

Sociology 510/511: Sociological Theory

Units: 4.0 (per semester)

Fall 2020 / Spring 2021 | Wednesdays | 2:00pm to 4:50pm

Location: Online

Syllabus last updated: April 1, 2021

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Course Description

This is a two-semester social theory course for sociology PhD students. Learning the arguments made by some of the discipline's most popular theorists is an important goal, and it's one that we'll seriously pursue. However, we'll also read works historically excluded from courses like this in an effort to question and broaden our understandings of "theory," "theorist," "the canon," and more. I ultimately hope that you end this year very confident in your ability to *consume, critique,* and *craft* social theory.

The first semester will detail some "foundations" of sociological thought and will focus on six theorists: Karl Marx (with Friedrich Engels), Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, W.E.B. Du Bois, Simone de Beauvoir, and Anna Julia Cooper. We'll put these theorists in conversation with one another, and this will give us a chance to lay the groundwork for discussing some enduring topics in sociology: capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy, culture, state, and more.

The second semester will focus on some major "extensions and breaks" from the foundations laid in the first semester. We'll match each of our foundational theorists (who you will reread/skim) with two scholars who complement and/or contradict their claims: Marx and Engels with Antonio Gramsci and Frantz Fanon, Durkheim with Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu, Weber with Zygmunt Bauman and Ann Swidler, Du Bois with Cedric Robinson and William Julius Wilson, Beauvoir with Maria Mies and Catharine MacKinnon, and Cooper with Angela Davis and Patricia Hill Collins (figure 1). This organization will help keep us focused, but you'll also be challenged to put our theorists in other productive conversations.¹

¹ I didn't reinvent the wheel. This syllabus is inspired by a two-semester "History of Social Theory" course taught by Michael Burawoy at the University of California, Berkeley. The particular version I assisted in 2013-2014 included many of the same readings by Marx and Engels, Durkheim, Weber, Beauvoir, Gramsci, Foucault, Fanon, MacKinnon, and Collins. However, Burawoy also included readings by Adam Smith and Vladimir Lenin, and he did not include works by Du Bois, Cooper, Bourdieu, Bauman, Swidler, Robinson, Wilson, Mies, or Davis. Burawoy also split his course into two major units: Marxism (Marx and Engels, Lenin, Gramsci, and Fanon) and sociology/post-sociology (Durkheim, Weber, Foucault, Beauvoir, MacKinnon, and Collins). In contrast, this class opens with an engagement and critique of the "sociological canon" before spiraling out to more "contemporary" theory. Our course stages some of the same conversations as Burawoy's (e.g., Marx and Engels with Gramsci), but most of the conversations are unique.

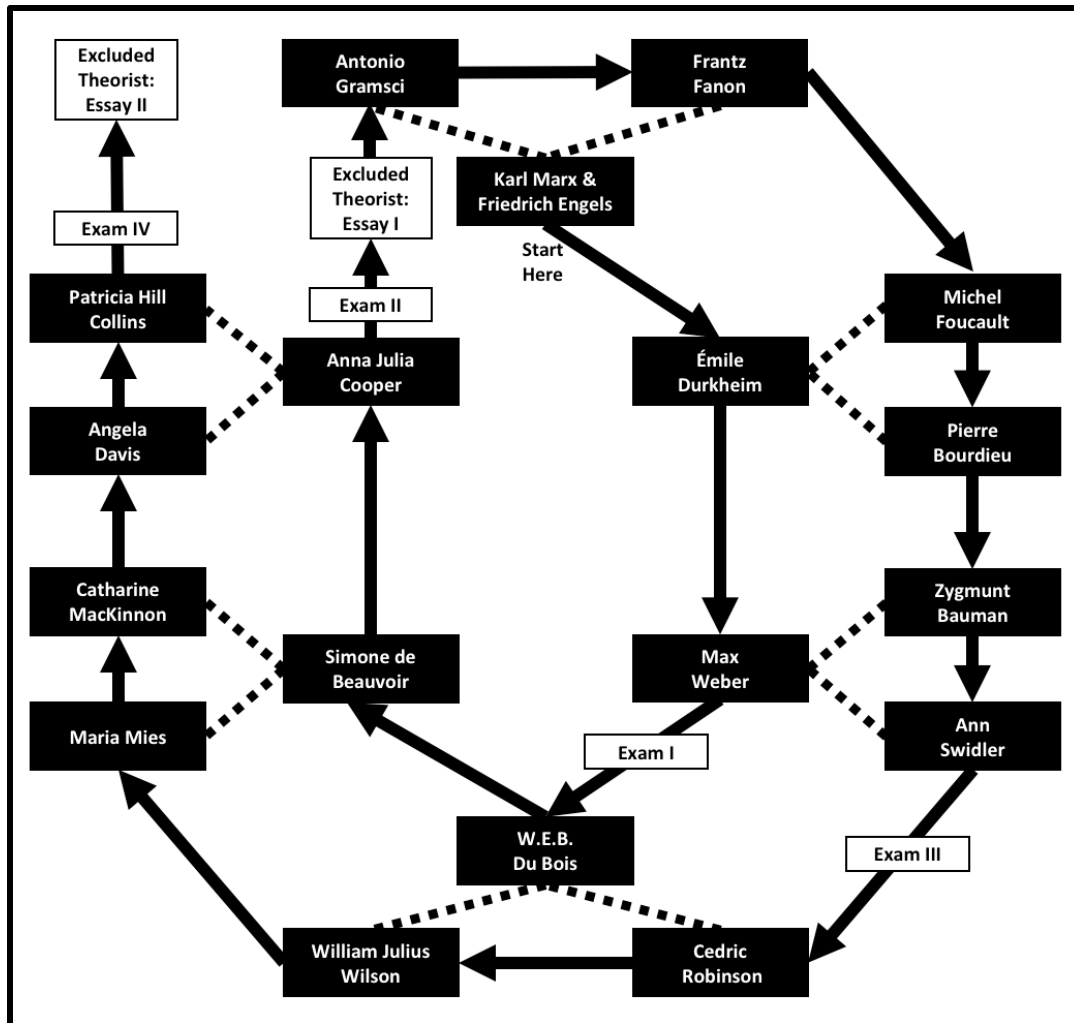


Figure 1. Sociology 510 / Sociology 511

Professors who teach theory classes like this one are forever vulnerable to an easy student critique that we might call the “omitted theorist bias.” It tends to go something like this: “How can we seriously learn theory without reading (insert any popular theorist)?” There are certainly some big names missing from this syllabus (e.g., Georg Simmel, Erving Goffman, Ida B. Wells, Stuart Hall, and Jürgen Habermas). This seems to be an unsolvable problem since we can’t read everything, and we want to sufficiently engage the texts we do read. Nevertheless, we’ll attempt to alleviate this issue with an “excluded theorist” project. You’ll be tasked with reading, presenting, and writing about an unassigned theorist of your choice.

This is the only required theory sequence for the PhD program. You should, however, treat this year as the beginning of your theory training rather than the end of it.

Learning Objectives

1. Understand our selected theorists on their own terms and in relation to one another
2. Sharpen your skills for consuming, critiquing, and crafting theory
3. Broaden and question the meaning of “theory,” “theorist,” “the canon,” and more

Course Materials

You are required to obtain the following books. Be sure you get the correct editions.

- Bauman, Zygmunt. 2000. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. [10-digit ISBN: 0745624103]
- Beauvoir, Simone de. [1949] 2011. *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage Books. [10-digit ISBN: 030727778X]
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1998. *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. [10-digit ISBN: 0804733635]
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment (Revised 10th Anniversary 2nd Edition)*. New York: Routledge. [10-digit ISBN: 0415924847].
- Cooper, Anna Julia. 1998. *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper: Including a Voice from the South and Other Important Essays, Papers, and Letters*. Edited by C. Lemert and E. Bhan. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. [10-digit ISBN: 0847684083]
- Davis, Angela Y. [1981] 1983. *Women, Race, & Class*. New York: Vintage Books. [10-digit ISBN: 0394713516]
- Du Bois, W.E.B. [1935] 1992. *Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880*. New York: The Free Press. [10-digit ISBN: 0684856573]
- Durkheim, Émile. [1893] 2014. *The Division of Labor in Society*. New York: The Free Press. [10-digit ISBN: 1476749736]
- Fanon, Frantz. [1961] 2005. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press. [10-digit ISBN: 0802141323]
- Foucault, Michel. [1975] 1995. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books. [10-digit ISBN: 0679752552]
- Gramsci, Antonio. [1971] 1989. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. New York: International Publishers. [10-digit ISBN: 071780397X]
- MacKinnon, Catharine A. 1989. *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. [10-digit ISBN: 0674896467]
- 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]
- Robinson, Cedric J. [1983] 2000. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press. [10-digit ISBN: 0807848298]
- Weber, Max. [1905] 2003. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications. [10-digit ISBN: 048642703X]
- Wilson, William Julius. 2009. *More Than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. [10-digit ISBN: 0393337634]

All other readings are available on Blackboard.

You should also treat the reading summaries in this syllabus as supplemental course material. I wrote these as abstracts for loosely planned discussions. I also wrote these because I wanted to offer a demystifying and synthesizing document that students with varying backgrounds in theory training could refer to during, and hopefully beyond, their first year in the PhD program. There are certainly downsides to this approach. But, given our ambitious reading schedule and course goals, I think the pros outweigh the cons.

