

SOCIOL 711:Sociological Perspectives in Social Psychology

Professor Cyril Levitt and Professor Neil McLaughlin

2:30pm to 5:20pm, Tuesdays

Professor Levitt's office hours are Wed., 5:00 pm to 6 pm and by appointment after class on Tuesdays.

Professor McLaughlin's office hours are Wed, 2:30pm to 3:30pm and by appointment either before or after Tuesday classes.

nmclaugh@mcmaster.ca

The first section of the course will be led by Prof. Cyril Levitt. He will begin with an etymological and semantic historical overview of the precursors in Western thought of concepts and topics relevant to contemporary thinking in social psychology. These include for example the concepts of "individual," "individuality" "collectivity," "community," "the self and the social self," "person and personality," etc. Prof. Levitt will begin with the relevant ideas of the most important thinkers in classical antiquity and then follow some of these ideas through early to late Christianity in the Western Church through the Renaissance and Reformation and then focus more closely on the late 18th and throughout the 19th century, from the Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment, Romanticism, Classicism and German Idealist philosophy from Kant through Fichte to Schelling and Hegel. He will then take up the ideas on these topics developed by Marx and follow them through the thinking in 19th century anthropology and sociology especially concerning the relationship between individualism and collectivism. This material will be covered in the first two class meetings. We will then turn our attention to some of the foundational thinkers in social psychology of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, namely Charles Horton Cooley, George Herbert Mead, Emile Durkheim and Sigmund Freud.

There will be no assigned readings for the Classical to the Post-Enlightenment period. However, selective texts by Cooley, Durkheim, Mead and Freud will be required. Some of these selected readings will be available on Avenue to Learn but students are asked to obtain the Cooley and Freud material independently. The bookstore is ordering the relevant texts. Students are encouraged to begin their readings of these materials as soon as possible.

At the conclusion of the first part of the course, students will receive 4 comprehensive exam-like questions based on the lectures, texts and class discussions. Students will be asked to select ONE of these questions and submit their answers on Avenue to Learn in electronic format 12 point type, double-spaced as a doc or PDF file. Students will have two weeks to complete and submit their answers. The grade on this submission will make up 50% of the total grade for the class.

Readings for Part One of the Course:

Cooley, C.H. *Human Nature and the Social Order*

Durkheim, E. Selections from *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*

Freud, S. *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*

Krader, L. *Person and Collectivity and Selections from The Dialectic of Civil Society*

Mead, G.H., *Selections from Mind, Self, and Society*

The second half of the class will deal with 6 sociological social psychology topics that take some of the classical ideas developed in the first part of the class, and link them to important mid and late twentieth century theory and contemporary research. The 6 topics are:

- 1) Robert Merton's underappreciated sociology psychology on Nov 1
- 2) Erving Goffman's sociology of everyday life + Arlie Hochschild on Nov 8.
- 3) The authoritarian personality and Milgram experiment research traditions on Nov 15.
- 4) The work and personality/Kohn and Lareau approaches on Nov 22.
- 5) Collaborative circles and creativity theory on Nov 29.
- 6) Abraham Maslow and post-materialism research on Dec 6.

There will be approximately 2 chapters or journal articles assigned for each week, all of them uploaded on Avenue to Learn. Professor McLaughlin will provide a background mini-lecture at the beginning of each class, and then we will talk about the articles and research traditions in class. We will also spend some time talking in class about C Wright Mills, Nancy Chodorow and Erich Fromm.

There will be 4 comprehensive exam-like questions handed out at the end of class, Dec 6. Students will write essays answering 1 of the 4 questions in a 10 to 12 double spaced submission that engages with the material read and discussed in class along with theories and research and readings brought to the table by students themselves. The final submission will be due, Dec 15th at noon, uploaded on Avenue to Learn and submitted in paper copy in Professor McLaughlin's mail-box. The grade on this submission will make up 50% of the total grade for the class.