

SSC 3038

Contemporary Sociological Theory



Course Description

This course introduces students to major theoretical schools of thought as well as theorists of 20th century sociology. The schools of thought include: the Frankfurt School and Critical Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, Psychoanalytic Feminism and Post-Colonial or rather Critical Race theory. The basis of our discussions will be a combination of primary and secondary literature. The seminar begins with a session on the Chicago School of Sociology. We continue with a critique of modern, i.e. 20th century, capitalism by Herbert Marcuse. Marcuse paints a rather bleak picture of our “one-dimensional society.” We are living in a restrictive society, our political freedom is illusory and our thoughts only go as far as society allows, he argues. We will carry on with psychoanalytic feminism and Foucault. Next will be standpoint theory. In this session we will explore an alternative way of looking at the world from the standpoint of the subjugated. With Pierre Bourdieu, immediately following that, we will be entering more pragmatic and empirically based theoretical frameworks. Bourdieu, for instance, wants to transcend the structure versus action dichotomy. Along the same line as the symbolic interactionists, he advocates a social science that is based on the study of the doings of actors. The course will be concluded with sessions on Critical Race Theory and Zygmunt Baumann’s sociological theory of morality.

The course will be run like a tutorial, but without the pre-discussions. The instructional method is outlined in greater detail in the assessment section of this course manual.

Objectives

The goal of this seminar is for you to become conversant with a few major theories in sociology, and for you to be able to analyze, use, and criticize those theories. Simply memorizing facts about theories is not sufficient. It is necessary to read about them, talk about them, write about them and consequently we will be able to critically assess them. Within the course of the collective learning process you will be able to discuss what a "theory" is, how we can "do" theory, and how theories can illuminate real social problems or issues.

Assessment

The take home exam will comprise 55% of your final course grade. The exam questions will be handed out approximately five days before the essay is due.

55% Final Take Home Exam, 4000 words, due Thursday, March 29, 4 pm.

25% of course grade: Student Presentations (Peer Reviewed)

For the presentation, please apply any one of the theorists or schools of thoughts we have dealt with this period to a current social phenomenon, i.e. social issue, event or trend. First, delineate the main arguments of the theory, then **thoroughly** explain **how** this theory applies to the phenomenon. This is a chance now to **apply theory to practice**, but, please, be **specific** and **thorough** in providing your evidence and show me how this phenomenon relates to the theory.

The presentations will be between 30 to 20 minutes long depending on the size of the group. All presentations will be peer graded, that is, students will give a recommended grade. Furthermore, depending on how many students are in one tutorial, presentations will be done in teams of two.

20% of course grade: Discussion leader

Every student will be discussion leader at least once during the term. You will have to prepare an outline of the reading and hand it in before the session starts. Please bring copies of your outline for all the group members including the tutor. As the discussion leader you will be the “expert” for the day, i.e. you will have to prepare the reading material in such a way as if you were the tutor of the group. As the discussion leader **you** are responsible for the session and have to make sure that all the main points of the readings are covered.

The discussion leader generates the questions on the basis of his/her understanding of the reading assignments. You are advised to think of questions that would lead the group towards a better comprehension of the text, as well as questions that came up or were inspired by/in/during the reading, or questions that you feel were not addressed in the text, but are nevertheless important to discuss.

You will be graded on your outline as well as your performance as a discussion leader.

Below are further suggestions for running a good discussion.

On being a discussion leader:

A good discussion leader **orchestrates** and directs a discussion without dominating it. As a discussion leader you are responsible for the direction the discussion takes. You are expected to run a quality discussion in which students engage deeply and analytically with what they have read for the day. Since you are the expert of the reading you might have to do additional background reading, if the course material is particularly hard to understand.

Suggestions, guidelines, questions for discussion leaders:

- Find interesting, important and specific passages from the text for further discussion in class
- What ideas seem significant or puzzling to you? Prepare questions about these to ask during discussion.
- What is the overarching theoretical question of the text? What is the broad theoretical theme we are dealing with here?
- How does the reading relate to other materials you've read in this class and/or other classes?
- What did you learn from the reading? Please be specific.
- How does the reading relate to contemporary social issues, historical processes or experiences you have had?

- What is your opinion of the reading? Provide a reason for your opinion.

A note on participation:

Participation is expected from every student. Good participation, the kind that enhances the quality of the learning experience for everyone, requires adequate preparation: the thoughtful and critical reading of the assigned texts at the assigned time. Everyone is expected to come to class having read all of the scheduled readings and to participate to their ability in class discussions.

