

THE THEORY OF PEDAGOGY

Those who took the history of social theory (101A-B) with me will recall that we ended with feminist theory and the problematization of the sociologist's place in society. For 8 months we explored the different visions of society that Marxism and sociology offer on the presumption that society was something we observe from the outside, something external to the theorist. By showing the partiality of these sociological perspectives feminism suggested that they were manufactured from a particular place *within* society, a place of male privilege and dominance. A feminist sociology, therefore, would turn social theory upside down in providing an alternative vision of the world from the standpoint of women. Later the same trick would be played on feminism from the stand point of race and sexuality. After feminism there can be no neutral hide-out for the sociologist who is now implicated in the world he or she seeks to comprehend. This course pursues the implications of the sociologist being part of the world he or she studies.

If the sociologist can no longer be the "objective" outsider, the "scientist," then who is he or she? In this seminar we explore the idea of the sociologist as "teacher." Just as the iconic location of science is the laboratory, the classical location of the teacher is the classroom (the lecture hall, the seminar room, the crèche, etc.). It's an enclosed space in which the teacher has a captive audience. Just as there are many ways to think about "scientists" and their relation to their "objects" of study even within the framework of the laboratory, so there are many ways to think about teachers and their relation to students. One crucial dimension is the degree to which teachers are viewed as having a monopoly of knowledge and insight, and to what extent students are viewed as empty vessels to be filled or carriers of significant lived experience to be elaborated.

This is the conventional terrain of pedagogy and we will be continually referring to it in our discussions, but we shall also ask what happens when we leave the ordered sphere of the classroom and think of society as a classroom. Sociologists become educators in the wider world while various "publics" become their students. This is, indeed, the realm of "public sociology." What can we learn about "public sociology" by thinking about the classroom, and what can we learn about the classroom from thinking about public sociology? What is the relation between "teaching in the classroom" and "public sociology in society"? For example, if sociologists have a captive audience in the classroom, they have to compete with other "teachers" in the public sphere.

We shall start out by examining these questions in relationship to classical social theory, beginning with Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*, turning to Weber's essays on science and politics, and from there to Durkheim's disquisition on education in *Moral Education*. From there we turn to Bourdieu, the most important contemporary sociologist, and his (together with Passeron) critical reassessment of Durkheim. For them schooling is a

vehicle for the reproduction of domination. In *Deschooling Society* Ivan Illich takes the ideas of Bourdieu and Passeron to one logical conclusion, advocating a drastic rethinking of education.

From here we turn to Antonio Gramsci (of course!) for whom “education” is the metaphor for understanding social change. The intellectual, the party, and the state, not to mention the classroom, are all viewed as “educators,” but in Gramsci’s view we are all intellectuals and have something to contribute to the process of education. One of the most fascinating applications of Gramsci’s theories to schooling can be found in Paul Willis’s *Learning to Labour* where students half-knowingly engage in a rebellion that becomes the vehicle of their subjugation. Gramsci’s view of education can also be turned in the direction of “popular education” enunciated by such major figures as Paulo Freire and bell hooks. We end with Myles Horton’s account of the Highlander Center, a historic place for the development of community and labor organizers, civil rights leaders.

This is a course in the reading, writing and application of social theory. Therefore, the requirements are as follows:

1. Read the assigned texts very carefully and come to class ready to discuss that text. I will expect everyone to have read the text and will cross-examine you accordingly.
2. To assist you in this, each week you will complete a no-more-than-200 word assignment that will require an analytical commentary on the readings.
3. Finally, there will be a final paper no longer than 3,000 words that elaborate the ideas of the course in relation to some contemporary issue.

For the final grade each of the 3 requirements will be weighted equally.

Books by Bourdieu and Passeron, Freire, Willis and Hooks are available at ASUC. The other readings will be available on bSpace. I have to be away the first meeting of the class which will be taken by Adam Reich who will tell you about the work he did in a juvenile prison while he was an undergraduate, the subject of his forthcoming book, *Hidden Truth*.

August 31. Adam Reich, *Pedagogy in and out of Prison*

REARRANGED CLASS, Tuesday, September 8, 7-10p.m., Barrows 402
Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*

September 14. Max Weber, *Science as a Vocation*

September 21. Max Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*

September 28. Emile Durkheim, *Moral Education*

- October 5. Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*
- October 12 Continued
- October 19 Ivan Illich, *Deschooling*
- October 26 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*
- November 2 Paul Willis, *Learning to Labor*
- November 9 Continued
- November 16 Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
- November 23 Bell Hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*
- November 30. Myles Horton, *The Long Haul*