SOCIOLOGY 202/POLITICAL SCIENCE 212

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL THEORY

Textbooks:
Antonio Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks (International)
Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia (Harvest)
Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish (Vintage)
Michel Foucault, History of Sexuality, vol. 1 (Vintage)
Pierre Bourdieu, Distinction (Harvard)
Pierre Bourdieu, The Field of Cultural Production (Columbia)

This course is meant as an introduction to some of the central issues in the contemporary study of society and politics. It is based on the reading of some of the most important works of the last fifty years that have been built upon, and contributed to, the development of sociology and social theory. The topics that these works treat have become central to a wide range of social and political thought: intellectual and cultural production; critical theory, language, and the re-evaluation of classical social thought; normalization and social control; the body and power; practices of the self; social reproduction through education; stratification and culture.

At the same time, this is, inevitably, a selective course with many gaps in sociological theory, among them functionalism (Parsons, Merton, etc) and micro-sociology and interaction (Goffman, Garfinkel, Cicourel, Blumer, etc) – and in other theoretical positions – postmodernism (Lyotard, Baudrillard, etc) and feminism (Beauvoir, Butler, Gross, etc).

Requirements: TWO 4-5 page papers and ONE 10-15 page paper:
Two people will do the short paper each week, to serve as the basis for beginning class discussion. You will sign-up to do one paper in the first 5 weeks and one in the second 5 weeks. For the longer paper, students may pursue a topic or theme of their own choosing in reference to the themes or readings of the term. The final paper topic must be chosen in consultation with me. Due date for the final paper is exam week.
I. INTRODUCTION

II. THE MEANINGS OF CULTURE FOR A CRITICAL THEORY

Max Horkheimer, “The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social Research”, from Between Philosophy and Social Science
http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/horkheimer/1931/present-situation.htm

Max Horkheimer, “Traditional and Critical Theory,” from Critical Theory

Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, “The Concept of Enlightenment” and “The Culture Industry,” from Dialectic of Enlightenment


III. THE SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING OF KNOWLEDGE

Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, all

IV. CULTURES, STRUCTURES, AND IDEOLOGIES

Gramsci, Selections from Prison Notebooks, 5-23, 52-61, 102-120, 125-90, 210-18, 227-38, 257-68, 275-76, 343-66, 407-10

Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” from Lenin and Philosophy
http://www.marx2mao.com/Other/LPOE70ii.html#s5

Habermas, “Technology and Science as Ideology,” from Toward a Rational Society

V-VI. KNOWLEDGE, POWER, AND SOCIAL CONTROL
Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, all
Foucault, “Two Lectures,” from *Power/Knowledge*
Foucault, “Truth and Power,” from *Power/Knowledge*

**VII. THE MICROPHYSICS OF POWER/KNOWLEDGE**

Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, volume 1, all
Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” from Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*

**VIII-IX. STRATIFICATION AND CULTURAL CAPITAL**

Bourdieu, *Distinction*, pp. 1-256, 466-500

**X. CULTURE AND INTELLECTUAL PRODUCTION**

[http://ssi.sagepub.com/content/vol8/issue2/](http://ssi.sagepub.com/content/vol8/issue2/)
Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, pp. 29-73, 112-141, 176-91
BIBLIOGRAPHY

CULTURE AND INTERPRETATION
For background on developments in anthropology, see Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures, and idem, “`From the Native’s Point of View’: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding”, in Geertz, Local Knowledge; George E. Marcus and Michael M.J. Fischer, Anthropology as Cultural Critique; Marshall Sahlins, Culture and Practical Reason; Pierre Bourdieu, Outline of a Theory of Practice; and Claude Levi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology. For a different perspective, see James Clifford & George Marcus, Writing Culture, especially the essays by Crapanzano (a critique of Geertz’s “Deep Play”), Marcus, and Rabinow.


GENERAL WORKS IN SOCIAL THEORY, HISTORY, AND PHILOSOPHY

MARXISM AND CRITICAL THEORY
On Marxism after Marx, Perry Anderson’s Considerations on Western Marxism is an interesting overview, with some substantive analysis of the arguments of those thinkers considered as parts of “Western Marxism”. Dick Howard, The
Marxian Legacy deals with some of the same figures, like Merleau-Ponty and Habermas, but is rather opaque. David McLellan, *Marxism after Marx* is extremely light in its overview, but mentions nearly everyone of importance. John Roemer, ed., *Analytical Marxism* is a collection of essays focusing on structural and analytical issues and on a number of different themes in contemporary Marxism. The most influential of the French thinkers is Louis Althusser. See his *For Marx* and *Reading Capital*. Althusser’s essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” in *Lenin and Philosophy*, is also valuable. On Althusser, see Gregory Elliott, *Althusser: A Critical Reader*; and E.P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory*. The first two volumes of a multi-volume biography of Althusser have now appeared in French, written by Yann Moulier Boutang.