A note on attendance:

This course consists of 13 two hour sessions. According to UCM rule, you are allowed to miss two meetings. Any meetings you miss beyond the two permissible ones need to be excused, that is, you have to inform your tutor that you are unable to come to class before or on the day you are sick. If you have not done so, you won't be eligible for the additional assignment.

Handing in assignments:

Students need to hand in one hard copy and one soft copy of the Take Home Exams. The soft copy is to be submitted via "Safe Assignment" and the hard copy needs to be dropped in the OSA mailbox in the green room. Before dropping your assignment in the mailbox make sure to firmly attach the completed assignment cover sheet. You can find this cover sheet on EleUM (go to UCMStudents/Course Material/Student Affairs).

Required Reading

You may want to purchase the following books online (not available at Selexyz):

Chodorow, Nancy. (1978) *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Note: This book will cover one session only. It is also in the UCM reading room. We will be reading 127 pages out of 219.

Calhoun, Craig et al. (2012) *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

There are three editions published of this book, the other two are from 2007 and 2011. I would recommend purchasing either the first or the latest edition.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. (2015) *Between the World and Me*. Melbourne: Text Publishing.

Fanon, Frantz. (1963). *The Wretched of the Earth: The Handbook for the Black Revolution that is Changing the Shape of the World*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld. Pp. 35 – 106.



Marcuse, Herbert. (1991) *One – Dimensional Man*. London: Routledge

Rabinow, Paul. (ed.). (1984). *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Course Coordinator

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The Course at a Glance

Week 1	5/2 – 9/2	Tutorial	Introduction to the Course
	Task 2	Tutorial	The Chicago School of Sociology
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Week 2	19/2 – 23/2	Lecture	Herbert Marcuse
	Task 3	Tutorial	Herbert Marcuse
	Task 4	Tutorial	Franz Fanon
Week 3	26/2 – 2/3	Lecture	Foucault Lecture
	Task 5	Tutorial	Foucault
	Task 6	Tutorial	Nancy Chodorow
Week 4	5/3 – 9/3	Lecture	Standpoint Theory
	Task 7	Tutorial	Standpoint Theory
	Task 8	Tutorial	Pierre Bourdieu
Week 5	12/3 – 16/3	Lecture	Postcolonial-and Critical Race Theory (tentative)
	Task 9	Tutorial	Black Lives Matter
	Task 10	Tutorial	Modernity and the Holocaust
Week 6	19/3-23/3	Lecture	Student Presentations (tentative)
	Task 11	Tutorial	Student Presentations
	Task 12	Tutorial	Student Presentations
Week 7	26/3 – 30/3		Take Home Exam due: Thursday, March 29, 4:00 PM

Thematic Course Outline and Scheduled Readings

WEEK 1

Session 1: Introduction to the course

Introduction to the course by the course coordinator.



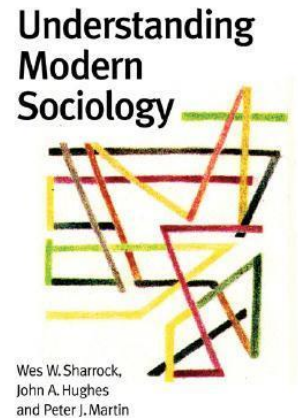
Note: Since the course is based on a conglomeration of material collected from books and Journal articles, it was not always possible to stay within the 25 page limit that is required for e-readers. Because of this you have to make the copies yourself several times throughout the course. I suggest that you make the copies today (!!) in foresight of the reoccurring problem of missing books. The excuse “the book was not there,” will not count, since I expect you to anticipate this problem.

Session 2: The Chicago School of Sociology

Required Reading:

Understanding Modern Sociology, Chapter 5, pp. 150 – 170, 184 – 185, 190 – 196.

