Class time and location: Thursdays, 1-3:45 (be prompt and well fed!), in the Curry Wing Conference Room, Read Center
Office Hours: Tuesday, 3-5:30 p.m., and by appointment
Ways to Contact Me: Education 4232; 856-8359; through Oncourse; brlevins@indiana.edu

Key required texts:
Critical Social Theories. Ben Agger.
*Unequal Childhoods. Annette Lareau.
*Women Without Class. Julie Beattie.
*Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds. Dorothy Holland et al.
*Talk and Social Theory. Frederick Erickson.
*subject to discussion and selection

Recommended Supplementary Texts:
Locating Bourdieu. Deborah Reed-Danahay.

Primary and secondary readings are also available on electronic reserve:

Course Rationale and Objectives
Some sort of social theory informs most contemporary educational scholarship, implicitly or explicitly. Over the course of their graduate training, most students become aware of the varieties of social theory in education scholarship, but only in fairly vague and unsystematic ways. They hear names and see concepts applied or analyzed without a full understanding of the historical and intellectual contexts in which people and ideas have developed. This course in social theory is premised on the notion that students who are developing their competencies as educational researchers and as critical readers of educational analysis should also develop the ability to creatively apply, or at the very least discern, varieties of social theory.

This course, then, is mainly about wrestling with key thinkers and ideas in the field known as social theory. The goal is for you to come to a strong understanding of how different thinkers have tried to make sense of the social world over the course of the last 200 years or so. Secondarily, the course is about how social theory can and does inform research on educational processes. I should make it clear that I am not a philosopher or social theorist by training. I am an anthropologist and educational ethnographer whose work has been deeply informed by several traditions of critical social theory. Thus, I can speak to the challenges and thrills of research informed by social theory. Finally, this course emphasizes critical social theories, since they are particularly relevant for educational thought that tries to transform society for the better. And quite frankly, they are what I know and like best. We shall spend some time looking at what makes a theory “critical” or not, and why that should matter.
(Among other things, a critical social theory tries to illuminate the relations among the four processes that form the subtitle of the course).

Obviously, this is an impossibly broad mandate for a one-semester course, so my main goal is to provide you with a road map, and a key for that map, so you can continue to explore the uses of social theory in educational scholarship over the course of your careers. There will be little time to examine any particular thinker or tradition in great depth, though you may choose to do so on a modest basis through discussion briefs and a final paper project.

**Expectations, Assignments, and Assessment**

Your main responsibility for this course is to read the assigned readings, develop occasional discussion briefs and postings to the Oncourse Discussion forum, and attend class weekly. Each week we address a different set of theories and theorists, with both original source readings and secondary commentaries. Readings are divided into “required” and “recommended.” The required readings will serve as the basis for most of our discussion, while the recommended readings provide further illustration or background for clarification.

Your participation in the seminar will be assessed in terms of the quality of your verbal contributions—how detailed and earnest your engagement with the readings, how acute your observations and questions, how fruitful and imaginative your intellectual connections across the readings. Please notify me if you must miss a weekly seminar session and, if possible, provide me with some reading notes, or respond to your classmates’ postings on Oncourse, as an indication of your “participation” that week.

There’s no way around it: this course involves a lot of difficult reading that tries to make sense of very complicated processes. You are expected to consult the required readings for each week and prepare a small set of thoughts and questions you would like to share with your classmates and the instructor. In addition, you can plan to focus your reading on particular authors or theoretical traditions: You will also be asked to **develop 5 discussion briefs on 5 seminar days of your choosing** (out of more than 10 possible days). The discussion brief, approximately 1000 words, need not be a polished piece of work, but it should show an active engagement across the readings for the day, anchored in specific terms and passages. The idea is for you to wrestle with the readings and tell us what you think.

I urge you to refer back to this set of guiding questions as you prepare for class each week, and especially as you prepare your discussion briefs. Of course, you will not be able to address all of these questions in each brief, but hopefully they can give you some orientation:

- What do you think is the author’s main purpose in this piece of writing? What social process or phenomenon is the author theorizing? What is s/he trying to say, and why?
- How do the writings for this week relate to those of previous weeks? To your experience?
- Which passages or concepts from the readings did you find especially interesting or inspiring or useful or provocative, and why?
- Which passages or concepts from the readings did you find especially confusing or troublesome or wrong-headed, and why?
- Which of the readings (articles, chapters, excerpts, introductory essays) did you find the most interesting, and why? Which did you find the least interesting, and why?
- What would you like to know more about the authors or the theories you read for this week?
- What’s the point? What value or use do you see for reading and understanding these authors—even if only for historical purposes?
It may also help to keep in mind the following guiding questions, which will help organize some parts of our seminar discussions:

- What is the role or conception of POWER, if any, in these reading selections?
- What is the relationship between power, culture, and knowledge, broadly speaking?
- What role does identity or subjectivity play in the account?
- What are the implications for education, if you can discern any?