Habermas early works are both historical and philosophical. See *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* and *Knowledge and Human Interests*. The best general work on Habermas is still Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas*. See also the interview with Habermas in *New Left Review* 151 (1985), pp. 75-105, and the collection of interviews *Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews*, edited by Peter Dews.

Habermas’ Philosophical Discourse of Modernity is a set of lectures that attacks a whole series of developments in French thought, including the work of Foucault. On this issue, see Foucault contra Habermas: Recasting the Dialogue between Genealogy and Critical Theory, ed. by Samantha Ashenden and David Owen; Michael Allen, ed., Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault-Habermas Debate, and Noelle McAfee, Habermas, Kristeva, and Citizenship.

STRUCTURALISM AND POST-STRUCTURALISM


Vincent Descombes, Modern French Philosophy, is a brief but entertaining overview of recent French thinkers. Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, French Philosophy of the Sixties, is a conservative and rather simple critique of the same thinkers. Jürgen Habermas provides a trenchant critique of the “Nietzschean current” in France in his The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, with chapters on Foucault and Derrida, among others. Martin Jay, Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought, is an unusual and ingenious investigation of recent French thought from the point of view of its “anti-ocularcentric” attitude toward “seeing”.

FOUCAULT

Foucault’s many essays and interviews are collected in a four-volume set, *Dits et Écrits*, from which a selection has been published in English in three volumes.

There are now three biographies of Foucault: Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*; James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, and most recently, David Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault*. There is even a French roman à clef, in which Foucault appears under another name: Hervé Guibert, *À l’ami qui ne m’a pas sauvé la vie*.

There are a number of books of interviews with Foucault, which often explain his work better than the works themselves. The most important is *Power/Knowledge*. See also Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and other Writings, 1977-1984*; idem, *Foucault Live*; and James Bernauer and David Rasmussen, eds., *The Final Foucault*, which also has an excellent bibliography of Foucault’s writings. *Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, contains essays by and interviews with Foucault. See also the interview with Foucault and the afterward by him, included in Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2d ed. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, Patrick H. Hutton, eds., *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, contains two interesting essays by Foucault and a fascinating interview. *Foucault, Power, Truth, Strategy* contains some interesting pieces and an interview. See also Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, which includes two lectures by and an interview with Foucault, and essays by others as well.

Foucault began his career with a great interest in psychiatry and mental illness, in *Mental Illness and Psychology*. His interest became more oriented toward the history of madness in *Madness and Civilization*. He then turned toward the study of knowledge in *Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. His “third period” begins with *Discipline and Punish*, his principal work on power. *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, which has as its subtitle in the French original, *The Will to Knowledge*, is the sequel to *Discipline and Punish*. For more on power, see “Truth and Power” and “Two Lectures,” in *Foucault, Power/Knowledge*. The succeeding volumes of the *History of Sexuality* are in fact great departures, restoring the importance of the self and its shaping: *The Uses of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*.

Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2d ed., is still probably the best general work in English so far on Foucault. There is also the excellent work of Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, which is now in English, though it is difficult. Roy Boyne, *Foucault and
Derrida: The other side of reason, attempts some comparisons. There are two largely introductory books on Foucault by Barry Smart, Michel Foucault, and Foucault, Marxism, and Critique. Gary Gutting, Michel Foucault’s Archaeology of Scientific Reason is a study of Foucault that explores his roots in French philosophy and history of science. Michèle Barrett, The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault, examines Foucault as a critic of the concept of ideology. James W. Bernauer, Michel Foucault’s Force of Flight: Toward and Ethics for Thought examines thinking as a form of “practice.” Among more specialized works, see Simon During, Foucault and Literature; Stephen J. Ball, ed., Foucault and Education, and John Caputo and Mark Yount, eds., Foucault and the Critique of Institutions.

There are many collections of essays on Foucault. Gary Gutting ed., The Cambridge Companion to Foucault, has a wide range of perspectives. Arnold I. Davidson, ed., Foucault and His Interlocutors collects a number of pieces on Foucault by his colleagues. See also David Couzens Hoy, ed., Foucault: A Critical Reader, which includes comments by a number of interesting thinkers, including Habermas and Edward Said. Mike Gane, ed., Towards a Critique of Foucault proposes critical perspectives. Jonathan Arac, ed., After Foucault: Humanistic Knowledge, Postmodern Challenges has essays by a diverse group, including Sheldon Wolin.

