

Sociology 270: Sociological Theory

Units: 4.0

Spring 2020 | MW | 2:00pm to 3:20pm

Location: Kaprielian Hall (KAP) 137

Professor Josh Seim

Office: Hazel and Stanley Hall Building (HSH) 218

Office Hours: Mondays, 10:00am to 11:00am, or by appointment

Contact: jseim@usc.edu or 213-764-7930

Course Description

Welcome to Sociological Theory! This course puts six social theorists in conversation with one another and with you. The first half covers the so-called canon of sociology: the writings of Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx (with Friedrich Engels), and Max Weber. The second half adds a scholar historically excluded from that canon, W.E.B. Du Bois, before turning to the more contemporary works of Maria Mies and Michel Foucault. Much of our readings concern an essential theme in sociology: *the division of labor*. This focus will motivate some targeted discussions of class, race, gender, state, culture, family, body, crime, and other topics.

Learning Objectives

1. Understand our six theorists on their own terms and in relation to one another
2. Communicate analysis of course issues through writing and discussion
3. Apply and critique the assigned texts

Course Materials

Readings

- Durkheim, Emile. [1893] 1984. *The Division of Labor in Society*. New York: The Free Press. [10-digit ISBN: 1476749736]
- Foucault, Michel. [1975] 1995. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books. [10-digit ISBN: 0679752552]
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader (2nd Edition)*. edited by R. C. Tucker. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. [10-digit ISBN: 039309040X]
- Mies, Maria. [1986]. 2014. *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour (3rd Edition)*. London: Zed Books. [10-digit ISBN: 1783601698]
- Weber, Max. [1905] 2003. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications. [10-digit ISBN: 048642703X]
- All readings by W.E.B. Du Bois are available on Blackboard.

Guides

- This syllabus includes short reading summaries for every regular reading assignment.
- Custom “theory maps” (diagrams and tables) are also available on Blackboard.
- You should refer to these summaries and maps before, during, and after you read the assigned text.

Student Evaluation

Grading Breakdown	
Reading Responses	10%
Theory Isn't Dead: Short Reflections	15%
Take-Home Exam I	25%
Take-Home Exam II	25%
Theory Isn't Dead: Final Paper	25%

Reading Responses

Each reading assignment comes with a set of questions. You are expected to submit an answer to *one* question from each set (due 9:00am the day of the assigned reading). You may either write a response (three to four sentences with specific page citations) or diagram/table a response (with specific page citations). Written responses must be submitted using the assignment text box and diagramed/taled responses must be attached as a standard image file (e.g., JPG). All reading responses are graded on a pass/fail basis. While wrong answers will not be penalized, I may ask you to resubmit a reading response if your initial submission is obviously careless. *Late reading responses will not be accepted, but you are allowed to skip two without penalty.*

Note: I may integrate your reading responses into my lecture slides. Please trust that I will never do this to mock you or highlight something you have done wrong.

Theory Isn't Dead: Short Reflections

Theory isn't dead! While some specific theories have expired and there are probably many that should be killed off, the fact remains that sociology cannot exist without theory. And many of the discipline's core theoretical traditions have lived for a long time. The specific theories assigned in this class, for example, were all published before your professor's birth but they continue to influence sociology today. These are living theories, so to speak. They may be dated and they are certainly flawed, but they live on.

With this in mind, you will write six short reflections. You will use each of our theorists to examine a pre-selected news story, an op-ed, or (at least in one case) a song. They are due the following Fridays at 3:00pm: January 31st (Durkheim Isn't Dead), February 14th (Marx and Engels Aren't Dead), February 28th (Weber Isn't Dead) March 27th (Du Bois Isn't Dead), April 10th (Mies Isn't Dead), April 24th (Foucault Isn't Dead). See the detailed schedule in this syllabus for the reflection prompts. Reflections turned in late will be docked one full letter grade for each day they are tardy.

No reflection will be accepted beyond 72 hours of its designated submission time. Additional instructions and requirements will be detailed in lecture.

Take-Home Exams

Your performance on two written take-home exams will determine half of your grade in the course. For each exam, you will be given multiple days to answer a few questions. These exams will challenge you to put our theorists in conversation with each other. You will also be tasked with constructing custom “theory maps” to illustrate your answers.

The first exam will be distributed sometime before March 2nd and is due March 6th (Friday) at 3:00pm via Blackboard. The second exam will be distributed sometime before April 27th and is due May 1st (Friday) at 3:00pm via Blackboard. Exams turned in late will be docked one full letter grade for each day they are tardy. *No exam will be accepted beyond 72 hours of its designated submission time.* Additional instructions and requirements will be provided on the exam prompts.

Theory Isn't Dead: Final Paper

The course ends with a final reflection on how “theory isn’t dead.” This time you will examine a news story or cultural artifact (e.g., movie, song, meme) of your choice. Unlike the short reflections, your final paper must engage two theorists. And, like in the take-home exams, you will need to design and integrate some original “theory maps” that help illustrate your analysis. This final submission is due May 11th (Monday) at 4:00pm via Blackboard. Final papers turned in late will be docked one full letter grade for each day they are tardy. *No final will be accepted beyond 72 hours of its designated submission time.* Additional instructions and requirements will be detailed in lecture.

See the end of the syllabus for additional policies and a list of important support services.

Schedule

RR = reading response

SR = short reflection

Gray = important deadlines

Introduction

Date	Topic	Reading	Deliverable
01/13	Syllabus	N/A	N/A

Part I: Durkheim, Marx and Engels, and Weber

Date	Topic	Reading	Deliverable
01/15	The Division of Labor	Durkheim	RR by 9am
01/22	Mechanical Solidarity	Durkheim	RR by 9am
01/27	Organic Solidarity	Durkheim	RR by 9am
01/29	Abnormal Division of Labor	Durkheim	RR by 9am
01/31	Durkheim Isn't Dead	See SR prompt	SR by 3pm
02/03	Historical Materialism	Marx & Engels	RR by 9am
02/05	Rethinking the Division of Labor	Marx & Engels	RR by 9am
02/10	Capitalism	Marx & Engels	RR by 9am
02/12	Class Struggle	Marx & Engels	RR by 9am
02/14	Marx and Engels Aren't Dead	See SR prompt	SR by 3pm
02/19	Rethinking Capitalism	Weber	RR by 9am
02/24	The Protestant Ethic	Weber	RR by 9am
02/26	Iron Cage	Weber	RR by 9am
02/28	Weber Isn't Dead	See SR prompt	SR by 3pm
03/02	Review	N/A	N/A
03/04	Review	N/A	N/A
03/06	Exam I	N/A	Exam I by 3pm

Part II: Du Bois, Mies, and Foucault

Date	Topic	Reading	Deliverable
03/09	Slavery in the United States	Du Bois	RR by 9am
03/11	Rethinking Class Struggle	Du Bois	RR by 9am
03/23	Race and So-Called Free Labor	Du Bois	RR by 9am
03/25	White Supremacy	Du Bois	RR by 9am
03/27	Du Bois Isn't Dead	See SR prompt	SR by 3pm
03/30	The Sexual Division of Labor	Mies	RR by 9am
04/01	Colonization and Housewifization	Mies	RR by 9am
04/06	The New International Div. of Labor	Mies	RR by 9am
04/08	Feminist Perspective of a New Society	Mies	RR by 9am
04/10	Mies Isn't Dead	See SR prompt	SR by 3pm
04/13	From Public Execution to Timetable	Foucault	RR by 9am
04/15	Means of Correct Training	Foucault	RR by 9am
04/20	Panopticism	Foucault	RR by 9am
04/22	The Disciplinary Society	Foucault	RR by 9am