Contemporary Sociological Theory (2002), Chapter 3 “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life” by Erving Goffman, pp. 51 – 65 as well as p. 29 starting with “The work of Erving Goffman ...”. **(Book at UCM reading room)**



The Chicago School of Sociology originated with the establishment of the department of sociology at the University of Chicago in 1892. The department became a major force in the development of academic sociology and was particularly renowned for its empirical studies of urban life. Symbolic interactionism the school of thought that is tightly linked with the Chicago school of sociology has been strongly influenced by scholars such as George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer. For symbolic interactionists, meaning arises in the process of interaction between people. Symbolic Interactionism is considered a bottom up approach, i.e. theory is built from the ground up, rather than from the top down. Theory building from the bottom up means to develop analyses that “make sense of the ways in which ordinary people understand their lives and the social world” (*Contemporary Sociological Theory*, p.30). Symbolic interactionism is an empathetic approach to doing sociology, i.e. the point of view of the actor is very much put at the centre of analysis. Social structures, symbolic interactionists claim, do not exist apart from actual human beings and do not operate separate from people’s activities. In fact, social structures are “understood as the *outcome* of the activities of people in interaction” (*Understanding Modern Sociology*, p. 168). Qualitative sociology, for instance, has been significantly influenced by this micro sociological perspective. Erving Goffman is one scholar that is representative of the Chicago School. His book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* was an international bestseller when it first came out in 1959.

Further Reading:

Becker, Howard S. (1961) *Boys in White: Student Culture in Medical School*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers. (UCM reading room)

Becker, Howard S. (2002) The Life History and the Scientific Mosaic. In *Qualitative Research Methods*. Ed. Darin Weinberg. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, pp. 79 – 87. (e-reader)

Shaw, Clifford R. (1966, 1930). *The Jack – Roller: A Delinquent Boys Own Story*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (UCM reading room).

Shaw, Ian. (2009). Rereading the Jack Roller: Hidden Histories in Sociology and Social Work. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15: 1241 – 1264. (e-reader)

WEEK 2

Session 3: **The Frankfurt School and Critical Theory: Herbert Marcuse**

Required Reading:

Kellner, Douglas. "Introduction to the second edition". In Herbert Marcuse. *One – Dimensional Man*. London: Routledge, pp. 34 - 38. (E-Reader, book also available at UCM reading room)

This short excerpt tells you something about the contemporary relevance of the book.

Marcuse, Herbert. (1991/1964) *One – Dimensional Man*. London: Routledge, Part I, Chapters 1 and 3. (book available at UCM reading room).



Herbert Marcuse (1898 – 1979) was an important figure for the protest movements of the 1960s in Germany as well as in the US.

"Herbert Marcuse gained world renown during the 1960s as a philosopher, social theorist, and political activist, celebrated in the media as "father of the New Left." University professor and author of many books and articles, Marcuse

won notoriety when he was perceived as both an influence on and defender of the "New Left" in the United States and Europe. His theory of "one-dimensional" society provided critical perspectives on contemporary capitalist and state communist societies and his notion of "the great refusal" won him renown as a theorist of revolutionary change and "liberation from the affluent society." Consequently, he became one of the most influential intellectuals in the United States during the 1960s and into the 1970s."

(Douglas Kellner on Marcuse: <http://www.uta.edu/huma/illuminations/kell12.htm>)

Please note here, that the essence of Marcuse's argument is to be found in chapter 3, so you have to read both chapters, in order to understand Marcuse's argument.

Key concepts and key argument: distinction between true needs & false needs, sublimation & desublimation; the subversive power of art becomes assimilated in a one-dimensional society; art used to have the ability to undermine the status quo, but this is not the case anymore; political freedom is illusory, we are living in a restrictive society; people are shaped to think only as society allows.

Chapter 1:

1. Why is nonconformity socially useless? (2) If nonconformity is useless, why create a critical theory devoted to criticizing the status quo?
2. How does the new technological society practice totalitarianism?(3)
3. Give Marcuse's definition of economic freedom?(4)
4. How are our needs formed in a consumer culture and why is class irrelevant in this process? (8-9)
5. What is happening to private space?(10)
6. What is one-dimensional thought and behavior?(12)
7. How is the counterculture absorbed into the mainstream in a technologically-based society? (14)
8. Is the idea of progress value-free? Why or why not?(16-17)

Chapter 3:

1. What is the relationship of artists to mass culture in a technological society?(56-67)
2. Marcuse argues that in advanced industrial societies the idea of rebellion is commodified and absorbed into popular culture until it becomes irrelevant. Why and how does this trend happen?(66-71)

3. How are notions of sexuality transformed and how might this process reinforce technological domination?(71-75)
4. Describe the phenomenon Marcuse terms the "happy consciousness." Why do we accept the status quo?(76-81)

(Questions are taken from
<http://www.thinkingshop.com/Thiel/contemp/marcuse.htm#ch2> a helpful
website for this book.)

