CCC Theory I (CCCC7100-01), Fall 2011
Thursdays, 2-4:30 pm, Newcomb 314
Organizers: Fred Buttell (Social Work), Joel Devine (Sociology & Urban Studies)

Course Description, Logic, and Structure

CCC 7100 is the first semester of a two-semester graduate-level introduction to key theoretical issues, debates, figures, and works in the interconnected program core areas of city, culture, and community. Co-taught and relying on faculty from an array of disciplines, the course seeks to facilitate student’s acquisition of theoretical knowledge with a capacity to both interrogate and align theory and practice. The two-semesters are organized to elaborate, articulate, and promulgate the unique inter- and multi-disciplinary promise of the CCC program, by developing a more synthetic approach to theory per Diagram 1 (below).

Toward these ends, the organizing committee has designed a tripartite, two-semester theory sequence consisting of:

(a) A meta-theoretical framework focused on “thinking about theory”; and
(b) Pluralistic interrogation within and across the broad programmatic spheres of city, culture, and community through examination of a series of key:
   (1) Theoretical schools & orientations (balance of first semester); and
   (2) Conceptual lenses (second semester)

Diagram 1 – Visualization of CCC Theory I, II (CCCC 7100, 7150)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Conceptual Lens</th>
<th>Direction of Focus</th>
<th>Spheres of Inquiry</th>
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<tr>
<td>Interrogatory School / Orientation / Concept</td>
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<td>Culture, Community, Nexus</td>
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<td>City, Analysis within and across city, culture, and community</td>
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Course Goals

- Learn to analyze theory;
- Develop an understanding of the role, functions, and organization (structure) of theory in relation to research;
- Learn how to use theory to build knowledge;
- Organize and synthesize data and information;
- Develop systematic and integrative understandings and explanations in the key substantive areas of city, culture, and community;
- Build a necessary base of theoretical knowledge from multiple orientations in the key substantive areas of city, culture, and community;
- Construct new theories to understand past and present conditions and processes;
- Foster a sufficient understanding of multiple disciplinary and inter-disciplinary approaches, questions, issues to afford subsequent mastery of more specialized areas of inquiry.

Student Evaluation / Weight

1. Two - Peer Discussion Facilitator 10% @ 20%
   Prepare discussion questions regarding the assigned readings for distribution to class the week prior to the class for which the readings pertain

2. Weekly short topical readings summary, reflection, and application papers 25%

3. Two- Medium-length excursive synthesis & application(s) paper after each section of courses (1st semester - IA, IB; 2nd semester - IIC, IID) 15% @ 30%

4. Final integrative, applications paper in student’s core substantive area
   Prospectus only (equivalent to penultimate draft of theoretical chapter of dissertation) or additional integrative paper per above #3 15%

5. Discussion/Participation 10%

Facilitators’ Contact Info & Office Hours:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Office Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fred Buttell</td>
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<td>314-2328</td>
<td>113 Richardson Memorial</td>
<td>Wednesdays 9-11 am or by appointment</td>
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Tentative Schedule: Topics & Readings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Section &amp; Topic</th>
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<tr>
<th>Listing Format</th>
<th>Annotation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Readings for Session</td>
<td>Other Recommended / Supplementary Readings (Note: ‘other’ readings are not assigned readings for the week. These are a partial listing of topic-relevant readings which form the base of a CCC program theory reading list.)</td>
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SECTION IA. THINKING ABOUT THEORY – Weeks 1-3
Facilitator: Kevin Gotham

Section IA provides a schematic overview of the different definitions, functions, and properties of theory. Students will be introduced to the various criteria scholars use to evaluate the validity of theories. Students will also learn the basic components of theory which include concepts, ontological and epistemological assumptions, inductive and deductive reasoning, and levels of analysis.