04/24	Foucault Isn't Dead	See SR prompt	SR by 3pm
04/27	Review	N/A	N/A
04/29	Review	N/A	N/A
05/01	Exam II	N/A	Exam II by 3pm
05/11	Theory Isn't Dead: Final Paper	N/A	Final by 4pm

PART I: DURKHEIM, MARX AND ENGELS, AND WEBER

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15TH **THE DIVISION OF LABOR**

Durkheim. 1893. *The Division of Labor in Society*. (pp. 33-8, 41-56)

How is it possible that we have become more independent of others while at the same time more dependent upon them? Think about how you get lunch. You have plenty of choices, but you also rely on others to harvest, slaughter, and prepare your meal. Durkheim's answer to this puzzle is rather simple: an increasing division of labor yields both effects simultaneously.

However, this doesn't tell us if the division of labor is good or bad for society. It's not hard to imagine how an increased division of labor could produce boredom, isolation, and other forms of misery. Durkheim generally disputes this prediction. He argues that the division of labor can be beneficial for society if we can demonstrate how it's linked to something that's unquestionably good: social solidarity.

For Durkheim, solidarity comes in two forms: a solidarity of similarity (what he will call "mechanical solidarity") and a solidarity of dissimilarity (what he will call "organic solidarity"). He tells us that a solidarity of similarity was essential in the past under a rudimentary division of labor. As the division of labor advanced, a solidarity of similarity faded and a solidarity of dissimilarity emerged. In other words, the division of labor is linked to a new form of solidarity.

Fair enough, but how can we study this? Through an examination of laws. Durkheim argues, or rather assumes, that more laws will indicate more solidarity. He says we can determine the type of solidarity by categorizing laws according to their sanctions. This leads him to distinguish between two types: repressive law (or penal law) and restitutive law (or restorative law). The former inflicts pain on criminals and is associated with a solidarity of similarity, while the latter repairs broken social relations and is associated with a solidarity of dissimilarity.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. In what other ways are people simultaneously independent and dependent?
2. How have you experienced a solidarity of similarity?
3. How have you experienced a solidarity of dissimilarity?

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22ND
MECHANICAL SOLIDARITY

Durkheim. 1893. *The Division of Labor in Society*. (pp. 57-84)

Mechanical solidarity is a solidarity of similarity. Durkheim argues that mechanical solidarity is high when the division of labor is low. To demonstrate this point, he highlights the heavy emphasis of repressive law (or penal law) under more traditional societies.

This leads him to develop a theory crime, punishment, and the collective consciousness (i.e., our shared system of beliefs, values, and dispositions). These three concepts can only be understood in relation to one another. A crime is any act that violates the collective consciousness. This consciousness is significantly, but not totally or perfectly, embodied by the state. Punishment is a reaction to crime, but it doesn't function in the way we tend to think. The primary function of punishment is to reaffirm the collective consciousness. Durkheim doesn't really care about deterrence, rehabilitation, incapacitation, or the other "goals" of punishment we often hear about today.

In order to function correctly, punishment must be public, passionate, and organized. Punishment must be public because it's not really for the victims or perpetrators of crime, but is rather for the "honest people" who watch it unfold. It must also be passionate to counter the emotional offense produced by crime. Finally, punishment must be organized. It must be ritualized and executed by an authority.

In revitalizing the collective consciousness, punitive sanctions celebrate our shared disdain for acts that threaten our commonality. Thus, in demonstrating the prevalence of penal law under more traditional societies, Durkheim offers partial support for his hypothesis regarding solidarity and the division of labor.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. How might Durkheim make sense of one of today's high-profile court cases?
2. How have you experienced a collective consciousness?
3. How might the State of California embody a collective consciousness?

MONDAY, JANUARY 27TH
ORGANIC SOLIDARITY

Durkheim. 1893. *The Division of Labor in Society*. (pp. 88-91, 96-103, 171-9, 131-5, 215-20, 201-6)

Organic solidarity is a solidarity of dissimilarity. Durkheim argues that organic solidarity is strong when the division of labor is highly developed. He claims the best way to measure organic solidarity is through a study of restitutive law. Indeed, as the division of labor has evolved, new sanctions focused on "restoration" have emerged (e.g., landlord-tenant law, family law, industry regulations).

Instead of celebrating our commonality, restitutive sanctions celebrate our interdependence. Among other things, such laws govern the many contracts we enter into under an advanced division of labor. These laws are diffused across the “body social” like a nervous system, assuring that all the specialized organs work together. Restitutive laws extend from the modern state (i.e., an assemblage of administrative law and the “brain” of advanced society). As such, the state must become larger and more complex. This is consistent with Durkheim’s earlier claim that the raw number of laws increases over time.

Consciousness is also changing during the ongoing transition from traditional to modern society. Collective consciousness loses its prominence and individual consciousness becomes far more important. However, this doesn’t mean the collective consciousness disappears under an advanced division of labor. It’s relatively weak, vague, and imprecise today, but it still exists. The new collective consciousness is rooted in the cult of the individual, is increasingly localized according to specialized professions, and is concerned with a morality of cooperation.

Again, all of these changes in sanction, state, and consciousness are made possible through an advanced division of labor. But what motivates this advancement? Durkheim sees society as something that slowly evolves. He tells us that in the beginning there were no individuals. There were only segmented groups. Over time, this segmentation eroded as people started to realize they could better meet their needs with more people by their side. This naturally increased moral and physical density (more industry, more urbanization, and more/faster communication). In turn, this accelerated the decline of segmentation and increased the division of labor, which also fueled an increase in moral and physical density. And, of course, we should remember that organic solidarity will not emerge unless it develops out of mechanical solidarity.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. What are some other examples of restitutive law?
2. How have you encountered the cult of the individual?
3. How have you experienced a localized collective consciousness?

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29TH

ABNORMAL DIVISION OF LABOR

Durkheim. 1893. *The Division of Labor in Society*. (pp. 277-80, 285-308, 316-8)

The division of labor can take abnormal or “pathological” forms. In other words, the evolved body social can get sick and fail to produce organic solidarity. According to Durkheim, we should study such morbidity because it can help us better understand a healthy division of labor.

He details three basic pathologies. First, the division of labor can become anomic or unregulated. Under this abnormal form, abrupt social changes (e.g., economic crises and rapid economic progress) intensify conflict and uncertainty. Second, the division of labor can become forced or overregulated. This is less about legal despotism and more about “external inequality” (e.g., hereditary wealth and unjust obstacles to employment.) Under a forced division of labor, many people are unhappy because their “natural” talents and abilities are mismatched with their jobs. Third, the division of labor can become discontinuous or incoherent. This “third abnormal form”

has low vitality (i.e., wasted productive activity) and is often characterized by a significant number of useless jobs. A discontinuous division of labor emerges through a lack of coordination and this is often rooted in poor leadership.

