

# MAJOR THEORIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES (Autumn Term)

## ***MA in Humanities & Social Sciences***

Department of Humanities & Social Sciences  
Yıldız Technical University

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### ***Course Description:***

This course presents the students with an overview of classical and contemporary theories in social sciences. The evolution of social & cultural theory from the eighteenth century onwards will be analyzed with reference to major themes during the term. The aim will be to understand and make sense of 'cultural theory' together with 'social theory' that seems to follow a different historical and thematic trajectory when compared to political theory, sociological theory or history of philosophy.

During the lecture we will attempt to comprehend the views of major theorists, their relation to other theories and the way in which certain concepts are covered and analyzed in their theories. Among the major themes that are relevant to our discussion with regards to social & cultural theory will be society, community, individual, social action, solidarity, alienation, structure, agency, modernity and postmodernity.

*As this is a must course for the MA program it is an essential obligation and extremely important for the students to do all readings for each week before coming to class. All students are expected to attend each session and participate as much as possible to the discussions in class.*

### ***Grading System:***

Exams: 60% (30% each)

Assignment: 15%

Presentation: 15%

Discussion Questions: 5%

Participation: 5%

**Exams:**

There will be two classical mid-term examinations during the term in the weeks declared in advance. The exams will take place in class.

**Take-Home Assignment:**

There will be a take home assignment given in a specific week about 1 to 3 pages long due to be returned back in one week. The assignment will be in the form of a mini take-home examination and will include the answer of a single comprehensive question.

**Presentation:**

Each student will pick up a theory/theorist at the beginning of the term and make a presentation of one specific article or a combination of more than one article. The maximum duration for each presentation will be 20 minutes. The aim will be to **clearly summarize and review** the relevant readings in the light of all what we have seen in class so far. The presentation material as a text will also be presented at the end.

**Discussion Questions:**

For each week, students are expected to write *two* discussion questions to be discussed in class. The questions should combine all the readings assigned for that week.

**Schedule:**

**Week 1 - *The Roots of Social Theory***

(October 2)

*Key Thinkers: Comte, Spencer, Saint-Simon*

**S6 (1-6), R2 (1-41)**

**Week 2 - *Classical Theories I***

(October 9)

*Key Thinker: Marx*

**A3, S4, R2 (43-75), M2**

**Week 3 - Classical Theories II**

(October 16)

*Key Thinker: Durkheim*

**R2** (76-111), **M4, S8** (97-127)

**Week 4 - Classical Theories III**

(October 23)

*Key Thinker: Weber*

**S9** (22-36), **K1, R2** (112-157)

**Week 5 - Classical Theories IV**

(October 30)

*Key Thinker: Simmel*

**S9** (22-36), **S1, R2** (158-188)

**Week 6 - The Heritage of Hermeneutics and Social Action**

(November 6)

*Key Thinkers: Dilthey, Weber, Gadamer & Goffman*

**S8** (128-170), **O1, S6** (58-73)

**Week 7 - Exam 1 - Classical Theories (Weeks 1-6)**

(November 13)

**Week 8 - Critical Theory**

(November 20)

*Key Thinkers: Adorno, Horkheimer, Benjamin, Freud, Fromm & Marcuse*

**E2** (17-52), **C2, K3, A1, A2, B4**

**Week 9 - *After Marx: Ideology and Hegemony***

(November 27)

*Key Thinkers: Lukacs, Althusser & Gramsci*

**S8** (194-224), **S6** (37-57), **W1** (190-204), **F**

**Week 10 - *Structuralism & Poststructuralism***

(December 4)

*Key Thinkers: Saussure, Levi-Strauss, Barthes, Lacan & Derrida*

**S7** (116-139), **M5** (92-127), **B1** (39-80), **S6** (97-132), **C3** (67-90)

**Week 11 - *Critical Modernity: History, Subjectivity & Power***

(December 11)

*Key Thinkers: Habermas & Foucault*

**G2, P1, M3, S5, O2, R1**

**Week 12 - *Exam 2 - 20<sup>th</sup> Century Theorists (Weeks 8-11)***

(December 18)

**Week 13 - *General Discussion & Evaluation***

(December 25)

**Week 14 - *General Discussion & Evaluation***

**Reading List:**

**A1** Theodor W. Adorno & Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" in *The Cultural Studies Reader* 2nd edition (Simon During, ed.) London: Routledge, 1999, 31-41.