Session 4: Postcolonial Theory: Frantz Fanon

Required Reading:

Fanon, Frantz. (1963). *The Wretched of the Earth: The Handbook for the Black Revolution that is Changing the Shape of the World*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld. Pp. 35 – 74 and pp. 85-95. (Chapter: Concerning Violence).

Gibson, Nigel. (2003) *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 106 – 117.



Franz Fanon is a towering figure in African philosophy and twentieth-century revolutionary thought. Psychiatrist, philosopher, social scientist, revolutionary, he posed a number of pressing questions that spanned many political milieus and academic disciplines. He is the author of *Black Skin, White Masks*, *A Dying Colonialism* or *Year Five of the Algerian Revolution*, *Toward the African Revolution* and *The Wretched of the Earth*.

Fanon was born on June 20, 1925 (one month after Malcolm X) on the island of Martinique. Through his families' modest but dependable income he was able to attend the Lycee as a child (a circumstance available only to approximately four percent of the black population of Martinique at that time). When he was seventeen he fled Martinique which was under occupation by the Nazis in a dramatic escape by rowing his way to the island of Dominica. There he trained for six months before joining the Allied forces against Germany in North Africa and then in Europe. In 1951, he wrote his dissertation in psychiatry at the university in Lyon. In 1953 he accepted a post as head of Blida-Joinville Hospital in Algiers. In subsequent years, Fanon served as one of the chief theoreticians of the Algerian struggle. His text *A Dying Colonialism* provided not only a provocative critique of French propaganda against the Algerian people and the assumptions of a "benevolent colonialism," but also a theory of values-forming revolutionary praxis. The book was immediately banned in France, but not before the first edition was in the hands of the general public. Fanon died in 1961 at the age of 36. (Excerpts from *Fanon: a critical reader*, 1996, eds. Lewis R. Gordon et al, pp. 1-5.)

Key concepts & key arguments: Manichean thinking & the Manichean world → an approach to culture in which all values and concepts are split

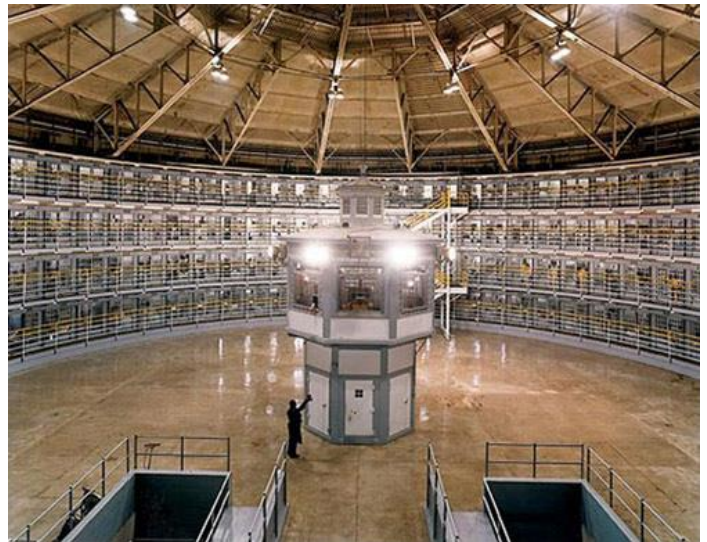
into binary opposites; one is positive = white, one is negative = black. Fanon argues for violence as a tool for liberation and as a way to detoxify the colonial mind.

WEEK 3

Session 5: **Michel Foucault**

Required Reading:

The Foucault Reader (1984). Ed. Paul Rabinow. “The Body of the Condemned,” “Docile Bodies,” “The Means of Correct Training,” pp. 169 – 205 (all excerpts from *Discipline and Punish*). (**Book in UCM reading room**)



Calhoun, Craig. (2012) *Contemporary Sociological Theory. Third Edition*. Chapter 20. Truth and Power & Chapter 21. Discipline and Punish. pp. 305 – 321.

2002 Edition: pp. 203 – 218.

Background Reading:

Understanding Social Theory (2006) by Derek Layder, Chapter 6, “Foucault and the Postmodern Turn”, London: Sage Publications, pp. 115 – 133. (E-Reader)

Further Reading on the web:

<http://foucault.info/>

General questions:

What is discourse? How does Foucault use this concept?

How are discourse and power related?

What is truth to Foucault? How does it relate to power and knowledge?