With these three abnormal forms in mind, we have a better sense of what the normal division of labor looks like. It's regulated (not anomic), spontaneous (not forced), and continuous (not discontinuous). But that's not all. Durkheim argues a healthy division of labor must also emphasize social justice (i.e., just opportunity and just reward). This justice should exist in restitutive law and in the collective consciousness (i.e., in our "hearts").

So, what should we, as sociologists, do if we find ourselves under pathological conditions? In so many words, Durkheim tells us to simply wait it out. A normal division of labor will eventually emerge. All we can really do is strive to better understand what a healthy division of labor can look like. The "internal" forces of society will eventually lead us to organic solidarity.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. Is there evidence that we live in an anomic division of labor?
2. Is there evidence that we live in a forced division of labor?
3. Is there evidence that we live in a discontinuous division of labor?

FRIDAY, JANUARY 31ST DURKHEIM ISN'T DEAD

Draw on Durkheim to make sense of Paulina Velasco's (2018) article, "Down and Out in Disneyland: Study Finds Most LA Workers Can't Cover Basic Needs."

Due at 3pm via Blackboard. 500 words max. Include page citations for Durkheim.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3RD HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

Marx and Engels. 1843/1846. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. (pp. 3-6, 147-55)

How and why does the division of labor transform over time? Marx and Engels provide an answer. They tell us that human history is not propelled by revolutions in ideas, but by transformations in material circumstance. At the root of all history is a simple fact: living people conquer nature to realize their means of subsistence. This conquest, or mode of production, shapes consciousness. It's therefore foolish to say that only ideas motivate history. Consciousness does not produce (material) life as much as (material) life produces consciousness.

Marx and Engels tell us that the mode of production varies across time and that this variance boils down to different stages in the division of labor (e.g., an ancient division of labor, a feudal division of labor, and a capitalist division of labor). For them, these different stages really are just different forms of ownership (i.e., the property relations that situate individuals in reference to the materials, instruments, and products of labor). With different forms of ownership come different class antagonisms: owners and slaves, lords and serfs, and bourgeoisie and proletariat. Classes are social

relations of exploitation. One class exploits another class by appropriating the surplus of their labor. As such, (written) history up to, and including, the present can be divided according to different class antagonisms.

But how do we get from one class antagonism to the other? Well, within any mode of production, we find an economic base (i.e., the forces and relations of production) that heavily determines a legal, political, and cultural superstructure (which in turn structures consciousness). Except for communism (i.e., the end of class antagonisms), the relations and forces of production will always come into intense conflict. The relations of production will become “fettters” to the forces of production. This will always necessitate a social revolution that will transform the base (and thus also the superstructure and consciousness). However, this will only occur if the old mode of production has exhausted its development and if the new forces of production have emerged within that expiring mode of production.

Does this mean we are all just passive victims to the winds of material change? Maybe, but perhaps not totally. Marx and Engels say some interesting things about consciousness and revolution. They’ll develop this point in the upcoming readings.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. What might Marx and Engels say to Durkheim about the origins of the division of labor?
2. What does today’s class antagonism look like in the United States?
3. How have you experienced or seen class exploitation?

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH

RETHINKING THE DIVISION OF LABOR

Marx and Engels. 1846/1884. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. (pp. 155-75, 189-93, 738-40)

We begin with a discussion of consciousness to better understand the division of labor. Marx and Engels advance their claim that life produces consciousness by insisting that “life” generally translates into “social being.” Indeed, there is something fundamentally social about Marx and Engels’s vision of consciousness. Recall from the previous reading that by producing the means of subsistence people develop new needs and this necessitates more people (i.e., procreation) and therefore social relations. Such relations are organized by patterns of ownership. And, different forms of ownership translate into different divisions of labor.

For Marx and Engels, the division of labor can also be separated into two basic stages: “natural” and “voluntary.” The natural division of labor is always a forced division of labor. It exists as a power alien to individuals. This fact seems to emerge during the initial separation of mental and manual activity, but it really takes explicit form in the genesis of monogamy. The natural division of labor still exists today, but it will eventually be replaced by a voluntary division of labor. Under a voluntary division of labor, we won’t be forced to specialize. Instead, we’ll be able to realize our rich and varied talents across an array of productive tasks of our choosing.

The voluntary division of labor, however, can only emerge once exploitation is abolished. This will happen when capitalism, the final class antagonism, disappears and we enter into communism.

Marx and Engels tell us relatively little about communism, but we know that within it there will be no exploitation, no natural/forced division of labor, and no private property. How will we get there? Through a global proletarian revolution.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. What might Marx and Engels say to Durkheim about consciousness?
2. What might Marx and Engels say to Durkheim about the forced division of labor?
3. How have you encountered a so-called natural division of labor?

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH

CAPITALISM

Marx and Engels. 1849/1880. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. (pp. 203-17, 700-17)

Under capitalism, wage labor presupposes capital and capital presupposes wage labor. According to Marx and Engels, the proletariat must sell their labor power (i.e., their capacity to work) to the bourgeoisie in exchange for the means of subsistence. They must do this or else they will die. At the same time, the bourgeoisie must purchase labor power if they hope to make a profit. They need to appropriate workers' surplus in order to accumulate capital.

Thus, as capital grows so too does wage labor. Put another way, the value of capital increases as more and more people become wage laborers. Still, the growth of wage labor does not mean wages go up. The opposite tends to be true according to Marx and Engels.

To understand why this is the case, we need to understand profit and wages as (for the most part) inversely related. At least in relative terms, the former increases as the latter decreases. That's because the bourgeoisie must intensify exploitation if they hope to survive in a capitalist market. They have to undercut their competitors and the primary way they do this is by increasing the rate of surplus they appropriate from workers. This rate increases as the (natural) division of labor advances and as machinery is further integrated into production. More division of labor and more machinery simplify jobs, increase the reserve army of labor, and reduce workers to mere appendages of machines.

This drives down wages, but it's also a recipe for disaster. A conflict at the economic base heats up as capitalism develops: the contradiction between socialized production and capitalist/individual appropriation. But how exactly will this contradiction between the forces and relations of production give way to a social revolution? Marx and Engels tell us that capitalist competition intensifies exploitation and this increases class polarization. This polarization sets the stage for economic crises (i.e., crises of overproduction) and this leads to capital falling in the hands of fewer and fewer people. Over time, the bourgeoisie become superfluous and the capitalist state starts to seize some of their assets in order to prevent a total economic meltdown. Meanwhile, class struggle intensifies and the proletariat begins to face an increasingly easy target: a smaller and smaller number of vulnerable capitalists.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. What might Marx and Engels say to Durkheim about organic solidarity?

2. What are some other ways that capitalists can intensify exploitation?
3. Why might Marx and Engels see today's billionaires as superfluous?

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12TH

CLASS STRUGGLE

Marx and Engels. 1846/1847/1848/1880/1894. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. (pp. 218-9, 473-83, 711-3, 197-200, 439-41)

Recall that consciousness plays a role in social revolution. Revolutionary classes will begin to recognize economic contradictions. According to Marx and Engels, the proletariat must shift from a class in itself to a class for itself. This transition happens as workers move from individual struggle (i.e., within the workplaces), to collective struggle (i.e., across workplaces), and finally to political struggle (i.e., across nation/world).