Be sure to identify specific pages and quotes that you’d like to discuss more in class. A strong, adequate brief covers **most, if not all** of the readings for the week and raises some good questions or issues. It also brings into the discussion at least one or two of the recommended readings for the day. Such a brief will be given a “check,” corresponding roughly to 92 points or “A-” work. Particularly insightful or elaborate briefs will occasionally receive a “plus,” worth 95-97 points. Those briefs judged inadequate will be given a “minus,” worth 70-85 points, and you have a one-week option to re-submit for a check. Or you may simply choose to submit 6 or 7 briefs and have the best 5 scores taken in the end. You may look at examples of previous briefs at the Fall 2005 H637 Oncourse site.

You are expected to post these five discussion briefs over the course of the semester (out of more than 10 possible seminar days). Typically, you should post your brief to Oncourse **by 5 p.m. on Wednesday** prior to our Thursday class meeting. If you have not completed your reading or the brief for that week, simply post whatever ideas or thoughts you have by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, and then bring the brief to class. For **two of the five briefs, you can choose to submit your brief later in the week, by Friday at 5 p.m.** In this brief, which should also be posted to Oncourse, you are encouraged to incorporate what you thought or learned in seminar that week.

For the **theory-in-research paper**, of 8-10 double-spaced pages, you are to critically assess and review a few key texts in educational scholarship that are informed by a tradition or set of social theories. The goal of the paper is to closely examine the ways that critical social theory informs educational research and analysis.

---
---
---
---
---
---
---
---
---
---
---
---

**All papers are due by 5 p.m. on Monday, December 11th.**

So, here’s how the final scheme of assignments and assessment looks:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Briefs (5)</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory-in-Research Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tentative Course Schedule [readings not finalized]

**Th, August 31**  *Introduction: What is critical social theory, what is its relation to educational research, and why should we care?*

Reqd:  C. Lemert, ST, Introduction (pp. 1-20), pp. 348-352 (C.W. Mills), 587-91 (Bauman)  
B. Agger, CST, Chap. 1 (pp. 1-33)  
Calhoun, “Rethinking Critical Theory,” pp. 1-42  (Reserve)

**Th, September 7**  *Foundations of Studying Modernity, aka The Big Three: Marx, Weber, and Durkheim*

Reqd:  Lemert, ST, pp. 21-41, 58-65 (Marx); pp. 99-100, 110-125 (Weber); pp. 70-83 (Durkheim)  
Recd:  Avineri, “Homo Faber” From *Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*  (Reserve)  
Cheal, “Interpretive Understanding: Max Weber”  (Reserve)  
K. Allan, *Classical*, Chaps. 3-5

**Th, September 14**  *Self and Society and the Microsociological Traditions*

Reqd:  Allan, “The Problem of Meaning and Reality—Alfred Schutz”  (Reserve)  
Allan, “Symbols, Meaning, and the Social Self”  (Reserve)  
Lemert, ST, pp. 125-130 (Freud); 180-185 (Simmel and Cooley); 187-197; 220-25 (G.H. Mead), 331-36 (Goffman), 383-88 (Berger and Luckmann), 43-35 (Garfinkel)  
Recd:  Powers, “Symbolic Interaction in Everyday Life”  (Reserve)  
Schutz and Luckmann, “The Everyday Life-World and the Natural Attitude”  (Reserve)  
Mehan and Wood, “Ethnomethodology…”, pp. 322-40  (Reserve)  
Allan, *Classical*, Chap. 7  
Allan, *Contemporary*, Chaps. 2-4

**Th, September 21**  *Gramsci and Cultural Marxism*

Reqd:  Agger, CST, pp. 122-134  
Joseph, “Antonio Gramsci: Theorist of Hegemony”  (Reserve)  
Lemert, ST, 259-61 (Gramsci), 202-04 (Lukacs)  
Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, pp. 5-23, 52-61, 323-35  (Reserve)  
Jackson Lears, “The Concept of Cultural Hegemony,” pp. 567-93  (Reserve)  
Recd:  Hebdige, “From Culture to Hegemony” pp. 357-67  (Reserve)  
Femia, “Hegemony and Consciousness…”, pp. 29-48  (Reserve)  
Williams, “Hegemony” and “Structures of Feeling”  (Reserve)  
Adamson, “Political Education” pp. 140-201  (Reserve)  
Hall, “The Toad in the Garden,” pp. 35-57  (Reserve)

