

****DRAFT SYLLABUS****

Small changes in readings and scheduling possible.
CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL THEORY 406-2, Fall 2011

MODERN PROJECTS: CRITICS, MECHANISMS, SKEPTICS

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office hours: T 3:30-4:30 and by appt.

This class investigates modernity. It includes selections that illustrate how various thinkers have conceived of what it means to "be modern" or "post-modern," critiques of modernity that have profoundly shaped our images of it, and skeptics who challenge the idea of modernity. It also includes sections that investigate in detail what I call "mechanisms" of modernity: procedures, devices, approaches or strategies that people adopt or promulgate in their efforts to be rational, manage uncertainty and conflict, or attain efficiency in various institutional arenas.

Each week one or two students will be responsible for presenting an overview of the week's readings and directing discussion. While it is important that presenters cover the assigned material in enough detail to ensure that we all understand the argument, presenters should also critically evaluate the material, raise provocative questions for class discussion, make connections among different authors, and generally be prepared to sustain a lively class discussion.

Each week, students will write a one-page (no more than two pages) position paper that engages the assigned reading. In these papers, you should critically evaluate, rather than simply summarize, the material. These position papers should be distributed to the class via email by noon on Sunday.. The point of these papers is to make sure that the required reading is completed, to enliven and elevate our discussion, and to provide whoever is responsible for organizing and leading our discussions with useful feedback on the material.

It is crucial that students come to class prepared to engage the material. Grades will be based mainly on the final course paper (80%). Class participation is worth 20% and takes two forms: position papers (10%) which will not be graded excepted as having been adequately completed or not, and participation (10%), where quality matters more than quantity. The final paper will be an exercise inviting students to write an analytical, synthetic introduction to the course readings, as if this essay were an introduction to an edited volume on modernity. Students can incorporate comments from position papers (with appropriate attribution) if they wish. Students are also free to incorporate a few selected additional readings into their edited volumes and introductions if they choose.

Books are available at Norris. Packets are available at Quartet Copies on Clark. I'm assuming you have the Marx-Engles Reader. The books are also available in the library but are not on reserve. If financial constraints make getting the books or packet a serious burden, please contact me for help.

Required books:

Anthony Giddens. Consequences of Modernity.

Michele Foucault. Discipline and Punish.

Theodore Porter. Trust in Numbers.

Sarah Igo. The Averaged American.

David Harvey. The Condition of Post-Modernity.

Bruno Latour The Pasteurization of France.

James Scott. Seeing Like a State.

PART ONE: MODERNITY AND ITS CRITICS

**WEEK ONE : INTRODUCTION: SOCIOLOGY AS A MODERN PROJECT
CRITQUES MODERNITY**

Lecture and discussion: Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Simmel

Optional reading recommended for students without exposure to these theorists or for those who need to brush up:

Karl Marx

From The Marx-Engles Reader ed.Tucker:

Estranged Labour 70-81, Alienation and Social Classes 133-5,

Capitalism, Machinery and Automation from "The Grundrisse" p.278-290.

"Wage Labor and Capital" pp. 203-217 and "The Manifesto of the

Communist Party " pp.469-491.

Max Weber: "Author's Introduction" Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism"

"Science as a Vocation" Max Weber, Gerth and Mills ed. On Max Weber.

"The Types of Legitimate Domination" [ch. III pp 212-245], Economy and Society.

Georg Simmel:

"The Style of Life" (ch. 6 Philosophy of Money)

“The Stranger” and “The Metropolis and Mental Life” from Levine ed. Individuality and Social Form.

Emile Durkheim:

"Division of Labor in Society: Consequences", "The Division of Labor in Society: Conclusions", "The Dualism of Human Nature and its Social Conditions" taken from On Morality and Society.

WEEK TWO :

WEEK THREE THE PROMISE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Readings from the packet:

"What is Enlightenment?" Immanuel Kant

"What is Enlightenment?" Michel Foucault

“Two Theories of Modernity” Charles Taylor (packet)

Readings from JSTOR:

“Objectivity and the Escape from Perspective” Lorraine Daston. *Social Studies of Science*, #22, 1992, 597-618.

****WEEK FOUR .**

WEEK FOUR: CONCEPTUALIZING MODERNITY

The Consequences of Modernity. Anthony Giddens.

PART TWO: MECHANISMS OF MODERNITY: EXPERT AUTHORITY, CLASSIFICATION, AND CONTROL

WEEK FIVE DISCIPLINE

Discipline and Punish. Michel Foucault

Sauder, Michael and Wendy Espeland. “The Discipline of Rankings: Tight Coupling and Organizational Change,” *American Sociological Review*, Forthcoming, 74 (1) 2009. Proofs posted on Blackboard.

WEEK SIX : NUMBERS and STATISTICS

Trust in Numbers. Theodore Porter

Darfur and the Crime of Genocide, chapter on disputed statistics.

WEEK SEVEN: NUMBERS AND IDENTITY

The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens and the Making of a Mass Public. Sarah Igo

From the packet: excerpts from The Taming of Chance Ian Hacking ch.1, 8,9,10

Optional reading: Made available on request:

Espeland and Sauder, "Rankings and Reactivity: How Public Measures Recreate Social Worlds," *American Sociological Review*, 2007

Espeland, Wendy and Mitchell Stevens, "A Sociology of Quantification," forthcoming, *European Journal of Sociology (Archives Européennes de Sociologie)*, Forthcoming, 49(3) 2009.

WEEK EIGHT DEVELOPMENT, PROGRESS AND COLONIALIZATION

Seeing Like a State. James Scott Yale University Press.

From the packet: Excerpts from Measures and Men. Witold Kula (ch 4,6,7 17

Excerpts from Nature's Metropolis William Cronon, "Pricing the Future: Grain; Annihilating Space: packet

Intro from Lampland and Starr: packet.
Chapter by Epstein. Or Annual Rev. Soc. w/ Timmermans.

WEEK NINE : SCIENCE

The Pasteurization of France. Bruno Latour. Harvard University Press

Porter, Theodore "How Science Became Technical," *Isis* 2009 100:292-309.

PART THREE: SKEPTICS AND REBUTTALS

WEEK TEN (Mar 1): POSTMODERNITY: WHAT IS IT? WHAT CREATED IT? ARE WE THERE YET?

The Condition of Postmodernity. David Harvey

From the packet:

"Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?"
Jean-Francois Lyotard from The Postmodern Condition.

"Postmodernism and Consumer Society" Fredric Jameson

"Modernity--An Incomplete Project" Jurgen Habermas

Papers are due **in my mailbox** on Monday,xxx.. Please send me an electronic copy as well.
Late papers will not be graded promptly. You will receive an incomplete until it is convenient for me to grade them.