Ironically, the bourgeoisie furnish the conditions for the proletariat to become a class for itself. They start by continually immiserating wage labor and ripping workers from tradition, religion, family, etc. Thus, as capitalism advances, workers have less and less to lose. At the same time, in an effort to intensify exploitation, the bourgeoisie advances the division of labor and this organizes workers like soldiers in the factory. The capitalists don't realize it, but they're playing with fire. They pour gasoline on this fire as they develop communication infrastructure. The bourgeoisie do this to spread capitalism across the globe, but they're inadvertently making it easier for workers to communicate with one another. Capitalists also pull workers into the political arena in an effort to triumph over old political enemies. As Marx and Engels put it, the bourgeoisie create their own gravediggers.

By the time the proletariat becomes a class for itself, capital will be concentrated, the bourgeoisie will be superfluous, and the state will have already begun to seize private property (in an effort to keep capitalism alive). The proletarian revolution, a revolution of the immense majority, will have workers infiltrating and transforming the state. Once they have state power, workers will amplify the public appropriation of private property. This is not communism yet though. It's a transitional stage that Marx and Engels call "socialism."

Once we enter communism, classes will disappear and so too will the need for repressive power. As such, the state as we know it will eventually wither away. Communism will also expand the realm of freedom. Efforts to realize the means of subsistence (i.e., the realm of necessity) will not disappear, but it will account for a dramatically shorter period of time. According to Marx and Engels, the only path to an expanded realm of freedom and a shrunken realm of necessity is through class struggle.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. What might Marx and Engels say to Durkheim about state and collective consciousness?
2. How have you experienced or seen class struggle?
3. How might capitalists today be digging their own graves?

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH
MARX AND ENGELS AREN'T DEAD**

Draw on Marx and Engels make sense of Joe Allen's (2019) article, "Why Today's Amazon Strike Is So Important."

Due at 3pm via Blackboard. 500 words max. Include page citations for Marx and Engels.

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19TH
RETHINKING CAPITALISM**

Weber. 1905. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (pp. 13-31, 47-78)

Western societies are undergoing a rapid process of rationalization and we can see this in a number of fields like music, government, medicine, science, and architecture. Weber doesn't offer a very clear definition of rationalization, but we should associate it with calculation, systematization, and a departure from traditionalism. Rationalization involves efficient means and methods. However, the goals rationalization can, at least from certain points of view, seem irrational.

Western capitalism is also influenced by rationalization: the separation of home from work, the organization of (formally) free labor, obsessive bookkeeping, etc. Weber wants to understand the origins of this modern rational capitalism. He tells us that such a capitalism requires a combination of rational techniques and rational laws. However, these are necessary but not sufficient conditions.

There's another ingredient that's critical: the spirit of capitalism. This spirit, or ethos, motivates rational economic conduct and it's particular to the West. The spirit of capitalism is not characterized by greed. It's instead characterized by restraint (e.g., saving/investing money and avoiding leisure). It emphasizes acquisition for the sake of acquisition and labor for the sake of labor. From the standpoint of traditionalism, the spirit of capitalism motivates irrational ends (e.g., acquiring capital and working hard as ends in themselves). However, it motivates rational means (e.g., calculation, systematization, and self-discipline).

In arguing against historical materialism, Weber insists this spirit emerged in some significant way in the West before modern rational capitalism existed in concrete form. He leans on the writings of Benjamin Franklin to illustrate this point. But if the spirit came first, where did this spirit come from? Why did it pop up in the West but nowhere else? Weber argues that the spirit of capitalism was spawned by the protestant ethic. While the spirit of capitalism is generally hostile to religion today, Weber insists that the rise of protestant asceticism was critical to the development of this spirit. The protestant ethic helped drag Western culture out of traditionalism.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. How have you experienced a spirit of capitalism?
2. What might Weber say to Marx and Engels about the origins of Western capitalism?
3. What might Weber say to Durkheim about the rise of restitutive law?

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24TH
THE PROTESTANT ETHIC

Weber. 1905. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (pp. 79-128)

The development of the protestant ethic is consistent with the overall trend of Western rationalization. Beginning with an analysis of Martin Luther, Weber tells us that Protestantism encouraged worldly asceticism. A number of Catholics certainly embraced asceticism, but they tended to abandon the community in the process (e.g., monks, nuns, and priests). Luther, on the other hand, argued that ascetic Christians should contribute to their communities in the name of “brotherly love.” They should pursue their calling. This provided a moral justification for the division of labor. However, Luther’s calling was still an idea steeped in traditionalism. The calling alone did not encourage a systematic organization of moral, let alone economic, life.

There was another major development in the protestant ethic that made this rationalization possible: John Calvin’s doctrine of predestination. According to this doctrine, God has already determined who will get into heaven. While the Catholic can rely on the “magical” powers of priests to assure his salvation, the Calvinist must accept that God has already determined his admission or rejection. No one can help the Calvinist. Confession is theologically useless, as is communion and other sacraments. Because Calvinists hold a deep sense of uncertainty about their salvation, they are motivated to seek out signs that they are elected for heaven. These signs help tame the anxiety of predestination. Calvinists realize that going to church doesn’t really increase their chances of salvation, but they know for sure that the people who reject the church are not saved. Calvinists know this because God requires the world to be organized according to the commandments.

In pursuing the signs of his election, the Calvinist becomes ever more committed to his calling. But now the calling is mixed into a highly systematized moral life. The Calvinist can’t cleanse his soul of sins like the Catholic can. He must embrace rational asceticism throughout his entire life. Thus, in addition to motivating hard work in the calling, Calvinism encourages self-discipline. It’s not difficult to imagine how wealth is produced under these conditions (e.g., hard work combined with minimal earthly pleasure).

Weber nevertheless pauses to tell us that it would be naïve to assume the Protestant Reformation totally generated modern capitalism in the West. His goal is to highlight just one important causal connection between culture and capitalism, but he acknowledges an interdependence between these forces.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. How have you encountered an ethic of asceticism?
2. What might Weber say to Durkheim about the evolution of the division of labor?
3. What might Weber say to Marx and Engels about historical materialism?

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26TH
IRON CAGE

Weber. 1905. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (pp. 155-83)

How does the protestant ethic help generate the spirit of capitalism? According to Weber, Richard Baxter represents the missing link. Baxter emphasized the moral hazards of wasted time. As a late champion of the protestant ethic, he also argued that wealth was not itself evil. While it may tempt evil (e.g., idleness and sinful enjoyment), Baxter argued that the pursuit of wealth may be done in the name of God as part of the calling. The ascetic protestant must nevertheless be a good trustee of worldly goods and this means resisting temptation. Because of his faith, the ascetic protestant has a disposition to save and invest his earnings. Capital grows easily under such conditions. According to Weber, the protestant ethic not only legitimated wealth as a sign of election, it also legitimated exploitation. Rational sober capitalists were met by rational sober workers and this helped lay the foundation for the modern economic order in the West.

Over time, the spirit of capitalism separated from the protestant ethic. An iron cage encapsulated the lives of capitalists and workers alike and religious justification escaped from that cage. The cosmos of modern capitalism, while birthed and nurtured by the protestant ethic, now survives sans religion. Only the ghosts of ascetic Protestantism remain, like the old idea of a calling.