On Foucault’s relevance for history and historical sociology, see Jan Goldstein, ed., Foucault and the Writing of History, Mitchell Dean, Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault’s Methods and Historical Sociology, and Mike Gane and Terry Johnson, eds., Foucault’s New Domains. There are several works on Foucault from a feminist perspective: Jana Sawicki, Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, Power, and the Body; and Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby, eds., Feminism and Foucault.

There is an essay on the early Foucault by Derrida, “Cogito and the History of Madness,” in Writing and Difference. For another critique of Foucault’s work on madness, see Andrew Scull, Social Order/Mental Disorder, and idem, “Michel Foucault’s history of madness,” in History of the Human Sciences 3 (1990). On the problem of the self in the late Foucault and in Weber, see Pasquale Pasquino, “Michel Foucault (1926-1984): La volonta’ de sapere,” in Quaderni Piacentini, number 14 (1984), and Harvey Goldman, Politics, Death, and the Devil.

Chapters on Foucault appear in Habermas, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, Michel de Certeau, Heterologies, Geoffrey Galt Harpham, The Ascetic Imperative in Culture and Criticism, Hayden White, Tropics of Discourse, and idem, The Content of the Form; and Edward Said, Beginnings, and idem, The World, the Text, and the Critic. See also Dominick LaCapra and Steven Kaplan, eds., Modern European Intellectual History. Praxis
International, number 6 (1986), has some essays on Foucault and
the Frankfurt School by Reiner Schürmann and David Ingram.

There have been a series of interesting debates on Foucault in
Political Theory; see volume 12, May, 1984, volume 13, August,
Foucault in Walzer, "The Politics of Michel Foucault," Dissent,
Fall, 1983, now in Walzer, The Company of Critics. For an
analysis of Foucault and rationality, see John O’Neill, "The
disciplinary society: from Weber to Foucault," in British Journal
of Sociology (37) 1986. A very interesting critique is by Thomas
McCarthy, Habermas’ translator: "The Critique of Impure Reason:
Foucault and the Frankfurt School," Political Theory 18 (1990),
now in McCarthy, Ideals and Illusions.

On the theme of justice, see Foucault’s debate with Noam
Chomsky, “Human Nature: Justice versus Power,” in Fons Elder,
ed., Reflexive Water: The Basic Concerns of Mankind. It is now
included also in Davidson, Foucault and his Interlocutors. On
this debate, see Harold Weiss, “The Genealogy of Justice and the

There are many works on the body that have been influenced
by Foucault. Among them, see Francis Barker, The Tremulous Body:
Essays in Subjection. On Foucault’s conception of the subject,
see Jerrold Seigel, “Avoiding the Subject: A Foucaultian
Foucault and cruelty, see James Miller, “Carnivals of Atrocity:

BOURDIEU

Bourdieu’s general theory was expounded in its first version
in Outline of a Theory of Practice. The Logic of Practice is the
revised version of this book. Bourdieu’s roots are in structural
anthropology, which plays a large part in these works as well.
On the origins of Bourdieu’s work, see "Fieldwork in
Philosophy," and "Landmarks," in Bourdieu, In Other Words.
Bourdieu has a number of brief essays collected in In Other
Words. Bourdieu’s work began in studies of Algeria, then moved
on to studies of art and culture. See Photography, The Love of
Art, and Distinction. For a recent collection of his work on
art, see Bourdieu, The Rules of Art. A good essay on this subject
is Hans-Peter Müller, "Kultur, Geschmack und Distinktion:
Grundzüge der Kulturozsiologie Pierre Bourdieu’s," in Kultur und
Gesellschaft, Special Issue 27 (1986). For the influence on
Bourdieu of Heidegger and Nietzsche, see Bourdieu, The Political
Ontology of Martin Heidegger. The most recent of his works
published in English are Practical Reason, a collection of essays
on a range of subjects, including the state, and Pascalian
Meditations, a wide-ranging reflection on themes of culture and
society that also criticizes modern social and political thought in Habermas and John Rawls.

On cultural capital, see The State Nobility, which is a study of the French ruling classes and their training and reproduction. For his own analysis of the French academic scene, in which he and Foucault were major players, see Bourdieu, Homo Academicus. Although his first work on education and socialization is The Inheritors, his most advanced work on the same subject is Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture, now in a second edition. See also Bourdieu, et al., Academic Discourse.

Bourdieu reflected a great deal on method, and even wrote a kind of introductory book on it, The Craft of Sociology. On his method, see Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant, An Introduction to Reflexive Sociology, which has theoretical articles, the record of a workshop, and a good bibliography.