**A2** Theodor W. Adorno, "Culture Industry Reconsidered" in *Popular Culture: A Reader* (Raiford Guins and Omayra Zaragoza Cruz, eds.) London: Sage, 2005, 103-108.

**A3** Robert J. Antonio, "Karl Marx" in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Major Social Theorists: Volume I Classical Social Theorists* (George Ritzer & Jeffrey Stepnisky, eds.) Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, 115-164.

**B1** Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. 2002.

**B4** Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in *Popular Culture: A Reader* (Raiford Guins and Omayra Zaragoza Cruz, eds.) London: Sage, 2005, 96-102.

**C2** Craig Calhoun and Joseph Karaganis, "Critical Theory" in *Handbook of Social Theory* (George Ritzer & Barry Smart, eds.) London: Sage, 2003, 179-200.

**C3** Nick Couldry, *Inside Culture: Re-imagining the Method of Cultural Studies*. London: Sage, 2007.

**E2** Anthony Elliott, *Contemporary Social Theory: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2009.

**F** David Forgacs, "National-Popular: Genealogy of a Concept" in *The Cultural Studies Reader* 2nd edition (Simon During, ed.) London: Routledge, 1999, 209-219.

**G2** Anthony Giddens, "Jürgen Habermas" in *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* (Quentin Skinner, ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 121-139.

**K1** Stephen Kalberg, "Max Weber" in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Major Social Theorists: Volume I Classical Social Theorists* (George Ritzer & Jeffrey Stepnisky, eds.) Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, 305-372.

**K3** Douglas Kellner, "The Frankfurt School" in *Cultural Theory: Classical & Contemporary Positions* (Tim Edwards, ed.) London: Sage, 2007, 49-68.

**M2** Karl Marx, "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof" in *Popular Culture: A Reader* (Raiford Guins and Omayra Zaragoza Cruz, eds.) London: Sage, 2005, 89-95.

- M3** Tim May and Jason Powell, "Foucault: Interpretive Analytics and the Constitution of the Social" in *Cultural Theory: Classical & Contemporary Positions* (Tim Edwards, ed.) London: Sage, 2007, 123-140.
- M4** Tara Milbrandt and Frank Pearce, "Émile Durkheim" in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Major Social Theorists: Volume I Classical Social Theorists* (George Ritzer & Jeffrey Stepnisky, eds.) Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, 236-282.
- M5** Andrew Milner and Jeff Browitt, *Contemporary Cultural Theory: An Introduction* (third edition). London: Routledge, 2002.
- O1** William Outhwaite, "Hans-Georg Gadamer" in *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* (Quentin Skinner, ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 21-39.
- O2** William Outhwaite, "Jürgen Habermas", in *The Blackwell Companion to Major Contemporary Social Theorists* (George Ritzer, ed.) Oxford: Blackwell, 2003, 228-246.
- P1** Mark Philp, "Michel Foucault" in *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* (Quentin Skinner, ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 65-82.
- R1** Paul Rabinow, "Introduction" in *The Foucault Reader* (Paul Rabinow, ed.) New York: Vintage, 2010, 3-29.
- R2** George Ritzer, *Sociological Theory* (eighth edition). New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011.
- S1** Lawrence A. Scaff, "Georg Simmel" in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Major Social Theorists: Volume I Classical Social Theorists* (George Ritzer & Jeffrey Stepnisky, eds.) Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, 205-235.
- S4** Peter Singer, *Marx: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- S5** Barry Smart, "Michel Foucault" in *The Blackwell Companion to Major Contemporary Social Theorists* (George Ritzer, ed.) Oxford: Blackwell, 2003, 207-227.
- S6** Philip Smith, *Cultural Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001.
- S7** John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2012.
- S8** Alan Swingewood, *A Short History of Sociological Thought* (second edition). London: Macmillan, 1991.
- S9** Alan Swingewood, *Cultural Theory and the Problem of Modernity*. New York: Macmillan, 1998.
- W1** David Walton, *Introducing Cultural Studies: Learning Through Practice*. London: Sage, 2008.