Will we ever escape this iron cage of modern rational capitalism? Maybe. Maybe not. There are three possibilities: 1) new prophets will arise and motivate a new economic spirit, 2) there will be a great rebirth of old ideas (e.g., a return to traditionalism), or 3) we will remain in the cage until human extinction.

Weber ends his book with a final reminder. He doesn't want to replace a one-sided materialistic argument with a one-sided cultural argument. He simply wants to emphasize a causal arrow that is often ignored.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. How have you encountered a modern notion of the calling?
2. Which three futures outlined by Weber do think is most likely?
3. What might Weber say to Marx and Engels about the likelihood of communism?

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28TH
WEBER ISN'T DEAD

Draw on Weber to make sense of Erin Griffith's (2019) article, "Why Are Young People Pretending to Love Work?"

Due at 3pm via Blackboard. 500 words max. Include page citations for Weber.

**MONDAY, MARCH 2ND
REVIEW**

This is an open review session. Please come with specific questions about the readings.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4TH
REVIEW**

This is an open review session. Please come with specific questions about the readings.

**FRIDAY, MARCH 6TH
EXAM I**

Due at 3pm via Blackboard. See prompt for details.

PART II: DU BOIS, MIES, AND FOUCAULT**MONDAY, MARCH 9TH
SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES**

Du Bois. 1935. *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*. (pp. 3-54)

We cannot understand race relations in the United States without wrestling with the history and legacy of slavery. According to Du Bois, this institution helped solidify the color line and it paradoxically endured in a nation that celebrated equality and consent. Slavery's long history can be partially explained by its economic significance in the nineteenth century. Capitalism in America and across Western Europe depended on this anomalous institution. Slavery simply and unsurprisingly drove down the cost of important commodities.

After making the case that capitalists and workers across the industrializing world existed on a foundation of black labor, Du Bois unpacks the internal dynamics of slavery in the American South. He starts at the bottom of the racial-labor hierarchy with black workers. While there were conditions of slavery that could make it appear to be less miserable than free labor (e.g., job insurance and medical attention), Du Bois is clear: slaves constituted the most exploited and degraded workers in the United States.

Just above the color line, we find the largest population in the South: poor whites. This was mostly a population of economic outcasts. However, a significant minority of poor whites found employment as slave overseers, slave drivers, slave dealers, and slave police. In doing this work, poor whites helped facilitate the planters' domination and exploitation of black labor. Poor whites were often exploited too, but they couldn't imagine a unification of black and white labor. Instead, it was much easier for them to envision a world where they were similar to the planters. This mass of propertyless but free people could depend on the Southern racial order to fuel their vanity and pride in being white. Of course, their aspirations to be like the planters exceeded their opportunities.

The planter class, a group with immense concentrations of property and power, was both small and exclusive. According to Du Bois, they exploited black labor because it was the easiest and most effective way for them to maintain their leisurely and self-indulgent lifestyles. It's hard to imagine the sustainability of the planter class given the economic discipline and expanding wealth of their capitalist competitors in the North and across the Atlantic. Indeed, Du Bois tells us the planter class eventually died off after the Civil War and the abolition of slavery.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. What might Du Bois say to Durkheim about pathological division of labor?
2. What might Du Bois say to Marx and Engels about exploitation?
3. What might Du Bois say to Weber about the economic spirit?

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11TH **RETHINKING CLASS STRUGGLE**

Du Bois. 1935. *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*. (pp. 55-70, 121-6, 670-5, 694-708)

We should rethink class struggle in light of race relations. Du Bois helps us do this by examining the Civil War and the abolition of slavery. He refutes the fairytale that the North heroically went to war to free the slaves. The truth was much more complicated. The South, growing increasingly nervous over the sustainability of slavery, attacked first. The North reacted, but they didn't use any sort of abolitionist slogan to rally their troops. They simply wanted to preserve the Union and reverse secession. In fact, Du Bois tells us that the white majority in the North wouldn't have supported, let alone fought in, a war over the liberty black slaves.

Still, the Civil War brought an end to slavery in the South. How? Through the general strike of black labor. With increased opportunities to run away during the conflict, more and more slaves escaped plantations and ran to federal military camps for refuge. The Union eventually permitted these fugitives to labor in the camps before they finally let them fight in the war (along with free blacks from the North). Only after realizing they couldn't win the war without black warriors did the North seriously commit to abolition. Thus, it's fair to say that black labor freed the slaves.

This freedom was like the second coming of the Lord for blacks in the South, but for whites everything black remained hideous. Blacks could never win or act correctly in the eyes of whites. The post-slavery racial order quickly set and it looked remarkably like the one found under slavery: white planters were replaced by a white landholding/capitalist class and labor remained separated by the color line. In addition to receiving greater material rewards than blacks (e.g., higher wages and better-funded schools), white labor enjoyed a "public and psychological wage" of being white. Black labor, on the other hand, tended to suffer an "inferiority complex." White domination permeated all spheres of the post-slavery South: economy, government, culture, etc. New forces of racial oppression emerged: KKK, lynchings, chain gangs, etc.

The new economic order emphasized both black exploitation (white capitalists wanted to drive blacks into work) and black exclusion (white labor wanted to drive blacks out of work). What happened next? A great migration of black labor to the North.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. What might Du Bois say to Marx and Engels about class struggle?
2. What might Du Bois say to Durkheim about crime and collective consciousness?
3. How might white people today enjoy a public and psychological wage?

MONDAY, MARCH 23RD
RACE AND SO-CALLED FREE LABOR

Du Bois. 1899. *The Philadelphia Negro*. (pp. 97-8, 109-18, 126-41, 145-6, 343-7)

Du Bois. 1953. "Negroes and the Crisis of Capitalism in the United States."

What does a racial division of labor look like in the North? Writing about blacks in Philadelphia in the late nineteenth century, Du Bois maps a hierarchy that looks similar to the ones found in the pre- and post- Civil War South. While there are critical differences between slave labor and wage labor and between planters and capitalists, America is structured by a stubborn racialized economic order that tends to put white exploiters at the top, black labor at the bottom, and white labor in the middle.

But why is this the case in the North? The doctrine of race hatred is not as strong (or at least not as obvious) in the North as it is in the South. Du Bois highlights three social forces that push black wage labor down: 1) longstanding inequalities in education, training, and labor market experience, 2) fierce inter-racial competition (e.g., more privileged white workers and white unions organized against black progress), and 3) the often-subtle discrimination of whites who hire and promote workers. These forces can be seen not only in manual and service labor, but also in the labor sectors that include a significant minority of blacks (e.g., the professions and the skilled trades). Unsurprisingly, this hierarchy concentrates a lot of suffering in black neighborhoods: poverty, crime, family disruption, despair, etc.

Meanwhile, white labor suffers less. Not unlike the "poor whites" during slavery, this massive group in the middle is exploited, but they clearly enjoy more material and symbolic rewards than black labor. Similar to poor whites in the South, they align themselves with their white exploiters more than with fellow workers of color. And, while white capitalists generally want to exploit black labor, white workers generally want to exclude black competition in the labor market. This amplifies whites' disdain for blacks and prevents a unification of workers across the color line.

