French Social Theory and the Social Text: Sociology, Anthropology and History in France since the Late Nineteenth Century. 

Professor Emmanuelle Saada
Fall 2005

Course number : G46.3700
Class: Tuesday - 9:45am - 12:15 pm.
Classroom: Institute of French Studies (15 Washington Mews)
Class in English
Office hours : Institute of French Studies (15 Washington Mews)
email : ems8@nyu.edu

The first objective of the class is to present the main debates and concepts that have shaped French Social Sciences since the late nineteenth century -- the moment of the institutionalization of academic disciplines. This will be done through a close reading of some of the most influential works by Durkheim, Mauss, Lévi-Strauss, Foucault and Bourdieu. The class will also concentrate on how these works engaged and transformed a tradition of scientific research. In particular, we will trace the trajectory of the project of a unified “science of the social” or “science of man,” which deeply marked French social sciences. We will see how sociology, anthropology and history developed as autonomous disciplines and collaborated toward this objective.

Course Requirements:

Class participation: 20%

Class memos: 30%
During the course of the semester, students will be responsible for writing three memos that analyze the core issues in the week's readings (NO MORE THAN THREE PAGES). These must be sent by email to all participants on Friday before 6:00 pm. Memos should not be a summary of the readings but a spur to discussion. They should be organized as an argumentative discussion of the readings' main analytical and empirical points.

Research Paper (15 pages maximum): 50 %
In order to prepare for the paper, you will have to submit a 2-3 page research proposal by November 24. The proposal should state the research topic (formulated as a question rather than as just a theme) and a provisional bibliography. You will have the opportunity to discuss the proposal with me during office hours. The research paper is due on Monday, December 15 at 10:00 am.

Suggested Purchases ( NYU bookstore) :

Class 1: Introduction  
September 8

Class 2: How to do an History of the French Social Sciences?  
September 15


Recommended readings

Class 3: Emile Durkheim (1). Instituting the Science of the Social  
September 22


Recommended reading

September 29


Recommended readings

Class 5: French Social Sciences between the Wars.
Assessing the Legacy of Durkheim: sociology, ethnology and history
October 6


recommended readings

Class 6. French Social Sciences between the Wars.
Marcel Mauss (1): Social Structures and Mental Structures
October 13


Class 7: French Sociology between the Wars.
Marcel Mauss (2): The Total Man
October 20


Recommended reading

Class 8: Structuralism and the Science of Man: Claude Lévi-Strauss.
October 27


Recommended reading:

Class 9: Toward a Science of Man?
November 3


recommended readings:

Class 10 : Foucault (1): An archeology of knowledge.
November 10


Class 11: Foucault (2): Genealogy of the subject.
November 17


Recommended readings
Burchell, Graham, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller, The Foucault Effect. Studies in Governmentality. With two lectures
by and an interview with Michel Foucault. Chicago: the University of Chicago Press. 

Class 12: Pierre Bourdieu (1): Toward a Theory of Practice
November 24


Recommended readings

Class 13: Pierre Bourdieu (2): Classes and Forms of Capital
December 1

[Chapter 1 (“Social Space and Symbolic Space”) without the appendix (pp. 1-13) and chapter 2 (“The New Capital”) with the appendix (pp 19-34)]


Recommended readings:

Class 14 : The Disciplines today
December 8