Wk 1 (9/1) Dissecting Theory

Readings

Wk 2 (9/8) Knowledge for Whom and For What Purpose: Ontology, Epistemology, and Explanation

Readings
Wk 3 (9/15) The Building Blocks of Theory: Concepts, Levels of Analysis, and the Agency /Structure Relationship

Readings


Weeks 1 – 3: Other Recommended / Supplementary Readings


Social Work Debate on Theory in Social Work in response to Thyer 2001 (see Week 1)

**IB. THEORETICAL SCHOOLS / PERSPECTIVES**

**Wk 4 (9/22) Objectivism (Positivism) / Phenomenology**

Facilitators: Joel Devine & Fred Buttell

*Both have their roots in philosophy, having developed as generally opposing epistemological positions regarding the creation of knowledge. Objectivism incorporates the theoretical supposition that there is a vantage point based in "objective reality" or abstract "truth" from which knowledge can be drawn; a world that exists outside and independent of individual mind or consciousness. Universal laws that transcend time and space govern that reality. Alternatively, Phenomenology incorporates the theoretical supposition that individuals construct reality as they act in the "lifeworld." Reality emerges from consciousness and develops as people interact with each other. Inasmuch as there is no objective reality to the lived world, which is too complex to be derived from general universal laws, the search for ontological "truth" is both formed in and revealed by the experiential realm of the senses.*

**Readings**


**Other Recommended / Supplementary Readings**

**Positivist Epistemology & Critiques**

For some researchers, a theoretical approach grounded in pragmatism has seemed a promising direction, especially in the wake of theoretical anxiety or uncertainty associated with post-modernist disavowals of universal truths. Distinctions between what might be termed “neo-classical pragmatism” (for example, Peirce, Dewey, and James) of the early twentieth century and “neo-pragmatism” of the later twentieth century (for example, Rorty) are important.

Symbolic Interactionism is a micro-level, social-psychological theoretical perspective focusing on the emergence of meaning from actions and interactions of individuals. Meaning emerges from the mind of the individual and is socially constructed as people interact. The use of symbols, with language being the dominant symbol system, is imperative for interaction to occur. Thus, meaning and understanding between interactants occurs at the level of symbolic reality; individuals must interpret the symbols exchanged during interaction in order for them to collectively create meaning, understanding, and, thus, to effect communication. Reality, from this vantage point, is socially constructed.

Social Constructionism is an applied version of Phenomenology that explains how people develop their ‘lens’ or perspective on the world. It suggests that social interactions are at the core of how individuals interact with the world. Consequently, these interactions form the basis for both what an individual ‘knows’ and what they ‘believe’. This concept explains why objective truth is of less importance than subjective truth to people on a case-by-case basis. Their subjective experience forms the lens through which they view the world and is of greater personal importance and value to them than objective truth.

Readings


**Other Recommended / Supplementary Readings**


**Wk 6 (10/6) Human Development** (Freud, Piaget, Maslow, Erikson, Kohlberg)

Facilitator: Fred Buttell

The concept of Human Development reflects the work of several developmental theorists (e.g. Freud, Erickson, Kohlberg), all of which view human functioning through the lens of developmental stages. These stages form an invariant sequence through which a healthily developing human should pass from infancy to late adulthood. In each stage, the person confronts, and hopefully masters, a new psychosocial crisis, by developing and employing new skills. Each stage builds on the successful completion of earlier stages. Consequently, failure to meet the challenges of any earlier stage creates problems or difficulties in the successful resolution of future stages.

**Readings**

TBD

**Other Recommended / Supplementary Readings**

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Wk 7 (10/13) Fall Break

Wk 8 (10/20) Systems Theory (Macro-Meso-Micro)
      Facilitator: Fred Buttell

Broadly speaking, Systems Theory is the search for concepts that can be applied to understanding the structure and functioning of different entities and organizations. In this context, it relates to concepts that explain the connectivity between the individual (micro), his interpersonal relationships and family (mezzo) and his relationships with his community and its structures (macro). This model considers dysfunction the result of a myriad of reciprocal exchanges between the individual and these various layers of systems that initiate and sustain the dysfunctional relationship or behaviors.

Readings


Other Recommended / Supplementary Readings


Wk 9 (10/27) Human & Urban Ecology (Environments: Natural, Social, Built)
      Facilitator: Fred Buttell and Joel Devine
Human ecology is the study of the human species and its interactions with its environment (natural, social and built). It recognizes that humans, like all organisms, both change their surroundings and are changed by their surroundings. Of particular interest here, are concepts like ‘adaptation’ and ‘goodness of fit’, as well as the intersection with Systems Theory described above.