White capitalists benefit tremendously from this arrangement. The color line drives wages down overall and it helps neutralize class struggle. According to Du Bois, the color line may bend or loosen in the future, but it will not break anytime soon. Blacks, regardless how successful they might become under capitalism, will remain "half-free" so long as the caste structure remains intact. Likewise, capitalism will endure so long as the color line separates workers of the nation (and the world).

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. How have you encountered the color line?
2. What does the racial division of labor look like in Los Angeles?
3. What might Du Bois say to Durkheim about organic solidarity?

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25TH
WHITE SUPREMACY

Du Bois. 1923. "The Superior Race." (Blackboard)

Du Bois. 1903. "Of Our Spiritual Strivings." (Blackboard)

Du Bois. 1920. "The Souls of White Folk." (Blackboard)

What is white supremacy? Du Bois helps us answer this question. He begins with a critique of "White Imperial Industry," a Frankenstein-like monster made possible by the oppression, exploitation, and exclusion of dark bodies. This is the truth about white supremacy. White people are not biologically, intellectually, or morally superior to people of color, but they enjoy real advantages at the expense of non-white people's suffering. According to Du Bois, this truth is mystified by a sort of "religion" or "propaganda" of white superiority. This ideology celebrates whiteness and problematizes blackness. Whites look down on blacks with pity and contempt.

For Du Bois, whites seem to be unwilling and/or incapable of seeing blacks as true equals. Their vision is obstructed by the color line, which acts like a great veil separating white and black subjectivity. Du Bois suggests that a kind of semi-transparent cloth covers and separates black experience in a white world. He tells us that people behind this veil harbor a double consciousness or a "twoness" of souls, thoughts, and strivings. They navigate the world simultaneously as Americans and as blacks. As such, they cannot escape the insulting perceptions of whites. In a way, blacks partially see themselves through white eyes.

While the veil is certainly a burden, it also comes with a gift of second-sight. Whites struggle to see blacks behind the veil, but the reverse is not equally true. The person behind the veil can see others better than they can see him or her. According to Du Bois, living beneath the color line means occupying a special vantage point for seeing in and through whiteness. People of color can more easily see the truth of white supremacy.

This supremacy is a force to be reckoned with. It spans the globe and has done so for a long time (e.g., transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, and the globalization of the free market). White civilization was built, and continues to build itself, upon the exploitation of dark bodies in Africa, Asia, South America, etc. In the end, the future is clear for Du Bois: the fight against white supremacy must be a global one.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. What might Du Bois say to Durkheim about consciousnesses?
2. What might Du Bois say to Marx and Engels about consciousness?
3. What might Du Bois say to Weber about the iron cage?

FRIDAY, MARCH 27TH
DU BOIS ISN'T DEAD

Draw on Du Bois to make sense of Body Count's (2017) song, "No Lives Matter."

Due at 3pm via Blackboard. 500 words max. Include page citations for Du Bois.

MONDAY, MARCH 30TH
THE SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOR

Mies. 1986. *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. (pp. 6, 36-40, 53-71)

Mies offers a feminist critique for (and of) the course. To really appreciate this, we need to abandon our common understanding of feminism as a project concerned with gender privilege and oppression. It's not enough to say that men have privilege or even that they oppress women. We must understand such privilege and oppression as being rooted in exploitation.

But what exactly does this mean? Why do men exploit women? According to Mies, they do this because female productivity is a precondition of male productivity in all societies and across all of history. For her, productivity refers to a conscious transformation of nature. In addition to deliberately transforming the external world to realize their means of subsistence, women also transform their internal nature by regulating the reproduction of new humans. They at least do this more than men.

We can see this preconditioning in the earliest iteration of social life: in the hunter-gatherer society. In addition to doing most of the conscious labor of procreation, women do most of the gathering. Under this rudimentary division of labor, men do the less essential task of hunting. Without the daily subsistence yielded through women's gathering, men would not have the energy to hunt. In other words, gathering (women's labor) preconditions hunting (men's labor). This simple division of labor sets the possibility for women's oppression and exploitation because it concentrates destructive tools (i.e., weaponry) in the hands of men.

According to Mies, patriarchy emerges when men begin to use (or threaten to use) these tools against their female counterparts. This happens in pastoral and agricultural societies where men use arms to domesticate animals and women. By the time we get to feudalism and early capitalism, women's oppression and exploitation is institutionalized and regulated by witch hunts, economic coercion, and other mechanisms. Certainly, men are oppressing and exploiting other men under such modes of production (e.g., male lords over male serfs and male bourgeoisie over male proletariat), but these conditions are undoubtedly patriarchal. Net of their class positioning, women are often reduced to breeders, treated as property, and forced into doing work that is marginalized, hidden, and/or unpaid. Patriarchal modes of production are ultimately predatory modes of production. This necessitates, according to Mies, a feminist account of other forms of male-driven accumulation (e.g., slavery and colonization).

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. What might Mies say to Marx and Engels about exploitation?
2. What might Mies say to Du Bois about slavery?
3. How have you encountered a patriarchal mode of production?

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1ST
COLONIZATION AND HOUSEWIFIZATION

Mies. 1986. *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. (pp. 74-110)

Let's return to a question we've asked many times before. What explains the rise of modern Western society? All of our previous theorists ask some version of this question, but Mies insists it's not the right question. So, she asks something more direct. What explains the rise of the "European big men"? For Mies, these big men not only include the bourgeoisie but also the state and the church. European big men have long oppressed and exploited European small men (e.g., serf labor under feudalism and wage labor under capitalism). But there's a critical "underground" beneath the exploitation of men and it includes the triple exploitation of nature (via science and technology), European women (via witch hunts and housewifization), and others/foreigners (via colonization). Without these processes, European big men could not hope to exploit European small men.

Thus, for Mies, the rise of the West involves deep structures of violence. In contrast to an evolutionary vision of social progress, Mies forces us to consider how progression requires retrogression. Humanization, overdevelopment, and evolution for some means dehumanization, underdevelopment, and devolution for others. The progression of men necessitates the retrogression of women, just as the progression of the bourgeoisie necessitates the retrogression of the proletariat and the progression of Western nations necessitates the retrogression of other nations.

These systems of progression-retrogression are deeply interconnected and this is especially evident in Mies's account of colonization and housewifization. After the witch hunts crushed the limited economic and sexual liberties of European women during the transition from feudalism to capitalism, the European big men pressured more and more women into the role of housewife. At first, only the wealthiest of women fell into this position. They became the initial consumers of luxury commodities provided through colonies. As colonization grew, so too did housewifization. Eventually, working class men started to get their own housewives.

Besides colonization, Mies credits many internal Western forces with the housewifization of proletarian women. The church offered moral justifications for massive housewifization and the state adjusted the law to make this possible. Capitalist big men and laboring small men were also critical. The former wanted proletarian housewifization to guarantee the reproduction of workers. The latter wanted proletarian housewifization because it increased men's wages and gave working men more power in the home. Thus, capitalism didn't destroy the family. It made the family, but it could only do so on a foundation of global exploitation.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. What might Mies say to Durkheim about the origins of the division of labor?
2. What might Mies say to Weber about the origins of Western capitalism?
3. How does housewifization look different today?