How does Foucault's understanding of power differ from that of Marx?

How would you locate Foucault within the structure agency debate?

Explain Foucault's concept of disciplinary power. What has changed in the disciplinary system?

What are the new mechanisms of normalizing judgement? How does it compare to the past? What is new about it?

What is the power of the norm?

How does normalization homogenize and individualize at the same time?

"Disciplinary power, on the other hand, is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility" (p.199).

How would you explain the quote above ? Please give some contemporary examples of this phenomenon.

Power does not only repress and exclude, it also produces--- how does it produce? What does it produce?

Session 6: Nancy Chodorow – the psychoanalytic approach to feminism

Required Reading:

Chodorow, Nancy. (1978) *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. Berkeley: University of California Press.



Part I, chapter 1 and Part III, chapters 11, 12 and “Afterword”.
(book available at UCM reading room)

For a critique, please see:

Rich, Adrienne. (1980) “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence”. *Signs*, Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 635 – 637. (e-reader)

OR

Spelman, Elizabeth V. (1997) Gender in the Context of Race and Class: Notes on Chodorow’s “Reproduction of Mothering.” In *Feminist Frontiers IV*, Eds. Laurel Richardson, Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier. New York: The McGraw Hill Companies, pp. 158 – 159. (e-reader)

Nancy Chodorow (1944 -) is psychoanalyst and professor Emeritus at the sociology department at UC Berkeley (USA). Her *Reproduction of Mothering* has been a groundbreaking and very important contribution to social theory and feminist theory in particular. Chodorow is arguing that “the contemporary reproduction of mothering occurs through social structurally induced psychological processes” (p. 7, *Reproduction of Mothering*). The traditional, Western family structure produces differential psychological capacities in men and women which, in turn, reproduce those family structures. What is fascinating about this book is that she is combining Marx and Freud, i.e. she is moving from the micro to the macro and shows the relationship between the two. By moving swiftly between the micro and macro perspective, Nancy Chodorow exhibits what C. Wright Mills calls the *sociological imagination*, this is what marks her a “classic” social analyst and it stands for the strength of her work.

Among the fundamental questions Chodorow is exploring are: Why do women mother? Why is it that women are mothering and not men? Although many mothers are working nowadays, it is still women who do the “mothering” work, i.e. women are still the primary caretakers of young children may it be as mothers, child care workers, primary school teachers or as child minders. Why is that?

An interesting introduction to the topic would be to explore the terms “mothering” and “fathering”. How is the verb “to father” (a child) used in the English language as opposed “to mother” (a child)? What does this imply and how does it relate to Chodorow’s argument?

For this session it is helpful to look up and understand the term Oedipus complex.



Note: Nancy Chodorow makes her most important points of this book in the **LAST THREE** chapters, these you **MUST** read. Her “Afterword” is about her vision of a “good society.”

WEEK 4

Session 8: **Standpoint Theory: Dorothy Smith and Patricia Hill Collins**

Required Reading:



Smith, Dorothy. 1987. "The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Methodology." In *The Everyday World as Problematic: a feminist methodology*. Boston: Northeastern University Press. pp. 105 – 146. (TBA)
Extra credit reading: same book: pp. 78 – 100. (TBA)

Collins, Patricia Hill. (1989) *The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought. Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 14, 4 (Summer): 745-773. (e-reader)



Recommended Reading:

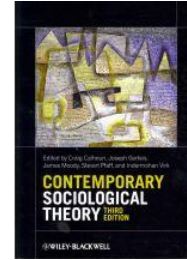
Collins, Patricia Hill. (1991) *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. London: Routledge. Chapter 2, pp. 21 – 43.

Standpoint theory arose from feminist theory as a theory of knowledge that is based on women's experiences. Feminists such as Nancy Hartsock, Dorothy Smith, Patricia Hill Collins, and Sandra Harding have worked on and developed this perspective. Standpoint theory is based on several assumptions. They are: a standpoint is a place from which people view the world, our standpoint or social location shapes how we construct the world around us, social identities or group memberships impact our standpoint, inequalities between different social groups create different standpoints, all standpoints are partial, but some can be more objective than others.

This last point is what Sandra Harding calls “strong objectivity” which is the idea that the perspectives of marginalized individuals can help to create more objective accounts of the social world. Patricia Hill Collins supports this point in her book *Black Feminist Thought*, she calls this perspective, the “outsider-within.” It entails the notion that Black women have to develop a double consciousness in order to be able to live in a “white supremacist”, this gives them a more complex, and thus, objective perspective, since they see the world from the black woman’s perspective, but also from the white perspective.

