Sociology 210
Classical Social Theorizing

Instructor: Dr. William Little

Course Description and Objectives:

This course is designed as an introduction to the foundations of sociological theory. We will principally focus on the work of Durkheim, Marx, Weber and Simmel, who are often considered the primary authors of the discipline. They also are responsible for defining four main lines of development in sociological thinking—the schools of positivism and functionalism, critical sociology, interpretative sociology and micro-sociology respectively. These lines continue to structure the debates and perspectives of the discipline today. Their study is essential for students of sociology in order to advance in the discipline and to be able to engage in rigorous, higher level thinking. The course will define key concepts from the founders’ works and provide the historical and intellectual context of their ideas.

Aside from being an introduction to sociological theory, the course will focus on developing the skills of theoretical work including the close reading of theoretical texts, the clear formulation of concepts and thesis statements, the creation of ideas, and critical analytical thinking.

Course Materials:

- Kenneth Thompson, Emile Durkheim: Revised Edition, Routledge
- Derek Sayer, Capitalism and Modernity, Routledge
- Supplementary readings will be made available via CourseSpaces