MONDAY, APRIL 6TH
THE NEW INTERNATIONAL DIVISION OF LABOR

Mies. 1986. *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. (pp. 112-27, 142-3, 145-6, 168-71)

Mies helps us understand a recent shift in global capitalism. For most of its life, capitalism depended on what she calls the “old international division of labor.” A number of mostly Western metropolises relied on their colonial extensions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to secure raw materials. The colonies would then send these materials to the industrialized metropolises where “free labor” would transform them into consumable goods to sell. Eventually, this old international division of labor exhausted its potential. Capitalists and states forecasted a series of economic crises that would risk social upheaval in the metropolises.

So, beginning in the 1970s, a “new international division of labor” emerged. Capital shifted industrial production to the “third world” (much of this covering ex-colonies). The corresponding “first world” (much of this covering ex-metropolises), underwent deindustrialization and this meant a significant loss of factory jobs. Nevertheless, this shift from the old to the new international division of labor prevented (or at least stalled) social upheaval. By driving down the price of production, capitalists were able to shower the first world masses in cheap consumer goods (e.g., clothing, electronics, and groceries).

As with the old version, the new international division of labor would not be possible without patriarchy. Capital is masculine (“Mr. Capital”), and the new order depends primarily on female producers in the third world and female consumers in the first world. Small men are consuming and producing too, but women are more critical to this arrangement. Across the globe, women are universally defined as housewives, as the dependents of male breadwinners. First world women (who may be employed in the formal economy) are tasked with doing most of the shopping for their families. Meanwhile, third world women are increasingly employed by capital to produce the goods that will be consumed by first world women. Their wages are exceptionally low because they too are seen as the docile dependents of breadwinning husbands. It’s perhaps not surprising then that capital (along with the state, the church, and other patriarchal institutions) encourages first world women to have more babies (more white consumers) but discourages third world women from having too many babies (which would threaten their productivity and result in too many non-white mouths to feed).

Mies closes this discussion by reminding us that, like the old international division of labor, the new one requires direct and structural violence against women.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. How have you encountered the new international division of labor?
2. What might Mies say to Marx and Engels about capital accumulation?
3. What might Mies say to Du Bois about the international division of labor?

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8TH
A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE OF A NEW SOCIETY

Mies. 1986. *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. (pp. 205-33)

Can we escape capitalist patriarchy and the new international division of labor? Mies certainly thinks this is possible. She details a feminist perspective of a new society. Mies calls for an abolition of all major forms of oppression and exploitation, and she seeks to replace it with genuine reciprocity and human autonomy. More concretely, she proposes a world made up of largely autarkic (i.e., self-sufficient) economies that tend to only consume what they produce.

To understand why this would be ideal, Mies says we must reconceptualize labor. We need to abandon our current vision of labor as a process for making usable or exchangeable things and instead recognize it as the production of life. In rethinking labor as such, we will assume new aspirations. For one thing, this new conception of labor encourages us to desire a world where human autonomy is realized through subsistence production (and not through a shrinking realm of necessity). Such a realization will require a return to a “direct and sensual” interaction with nature. This will require rejection of most (but not all) machinery in production and a refusal to consume superfluous goods. That’s because both of these conditions spoil our reciprocity with nature and with other people.

What would we produce in this alternative? Well, if we abolish the new international division of labor, embrace relative autarky, and rethink work as the production of life, then much of our labor would be reasonably centered on food production. Whatever division of labor would exist would need to not only be reciprocal but also useful and meaningful. People should be able to see how their work contributes to the production of life. And, of course, this production shouldn’t fall disproportionately on women. People should not be able to use violence (direct or structural) to avoid labor.

How might we move toward this new society? Through a feminist struggle for autonomy. Mies calls for a concerted assault on Mr. Capital. Female consumers in the first world should boycott multinational corporations and female producers in the third world should strike against this common enemy. Of course, men should join this global struggle as well. According to Mies, such a movement would force capital to abandon the new international division of labor. This would present an unprecedented opportunity for people across the globe to build real alternatives to capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. What might Mies say to Marx and Engels about their vision of communism?
2. What might Mies say to Du Bois about economic/political struggle?
3. What are some contemporary political struggles that Mies might applaud?

FRIDAY, APRIL 10th
MIES ISN'T DEAD

Draw on Mies to make sense of Michael Shank's (2016) article, "How Beyoncé's 'Ivy Park' Label Should Solve Sweatshop Scandal: Switch Suppliers."

Due at 3pm via Blackboard. 500 words max. Include page citations for Mies.

MONDAY, APRIL 13TH
FROM PUBLIC EXECUTION TO TIMETABLE

Foucault. 1975. *Discipline and Punish*. (pp. 3-31)

How is power exercised in modern society? Foucault helps us answer this question by analyzing a radical and rapid shift in the management of criminals. We have abandoned the public execution and embraced a new penal style: the timetable. As an exercise of sovereign power, the public execution was an organized spectacle that sought to obliterate the criminal body and maximize physical pain. This is evident in the execution of Damians. In contrast, the timetable, that numbing routine imposed on young prisoners in Paris only eight decades later, is a more private exercise of disciplinary power. Rather than dispose of the body in some spectacular ritual, the timetable is designed to fix and direct the body and it seeks to do this without spilling blood.

Less than a century separates the public execution and the timetable as modal responses to criminal behavior. Foucault refuses, however, to applaud or condemn this shift. It's easy for us to look at the executions of the past and see them as excessively brutal. Likewise, it's easy to look at the prisons of the present and see them as relatively humane. But, Foucault says we shouldn't blindly celebrate this change. It indicates a transformation of power more than anything else. Where power was once exercised to amplify the corporeal suffering of criminals, it is now used to suspend rights, impose obligations, and specify prohibitions. The executioner has been replaced by an army of technicians that includes psychologists, teachers, doctors, and other experts.

Rather than terrorize and repress, disciplinary power aims to increase the docility and utility of bodies. Put simply, disciplinary power makes productive individuals. How? By targeting the soul, that hard to see, but nevertheless real, patterning of thoughts, wills, and inclinations. For Foucault, the soul springs and structures conduct. It imprisons the body. We can think of disciplinary power as a general force that assembles and adjusts the soul.

Such power is nevertheless very difficult to see. It is exercised across a diffused network of experts and institutions. Foucault also tells us that power and knowledge imply one another. Power is rooted in knowledge, and knowledge is made through exercises of power. Thus, the diffused network of disciplinary power highlighted by Foucault is also a diffused network of knowledge.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. How have you encountered disciplinary power?
2. What might Foucault say to Durkheim about the origins of individual consciousness?
3. What might Foucault say to Mies about the witch hunts?

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15TH
MEANS OF CORRECT TRAINING

Foucault. 1975. *Discipline and Punish*. (pp. 170-94)

Disciplinary power produces individuals. It makes each of us into cellular objects of power/knowledge. Such power yields docile and useful bodies and it does so by targeting and training the soul. But how does this work exactly? Foucault specifies three mechanisms: hierarchical observation (we can call this “surveillance”), normalizing judgement (we can call this “normalization”), and examination (the combination of surveillance and normalization).