Readings


Overview of the Urban Sociological Ecological Approach


Human Ecology from a Social Work Perspective


The New Urban Ecology


Other Recommended / Supplementary Readings


Early Post-World War II Ecological Perspectives


Ecological Perspectives (up through 1980s)


Contemporary Ecological Perspectives (social-ecological theories and theories of urban ecosystems)

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**Wk 10 (11/3) Neo-Marxism(s)**
Facilitator: Joel Devine

_in dialogue with Marxian historical materialism, a diverse and often oppositional set of insights, sensibilities, orientations, and aesthetics emerged during the 20th century, influencing many disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Several of these frameworks are considered in light of their ongoing analytical contributions to the understanding of city, culture, and community._

**Readings:**

**Wk 11 (11/10) Neo-Marxisms in American Sociology & Urban Studies**

**Readings**

**Weeks 10 – 11: ‘Other’ Recommended / Supplementary Readings**
Modern political economy takes a variety of forms (e.g., public choice, neo-Marxian) but common to all is the interdisciplinary focus on the interrelationships between political and economic processes. Emerging in the 1960s – owing to the rigorous separation of mainstream neo-classical economics and political science and their explanatory inadequacy in addressing the decline of American cities and subsequently broader issues of public policy and choice – the label of political economy is intentionally suggestive of the more holistic approach of pre-neoclassical economic analysts such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and Karl Marx.

Readings


Other Recommended / Supplementary Readings


Positive PE, Public Choice


Wk 13 (12/1) Emancipatory / Critical / Empowerment Theories

Facilitator: Fred Buttell with Sally Kenney et al.

Each of these theoretical orientations is critical of society and the structures that oppress particular groups of people. In the social sciences, *Critical Theory emerged in the early 20th century from the Frankfurt School*. *Critical race theory*, *feminist theories*, and *post-colonial theories* are among the more recent theories that address the oppression of certain groups and their impediments to emancipation. Critical theories tend to move beyond critique to incorporate activism and change with the intent to emancipate or liberate people oppressed by these structures. “Modernist” critical theory has been differentiated from “post-modernist” critical theory, with the former tending to see specific social structures as oppressive and in need of dismantling, while the latter tends to be more tentative about assigning oppression to particular social structures, seeing oppression as ubiquitous and amorphous (for example, the work of Foucault). In the latter
Readings


4. TBD

Other Recommended / Supplementary Readings


Wk 14 (12/8) Modernity / Post-Modernity (Modernism / Postmodernism; Structuralism / Post-Structuralism; Fordism / Post-Fordism)

Facilitators: Carol Reese

A conceptual dichotomy that incorporates, while moving beyond, a historical temporalization. Emerging from the Enlightenment, the concept of modernity signified the shift from religious, faith-based beliefs to science, logic, and reason as the foundation of knowledge. Modernity engaged the Enlightenment belief in progress and the objective basis for knowledge that can be accessed by way of scientific research. It welcomed “grand theory” and grand theory’s totalizing explanations, including a belief in unity, unified identity, and structures of hierarchy. Post-modernity, on the other hand, evolved historically in the early to mid-twentieth century as a move away from objectivity and absolutes toward subjectivity and relativism, generally advocating deconstruction of the ideas inherent in modernity.

Readings (final determination pending)


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Other Recommended / Supplementary Readings
Modernity (ism) / Post-Modernity (ism)
- Habermas, Jürgen. 1989. The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, translated by Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence. MIT Press.

Post-Structuralism

Tentative Topical Schedule for Second Semester (CCCC 7150)

IIC. KEY CONCEPTS

Week 1      City
Week 2      Culture
Week 3      Community
Week 4      Subject / Object
Week 5      Structure(s)
Week 6      Agency
Week 7      Cases
Week 8      Time
Week 9      Space & Place
Week 10     Global-Local
Week 11     Markets & Networks
Week 12     The “Everyday”
Wk 13-14    Planning, Policy, and Programs