**Th, September 28**  *Frankfurt School Critical Theory and Habermas*

Reqd:  Agger, CST, Chapter 4  
Lemert, ST, 204-08 (Horkheimer), 380-83 (Habermas), 427-30 (Marcuse); 572-74 (Havel); 630-34 (Beck)  
Habermas, “The Concept of the Lifeworld”  (Reserve)  
Recd:  Habermas, “The Tasks of a Critical Theory of Society”  (Reserve)
Allan, Contemporary, Chap. 11

Th, October 5  Examples of Educational Scholarship: Marxist and Neo-Marxist Perspectives

Reqd:  (Choose at least 1):
Apple, “Reproduction, Contestation, and Curriculum”  (Reserve)
Giroux, “Hegemony, Resistance, and the Paradox of Educational Reform” (Reserve)
Ferguson, “Teaching and/as Reproduction” (Reserve)
(Choose at least 3):
Anyon, “Social Class and School Knowledge” (Reserve)
Anderson, “Ex-Slaves and the Rise of Universal Education in the South” (Reserve)
Luykx, “From Indios to Profesionales: Stereotypes and Student Resistance in Bolivian Teacher Training”
Gandin and Apple, “Beyond Neoliberalism in Education: The Citizen School...” (Reserve)
Everhart, “Summary and Conclusions” from Reading, Writing, and Resistance (R)
Foley, “Working and Playing Around in the Classroom” (Reserve)
Willis, “Chapter 1 and part of Chapter 3, from Learning to Labor” (Reserve)
Slaughter and Silva, “Service and the Dynamics of Developing Fields” (Reserve)

Recd:  Ewert, “Habermas and Education” (Reserve)
Agger, CST, Chap. 8

Th, October 12  Bourdieu and Giddens on Practice and Structuration

Reqd:  Reed-Danahay, “Introduction” to Locating Bourdieu (Reserve)
Allan, “The Juggernaut of Modernity” (Reserve)
Lemert, ST, 435-40 (Bourdieu), 477-83 (Giddens)
Bourdieu, “Social Space and Symbolic Power” (Reserve)
Levinson, “Concepts for a Critical Analysis...” (Reserve)

Recd:  Giddens, “Structuration Theory...”, pp. 281-310 (Reserve)
Swartz, “Habitus”, pp. 95-116  (Reserve)
Brubaker, “Rethinking Classical Theory,” (on Bourdieu) pp. 745-74 (Reserve)
Allan, Contemporary, Chap. 8

W, October 19  Foucault, Poststructuralism, and Postmodernism

Reqd:  Agger, CST, Chaps. 2-3, and pp. 139-143
Lemert, ST, 148-156 (de Saussure), 309-14 (Levi-Strauss), 317-321 (Althusser), 365-75 and 445-456 (Lemert), 665-67 (Deleuze); 409-413, 465-476 (Foucault and Baudrillard), 457-60 (Lyotard)
Foucault, “The Subject and Power” (Reserve)

Recd:  Smart, “Major Themes and Issues,” pp. 18-46 (Reserve)
Olssen, “Power and the Self” (Reserve)
Castells, pp. 5-12 (Reserve)
Allan, Contemporary, Chap. 13, 15

W, October 26  Examples of Educational Scholarship: Bourdieu and Foucault

Reqd:  a) Choose to read the book by Lareau or the two articles:
Unequal Childhodds (Lareau)
Wells and Serna, “The Politics of Culture” (Reserve) [About school choice and middle class influence in U.S. “de-tracking” reform]
MacLeod, “Leveled aspirations: Social reproduction takes its toll” [A chapter from Macleod’s well-known ethnography of poor youth, “Ain’t no Makin’ It”]
Levinson, “Social difference and schooled identity at a Mexican secundaria” (Reserve)

b) Choose at least 2 of the following articles or chapters:
Walkerdine, “On the regulation of speaking and silence” (Reserve) [About women and gender subjectivity—Britain]
Graham and Neu, “Standardized testing and the construction of governable persons”
[Reserve]

[critique of testing in Canada]
Vavrus, “Governmentality in an era of ‘empowerment': The case of Tanzania” (Reserve)
Essays from Popkewitz and Brennan, Foucault’s Challenge (IUCAT—online)
[choose one or two of the essays in this book—a number from Europe as well as U.S.]
Palermo’s "I'm not lying, this is not a pipe: Foucault and Magritte on the art of critical pedagogy" Philosophy of Education (1994): the author describes what he calls Foucault’s critical aesthetic theory and his treatment of repressive normalizing practices in order to critique the way in which standardized testing (specifically the CAT) categorizes kindergarten speakers of Black English.
Ross's “It Certainly Looks like a Pipe...” is a response.
http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PES-Yearbook/94_docs/ROSS.HTM and
http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PES-Yearbook/94_docs/PALERMO.HTM