Dorothy Smith, is a Canadian sociologist and she is known as the pioneer of standpoint theory. In her book, *The Everyday World as Problematic*, she is asking how the social world would look different when seen from the standpoint of women.

Session 8: The Sociological Theory of Pierre Bourdieu



Required Reading:

Contemporary Sociological Theory (2012), Part VI, “The Sociological Theory of Pierre Bourdieu”, pp. 323 – 358. (This includes “Introduction to Part VI,” “Social Space and Symbolic Space,” and “Structures, Habitus, Practices.”)

2002 Edition: pp. 259 – 288.

Recommended secondary literature on Bourdieu:

Craig, Calhoun. (2003) “Pierre Bourdieu.” *The Blackwell Companion to Major Contemporary Social Theorists*. Ed. Georg Ritzer. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 274 – 277, 286 – 307. **(E-Reader)**

Although the amount of reading is very little compared to other assignments, I have to warn you, Bourdieu is very dense and very difficult to read. I suggest that you either take several days and read only a few pages thoroughly or that you read it several times. Pierre Bourdieu is a French sociologist, he does not fit any school of thought that we have discussed so far, but he, nevertheless, is a leading theorist and empirical researcher. His work stands on the premise that theory and research are inseparable parts of one sociological enterprise and Bourdieu refused to separate the two. He advocated a social science that is based on the study of the doings of actors. Actors, Bourdieu maintains, always have some practical knowledge about their world even if they cannot articulate that knowledge.

According to Bourdieu structures guide and constrain action and they are generated and reproduced by actors. It is the task of sociology to grasp the underlying structural features that make surface phenomena possible. Important key concepts of his work are: habitus, social space, production of common-sense world, social space. It is very important that the text is discussed as a whole entity; in other words, do not just talk about the concepts individually as if they are not interlinked. Do not treat the



discussion like a glossary, this way you will not do any justice to his theory. What is characteristic of Bourdieu's style is that he writes in paradoxes; he says one thing and then he negates it in the next sentences.

WEEK 5

Session 9: **Black Lives Matter**

Required Reading:

Omi, Michael and Howard Winant (2002). Racial Formation. In *Race Critical Theories*. Eds. David Theo Goldberg and Philomena Essed. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 123 – 145 (15 pages). (Chapter 7) (E-reader)

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. (2015) *Between the World and Me*. (book at UCM reading room) pp. 73 – 152. (TBA)

Recommended Reading:

Omi, Michael and Howard Winant (2002). Reflections on “Racial Formation.” In *Race Critical Theories*. Eds. David Theo Goldberg and Philomena Essed. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 455 - 459. (Chapter 32) (e-reader)

Documentary: here is a documentary on how Black people experience their home country „Germany“ (Wie schwarze Menschen ihre deutsche Heimat erleben"). Unfortunately, it is in German only. For those of you who do understand it, it will show that racism is not just a US problem, but it is well and alive in Europe just as much as it is in the US.

<http://www.dw.com/de/wie-schwarze-menschen-ihre-deutsche-heimat-erleben/a-38132393>.

Michael Omi and Howard Winant, two US-American sociologists have written the first edition of *Racial Formation in the United States* in 1986. In 2014 the third edition has been published by Routledge. The book is a classic by now. Their concept “racial formation” emerged out of a critique of left-wing thinking about race. In these writings, race was often equated with

class and/or it was treated as a manifestation of class. In other words, race was reduced to class. Moreover, there was no structural dimension given to race, this manifested itself as an absence of race in theories of the state, for example. Omi and Winant were inspired by the new social movements of the 1960s and 1970s which stressed forms of oppression that were not reducible to class.

The big buzzwords of their theory are racial formation and racial projects. Omi and Winant define racial formation as the socio-historical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed. They argue that racial formation is a process of historically situated projects in which human bodies and social structures are represented and organized. From a racial formation perspective, race is a matter of both social structure and cultural representation; both need to be taken into consideration. If we explain racial inequality as merely a problem of social structure, we are unable to account for the origins, patterning, and transformation of racial difference. Racial difference changes over time and social space, what was considered to be racially different seventy years ago, Jewishness, for instance, in Germany is not considered racially different any longer. The same is true for cultural context; what might be considered racially different in one country is not racially different in another country. In fact, the usage of the term “race” might vary according to cultural context, so that in some cultural context we are dealing with cultural definitions of race, i.e. race then disappears behind culture.

