “communism” can only lead to deeper bureaucratization. Foucault goes even further to dismiss any conception of a utopian future as dangerous fantasy while feminists naturally ask what happens to male domination in this classless utopia.

For each theorist “the division of labor” signifies something different. Where Marxism examined the consequences of the division of labor for “class”, Durkheim is interested in the relationship of the division of labor to ”solidarity,” Weber its relation to ”rationalization,” Foucault its relation to ”power,” and feminism its relation to ”gender.” To gain insight into each theorist we will continue to ask about the form, origins, conditions of existence, mechanisms of development and future of the division of labor. In the process we will see which collective identities each theorist recognizes. We will also examine how each theorist understands the relation of the division of labor to ”individuality” and ”individualism.” We will pay particular attention to where the ”individual” comes from, how “it” is produced, how ”it” is fitted into the division of labor and with what consequences.

There will be two mid-semester examinations. The first will deal with Durkheim and the second will revolve around Weber and Foucault. The first mid-term will be worth 20% and the second mid-term 30% of the final grade. The final oral examination will cover the entire year's work and count for 25% of the final grade. The remaining 25% will be allocated on the basis of participation in sections.

A xerox reader containing materials from Weber, Beauvoir, MacKinnon, and Collins will be available at Copy Central on Bancroft. Durkheim's The Division of Labor in Society and Foucault's, Discipline and Punish are available from the ASUC Bookstore, NEDS and CTE.

My office hours are from 4-6 p.m. on Mondays and Tuesdays in Barrows 454. Please sign up ahead of time. Your Graduate Student Instructors are the redoubtable: Abigail Andrews, Jennifer Carlson, Gabe Hetland, Graham Hill, Mike Levien, Kate Mason, and Alina Polyakova. Sections do not meet the first week of classes.
Those articles marked with an "*" are contained in the reader.

January 20  Introduction: Why Durkheim, Weber, Foucault and Beauvoir?

DURKHEIM (1858-1917)

January 22  Roots of Durkheim. Sociology as Science. Is the division of labor a pathology or normal?
*The Division of Labor in Society*, Preface to First Edition (pp.xxv-xxx); Introduction (pp.1-8)

January 27  The Argument. The functions of the division of labor? What are Durkheim’s two notions of solidarity? How to measure solidity? What is the relation between division of labor and solidarity? How to explain conflict and disorganization?
*The Division of Labor in Society*, Book I, chapter 1 (pp.11-30)

January 29  What is a Crime? What is the Function of Punishment? What is the form of punishment? Mechanical Solidarity and the State.
*The Division of Labor in Society*, Book I, chapter 2 (pp.31-67)

*The Division of Labor in Society*, Book I, chapter 3 (pp.68-72; 77-87) and chapter 7 (pp.149-175)

February 5  What happens to the collective consciousness under organic solidarity? What are the origins and impetus behind the development of the division of labor.
*The Division of Labor in Society*, Book I, chapter 5 (pp.118-123) and Book II, chapter 2 (pp.200-225)

February 10  Normal and Abnormal division of labor. Anomic, forced and discontinuous division of labor.
*The Division of Labor in Society*, Book III, chapters 1, 2 and 3 (pp.291-328)

*The Division of Labor in Society*, Conclusion (pp.329-341)

February 16  FIRST TAKE-HOME EXAMINATION DUE
FOUCAULT (1926-1984)

February 17  Introduction to Foucault.
“The Power and Politics of Michele Foucault,” Interview in Daily Californian

February 19  Compare Durkheim and Foucault with respect to (a) punishment, (b) restitutive law and discipline, and (c) occupational associations/workplace and the microphysics of power?
Discipline and Punish, pp.3-31

February 24  Discipline: Hierarchical Observation, Normalization and Examination
Discipline and Punish, pp.170-194

February 26  The Plague and the Leper. Panopticon vs. Hegemony and Bureaucracy.
Discipline and Punish, pp.195-215

Discipline and Punish, pp.216-228.

WEBER (1864-1920)

March 5  What Does Weber mean by Rationalization and by Modern Western Bourgeois Capitalism?
Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, pp.13-31

March 10  What is the Spirit of Capitalism?
Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, pp.47-78

March 12  What is the Protestant Ethic? The difference between Luther and Calvin?
Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, pp.79-128.

March 17  What is the connection between the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism? What is the difference between the origins of the Capitalist Division of Labor and its reproduction?
Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, pp.155-183

March 19  From Capitalism to Bureaucratization. What is Bureaucracy?
Bureaucracy*, Sections 1 and 2, (pp.196-204).

March 23 – March 27   MID-SEMESTER BREAK

March 31  What are the Conditions and Origins of Bureaucracy?
April 2  What are the tensions between democracy and bureaucracy?  Between power and knowledge?  
*Bureaucracy*, Sections 3 (pp.204-9),  9 (pp.224-228), and 11 (pp.230-232).

April 7  Why is bureaucracy so permanent? Whose interests are served by bureaucracy? What threatens bureaucracy? Weber vs. Lenin?  
*Bureaucracy*, Sections 12 (pp.232-235), and 14 (pp.240-44)

April 9  What are the types of legitimate domination? Weber vs. Gramsci.  Legitimacy vs. Hegemony?  
*Types of Legitimate Domination*  

April 13  SECOND TAKE-HOME DUE

FEMINISM: FROM BEAUVOIR (1908-1986) TO MACKINNON AND COLLINS

April 14  Women as Other. Why do women submit to male domination?  
Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*,  Introduction (pp.xix-xxxvi)

April 16  Film: Daughters of Beauvoir

April 21  Liberation and the independent woman.  
Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*,  Conclusion (pp.716-732).

April 23  Marxism and Feminism. Work and Sexuality.  
Catharine MacKinnon, *Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: An Agenda for Theory*, pp.227-239

Catharine MacKinnon, *Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: An Agenda for Theory*, pp.240-256

April 30  Multiple Oppressions  
Patricia Hill Collins, *Learning from the Outsider Within*

May 5  Seeking Universality  
Patricia Hill Collins, *Learning from the Outsider Within*

May 7  SUMMARY