Th, November 2 Just a Bunch of Whites? Critical Race and Post-Colonial Critiques and Proposals

Reqd: Delgado and Stefancic, “Introduction,” Critical Race Theory (Reserve)
Lemert, ST, 162-8 (DuBois), 261-63 (Gandhi), 342-48 (Cesaire and MLK, Jr.), 358-63 (Fanon), 413-22 (James), 505-21 (West and Gates), 526-35 (Minh-ha and Spivak), 603-09 (Hall)
Recd: Omi and Winant, “On the Theoretical Concept of Race” (Reserve)
Allan, Contemporary, Chap. 16

Th, November 9 (seminar cancelled)

**Post your proposals for the theory-in-research paper by November 7**

Th, November 16 Just a Bunch of Straight Men?: Feminist and Queer Critiques and Proposals

Reqd: Agger, CST, Chap. 5, and pp. 134-39
Lemert, ST, 170-74 (Perkins Gilman), 174-80 (Cooper), 257-58 (Woolf), 339-41 (de Beauvoir), 355-58 (Friedan), 388-90 (Smith), 440-43 (Lorde), 487-94 (Hartsock), 522-26 (Haraway), 535-72 (Hill Collins, Anzaldúa, Weeks, Butler, and Gunn Allen), 619-23 (Sassen), 647-51 (Kristeva), 654-62 (Kosofsky Sedgwick and Connell)
Recd: Ortner, “Making Gender”, pp. 1-20 (Reserve)
Haraway, “Situated Knowledges,” pp. 183-201 (Reserve)
Mackinnon, “Consciousness Raising” (Reserve)
Th, November 23
Thanksgiving! **No class meeting scheduled**

**Th, November 30  Examples of Educational Scholarship: Critical Race/Feminist Perspectives**

Reqd: Choose to read *Women without Class*, J. Bettie and Ladson-Billings and Tate, “Critical Race Theory and Education” (Reserve)

OR

the following papers:
- Ladson-Billings and Tate, “Critical Race Theory and Education” (Reserve)
- Duncan, G. “Beyond Love: A Critical Race Ethnography of Adolescent Black Males” ®
- Danns, D. “Chicago Teacher Reform and the Politics of Educational Change” ®
- Lather, “Feminist Perspectives on Empowering Research…” (Reserve)

Recd: Hatcher and Troyna, “Racialization and Children” (Reserve)
- Morrow and Torres, “Education and the Reproduction of Class, Gender, and Race”

**Th, December 7  Fellow travelers or friendly critiques?: Summing up and engaging critical theory with other theoretical traditions**

Reqd: Levinson, Book intro (Oncourse)
- Agger, CST, Chap. 7 and/or Chap. 9 (2nd edition)

Choose at least 2-3 of the following:
- Lemert, ST, 290-96 (Rostow), 460-64 (Rorty), 623-30 (Sen)
- Nussbaum, “Beyond the Social Contract” ®
- A. Appiah, “Liberalism, Individuality, and Identity” (Reserve)
- A. Appiah, “The Escape From Positivism” (Reserve)
- R. Rorty, “Relativism: Finding and Making” (Reserve)
- Bruno Latour, “Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?” (Reserve)
- Paolo Freire, Ch. 2, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Reserve)
- C.R. Bowers, “The Anthropocentric Foundations of Educational Liberalism” (Reserve)
- Arundhati Roy, “We Have to Become the Global Resistance”

- K. Wilber, “The Marriage of Sense and Soul: Integrating Science and Religion (Reserve)
- I. Wallerstein, “The Rise and Future Demise of World-Systems Analysis” (Reserve)
- B. Flyvbjerg, Selected portions of *Making Social Science Matter* (Reserve)

Notes for reading:
Nussbaum and Appiah are great representatives of progressive liberalism. A. Sen and Nussbaum are married.
Rorty is the preeminent figure of contemporary pragmatism, which is a variant of liberalism.
Latour is an interesting social scientist who is difficult to categorize.
Freire represents a prominent strain of radical Latin American educational theory.
Bowers makes a critique of both liberalism and critical theory as being too anthropocentric. He represents "deep ecology."
Roy is an Indian novelist and social activist.
Wilber tries to integrate critical theory with gnosis, or spiritual knowing.
Wallerstein is the founder of "world-systems analysis," a critical way of viewing global political economy.
Flyvbjerg is a Danish social scientist who combines Aristotle, Nietzsche, and Foucault…one of my favorites

** Don’t forget: The theory-in-research paper—and any other outstanding work—is **due by 5 p.m. on Monday, December 11th**. This is a strict deadline! (And you won’t be penalized if you hand in the work earlier!)