

**LIS 6278 Seminar in Theory Development
Spring 2008
Dr. Michelle M. Kazmer**

**Mondays, 2-4:45 p.m.
206 Louis Shores Building**

Course Description

Students will discuss and critique the structural components and research processes related to the origination, construction, and evolution of theory. The seminar will provide students with an awareness of the historical and social conditions that influence a tradition of ideas.

Objectives

The student will understand the theoretical approach to the development of knowledge by:

Analyzing historical and social factors associated with theory construction
Reading critically in the area of theory creation and development
Understanding and practicing tools to critique theories
Analyzing the progression of ideas through the development of a specific theory

Texts

Recommended: Fisher, Karen E., Erdelez, Sanda, & McKechnie, Lynne (E. F.) (Eds.). (2005). Theories of information behavior. Medford, NJ: Information Today.

Required readings are listed below. They may be placed on reserve in the Goldstein Library for your convenience.

Assessments

5% Discussion leading of an assigned class reading (January 21 through March 17)
16% Theory paper 1 (3 theories) due February 4
16% Theory paper 2 (theory background) due February 18
16% Theory paper 3 (theory propositions and concepts) due March 3 (yes, really; yes, I plan to; no, I won't)
16% Theory paper 4 (theory development and criticisms) due March 24
16% Theory paper 5 (theory application and synthesized paper) due April 14
15% In-class presentation of theory (including assigning 1 reading)

Requirements for assessments

5% Discussion leading of an assigned class reading
By Sunday January 13 please email the professor with your top three choices (ranked 1 as the highest and 3 as the lowest) of readings for which you would like to lead the discussion. The professor will assign the discussion leading schedule early in the week of January 14.

16% Theory paper 1 due February 4

Identify three theories that you think might have potential application to your area of research interest. They need not be from “library and information science” per se, but they need to be theories that might have a reasonable and cogent application to your own research ideas. Write approximately 2000 words (excluding references) in which you identify the three theories you are considering; describe briefly the research and/or disciplines from which they come and the research for which they are normally used; and describe how each of the three theories might be applicable to your own research.

16% Theory paper 2 due February 18

Select ONE theory with which you will work for the remainder of the semester. For this paper, you should identify the theory with which you will work and write approximately 2000 words (excluding references) about its origins. You should include information about the person(s) who developed the theory; the intellectual traditions in which the theory was originated; and the research milieu in which the theory was originated.

16% Theory paper 3 due March 3

For this paper, you should write approximately 2000 words (excluding references) identifying, analyzing, relating, and otherwise discussing the concepts and propositions associated with the theory. This paper needs to draw heavily on the class readings and be an extremely rigorous and systematic dissection of your theory.

16% Theory paper 4 due March 24

This paper (approximately 2000 words excluding references) should trace the development of the theory over time by the persons(s) who originated it; the development of the theory by persons(s) other than those who originated it; explore how it has been applied and modified over time; and discuss criticisms and limitations of the theory.

16% Theory paper 5 due April 14

Write approximately 2000 words (excluding references) provide a detailed discussion of how the theory might be applied to, and refined as a result of, the research problem you wish to explore.

15% In-class presentation of theory (including assigning 1 reading)

Select one reading about your theory that is appropriate background for a class discussion and provide the professor with a citation and a copy of the reading two weeks before your in-class presentation. The presentation of theory in class should include, in some way, all the points addressed in papers 1-3. The presentation should allow time for discussion within the allotted time (approximately 45 minutes).

January 14 (an introduction to get us started thinking about theory in LIS)

Grover, Robert, & Glazier, Jack. (1986). A conceptual framework for theory building in library and information science. *Library and Information Science Research* 8, 227-242.

Glazier, J.D., Grover, R. 2002. A multidisciplinary framework for theory building. *Library Trends* 50 (3), 317-329.