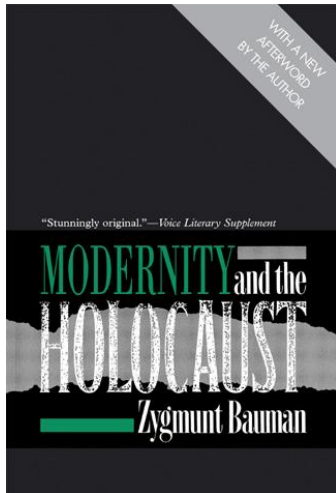
Many examinations of racial difference, such as post-structuralist accounts, where race is understood as a cultural attribute, do not include structural phenomena such as racial stratification in the labor market or patterns of residential segregation. According to Omi and Winant racial formation is a macro-level social process. To interpret the meaning of race is to frame it social structurally.

In connection with the *zwarte Piet* debate, journalists and other writers have raised questions about the extent to which racism is a societal problem in the Netherlands. Within these discussions a comparison to the United States is often made. After the book *Between the World and Me* (2015) by the US-American journalist, Ta-Nehisi Coates came out in Dutch, the question was raised whether or not the points that Coates makes are also applicable to the Netherlands. Whereas the general assumption has been that the US has a problem with racism, but in the “Netherlands we don’t do race” (Hondius, 2014), this common sense ideology is beginning to crumble. The insight that racism is an everyday as well as a structural problem is, perhaps, becoming

more accepted now. These are questions that we will be discussing in class within the context of the topic “Black Lives Matter.”

Session 10: Sociology after the Holocaust: Towards a Sociological Theory of Morality

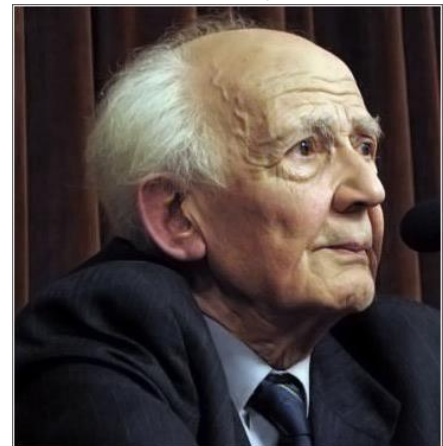
Required Reading:

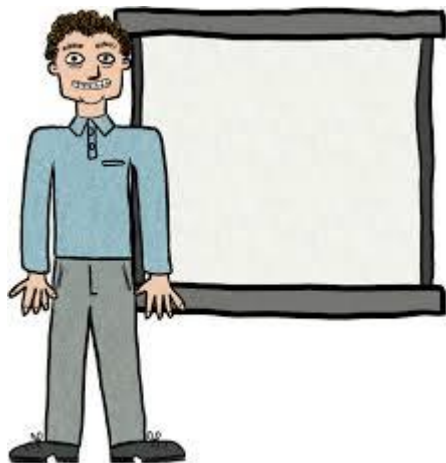


Baumann, Zygmunt. *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Preface and Chapters 1, 7 and 8. pp. 1 – 30, 169 – 207.

Zygmunt Baumann's argument is based on the conviction that the experience of the Holocaust contains crucial information about the society of which we are members. He is asking the important question: what does the Holocaust teach us about the status of modernity? The Holocaust was neither an extreme case nor was it something that happened to the Jews, rather it is something that was produced by modern civilization. At no stage did the Holocaust clash with our principles of rationality nor with modern bureaucracy. As Baumann puts it, the holocaust "was a legitimate resident in the house of modernity; indeed, one who would not be at home in any other house." Thus, it is precisely modern organization of our societies, our principles of rationality and our bureaucratic social structures that made the holocaust possible. And yet, mainstream sociological scholarship is not engrossed in the systematic, in depth study of the holocaust, rather it is left for specialists to deal with. The Holocaust teaches us about the ambivalence of modernity, the civilizing process and ultimately our own ambivalence, i.e. it confronts us with the scary idea that it is within all of us.

(source: Baumann, Zygmunt. (1989) *Modernity and the Holocaust*. New York: Cornell University Press)



WEEK 6Session 11 & 12: **Student Presentations**

E-Reader table of content:

Becker, Howard S. 2002. The Life History and the Scientific Mosaic. In *Qualitative Research Methods*. Ed. Darin Weinberg. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, pp. 79 – 87.