Student Evaluation

Grading Breakdown	
Seminar Participation	10%
Weekly Memos	20%
Take-Home Exams	50%
Excluded Theorist Project	20%

Seminar Participation

Attendance and participation in seminar are integral to your success in this course. You must come to seminar *prepared to discuss the assigned readings as well as your classmates' weekly memos*. You must also lead three seminars in the second semester (details forthcoming).

Weekly Memos

You are required to submit ten short memos in the first semester and six in the second semester (you cannot submit memos for the seminars you lead). These should be about 250 to 500 words each. Weekly memos are *not* summaries. These are opportunities for you to critique the readings, raise questions, and/or compare texts. You must submit memos via Blackboard by 5:00pm the day before the meeting. Late memos will not be accepted. All memos will be posted for your peers to read, and you're expected to read everyone else's memos before each seminar.

Take-Home Exams

Your performance on four written take-home exams (two per semester) 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 one another. Additional instructions and requirements will be provided on the exam prompts.

Excluded Theorist Project

You'll select one unassigned theorist to read on your own as the class progresses. At the end of the first semester, you'll submit an essay that puts your excluded theorist in conversation with one of the authors we have collectively read up to that point. At the end of the second semester, you'll submit another essay that puts your excluded theorist in conversation with one of the more contemporary scholars we'll read. Both essays should be between 2,000 and 4,000 words. The last seminar in the second semester will be reserved for student presentations on excluded theorists.

Schedule

Each three-hour seminar will be split into two topics.

Gray = important deadlines

Fall 2020: Foundations			
Date	Topic	Reading	Deliverable
08/19	a) The Meaning of “Theory” b) Epistemic Exclusion	Abend Go	N/A
08/26	a) Historical Materialism b) Natural and Voluntary Divisions of Labor	Marx and Engels Marx and Engels	Memo by Tues.
09/02	a) Capitalism b) Class Struggle	Marx and Engels Marx and Engels	Memo by Tues.
09/09	a) Rethinking the Division of Labor b) Mechanical Solidarity	Durkheim Durkheim	Memo by Tues.
09/16	a) Organic Solidarity b) Abnormal Divisions of Labor	Durkheim Durkheim	Memo by Tues.
09/23	a) The Spirit of Capitalism b) The Protestant Ethic	Weber Weber	Memo by Tues.
09/30	a) The Iron Cage b) Action, Legitimacy, and Rationalization	Weber Weber	Memo by Tues.
10/02	Exam I	N/A	Exam I by 3pm
10/05	Excluded Theorist Proposal	N/A	Proposal by 3pm
10/07	a) American Slavery and Global Capitalism b) Rethinking Class Struggle	Du Bois Du Bois	Memo by Tues.
10/14	a) Racism and So-Called Free Labor b) Seeing White Supremacy	Du Bois Du Bois	Memo by Tues.
10/21	a) Woman as Other b) History of Masculine Domination	Beauvoir Beauvoir	Memo by Tues.
10/28	a) Forming and Situating Woman b) Toward Liberation	Beauvoir Beauvoir	Memo by Tues.
11/04	a) The Problems of Gender <i>and</i> Race b) Womanhood and Racial Progress	Cooper Cooper	Memo by Tues.
11/11	a) Race and the Woman’s Cause b) Americanism	Cooper Cooper	Memo by Tues.
11/13	Exam II	N/A	Exam II by 3pm
11/24	Excluded Theorist Essay I	N/A	Essay I by 3pm
Spring 2021: Extensions and Breaks			
Date	Topic	Reading/ <i>Revisit</i>	Deliverable
01/20	a) Open Discussion b) Syllabus Revisit	N/A N/A	N/A
01/27	a) Hegemony b) Gramsci and Marx and Engels	Gramsci <i>Marx and Engels</i>	Memo by Tues.
02/03	a) Decolonization b) Fanon and Marx and Engels	Fanon <i>Marx and Engels</i>	Memo by Tues.

02/10	a) The Disciplinary Society b) Foucault and Durkheim	Foucault <i>Durkheim</i>	Memo by Tues.
02/17	a) Differentiation and Disposition b) Bourdieu and Durkheim	Bourdieu <i>Durkheim</i>	Memo by Tues.
02/24	a) Liquid Modernity b) Bauman and Weber	Bauman <i>Weber</i>	Memo by Tues.
03/03	a) Culture in Action b) Swidler and Weber	Swidler <i>Weber</i>	Memo by Tues.
03/05	Exam III	N/A	Exam III by 3pm
03/08	Excluded Theorist Update	N/A	Update by 3pm
03/10	a) Black Radicalism b) Robinson and Du Bois	Robinson <i>Du Bois</i>	Memo by Tues.
03/17	a) More Than Just Race b) Wilson and Du Bois	Wilson <i>Du Bois</i>	Memo by Tues.
03/24	a) Patriarchy and Accumulation b) Mies and Beauvoir	Mies <i>Beauvoir</i>	Memo by Tues.
03/31	a) Sexuality and Male Supremacy b) MacKinnon and Beauvoir	MacKinnon <i>Beauvoir</i>	Memo by Tues.
04/14	a) Sexism, Racism, and Capitalism b) Davis and Cooper	Davis <i>Cooper</i>	Memo by Tues.
04/21	a) Rethinking Domination and Consciousness b) Collins and Cooper	Collins <i>Cooper</i>	Memo by Tues.
04/23	Exam IV	N/A	Exam IV by 3pm
04/28	a) Excluded Theorist Presentations b) Excluded Theorist Presentations	N/A N/A	N/A N/A
05/12	Excluded Theorist Essay II	N/A	Essay II by 3pm

FALL INTRODUCTION

AUGUST 19TH

A) THE MEANING OF “THEORY”

Abend. 2008. “The Meaning of ‘Theory’” (Blackboard)

This is a course on “theory,” but what exactly does that mean? In addition to talking about this syllabus, we’ll open our first meeting by discussing Gabriel Abend’s “The Meaning of ‘Theory.’” He identifies seven distinct meanings of the term in the “sociological language.” Abend problematizes this polysemy before proposing a remedy that emphasizes practical reason as well as ontological and epistemological pluralism. We’ll think about how Abend might critique the syllabus at hand and consider some additional ways we might be able to address what he calls the “semantic predicament” (“How *ought* sociologists to use the word ‘theory’?”).

B) EPISTEMIC EXCLUSION

Go. 2020. "Race, Empire, and Epistemic Exclusion." (Blackboard)

During the second half of our first seminar, we'll discuss a recent essay published by Julian Go in *Sociological Theory*. He argues that the imperial roots of academic sociology explain much of the existing patterns of epistemic exclusion in the discipline. He then outlines two methods for challenging said exclusion. First, instead of simply replacing or expanding the sociological canon, Go suggests we treat all social knowledge as provincial (i.e., particularistic and partial). Second, we should rethink what counts as "theory" and who we consider to be a "theorist." We'll speculate on how Go might critique this syllabus and consider how his analysis might inspire your excluded theorist projects.

KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS

We start with Karl Marx (born 1818, Trier, Rhine province, Prussia – died 1883, London, England) and Friedrich Engels (born 1820, Barmen, Rhine province, Prussia – died 1895, London, England). We'll read excerpts from *The German Ideology* (Marx and Engels 1846), *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Marx and Engels 1848), and more. As with all our theorists, we should consider the particular social locations from which Marx and Engels theorized the world. Please be sure to read David McLellan's short biography of Marx and Oscar Hammen's even shorter biography of Engels (both on Blackboard). Note their political activity as well as the material circumstances shaping their lives.

AUGUST 26TH

A) HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

Marx. 1859. Preface from *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. (pp. 3-6)²
Marx and Engels. 1846. *The German Ideology*. (pp. 147-55)

At the root of all history is a simple fact for Marx and Engels: living people produce the means of their subsistence. However, people's mode of production varies across 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). According to Marx and Engels, these different stages are just different forms of ownership (i.e., the property relations that situate individuals in reference to the materials, instruments, and products of labor). And, with different forms of ownership come different class antagonisms: owners and slaves, lords and serfs, and bourgeoisie and proletariat. In each of these historical stages, the dominant class exploits the dominated class by appropriating the surplus of their labor. Except for communism (i.e., the end of class antagonisms), the relations of production will become "fetters" to the forces of production. This will always necessitate a social revolution that will transform the economic base and thus also consciousness and the superstructure.

² Page numbers are for *The Marx-Engels Reader* (1978), which includes all the assigned readings for Marx and Engels. The header for the first reading is "Marx on the History of His Opinions," but that is not what Marx titled the piece.

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 the relation between consciousness and revolution.

B) NATURAL AND VOLUNTARY DIVISIONS OF LABOR

Marx and Engels. 1846. *The German Ideology*. (pp. 155-75, 189-93)

Engels. 1884. *The Origin of Family, Private Property, and State* (pp. 738-40)

Marx and Engels claim that life produces consciousness, and they insist that “life” generally translates into “social being.” 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 different divisions of labor, which can be further distinguished as either “natural” or “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 and abilities 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 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.

SEPTEMBER 2ND

A) CAPITALISM

Marx. 1867. “Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist” (pp. 435-6)³

Marx. 1849. “Wage Labour and Capital.” (pp. 203-17)

Engels. 1880. *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. (pp. 700-17)

We turn to a short chapter linking industrial capitalism to colonialism, slavery, and other forms of so-called primitive accumulation before digging into Marx and Engels’s analysis of capitalist production. They insist that wage labor presupposes capital and that capital presupposes wage labor. The proletariat must sell their labor power (i.e., their capacity to work) to the bourgeoisie in exchange for the means of subsistence. At the same time, the bourgeoisie must purchase labor power and appropriate workers’ surplus in order to accumulate capital. The bourgeoisie must also intensify this exploitation if they hope to survive in a capitalist market. In other words, 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

³ Chapter XXXI from the first volume of Marx’s *Capital* (1867).

simplify jobs, increase the reserve army of labor, and reduce workers to mere appendages of machines. This drives down wages (at least relative to the growth of capital), 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. This contradiction between the forces and relations of production will increase class polarization, generate economic crises, and concentrate capital in the hands of superfluous capitalists. Meanwhile, class struggle intensifies and the proletariat begins to face an increasingly easy target: a smaller and smaller number of vulnerable capitalists.

B) CLASS STRUGGLE

Marx. 1847. "The Coming Upheaval." (pp. 218-9)⁴

Marx and Engels. 1848. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. (pp. 473-83)

Marx and Engels. 1846. *The German Ideology*. (pp. 197-200)

Marx. 1894. "On the Realm of Necessity and the Realm of Freedom." (pp. 439-41)⁵

Marx and Engels. 1858/1882. "Europocentric World Revolution." (pp. 676-7)⁶

How do we exit capitalism? 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 (within workplaces), to collective struggle (across workplaces), and finally to political struggle (across nation/world). Ironically, the bourgeoisie furnish the conditions for the proletariat to become a class for itself. They continually immiserate wage labor and rip workers from tradition, religion, family, and so on. Thus, as capitalism advances, workers have less and less to lose. At the same time, the bourgeoisie advance the natural 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 defeat old political enemies. As Marx and Engels put it, the bourgeoisie create their own gravediggers. What comes after the burial of capitalists? A shrinking realm of necessity and an expanding realm of freedom. Still, upon close reading, none of this actually seems very easy or automatic for Marx and Engels. Their notes on colonialism and the globalization of capital help illustrate this point.

ÉMILE DURKHEIM

Next, we turn to Émile Durkheim (born 1858, Épinal, France – died 1917, Paris, France). In *The Division of Labor in Society* (1893), Durkheim engages many of the same themes as Marx and Engels. However, he ultimately offers an analysis that, for many reasons, cannot be reconciled with a Marxian vision of the world. Before opening his book, you should read a short biographical

⁴ Excerpt from Marx's *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847).

⁵ Excerpt from the third volume of Marx's *Capital*, which was published after Marx's death (and edited by Engels).

⁶ Marx and Engels did not title this. This section includes two letters, one from Marx to Engels in 1858 and one from Engels to Karl Kautsky in 1882.

excerpt written by Robert Alun Jones (Blackboard). Durkheim's roots in a "close-knit, orthodox Jewish family" and his life in Paris provide a bit of otherwise hidden context for his analysis.

SEPTEMBER 9TH

A) RETHINKING THE DIVISION OF LABOR

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

Is an advancing division of labor good for society? It's not hard to imagine how increasing specialization 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. We can study this, according to Durkheim, through an examination of laws. He 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.

B) MECHANICAL SOLIDARITY

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

Durkheim argues that mechanical solidarity is high when the division of labor is simple. 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). A crime is any act that violates the collective consciousness, which is significantly, but not totally or perfectly, embodied by the state. The primary function of punishment is to reaffirm the collective consciousness. But, in order to function correctly, it must be public, passionate, and organized. Punishment must be public because it's not really for the victims or perpetrators of the crime, but is rather for the "honest people" who watch it unfold. Punishment must also be passionate to counter the emotional offense produced by crime. Finally, it must be organized. Punishment 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.

SEPTEMBER 16TH**A) ORGANIC SOLIDARITY**

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

Durkheim argues that organic solidarity is strong when the division of labor is highly developed. To demonstrate this point, he highlights the heavy emphasis on restitutive law under more advanced societies. Instead of celebrating our commonality, restitutive sanctions celebrate our interdependence. These laws are diffused across the “body social” like a nervous system, assuring that all the specialized organs work together. Consciousness also changes 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 advancing division of labor. But what motivates this advancement? Durkheim sees society as something that tends to evolve slowly. We’ll spend some time thinking about the origins of the modern division of labor according to Durkheim. The details are complicated, but above all we should remember that organic solidarity will not emerge unless it develops out of mechanical solidarity.

B) ABNORMAL DIVISIONS OF LABOR

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

The division of labor can take abnormal forms. Durkheim 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., inherited 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). So, what should we, as sociologists, do if we find ourselves under pathological conditions? Durkheim’s answer is complicated and perhaps a bit contradictory. We’ll wrestle with this in seminar.

MAX WEBER

We now turn to Max Weber (born 1864, Erfurt, Prussia – died 1920, Munich, Germany) to finish what some have playfully called the “holy trinity” of classical sociology: Marx, Durkheim, and Weber (I guess it’s easy to forget about Engels). Most of what we’ll learn from Weber will come from *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), but we’ll also read some excerpts from *Economy and Society* (1922). However, you should start by reading the short biography by Arthur Mitzman (Blackboard) as this will help us provincialize Weber’s sociology. Among other things, it’s worthwhile to consider his mother’s Calvinist roots and his father’s experience as a bureaucrat.

SEPTEMBER 23RD

A) THE SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM

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

Weber offers an alternative theory for the emergence of modern capitalism in the West. He tells us that such a capitalism required a combination of rational techniques and rational laws. However, these were necessary but not sufficient conditions. There was another ingredient that was critical: the spirit of capitalism. This spirit, or ethos, motivated rational economic conduct and it was particular to the West. The spirit of capitalism was not characterized by greed. It was instead characterized by restraint (e.g., saving/investing money and avoiding leisure). It emphasized acquisition for the sake of acquisition and labor for the sake of labor. 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 it come from? Why did it pop up in the West but nowhere else? Weber argues that the spirit of capitalism was spawned, at least in significant part, 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.

B) 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. Writing against Catholic traditionalism, Luther argued that the faithful should pursue their calling and contribute to their communities in the name of “brotherly love.” While critical for advancing the division of labor, 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 Calvin, God has already determined who is saved. Weber says this doctrine inspired a deep sense of uncertainty and motivated many believers to seek signs that they were elected for heaven. This intensified a Protestant commitment to the calling and mixed it into

a highly systematized moral life. The Calvinist couldn't cleanse his soul of sins like the Catholic could. He had to embrace rational asceticism throughout his entire life. Thus, in addition to motivating hard work in the calling, Calvinism encouraged self-discipline. It's not difficult to imagine how wealth could be produced under these conditions (e.g., hard work combined with minimal earthly pleasure).

SEPTEMBER 30TH

A) THE IRON CAGE

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

How did 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. He also argued that wealth was not itself evil. While it may tempt evil, Baxter argued that the pursuit of wealth may be done in the name of God as part of the calling. Weber also notes that the protestant ethic 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. Weber briefly considers some potential futures before ending his book with a final reminder. He doesn't want to replace a one-sided economic argument with a one-sided cultural argument. He simply wants to emphasize a causal arrow that is often ignored.

B) ACTION, LEGITIMACY, AND RATIONALIZATION

Weber. 1922. *Economy and Society*. (pp. 4-26, 212-6, 956-63, 973-5, 980-90, 998-1003) (Blackboard)

There's certainly a lot to learn from *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, but three concepts are particularly important and worth further exploring: action, legitimacy, and rationalization. Some excerpts from *Economy and Society* will help us better understand these concepts. First, in an effort to clarify Weber's conceptualization of action, we'll discuss "The Definitions of Sociology and Social Action" and "Types of Social Action." We'll cover the four possible orientations (instrumentally rational, value-rational, affectual, and traditional) and apply them to Weber's analysis of modern Western capitalism. Next, we'll discuss "Domination and Legitimacy" along with "The Three Pure Types of Authority" to help us understand legitimacy. We may also want to consider how the "legal grounds," "traditional grounds," and "charismatic grounds" of authority operate differently through Catholicism, Protestantism, and secular capitalism. Finally, to sharpen our comprehension of rationalization, we'll discuss portions of "Bureaucracy." In addition to detailing the basic features of "modern officialdom," Weber covers the vocation and position of a particular actor: the official. We'll also consider the bureaucratization of state, market, education, warfare, and more. Time permitting, we should also discuss how Weber's analysis of bureaucracy can help us understand the "iron cage."

Exam I due October 2nd at 3pm.

Excluded Theorist Proposal due October 5th at 3pm.

W.E.B. DU BOIS

We first break from the “holy trinity” with W.E.B. Du Bois (born 1868, Great Barrington, Massachusetts, U.S. – died 1963, Accra, Ghana). We’ll read a number of his works, but we won’t cover them in the order of their publication. Instead, we’ll generally follow a historical chronology of some of his main empirical objects. For example, we’ll read excerpts from *Black Reconstruction* (1935) before we read excerpts from *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899) only because slavery and the Civil War happened before the data collected in Philadelphia. The short biography by Elliott Rudwick (Blackboard) should help you better understand Du Bois’s intellectual evolution as well as the particular standpoints from which he articulated a wealth of sociological insights.

OCTOBER 7TH

A) AMERICAN SLAVERY AND GLOBAL CAPITALISM

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

Du Bois’s analysis of slavery in the antebellum South helps us better understand the significance of Black labor in the development of global capitalism. According to Du Bois, slavery 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 global economic significance in the nineteenth century. Capitalism in America and across Western Europe depended on this seemingly 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. Du Bois is clear: the enslaved constituted the most exploited and degraded workers in America. Just above the color line, we find the largest population in the South: poor whites. This was mostly a population of economic outcasts, but a significant minority of poor whites found employment as slave overseers, slave drivers, slave dealers, and slave police. Lastly, Du Bois details the planter class, a small and exclusive group with immense concentrations of property and power. White workers certainly benefited from the color line, but not as much as the planters did. Their property and power clearly depended on a racial division of labor.

B) RETHINKING CLASS STRUGGLE

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

Du Bois argues that the Civil War brought an end to slavery in the South through the general strike of Black labor. With increased opportunities to run away during the conflict, more and more enslaved people 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” Black people 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 ended slavery. However, this wasn’t total freedom. A 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 Black labor (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 postbellum South (e.g., economy, government, and culture) and new forces of racial oppression emerged (e.g., KKK, lynchings, and chain gangs). The new economic order emphasized both Black exploitation (white capitalists wanted to drive Black people into work) and Black exclusion (white labor wanted to drive Black people out of work).

OCTOBER 14TH

A) RACISM AND SO-CALLED FREE LABOR

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

Du Bois. 1953. “Negroes and the Crisis of Capitalism in the United States.” (Blackboard)

Writing about Black people 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. 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 industrial Philadelphia? 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 across a number of industries. Unsurprisingly, this hierarchy concentrates a lot of suffering in Black neighborhoods. Meanwhile, white labor suffers less. This massive group in the middle is exploited, but they clearly enjoy more material and symbolic rewards than Black labor. Of course, white capitalists benefit tremendously from this arrangement. The color line drives wages down overall and it helps neutralize class struggle. Looking forward, Du Bois suggests the color line may “bend and loosen,” but it will not break anytime soon.

B) SEEING 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)

We close Du Bois with some essays that help clarify white supremacy. He begins with a critique of “White Imperial Industry,” a Frankenstein-like monster made possible by the oppression, exploitation, and exclusion of dark bodies. And here’s the ugly truth concealed by that monster: white people are not biologically, intellectually, or morally superior to people of color, but they

enjoy real advantages at the expense of nonwhite people's suffering. According to Du Bois, this truth is mystified by a sort of "religion" of white superiority. This ideology celebrates whiteness and problematizes Blackness. White people look down on Black people with pity and contempt. Their vision is obstructed by the color line, which acts like a great veil separating white and Black subjectivity. Du Bois tells us that people behind this veil harbor a double consciousness or a "twoness" of souls, thoughts, and strivings. While the veil is certainly a burden, it also comes with a gift of second-sight. People of color, and Black people in particular, can more easily see the truth of white supremacy. And this supremacy is a force to be reckoned with. White civilization was built, and continues to build itself, upon the exploitation of dark bodies across the world. In the end, the future is clear for Du Bois: the fight against white supremacy must be a global one.

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

Simone de Beauvoir (born 1908, Paris, France – died 1986, Paris, France) is usually treated as a "contemporary theorist." However, the design of our class does not obey the typical (and often arbitrary) distinctions in "classical" and "contemporary" theory. What matters is that Beauvoir offers a foundational theory of feminism. Of course, feminist theory existed before *The Second Sex* (1949), but few can deny the book's novelty and influence. To help illustrate this point, while also accounting for Beauvoir's particular social location, I have posted her obituary from the *New York Times* on Blackboard. Please read this before starting her book.⁷

OCTOBER 21ST

A) WOMAN AS OTHER

Beauvoir. 1949. *The Second Sex*. (pp. 3-17, 21, 45-52, 55-6, 62-8, 638-40).⁸

What is a woman? Beauvoir suggests this is an important question, but simply asking it is insightful in and of itself. Consider the alternative: "What is a man?" That question has historically just meant "What is a human?" Indeed, men rarely even theorize the particular condition of males. That is because "man" is usually conceptualized as positive and neutral, while "woman" is usually framed as negative. He is universal and essential. She is particular and inessential. Man is subject and woman is object. In the broadest terms, man is the One and woman is the Other. And it is clear to Beauvoir that women are ultimately othered by men. But what explains this hierarchical separation by gender? Beauvoir notes that three explanations are usually put forward: biological determinism, psychoanalysis, and historical materialism. Despite their insistence otherwise, theorists from each of these paradigms offer highly reductive visions of gender. They all offer weak assessment of othering, and synthesizing these approaches would be unsatisfactory. Beauvoir calls for a more comprehensive theory of masculine domination. She draws on existentialism, and therefore uses the terminology of transcendence/immanence and authenticity/inauthenticity, to evaluate the

⁷ Our readings for *The Second Sex* rarely include full chapters or sections. Don't be alarmed when the assigned passages throw you into the middle of her analysis or when they combine the end of one chapter with the beginning of another.

⁸ E-book pages: 23-38, 41, 68-71, 73-6, 79-80, 87-94, 724-6.

social conditions of women. This necessitates a historical analysis of masculine power as well as a sociological analysis of the “formations” and “situations” of men and women today.

B) HISTORY OF MASCULINE DOMINATION

Beauvoir. 1949. *The Second Sex*. (pp. 71-90, 104, 109-11, 119-20, 126, 152-6)⁹

Beauvoir argues that “this world has always belonged to males.” But why is the case? In short, men oppress women because they’ve been given certain opportunities to do so. A series of advantages have allowed men to impose their sovereignty on women and to make gains at their expense. According to Beauvoir, we shouldn’t be all that surprised that one group would be motivated to dominate another. Instead, we should study the specific advantages that enable male supremacy. Beauvoir argues, for example, that men have long held a physiological advantage over women by being comparatively unburdened by human reproduction. This has provided men with more freedom to pursue their transcendence, while reproduction has chained women to relative immanence. Women, like nature, become something for men to dominate. Eventually, the advent of private property, marriage, and more helped solidify patriarchy. This instituted more advantages for men to realize their subjectivity. Indeed, male privileges are not static. They change as economic, cultural, and political circumstances do, but the correspondence is not perfect and male advantages do not evolve in a continuous manner. Beauvoir illustrates this by highlighting some narrow, but insightful, examples of European women’s autonomy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Despite all of this complexity, Beauvoir works toward a straightforward conclusion: women’s present situation is shaped by a long and stubborn history of masculine domination.

OCTOBER 28TH

A) FORMING AND SITUATING WOMAN

Beauvoir. 1949. *The Second Sex*. (pp. 283-95, 301-3, 311-2, 326-9, 334-5, 340-6, 380-2, 439-45, 470-2, 519-23, 569-70, 636-7)¹⁰

Beauvoir’s historical analysis leads her to a more direct examination of gender and modernity. Women remain othered, even with their increased labor and political participation, advancements in sexual liberation, and new opportunities for divorce. Men are still guided toward transcendence, while women are directed toward immanence. These situations are “formed” and are not determined by “biological, psychic, or economic destiny.” Hence one of Beauvoir’s most famous lines, “One is not born, but rather becomes, woman.” This becoming may be rooted in history, but it unfolds through biography. Beauvoir illustrates this by studying the formations of women (and men) in childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, marriage, and parenthood. Beauvoir shows that in each of these life stages females are pushed toward passivity and dependence. Males, on the other hand, are pushed toward a life of action and autonomy. The norms of marriage, for example, allow men to more freely navigate spaces beyond the home. Wives, in comparison, are imprisoned in the house and denied a meaningful existence. While there are interesting similarities between

⁹ E-book pages: 96-115, 117, 133, 139-40, 149-50, 157, 186-9.

¹⁰ E-book pages: 330-43, 349-51, 359, 375-8, 383-4, 390, 395-400, 438-9, 502-8, 535-7, 587-91, 646-7, 721-2.

domestic space and the world beyond it (note the analysis of home décor as a faulty means to realize subjectivity), this is ultimately a man's universe and that means it's also ultimately a man's house. Only in their very old age, as widows and without children, do modern women find serenity.

B) TOWARD LIBERATION

Beauvoir. 1949. *The Second Sex*. (pp. 645-9, 655, 661-4, 721-7, 753-66)¹¹

The emancipation of women is both possible and necessary according to Beauvoir. However, it can only be accomplished collectively. And, there are many hurdles preventing women's mobilization, including class divisions, a lack of feminine civil spaces, and the fact that women tend to dwell with their oppressors. These conditions are not, however, insurmountable and early twentieth century feminist movements offer partial evidence. For Beauvoir, the more important question of feminism concerns its goals. It's not enough to demand equality on paper (e.g., voting rights). Women must seek economic independence from men and this means they must engage in productive activity beyond the home. In many ways that should be the primary goal, but there are a couple caveats. First, capitalism limits freedom for all workers. Second, economic liberation does not guarantee freedom in other spheres of life (e.g., family, education, and politics). Beauvoir therefore calls for a socialist world that dispels masculine power. She details some of the concrete features of such a society: women and men would do the same work and get the same pay, sexual partnerships would be based on free engagement, parenthood would be socially supported (but not socially mandated), and girls and boys would be raised with the same demands and opportunities. Ultimately, Beauvoir envisions a world where men and women recognize each other as subjects and this requires more than just a material transformation.

ANNA JULIA COOPER

Next, we turn to Anna Julia Cooper (born 1858?, Raleigh, North Carolina, U.S. – died 1964, Washington, D.C., U.S.). Most of the writings we'll read by her were published before the assigned works by Du Bois and Beauvoir. We're reading Cooper now because she integrates a feminist sociology with a critique of white supremacy. As with our other "foundational" theorists, we should consider Cooper's positioning and experience. Please read the short biographies published by the Anna Julia Cooper Episcopal School in Richmond, Virginia and The Anna Julia Cooper Project in New Orleans, Louisiana (both on Blackboard). Note her intellectual, professional, and civic trajectories as well as the many barriers she confronted along the way.

¹¹ E-book pages: 731-6, 743, 749-53, 813-20, 848-63.

NOVEMBER 4TH**A) THE PROBLEMS OF GENDER AND RACE**

Cooper. 1892. "The Status of Woman in America" (pp. 109-17)¹²

Cooper. 1902. "The Ethics of the Negro Question" (pp. 206-15)

Cooper wrestles with the problems of gender and race, especially within the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Cooper's sociology of gender emphasizes the opposing, but ultimately complementary, features of masculinity and femininity. She argues that the economic, political, and cultural domains of America are excessively masculine. The archetypal business man, for example, is cold, selfish, and unsentimental. She argues that American society, increasingly removed from the struggle over nature and now more involved with the struggle over ideas, needs feminine voices. And, for Cooper, these voices should primarily articulate "moral ideas." Women can offer "heart power" and the "gifts of sympathy and appreciative love" to counter an unduly masculine civilization. In many ways, Cooper's sociology of race parallels her sociology of gender. Like masculine domination, white supremacy is rooted in selfishness and cold indifference. It can be countered by the brain and character of oppressed races. As such, we not only need women's voices, we also need Black voices. Both originate from insightful, but long ignored, vantage points. That said, no voice is more "unique" or better qualified to articulate moral ideas than the voice of the Black woman. She is in many ways best positioned to grasp crises of production, state, family, and more. For Cooper, this is both an opportunity and a duty. It's the "colored woman's office."

B) WOMANHOOD AND RACIAL PROGRESS

Cooper. 1886. "Womanhood" (pp. 53-71)¹³

Cooper argues that any aggregate of people, be it a civilization, a nation, or a race, can only progress as far as it elevates the status of its women. While she is certainly critical of America, Cooper notes that American progress is nonetheless real. Its developments are linked with the relatively dignified treatment of women. Cooper argues this progress is due in large part to the intertwined legacies of European feudalism and Christianity. She acknowledges that the church has contributed to women's oppression and racial exclusion, but she nevertheless insists that Christian theology has ushered the progress of Western women (and therefore Western civilization). Building on this assessment, she argues that Black progress will be stunted so long as it does not actively seek to elevate the position of Black women. She frames race as a "total of families" and notes that women determine the character and morality of individual homes. So long as Black women are silenced, Black progress will be stunted. Cooper therefore calls for the elevation of Black women's voices in racial struggle. She also points to Christianity as a philosophical and institutional pathway to ameliorating the suffering of Black women and their

¹² Page numbers are for *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper* (1998), which includes all the assigned readings for Cooper. This particular reading, along with "Womanhood," "Woman versus the Indian" and "Has America a Race Problem?" are all chapters from Cooper's *A Voice from the South* (1892).

¹³ This syllabus lists a different date for "Womanhood" than the other chapters from *A Voice from the South* because it was initially written as a speech for the Protestant Episcopal Church at Washington, D.C. in 1886.

race. And, because reductions in gender and racial inequalities further national success, it goes without saying that the elevation of Black women contributes to American progress.

NOVEMBER 11TH

A) RACE AND THE WOMAN'S CAUSE

Cooper. 1892. "Woman versus the Indian." (pp. 88-108)

Cooper. 1893. "Intellectual Progress of the Colored Woman in the United States Since the Emancipation Proclamation" (pp. 201-5)

Cooper doesn't just argue that racial progress necessitates a concern for women. She also argues that women's progress necessitates a concern for oppressed races. Cooper reminds us that women's voices can and should orient moral ideas and "good manners" (an ethic of mutual concern and respect). She makes it clear, however, that white-centric women's groups often fail to recognize this. They tend to assume white is universal, and Cooper cites evidence of explicit racial discrimination within these groups (a clear violation of good manners). While this is certainly concerning, she seems to be more alarmed by a problematic rhetoric of white feminism, which often pits women's interests against the interests of other oppressed and marginalized populations. This is a logical, strategic, and ethical mistake according to Cooper. As she puts it, the "woman's cause is the cause of the weak." Indeed, it's not hard to read Cooper's "Woman versus the Indian" (a title she borrows to critique, if not mock, suffragist Anna Shaw) as a call for anti-racist feminism. Her speech on the intellectual progress of Black women extends this argument. In that piece, she calls for a comprehensive women's cause while also making room for political projects sensitive to the specific issues and perspectives of Black women. For Cooper, universal interests and unique vantage points are complimentary, not contradictory.

B) AMERICANISM

Cooper. 1892. "Has America a Race Problem?" (pp. 121-33)

Cooper. 1925. "Equality of Races and the Democratic Movement" (pp. 291-8)

Cooper. 1942. "Hitler and the Negro" (pp. 262-5)

Cooper is an American optimist. This is a consistent theme in her writing and it can be found in both the earliest text we read by her ("Womanhood" from 1886) and the latest ("Hitler and the Negro" from 1942). She goes so far as to say that Americanism is the only "-ism" worth endorsing, and she repeatedly rejects communism, anarchism, and more. For Cooper, Americanism, which she says has yet to be fully realized, is the final stage of human progress with its seemingly obvious advancements in democracy, republicanism, and free enterprise. She even praises American capital for gifting public goods, notes that American labor has rare political and economic influence, and argues that a fragmented American state is structurally immune to despotism. However, we must be careful not to translate Cooper's optimism into blind or unwavering patriotism. She certainly recognizes the many horrors of America (e.g., slavery, Jim Crow, and lynching) as well as its many contradictions (e.g., between Christian values and caste prejudice). As such, she distinguishes between "genuine and spurious Americanism" and notes that the former is anti-racist, pro-immigration, and anti-classist (but apparently not anti-class). Genuine

Americanism also doesn't silence women's voices and, of course, it hears the unique voices of Black women. How do we achieve this American dream of universal reciprocity? Through a liberal/Christian education, a commitment to service, and an unyielding concern for the oppressed and marginalized.

Exam II due November 13th at 3pm.

Excluded Theorist Essay I due November 24th at 3pm.

SPRING INTRODUCTION

JANUARY 20th

A) OPEN DISCUSSION

Let's pause for an hour or so and just talk about your experiences in grad school. How do you feel about your research plans? How do you feel about the upcoming semester? Do you feel well-integrated into the department? Things can move incredibly fast during your first year, so we should take a moment to reflect during this halfway point.

B) SYLLABUS REVISIT

We'll reserve the second part of this seminar for a syllabus revisit. As noted earlier, you are required to lead three seminars during the second semester. We'll discuss the details of this requirement and assign students to specific seminars.

CONVERSATIONS WITH KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS

We'll put Marx and Engels in conversation with Antonio Gramsci (born 1891, Ales, Sardinia, Italy – died 1937, Rome, Italy) and Frantz Fanon (born 1925, Fort-de-France, Martinique – died 1961, Bethesda, Maryland, U.S.). We'll spare the debates on whether or not we should label Gramsci a “Neo-Marxist” or Fanon a “Third World Marxist.” Instead, we'll wrestle with how both of these theorists advance and critique what we read by Marx and Engels. We'll center our discussion on hegemony for Gramsci and decolonization for Fanon. Please start by reading a short biography on Gramsci by Frank Rosengarten and another one on Fanon by Nadra Kareem Nittle (both on Blackboard).

JANUARY 27th

A) HEGEMONY

Gramsci. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. (pp. 5-23, 56, 80, 125-33, 161, 175-85, 229-45, 257-66, [don't neglect the footnotes]).¹⁴

Gramsci offers some insightful analyses of domination. Our reading begins with an examination of “traditional intellectuals” and “organic intellectuals.” The former are thinkers legitimated by a past order and who appear to have autonomous interests. The latter are thinkers who emerge alongside rising classes under new relations of production to give such classes awareness and purpose. Gramsci argues that organic intellectuals help rising classes ideologically conquer traditional intellectuals and, more importantly, the popular masses. The discussion of intellectuals points to the particular importance of “superstructures.” Gramsci, while never losing sight of material circumstance, distinguishes between two superstructural levels: “political society” (coercive apparatuses) and “civil society” (private/voluntary associations where intellectuals tend

¹⁴ E-book pages: 134-161, 209-10, 248, 316-30, 373, 397-411, 481-505, 524-35.

to operate). This also constitutes Gramsci's unique definition of the state (political society + civil society). Civil society is the terrain where consent among the dominated classes is elicited, while political society is the terrain where force is imposed on them. Any direct assault on the state traditionally understood ("a war of movement" in political society) will likely be futile when civil society is strong. A struggle over hegemony must be waged and this requires a more patient "war of position" in the trenches of civil society. All of this motivates Gramsci's reimagining of capitalist crises and his predicted pathways to a post-capitalist world.

B) GRAMSCI AND MARX AND ENGELS

Putting Gramsci in conversation with Marx and Engels makes sense. The trick is determining the most fruitful topics for them to debate. Among other things, we may consider what Gramsci might say to Marx and Engels about manual/mental labor, crisis, state, ruling ideas, and historical materialism. We may also want to compare the stages of class struggle outlined by Marx and Engels with Gramsci's notes on the relations of political forces as well as his reflections on the modern political party. We'll also put Gramsci's writings on the "regulated society" in conversation with Marx and Engels's writings on socialism and communism. Of course, we should also keep other productive conversations in mind. Think about consent and legitimacy (Weber), wars of movement and position and the Civil War and Reconstruction (Du Bois), civil society and the family (Beauvoir), organic intellectuals and unique voices (Cooper), and more.

FEBRUARY 3rd

Fanon. 1961. *The Wretched of the Earth*. (pp. 1-29, 51-103, 127-44, 235-9)

A) DECOLONIZATION

Fanon is concerned with the methods and goals of decolonization. However, we cannot understand decolonization without first theorizing colonization. Fanon tells us that the colonial world is Manichean and compartmentalized. It's a universe of settlers and natives, a fundamentally racist world made of two different "species." It's also a world made through violence. Foreign forces have brutally carved native lands into territories of extraction and exchange. This has generated European opulence at the expense of human dignity. Fanon argues that because colonization is always violent, so too is decolonization. Violence against colonial forces helps unify the masses while also cleansing their feelings of inferiority. According to Fanon, we shouldn't expect this upward violence to emerge in the city because the nationalist parties there are typically led by a compromising "nationalist bourgeoisie" (a native middle class). We should instead expect a "spontaneous" movement to surface in the countryside. Fanon insists the peasantry is powerful, especially when they combine with radical intellectuals who have been pushed out of the towns. Their struggle is inevitably brought into the cities where other elements (e.g., the lumpenproletariat) enter the battlefield. None of this is automatic for Fanon, and this point is especially clear in the end. He emphasizes two paths, one toward democratic socialism and one toward neocolonialism.

B) FANON AND MARX AND ENGELS

We should think about what Fanon might say to Du Bois (on imperialism), Weber (on the spirit of capitalism), Durkheim (on solidarity), Beauvoir (on othering), Gramsci (on intellectuals), and others. However, it's probably best to put him in conversation with Marx and Engels. Fanon says a "Marxists analysis should always be slightly stretched" when addressing the colonial problem. That's putting it mildly. In addition to thinking about the relationship between "capitalist countries" and "colonial countries," we should address Fanon's comments on race, superstructure, and class struggle. With respect to the latter, it's critical that we spend some time contrasting Marx and Engels's emphasis on the industrial proletariat with Fanon's emphasis on the Third World peasantry. Finally, there's the question of the future. Fanon imagines a world that moves beyond failed European philosophies. What might this mean for Marxism, a theoretical tradition that was born and nourished in Europe?

CONVERSATIONS WITH ÉMILE DURKHEIM

We'll put Durkheim in conversation with Michel Foucault (born 1926, Poitiers, France – died 1984, Paris, France) and Pierre Bourdieu (born 1930, Denguin, France – died 2002, Paris, France). We'll read excerpts from Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1975) to examine the "disciplinary society" and selections from Bourdieu's *Practical Reason* (1998) for an updated sociology of differentiation and disposition. The many connections and tensions with Durkheim's *The Division of Labor in Society* (1893) shouldn't be hard to find. You should also read James Faubion's short biography of Foucault and the obituary for Bourdieu published by *The Guardian*. Both are available on Blackboard.

FEBRUARY 10th

A) THE DISCIPLINARY SOCIETY

Foucault. 1975. *Discipline and Punish*. (pp. 3-31, 170-228)

Foucault analyzes the rise of the disciplinary society. He opens by detailing a rapid shift from the public execution (an exercise of sovereign power) to the penitentiary timetable (an exercise of disciplinary power). Where power was once exercised to amplify corporeal suffering, 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. It does so by targeting the "soul," that hard to see, but nevertheless real, patterning of thoughts, wills, and inclinations. Foucault argues that disciplinary power does this through three general mechanisms: hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement, and examination (the combination of hierarchical observation and normalizing judgement). This motivates his comparison of three cases: the plague (as an example of hierarchical observation), the leper (as an example of normalization, or at least exclusion), and the panopticon (as an example of examination). The latter is key. While we may not live in literal panopticons, Foucault argues that we live in a network of

panopticon-like institutions that make up a disciplinary society. This leads to some important discussions of state, democracy, economy, and more.

b) FOUCAULT AND DURKHEIM

Discipline and Punish gives us a lot to chew on. We may want to consider what Foucault might say to Cooper (on Americanism), Du Bois (on the “dark side” of democracy), Weber (on rationalization), Beauvoir (on transcendence and immanence), Gramsci (on the regulated society), Fanon (on violence), and Marx and Engels (on the “accumulation of capital” and the “accumulation of men”). However, we’ll put him in a deeper conversation with Durkheim. We should compare sovereign power with mechanical solidarity and disciplinary power with organic solidarity. Foucault and Durkheim also both say some interesting things about the expansion and consolidation of state power. What might Foucault, for example, say to Durkheim about the rise of restitutive law? The most interesting conversation, however, might concern the social origins of “individuals.”

FEBRUARY 17th

A) DIFFERENTIATION AND DISPOSITION

Bourdieu. 1998. *Practical Reason*. (pp. vii-ix, 1-13, 19-34, 52-8, 75-88)

Bourdieu opens with a call for a “relational” and “dispositional” sociology, and he insists that this necessitates a break from a number of popular trends in the social sciences (e.g., “substantialist” models, rational choice theory, and some extreme varieties of structuralism). In opposition to these other approaches, Bourdieu is fundamentally concerned with the relation between objective structures and subjective constructions. This has motivated his conceptualizations of social space/field (objective relations of positions), habitus (incorporated structures, practical sense, and a “feel for the game”), and capital (possessed and/or embodied species of power that structure [dis]positions). These concepts are particularly useful for making sense of advanced or highly differentiated societies. In addition to detailing economic and cultural capital as two basic principles of differentiation, Bourdieu mentions a handful of fields: the economic field, the artistic field, the scientific field, and more. Each field comes with its own patterns of capital and habitus as well as its own rules (*nomos*) and interests (*illusio*). That said, differentiated societies are not made of relatively autonomous microcosms floating in the middle of nowhere. To understand why, we need to consider three domains: family/school (to study “modes of reproduction”), the bureaucratic field (to study symbolic violence), and the field of power (to study relations between different species of capital).

B) BOURDIEU AND DURKHEIM

Why should we pair Durkheim and Bourdieu? It’s a fair question. *Practical Reason* seems to offer a more obvious engagement with Weber (compare value-rationality with Bourdieu’s reflections on “disinterested acts”) and Marx (note Bourdieu’s critique of “classes on paper” and his defense of social space as an analytic tool). When Bourdieu does mention Durkheim, he doesn’t even explicitly engage the *Division of Labor in Society*. Instead, he typically turns to a 1912 book we

didn't read, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Nevertheless, we can stage a very fruitful conversation between the books we did read. We can compare fields with specialized "organs," habitus with localized collective consciousness, and the bureaucratic field with the "nervous system." With respect to the latter comparison, we may want to think about what Bourdieu might say about Durkheim's vision of the state as an embodiment of the collective consciousness. We may also reflect on what Durkheim might say about Bourdieu's now famous analysis of social reproduction.

CONVERSATIONS WITH MAX WEBER

We'll put Weber in conversation with Zygmunt Bauman (born 1925, Poznań, Poland – died 2017, Leeds, England) and Ann Swidler (Professor of Sociology at UC Berkeley). Both Bauman and Swidler extend and critique Weber, but they do so for different themes and topics. We'll first focus on Bauman's writings on modernity and its mutations. Then we'll concentrate on Swidler's highly influential writings on culture and action. On Blackboard you can find an obituary for Bauman published by the *Associated Press*. I couldn't find a biography for Swidler. So, instead I posted an informative book review that Michèle Lamont wrote for Swidler's *Talk of Love* (2001).

FEBRUARY 24th

A) LIQUID MODERNITY

Bauman. 2000. *Liquid Modernity*. (pp. 1-15, 22-41, 53-90, 113-23, 140-60)

Bauman argues that modernity isn't dead, it's just been transformed. We don't really live in a postmodern society, but rather in a "society of fluid modernity." As such, Bauman distinguishes between three basic periods: premodernity, solid modernity, and liquid modernity. Solid modernity was formed by melting down the already weakened bonds and practices of traditionalism. The point was to form a new solidity of social life, one made stable by rationalization and the increasing salience of the market. Modern society was a somewhat settled world of production, heavy capitalism, Politics with a capital P, leaders, conformity, and citizens. Its solidity could be detected in Ford factories, unionized labor, the welfare state, the nation, marriage, and the relative certainty of social life. That society, however, is largely gone. Solid modernity has been melted into liquid modernity. The latter is a relatively unsettled world of consumption, light capitalism, life-politics, counselors, adequacy, and individuals. Its fluidity can be detected in Microsoft office buildings, flexible labor, low taxes, international mobility, cohabitated households, and the relative uncertainty of social life. While Bauman argues that this liquification process has been massive, he is clear that it has also been uneven. The world today is more liquid at the top. A nomadic elite rules a settled majority.

B) BAUMAN AND WEBER

It's perhaps not surprising that Bauman engages so frequently with Weber. Both reference instrumental rationality and the iron cage (or "steely casing") in an effort to make sense of modernity in its early formation. In many ways, Bauman frames liquid modernity as an opposition,

if not an inversion, of Weber's descriptions. Among other things, we should spend some time thinking about Bauman's critique of "value rationality" and his reimagining of procrastination and asceticism. Then there's the question of authority. As odd as it might sound, it's worth comparing Weber's descriptions of Benjamin Franklin with Bauman's descriptions of Jane Fonda. Of course, we may also want to consider what Bauman says, or might say, about panopticism (Foucault), solidarity (Durkheim), civil society (Gramsci), labor power (Marx and Engels), global capitalism (Fanon), marriage (Beauvoir), Americanism (Cooper), and more.

MARCH 3rd

A) CULTURE IN ACTION

Swidler. 1986. "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies" (Blackboard)

Swidler. 1995. "Cultural Power and Social Movements" (Blackboard)

In "Culture in Action," Swidler challenges the view that culture motivates action by offering ultimate ends or values. In addition to highlighting the problematic uses of "value explanations" in the sociology of poverty and the sociology of religion, Swidler criticizes the conventional emphasis on the "unit act." It's a mistake to assume that culture propels a series of singular actions that are directed toward values. However, that does not mean culture is irrelevant or that it's unrelated to action. Swidler argues culture is best understood as a repertoire or "tool kit" from which individuals or collectives can draw upon to solve various problems. They can rummage through their cultural tool kit of "of habits, skills, and styles" to assemble "strategies of action." People build "chains" of conduct and culture shapes, but does not overdetermine, the possible linkages. That is at least the typical relation during "settled periods." However, Swidler argues that during "unsettled periods" culture can influence action more directly through coherent and competing ideologies. Structural conditions help determine which ideologies can mutate into durable cultural tools for future periods of settlement. Swidler's second essay, "Cultural Power and Social Movements," elaborates on this point. Social movements are where new ideologies and other cultural tools are "most frequently formulated."

B) SWIDLER AND WEBER

Swidler directly engages Durkheim (on collective consciousness), Foucault (on the exercise of power), and Bourdieu (on disposition). We can also think about what she might say to Du Bois (on ideology), Gramsci (on hegemony), Bauman (on liquid modernity), and others. However, she most directly engages Weber. Swidler critiques his vision of "social action," and spends considerable time poking holes in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. In addition to evaluating the merits of her critiques, we should consider how she subtly extends a Weberian sociology. We should discuss, for example, how these two theorists preference culture above other factors. It might also be worth our time to consider the similar manner in which they minimally address Marxism.

Exam III due March 5th at 3pm.

Excluded Theorist Update due March 8th at 3pm.

CONVERSATIONS WITH W.E.B. DU BOIS

We'll put Du Bois in conversation with Cedric Robinson (born 1940, Oakland, California, U.S. – died 2016, Santa Barbara?, California, U.S.) and William Julius Wilson (Professor of Sociology, Emeritus at Harvard University). We'll read selections from Robinson's *Black Marxism* before turning to some old and new writings by Wilson. While Robinson and Wilson offer distinct and often opposing analyses, they both can be read as extending some core themes first provided to us by Du Bois. To help situate our authors, I ask that you read a reflection on Robinson written by Robin Kelley and a short encyclopedia entry on Wilson. Both are on Blackboard.

MARCH 10th

A) BLACK RADICALISM

Robinson. 1983. *Black Marxism*. (pp. xxxv, 1-5, 9-28, 41-3, 60-8, 71-82, 97-100, 121-2, 167-71, 228-40, 307-18)

Robinson demystifies the origins, features, and trajectories of a Black radical tradition. This tradition offers a critique of Western civilization as well as a critique of Western radicalism (e.g., Marxism). Robinson may not fully dismiss historical materialism, but he argues that its typical articulations fail to recognize the true significance of racialism, nationalism, culture, and more. He begins to fill the gap by reconstructing the history of a Western racial order. Robinson shows how racialism not only predated but also set the possibilities for modern capitalism. He accounts for a racial ordering internal to feudal Europe as well the demonization of Islam during the Dark Ages before detailing the emergence of a world system defined by the colonization of extra-European spaces, the transatlantic slave trade, and the myth of white solidarity. All of this set the conditions for a Black radical tradition to emerge. The growth of this tradition was made difficult, but not impossible, by the European creation of the "Negro," a marginally human category without a history. Still, across the African diaspora, a culture and consciousness of Black resistance thrived and provided the foundation for Black radicalism as both a negation of Western civilization and a departure from the Marxist critiques of that civilization. Robinson closes by emphasizing the merits and durability of this tradition under contemporary racial capitalism and neocolonialism.

B) ROBINSON AND DU BOIS

Robinson reads Du Bois's work as a clear form of Black radicalism. We should carefully examine his exegesis of *Black Reconstruction*. While this book is often framed as one of Du Bois's most Marxist moments, Robinson suggests it's better read as a critique, if not a rejection, of Marxism. For Robinson, this book showcases the limitations of a class analysis that ignores racism and (subaltern) culture. He also praises Du Bois's emphasis of Western imperialism and his deemphasis of the European proletariat. In addition to thinking about how Du Bois might respond to this interpretation, we should consider what he might say about Robinson's account of racial capitalism, consciousness, and more. We may also want to put Robinson in conversation with Gramsci (on intellectuals), Beauvoir (on shared history), Durkheim (on collective consciousness), Cooper (on Western progress), Fanon (on colonialism), Bourdieu (on symbolic violence), and others. Of course, we should also evaluate Robinson's multifaceted critique of Marx and Engels.

MARCH 17th**A) MORE THAN JUST RACE**

Wilson. 1978. "The Declining Significance of Race" (Blackboard)

Wilson. 2009. *More Than Just Race*. (pp. 1-24, 57-61, 70-94, 105-32, 152-4)¹⁵

In an essay summarizing his "declining significance of race" thesis, Wilson details three stages of American race relations: the preindustrial stage (from antebellum slavery through the early postbellum era), the industrial stage (from the late nineteenth century through the New Deal), and the modern industrial age (mostly captured by the post-World War II economic boom). Wilson argues that different arrangements of production and polity explain variations in racial inequality across these periods. In contrast to the first two stages, and as a result of both economic growth and the interventions of a more autonomous state, the modern industrial stage increased the significance of class as a determinant of life chances. As such, many formally educated Black people experienced upward occupational mobility. However, this stage also solidified an "underclass" that was disproportionately Black due to historical inequalities in education and employment. Racial conflict was not insignificant during this time, but Wilson argues that more recent economic forces better explained Black suffering in the urban core. Fast forward three decades to *More than Just Race* and we find Wilson wrestling with what seems to be a fourth stage: the new global economy. He considers how technological changes in work, the internationalization of economic activity, and more influence contemporary racial inequality. Wilson also makes room for culture in his updated analysis, but he ultimately argues that structure matters most.

B) WILSON AND DU BOIS

We can put Wilson in conversation with Marx and Engels (on class), Durkheim (on external inequalities), Beauvoir (on marriage), Bourdieu (on disposition), Gramsci (on civil society), Bauman (on liquid modernity), Swidler (on cultural tool kits), and others. However, we'll spend most of our time putting him in conversation with Du Bois. In addition to writing, at least briefly, about slavery and Jim Crow, Wilson examines race and so-called free labor. He also writes about national culture, interpersonal discrimination, neighborhood segregation, and other topics covered by Du Bois. There are, nevertheless, some important differences between their analyses, many of which cannot simply be explained by the fact that these theorists often examine different periods. For example, we should contrast Wilson's writings on the global economy with Du Bois's writings on "White Imperial Industry." Finally, we should evaluate Wilson's declining significance of race thesis in light of Du Bois's claim that the color line may "bend and loosen" in the future.

¹⁵ Chapter 1, "Structure versus Culture" (Chapter 2), "Conclusion" (Chapter 2), "The Role of Structural Factors" (Chapter 3), "The Role of Cultural Factors" (Chapter 3), "Conclusion" (Chapter 3), "The Role of Structural Factors" (Chapter 4), "The Role of Cultural Factors" (Chapter 4), "The Interaction of Culture and Social Structure" (Chapter 4), "Conclusion" (Chapter 4), and "Structure and Culture Entwined" (Chapter 5).

CONVERSATIONS WITH SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

We'll put Beauvoir in conversation with Maria Mies (Professor Sociology at Cologne University) and Catharine MacKinnon (Professor of Law at the University of Michigan). Mies and MacKinnon engage a number of themes we've already discussed throughout the year, both within and outside a tradition of feminism. Mies, however, primarily critiques methods of accumulation, while MacKinnon focuses on issues of sexuality. To help us better understand Mies and MacKinnon's positions and perspectives, I have posted two interviews on Blackboard. The first is an interview with Mies in *Naked Punch* and the second is an interview with MacKinnon in the *Los Angeles Times*.

MARCH 24TH

A) PATRIARCHY AND ACCUMULATION

Mies. 1986. *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. (pp. 6, 36-40, 53-127, 142-3, 145-6, 168-71, 205-33)

Mies argues that patriarchy constitutes a form of predatory accumulation, and one that is fundamentally connected to other exploitive systems. For her, masculine domination really solidified when men began to use destructive tools against their more productive counterparts in agricultural and pastoral societies. Female productivity then continued to precondition male productivity during feudalism and early capitalism. Mies argues that "European big men" (e.g., lords and capitalists) did not simply emerge on the surplus of "European small men" (e.g., serfs and wage labor). There was in fact a critical "underground" that made the exploitation of small men possible and it included the triple exploitation of nature (via science and technology), European women (via witch hunts and housewifization), and others/foreigners (via colonization and slavery). To help illustrate how these systems of accumulation were connected, Mies shows how the housewifization of European women depended on colonialism and vice versa. These historical details help explain the role that patriarchy plays in the "new international division of labor." Like the early European housewives, women in today's Global North serve capital via consumption. They consume a massive amount of goods produced by women in the Global South. Mies closes her analysis by considering how an international feminist struggle for autonomy could threaten global capitalist patriarchy.

B) MIES AND BEAUVOIR

We'll put Mies in conversation with Beauvoir. In addition to comparing their historical analyses of masculine domination, we should consider how Mies offers a familiar analysis of Western women's present formation and situation. It's also worth noting that both Beauvoir and Mies emphasize women's autonomy when imagining a post-capitalist future. With that said, we should also pay attention to the many differences between Mies and Beauvoir. While Beauvoir occasionally mentions colonialism and racism, she does comparatively little to integrate these forces into her analysis of masculine domination. Mies and Beauvoir also offer different conceptualizations of production, motherhood, emancipation, and more. Of course, we may also put Mies in conversation with other theorists. She explicitly critiques Marx's writings on the

realms of necessity and freedom. We can also put her in conversation with Fanon (on colonialism), Weber (on the emergence of Western capitalism), Cooper (on masculinity and femininity), Bauman (on consumption), Du Bois (on foundational labor), Wilson (on deindustrialization), Foucault (on disciplinary power), and others.

MARCH 31ST

MacKinnon. 1989. *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*. (pp. 3-12, 83-125, 237-49)

MacKinnon. 2010. "Gender – The Future" (Blackboard)

A) SEXUALITY AND MALE SUPREMACY

MacKinnon centers sexuality, and heterosexuality specifically, in her analysis of male supremacy. She argues that gender does not determine sexuality. Instead, sexuality determines gender. As such, we should revisit the following question: "What is a woman?" For MacKinnon, a woman is that which turns men on. Femininity is defined by what is attractive to men. Put another way, women are the sexual objects of male subjects. Their sexuality is used by men. As MacKinnon puts it, "Man fucks woman; subject verb object." However, all of this is mystified. Male supremacy is hard to see, let alone critique or abolish, because objectivism, the dominant epistemology, preferences the standpoint of men. Objectivism pretends to examine the world from outside of it and ignores the subaltern insights of women in the process. Liberal theory, Marxism, and the social sciences more generally are all guilty of this. Only radical feminism can help us unmask and undo male power. It does this through "consciousness raising," where women critically examine the world by collectively drawing on their lived experiences. Consciousness raising doesn't only challenge male power and its corresponding epistemology, it also motivates and directs feminist struggle. While there can be many targets in feminist politics, MacKinnon argues the law should be a primary focus in societies regulated by the so-called liberal state.

B) MACKINNON AND BEAUVOIR

MacKinnon references Beauvoir multiple times, but she usually does this when discussing the formation of gender. While MacKinnon doesn't offer an explicit critique of Beauvoir on this issue, it's worth considering how their different starting points (i.e., sexuality and othering) structure unique analyses. Of course, there are many more topics these theorists can discuss. Beauvoir notes that women have been historically chained to domestic space and denied opportunities for transcendence. As such, can we understand the consciousness raising efforts described by MacKinnon as challenges to women's immanence? We should also compare the targets of their feminist politics. Where Beauvoir focuses primarily on economic independence, MacKinnon is more concerned with developing a feminist jurisprudence. We may also want to put MacKinnon in conversation with other theorists like Du Bois (on the veil and the gift of second-sight), Weber (on force and legitimation), Robinson (on consciousness and shared history), Cooper (on white feminism), and Swidler (on the formation of new ideologies). We should of course also put her in conversation with Marx and Engels given that radical feminism turns Marxism "inside out and on its head."

CONVERSATIONS WITH ANNA JULIA COOPER

We'll put Cooper in conversation with Angela Davis (Distinguished Professor of History of Consciousness, Emerita at UC Santa Cruz) and Patricia Hill Collins (Distinguished University Professor of Sociology, Emerita at University of Maryland). Davis's *Women, Race, & Class* (1981) examines sexism, racism, and capitalism as interlocking systems of domination and exploitation. She doesn't engage Cooper directly, but we'll be able to stage a productive conversation nonetheless. In *Black Feminist Thought* (2000), Collins draws on Cooper, Davis, and others to rethink domination and consciousness. We'll close with some excerpts from Collins's *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory* (2019). Please also read Dwayne Mack's biography of Davis and Elizabeth Higginbotham's profile of Collins (both on Blackboard).

APRIL 14th

Davis. 1981. *Women, Race, & Class*. (pp. 3-98, 110-26, 137-48, 172-244)¹⁶

A) SEXISM, RACISM, AND CAPITALISM

Davis examines feminist struggles in the United States and in doing so she shows how sexism, racism, and capitalism are fundamentally connected. She doesn't critique "white feminism" as much as she critiques white bourgeois feminism, which has historically marginalized the concerns of not only people of color but also the working class. From the campaigns for suffrage and birth control to more contemporary struggles against sexual assault and unequal housework, Davis illustrates how many women's liberation efforts are frequently leveraged against the interests of those who suffer most under racism and capitalism. This occurs in a world where women's oppression exists as something deeply entangled with white power and the supremacy of capital. Davis illustrates this entanglement with more than just examples of social movements. Her analysis of physical violence during slavery illustrates how slaveowners' abuses of enslaved women cannot be understood as just exercises of male power, nor can they be understood as the singular effects of racial or class oppression. Davis's critiques of modern American culture, be it the motherhood ideal, capitalist ideology, the myth of the Black rapist, or the stereotype of the promiscuous Black woman, all point to a similar conclusion. In the final chapter, Davis calls for the industrialization and socialization of domestic labor. However, this must be read as part of broader call to topple multiple systems of domination and exploitation.

B) DAVIS AND COOPER

Davis doesn't mention Cooper, but putting these two theorists in conversation makes sense. Both showcase racism within American feminist movements and both consider how struggles for racial progress have ignored the unique voices of Black women. They also detail interlocking systems of oppression. For these reasons and others, scholars usually situate Davis and Cooper under a broad umbrella of Black feminism. That said, the differences between Davis and Cooper are numerous and significant. Consider, for example, their differing accounts of gender, capitalism, and the state. And just as there are basic contrasts between their diagnoses, so too are there fundamental differences between their prescriptions. It's certainly hard to reconcile Cooper's call

¹⁶ Chapters 1-5, 7, 9, 11-13. E-book pages: 8-59, 66-74, 81-7, 101-39.

for Americanism with Davis's call for socialism, even if both could be framed as calls for universal reciprocity. Time permitting, we may also want to put Davis in conversation with Marx and Engels (on exploitation), Beauvoir (on independence), Weber (on rationalization), Gramsci (on hegemony), Robinson (on Black radicalism), Mies (on housewifization), and others.

APRIL 21st

A) RETHINKING DOMINATION AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Collins. 2000. *Black Feminist Thought*. (pp. vi-ix, 4-17, 22-5, 41-3, 45-67, 69-96, 99-102, 227-32, 273-90)¹⁷

Collins. 2019. *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory*. (pp. 1-5, 45-53, 87-9, 116-20, 286-90) (Blackboard)

Collins pushes us to rethink the relations of oppression and resistance and argues that we cannot adequately do so without simultaneously rethinking what constitutes knowledge. In *Black Feminist Thought*, she centers Black women's ideas to study a matrix of domination, that being a complex ordering of intersecting oppressions (along axes of race, gender, class, and so on). Collins argues that Black women's status as multiply oppressed, objectified, and othered provides them with special insights into the mechanics and effects of the interdependent systems of white supremacy, patriarchy, capitalism, and more. Their resistance efforts also help us see processes of domination from new vantage points. That said, we cannot hope to understand Black women's consciousness without also adequately situating their experiences within a matrix of domination. This necessitates, among other things, a consideration of their historically varied positionings in economy, polity, and civil society. It also requires a consideration of ideology and culture, which further suppress Black women's knowledge. Throughout her analysis, Collins is clear that an examination of Black feminist thought has implications for other cases of domination and subjugated knowledge. However, it is in *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory* where she more explicitly considers the general significance of resistant knowledge projects. This book also makes that argument that intersectionality is not yet a critical social theory, but is on track to become one.

B) COLLINS AND COOPER

Collins is an ideal theorist to end our readings with. It's not hard to put her in conversation with any of our previous theorists. She calls out several intellectual traditions (e.g., Marxism, feminism, and "traditional social theory") and she even engages a few of our theorists by name (e.g., Gramsci, Fanon, Davis, Wilson, and Foucault). Collins also returns us to many of the topics and concerns we encountered in our very first seminar when we discussed essays by Abend and Go. However, we'll put her in explicit conversation with Cooper. Unlike Davis, Collins engages Cooper directly.

¹⁷ Page numbers correspond to the second edition of *Black Feminist Thought* (2000). The first edition was published in 1990, but Collins made a number of substantive changes to the version we're reading. Later editions *may* work. We're reading the following: Preface to the First Edition, "The Suppression of Black Feminist Thought" (Chapter 1), "Why U.S. Black Feminist Thought?" (Chapter 2), "U.S. Black Feminism and Other Social Justice Projects" (Chapter 2), Chapter 3, Chapter 4, "Finding a Voice: Coming to Terms with Contradictions" (Chapter 5), untitled introduction (Chapter 10), "Nation and Nationalism" (Chapter 10), and Chapter 12.

She notes, for example, how Cooper's writings capture a common theme in Black feminist thought: the solidarity of humanity. Collins also makes room for reformist strategies that may be consistent with Cooper's endorsement of Americanism. Still, there are some unanswered questions. What might Cooper say about controlling images? What might she say about the outsider-within? Also, can (or should) Collins apply her critique of the "cult of true womanhood" to Cooper's analysis of gender? Finally, in what ways do Collins and Cooper conceptualize distinct politics of empowerment?

Exam IV due April 23rd at 3pm.

EXCLUDED THEORIST PRESENTATIONS

APRIL 28TH

A) EXCLUDED THEORIST PRESENTATIONS

B) EXCLUDED THEORIST PRESENTATIONS

Exam IV due April 23rd at 3pm.

Excluded Theorist Essay II due May 12th at 3pm.

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

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

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

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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

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