January 21 (no class, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)

January 28 (the pieces of what we need to talk about)

Brodbeck, May. (1959). Chapter 12 (Models, meaning, and theories). In Gross, Llewellyn (Ed.) Symposium on sociological theory. Evanston, IL: Harper & Row. Pp. 373-403.

McCain & Segal. (1988). (Ideas and their development). The game of science. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth..

McCain & Segal. (1988). (Scientific inquiry). The game of science. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Becker, Howard S. (1998).Chapter 2 (Imagery). Tricks of the trade. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 10-66.

**February 4 (how to "read" a theory – terms and approaches)
(paper 1 due)**

Meleis, Afaf. (1991). (A model for description, analysis, and critique of theory). Theoretical nursing. NY: Lippincott.

Gibbs, Jack. (1972). Chapter 5 (The terms of theory construction). Sociological theory construction. Hinsdale, IL: Dryden Press. Pp. 111-165.

February 11 (more pieces and processes of theory development)

Meleis, Afaf. (1991). (Strategies for theory development). Theoretical nursing. NY: Lippincott..

Becker, Howard S. (1998). Chapter 4 (Concepts). Tricks of the trade. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 109-145.

Merton, Robert. 1967. Chapter 4 (The bearing of sociological theory on empirical research). On theoretical sociology. NY: Free Press. Pp. 139-155.

**February 18 (some ways to categorize theories)
(paper 2 due)**

Merton, Robert. 1967. Chapter 5 (The bearing of empirical research on sociological theory). On theoretical sociology. NY: Free Press. Pp. 156-171.

Wagner, Helmut R. (1974). Types of sociological theory. In Denisoff, R. Serge, Callahan, Orel, & Levin, Mark H. (Eds.). Theories and paradigms in contemporary sociology. Itasca, IL: Peacock. Pp. 41-51.

Wallace, Ruth A., & Wolf, Alison. (1995). Theories of rational choice. In Contemporary sociological theory: Continuing the classical tradition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. Pp. 279-317.

February 25 (back to LIS-specific readings: theory use in LIS)

Kim, S.-J., & Jeong, D. Y. (2006). An analysis of the development and use of theory in library and information science research articles. *Library & Information Science Research* 28(4), 548-62.

Pettigrew, Karen E., & McKechnie, Lynne (E. F.) (2001). The use of theory in information science research. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 52, 62-73.

McKechnie, Lynne E. F. & Pettigrew, Karen E. (2002). Surveying the use of theory in library and information science research: a disciplinary perspective. *Library Trends* 50(3), 406-17.

**March 3 (big-picture approaches to LIS)
(paper 3 due)**

Budd, John M. (1995). An epistemological foundation for library and information science. *Library Quarterly* 65, 295-318.

Hjørland, Birger. (1998). Theory and metatheory of information science: A new interpretation. *Journal of Documentation* 54, 606-621.

Houser, Lloyd. (1988). A conceptual analysis of information science. *Library and Information Science Research*, 10, 3-34.

March 10

No Class Meeting (Spring Break)

March 17 (examples of theory in specific subfields of LIS)

Pettigrew, Karen E., Fidel, Raya, & Bruce, Harry. (2001). Conceptual frameworks in information behavior. *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology*, 35, 43-78.

Wilson, T. D. (1999). Models in information behaviour research. *Journal of Documentation*, 55, 249-270.

White, Howard D. (2007). Combining Bibliometrics, Information Retrieval, and Relevance Theory, Part 1: First Examples of a Synthesis. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 58(4), 536-59.

March 24 (paper 4 due) Presentations (1 reading to be assigned by each student presenting)

March 31 Presentations (1 reading to be assigned by each student presenting)

April 7 Presentations (1 reading to be assigned by each student presenting)

April 14 (paper 5 due) Presentations (1 reading to be assigned by each student presenting)

ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY:

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the

process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to “. . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University.” (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm>.)

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:

- (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and
- (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the

Student Disability Resource Center
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu
<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY:

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.