With respect to hierarchical observation, new architectures have emerged for seeing and knowing populations. There is no shortage of examples for Foucault: prisons are designed to make prisoners visible to guards, schools are designed to make students visible to teachers, hospitals are designed to make patients visible to nurses, and factories are designed to make workers visible to supervisors. Hierarchical observation is made possible by a pyramidal system of gazes, meaning that even the observers are exposed to observation (e.g., wardens watching guards, principals watching teachers, doctors watching nurses, and upper managers watching supervisors). This structure of surveillance is both absolutely indiscrete (everywhere and always alert) and absolutely discreet (permanent and largely silent).

While hierarchical observation is critical, disciplinary power cannot be reduced to surveillance alone. This power also imposes normalizing judgement. It compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, and excludes individuals. In short, disciplinary power evaluates and ranks individuals relative to a “norm” and it frequently excludes those who deviate too much from that norm. It’s fair to say that disciplinary power produces differentiated individuals within some mutable boundaries of normality. Like hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement is but one mechanism of disciplinary training.

This is why the examination is so critical for Foucault. It mixes hierarchical observation and normalizing judgement. The examination necessitates visible and measurable individuals. It can take many forms, including the academic test, the employee performance review, and the medical assessment. The examination also necessitates a field of documentation (e.g., report cards and medical records). By combining surveillance with normalization, the examination assembles individuals into monitorable “cases” that can be compared with one another. The examination generates knowledge about examinees. And, of course, Foucault argues that knowledge and power are inseparable.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. What are some other examples of hierarchical observation?
2. What are some other examples of normalizing judgement?
3. What are some other examples of examination?

MONDAY, APRIL 20TH
PANOPTICISM

Foucault. 1975. *Discipline and Punish*. (pp. 195-215)

Three historical cases help us understand the rise of disciplinary power: the plague, the leper, and the panopticon. The management of the plague tells us a lot about hierarchical observation (e.g., surveillance based on permanent registration, observation posts, and segmented space). The management of the leper tells us a lot about normalizing judgment (e.g. rituals of exclusion). Of course, Foucault tells us that hierarchical observation and normalizing judgement combine into that other mechanism of disciplinary power: the examination. This is evident in the panopticon (see the images around page 170).

Within this particular type of prison, we find a central observation tower encircled by a large number of cells. Inmates in the panopticon know they cannot hide from the tower, but they never know for sure if someone is actually watching them at any given moment. In many ways, this architecture perfects disciplinary power. By mixing surveillance and normalization, the panopticon produces docile and useful individuals. How? By fostering the conditions for self-regulation. The prisoner in the panopticon “becomes the principle of his own subjection.” He disciplines himself.

According to Foucault, the panoptic ideal has significantly spread throughout, transformed, and (in some ways) generated an array of institutions: schools, hospitals, factories, military units, etc. This can be explained not only by the efficiency, but also by the durability, of panopticism. There is no real risk, according to Foucault, that the panopticon will transform into tyranny. It will remain “democratically controlled,” because it too is subjected to a kind of public surveillance (e.g., outsiders are occasionally allowed to enter enclosed institutions to observe the observers). Ultimately, we are left with a society made of panopticon-like institutions that generate a multitude of individuals: students, patients, employees, soldiers, etc. Consistent with his earlier claims about the “army of technicians,” Foucault insists that disciplinary power is exercised across a fragmented network.

He nevertheless emphasizes a mild degree of centralization in the form of the modern state. We can think of the police in particular as a kind of meta-disciplinary force that regulates the spaces between enclosed institutions. But we certainly do not live in a “police state,” and the centralization that characterized sovereign power is long gone. We live in something that is terrifying in a different way. We live in the disciplinary society.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. How have you encountered panopticism?
2. What might Foucault say to Durkheim about organic solidarity?
3. What might Foucault say to Weber about self-discipline?

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22ND
THE DISCIPLINARY SOCIETY

Foucault. 1975. *Discipline and Punish*. (pp. 216-28)

Discipline is a type of power that may be exercised by specialized institutions for particular ends. It may have been developed and refined in the modern prison, but disciplinary power has since escaped the penitentiary walls and generated a complex and contradictory network of institutions. Panopticism has spread throughout Western civilization and has helped form the disciplinary society. Foucault tells us the formation of this particular society is linked with historical transformations in economy, law/politics, and science.

With respect to economy, disciplinary power drives down costs, increases productive intensity, and yields industrious workers. It also increases the individuals that necessitate (and are necessitated by) the expanding apparatuses of production. For Foucault, disciplinary power produces individuals for a complex division of labor and it yields the docile bodies necessary for capital accumulation.

The formation of the disciplinary society is also linked with the emergence of modern juridico-political structures. Foucault insists these structures have a “light side” and a “dark side.” We recognize, and often praise, the light side. It includes formal democracy (e.g., congress and other visible structures of representative governance) and universal rights (e.g., the constitution and other forms of egalitarianism on paper). However, this light side only exists because there’s a dark side that we don’t typically think about. The dark side captures the panopticism of everyday life. It includes all of those institutions that produce, classify, rank, and exclude individuals. Without this disciplinary dark side, the juridico-political structures could not exist.

Foucault also connects the rise of the disciplinary society to the growth of modern science. This makes sense given that knowledge and power imply one another. “Objectification” (knowledge) is inextricably tied with “subjection” (power). As knowledge becomes increasingly specialized, so too does the exercise of power. Power/knowledge splinters across a network of scientific specializations: medicine, psychology, social work, criminology, sociology, etc. Unsurprisingly, this amplifies the production of individuals.

Is there a way out of this so-called disciplinary society? Foucault doesn’t really say, but it doesn’t look hopeful. He tells us this society is oriented toward infinite discipline. It certainly seems possible that we will all become files that never close.

Reading Response (select one and submit by 9:00am via Blackboard)

1. How have you encountered the disciplinary society?
2. What might Foucault say to Marx and Engels about capital accumulation?
3. What might Foucault say to Du Bois about democracy?

**FRIDAY, APRIL 24TH
FOUCAULT ISN'T DEAD**

Draw on Foucault to make sense of Ellen Ruppel Shell's article, "The Employer-Surveillance State."

Due at 3pm via Blackboard. 500 words max. Include page citations for Foucault.

**MONDAY, APRIL 27TH
REVIEW**

This is an open review session. Please come with specific questions about the readings.

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29TH
REVIEW**

This is an open review session. Please come with specific questions about the readings.

**FRIDAY, MAY 1ST
EXAM II**

Due at 3pm via Blackboard. See prompt for details.

**MONDAY, MAY 11TH
THEORY ISN'T DEAD: FINAL PAPER**

Due at 4pm via Blackboard. See prompt for details.

Additional Policies

Attendance and Participation

You are expected to attend every class. However, simply showing up will not be enough to succeed. You must also be engaged. Among other things, this means *you must bring a printed or digital copy of the assigned reading to class.*

Technology

Laptops and tablets are permitted in class for notetaking and/or accessing the assigned readings and guides. You will be reminded to turn off your Wi-Fi before every class.

Plagiarism

Presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Independent Work

This is an extension of the plagiarism policy. You must complete all assignments and exams independently. That said, you are encouraged to discuss course material with your peers outside of class.

List of Support Systems

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety

UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu