

**SOCIOLOGY 316**  
**An Introduction to Sociological Theory**  
**Fall 2002**  
**Instructor: Gary Hamilton**

**RETHINKING DEMOCRACY:  
THE ORIGINS OF AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY**

**Purpose:**

There are a number of ways to introduce sociological theory to undergraduates. The way I have chosen to teach this course is to place sociological theory in the historical and social context of its creation. In so doing, I want to stress the complex relationship between the theorist and his or her intellectual environment, a relationship that has direct and indirect bearings on the theories themselves.

The historical and social setting that I have selected for this course is the United States in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, roughly from 1880-1920. This is the time when, and the place that, sociology became an established social science discipline. I should note that many textbooks in sociological theory depict the “forefathers” of sociology as being the European triumvirate: Marx, Durkheim, and Weber. Yet if we examine the history of sociology carefully, we will see that this conventional depiction is not only poor history, but also poor sociology. Even though Americans took the idea and the term of “sociology” from Europeans, sociology, as a discipline of academic study, began in the United States. It is this formative period of sociology that we will examine in this course. I believe you will find that there is much to learn about our lives and our social thinking today from this examination of an earlier time.

**Required Readings:**

There are two required readings:

1. A reader.
2. Louis Menand, The Metaphysical Club, A Story of Ideas in America. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001.

As you will see from the readings listed below, these selections are all original works by the thinkers we will be considering in this course.

**Course Requirements and Grading:**

It is important that you keep up with the readings and to attend class. These two tasks are essential because the lectures will provide the historical and social context for the theorists and an interpretation of the readings. Without attending class, you will not understand the readings. Without doing the readings, you will not understand the lectures. All lectures and discussion sections will involve assigned readings, and

everyone should be prepared to discuss the assigned readings for each class period. Participation in class and discussion sections will count 20% of the grade. Participation will be assessed through a series of classroom quizzes and attendance in discussion sections.

The other requirements consist of an examination at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> week, a final, and two research papers, each no more than three pages long. The first research paper will be due at the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> week of class. The second research paper will be due the last day of class. Both papers will be on some topics suggested by the readings. A special assignment sheets will be handed out for the research papers.

The grading will be as follows: The two examinations will each count 20% of the grade, research papers 20% each, and the class participation 20%.

## **Course Outline and Reading Assignments**

### **I. DEMOCRACY ASTRAY**

Week One: Literary and Journalistic Interpretations

#### Looking Backward

Edward Bellamy, first published in 1888 and still in print. This selection is the introductory chapter.

#### “The Working Girls of New York”

Jacob A. Riis, first published in 1890 as Chapter 20 in How the Other Half Lives (New York: Hill and Wang, 1957).

#### “Wealth”

Andrew Carnegie, first published in 1889 in North American Review, No. 391, June Issue.

Menand, The Metaphysical Club, pp. 1-48.

Week Two: The Sociological Interpretations

#### “Sociocracy”

Lester Ward, first published in 1893 as Chapter 38 in Psychic Factors of Civilization (Boston: Ginn and Co.), pp. 319-327.

#### “The Absurd Effort to Make the World Over”

William Graham Sumner, first published in 1894, in Forum, Vol. 17, pp. 92-102.

Menand, The Metaphysical Club, pp. 49-96

## II. REVISING EUROPEAN THOUGHT

Week Three: Social Darwinism and Herbert Spencer, Socialism and Karl Marx

“Spencer-smashing at Washington”

Lester F. Ward, first published in 1894 in The Popular Science Monthly, Vol. 44, pp. 856-857.

“Reflections Upon the Sociology of Herbert Spencer”

Charles Horton Cooley, first published in 1920 in The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 26, pp. 129-145.

“Remarks on Spencer’s Definition of Mind as Correspondence”

William James, first published in January, 1878, in Journal of Speculative Philosophy, Vol. 12, pp. 1-18.

“What Makes the Rich Richer and the Poor Poorer”

William Graham Sumner, first published in January, 1887 in Popular Science Monthly, Vol. 30, pp. 289-296.

(Not Required, but Recommended)

“The Socialist Economics of Karl Marx and His Followers”

Thorstein Veblen, first published in August, 1906 in The Quarterly Journal of Economics, Vol. 20, pp. 575-595.

Menand, The Metaphysical Club, pp. 97-150.

## III. REDEFINING INDIVIDUALISM: FROM ECONOMIC ACTOR TO SOCIAL SELF

Week Four: A. Society as Organization

“Advancing Social and Political Organization in the United States”

William Graham Sumner, written in 1896 or 1897, published in Essays of William Graham Sumner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1911).

(Recommended but not required)

“The Mechanics of Society”

Lester F. Ward, first published in 1896 in The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 2, pp. 234-254.

Menand, The Metaphysical Club, pp. 151-200.

Week Five: B. Social Organization as the Basis of Individualism

Folkways: A Study of the Sociological Importance of Usages, Manners, Customs, Mores, and Morals

William Graham Sumner, first published in 1906 (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp. 2-4, 13, 28-30, 34-36, 58-64, 76-77, 79-80, 173-174.

“Primary Groups”

Charles Horton Cooley, first published in 1909 as Chapter 3 of Social Organization (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons), pp. 21-31.

“Social Organization and the Individual”

John Dewey and James H. Tufts, first published in 1908 as Chapter 20 in Ethics (New York: Henry Holt), pp. 427-450.

Menand, The Metaphysical Club, pp. 201-254.

#### Week Six: C. The Individual and Society

“The Consciousness of Self”

William James, first published in 1890 as Chapter 10 in The Principles of Psychology (New York: Henry Holt), pp. 291-305.

“The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology”

John Dewey, first published in 1896 in Psychological Review, Vol. 3, pp. 357-70.

Human Nature and the Social Order

Charles Horton Cooley, first published in 1902 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons), pp. 1-13, 392-404.

“The Social Self”

George Herbert Mead, first published in 1913 in The Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 10, pp. 374-80.

Menand, The Metaphysical Club, pp. 255-336.

## IV. DEMOCRACY, ROLES, AND SOCIAL CONTROL

#### Week Seven: A. Social Responsibility and Social Control

“Private Business is a Public Trust”

Albion Small, first published in 1895 in The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 1, pp. 276-289.

“Rational Control through Standards”

Charles Horton Cooley, first published in 1922 as Chapter 32 in Social Process (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), pp. 382-394.

(Not Required but Recommended)

"The Genesis of the Self and Social Control"

George Herbert Mead, first published in 1924-25 in the International Journal of Ethics, Vol. 35, pp. 251-277.

Menand, The Metaphysical Club, pp. 337-408.

#### Week Eight: B. Social Ethics

Democracy and Social Ethics

Jane Addams, first published in 1902 (New York: The MacMillan Company), pp. 1-13; 137-177.

"Public Will"

Charles Horton Cooley, first published in 1909 as Chapters 35 and 36 of Social Organization (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), pp. 402-419.

"The Philosophical Basis of Ethics"

George Herbert Mead, first published in 1908 in International Journal of Ethics, Vol. 18, pp. 311-323.

Menand, The Metaphysical Club, pp. 409-442

#### Week Nine: C. Practical Action

"What Pragmatism Means"

William James, first published in 1907 as a chapter in Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking (New York: Longmans, Green and Co.)

"The Working Hypothesis in Social Reform"

George Herbert Mead, first published in 1899 in The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 5, pp. 367-371.

(Recommended but not required)

"Rational Control in Social Life"

W.I. Thomas, first published in 1918 as the introduction of The Polish Peasant in Europe and America (New York: Dover Publications, 1958), pp. 1-20.

#### Week Ten

No additional reading. Review and examination preparation