Craig, Calhoun. (2003) “Pierre Bourdieu.” *The Blackwell Companion to Major Contemporary Social Theorists*. Ed. Georg Ritzer. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 274 – 277, 286 - 307.

Foucault, Michel. 1982. The Subject and Power. *Critical Inquiry*. Vol. 8, No.4 (Summer, 1982, pp. 777 – 795. (e-reader)

Goldberg, David Theo. (2002) Racial States. In *A Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies*. Ed. David Goldberg and Solomos. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 233 – 258.

Hall, Stuart (1986). Gramsci’s Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. *The Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 10(2), 5-27.

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure", *American Journal of Sociology* (1979, 85, 3: 551 - 575).

Kellner, Douglas. “Introduction to the second edition”. In Herbert Marcuse. *One – Dimensional Man*. London: Routledge, pp. 34 - 38.

Layder, Derek (2006). *Understanding Social Theory*, Chapter 6, “Foucault and the Postmodern Turn”, London: Sage Publications, pp. 115 – 133.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. (1966) *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: the University of Chicago Press. Pp. 16 -33.

Payne, Michael. (1997) “Althusser’s ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses’” in *Reading Knowledge: An Introduction to Barthes, Foucault and Althusser*. Malden, Ma: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 31 – 43.

Payne, Michael. (1997) “Althusser’s *Reading Capital*” in *Reading Knowledge: An Introduction to Barthes, Foucault and Althusser*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 71 – 79.

Omi, Michael and Howard Winant (2002). Reflections on “Racial Formation.” In *Race Critical Theories*. Eds. David Theo Goldberg and Philomena Essed. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 455 - 459.

Rabinow, Paul. 1984. “Introduction.” In Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 3 – 14.

Said, Edward. "Orientalism Reconsidered," *Cultural Critique* 1 (1986): 89-107.

Shaw, Ian. (2009). Rereading the Jack Roller: Hidden Histories in Sociology and Social Work. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15: 1241 – 1264.

Schmitt, Richard. (1996). Racism and Objectification: Reflections on Themes from Fanon. In *Fanon: A Critical Reader*. Eds. Gordon, Lewis R., T. Deanean Sharpley-Whiting and Renee T. White. Oxford: Blackwell. Pp. 35 – 50.

Spelman, Elizabeth V. (1997) Gender in the Context of Race and Class: Notes on Chodorow’s “Reproduction of Mothering.” In *Feminist Frontiers IV*, Eds. Laurel Richardson, Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier. New York: The McGraw Hill Companies, pp. 158 – 159.

Additional books to be found in the UCM reading room:

Applerouth, Scott and Laura Desfor and Edles. (2007). *Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era: Text and Readings*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.

Baumann, Zygmunt. (1989) *Modernity and the Holocaust*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Becker, Howard S. (1961) *Boys in White: Student Culture in Medical School*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

Calhoun, Craig et al. (2002) *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Chodorow, Nancy. (1978) *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Collins, Patricia Hill. (1991) *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. London: Routledge.

Essed, Philomena and David Goldberg. (2002). *Race Critical Theories: Text and Context*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Fanon, Frantz. (1963). *The Wretched of the Earth: The Handbook for the Black Revolution that is Changing the Shape of the World*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld.

Fink, Bruce. (1996) "Language and Otherness". In Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject. Between Language and Jouissance*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Foucault, Michel. (1972) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews 1972 – 1977*. Great Britain: The Harvester Press.

Fromm Erich. (1955) *The Sane Society*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Layder, Derek (2006). *Understanding Social Theory*, London: Sage Publications.

This book by Layder includes a section on the structure/agency question. It is called, Chapter 9, "Linking Agency and Structure and Macro and Micro", pp. 193 – 212. I have not assigned it, but you are welcome to use it for the exam.

Marcuse, Herbert. (1991) *One – Dimensional Man*. London: Routledge.

Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. (1994). *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. (Second Edition). New York: Routledge.

Rabinow, Paul. (ed.). 1984. *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Sharrock, Wes W. et al. (2003) *Understanding Modern Sociology*, London: Sage Publications.

Shaw, Clifford R. (1966, 1930). *The Jack – Roller: A Delinquent Boys Own Story*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Young, Robert. (2003) *Postcolonialism: A very short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1 - 44.