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IN PLAIN SIGHT: EXAMINING THE DIFFUSION OF BLACK WOMEN'S  
KNOWLEDGE IN THE ERA OF EXPANDING THE SOCIOLOGICAL CANON

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the Department of Sociology  
in the College of Sciences  
at the University of Central Florida  
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## ABSTRACT

Amid the 2020 call to action to expand the sociological canon, sociologists have been encouraged to engage the contributions of diverse theorists in their courses. Extant research on graduate-level classical theory courses has explored the absence of early women theorists from these courses at elite institutions. This dissertation advanced the literature by 1) analyzing the diffusion of classical Black women theorists in graduate-level classical theory syllabi, 2) analyzing the discursive constructions of classical theorists in the syllabi, and 3) investigating the factors that influenced which classical theorists are included in these courses. Data consisted of 50 graduate classical theory syllabi from doctoral-granting institutions and in-depth qualitative interviews with 10 faculty members who teach the courses. The findings demonstrate that Black women do not have the same representation as other groups in these courses. Additionally, a critical discourse analysis revealed that theorists were constructed as *Hierarchical* – which valued a small collection of theorists – or *Corrective* – which valued the contributions of diverse theorists, including Black women. Interview data revealed that faculty developed their classical theory courses using materials from their graduate training, and research expectations limited the time they had to engage with unfamiliar theorists. Faculty were encouraged by graduate students to include diverse theorists, although some expressed concerns about including diverse theorists meaningfully. This study illustrates that systemic gendered racism underscores how classical Black women theorists are conceptualized and that their scholarship is not valued as a form of cultural capital that will translate into social mobility for graduate students.

For Anna and Ida.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

At the beginning of my doctoral journey, I was encouraged by a friend to choose a quote that I could return to as I completed the process. I returned to an old favorite: Nichiren Daishonin writes, "...the journey from Kamakura to Kyoto takes twelve days. If you travel for eleven but stop with only one day remaining, how can you admire the moon over the capital?" (The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, Vol. 1, p. 1027). As I completed my doctorate, I have been confronted with many "day elevens" that nearly prevented me from going forward. As I approach the conclusion of an exuberant and laborious process, I reflect fondly on all the effort it took to arrive at this place. More importantly, I acknowledge that reaching "day twelve" was not only a product of my mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual labor, but also a vast network of individuals from many areas of my life.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The extant literature on the sociological canon has emphasized the urgency of its expansion (Brunsma and Wyse 2019; Connell 2017; Morris 2017; Romero 2020) and the need to eradicate the long history of epistemological segregation that has separated the intellectual contributions developed by Black scholars from those developed by White scholars (Bhambra 2014; Go 2020). Further, scholars have written about the privileging of the contributions of White men and the suppression of the contributions of women and scholars of color (Collins 2000; Deegan 1981; Guy-Sheftall 2009; Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley 1998; Wyse 2014b). Following the murders of Breonna Taylor (African American Policy Forum 2020a, 2020b) and George Floyd (McLaughlin 2020) in 2020, movements for racial justice once again stimulated discussions on racism in the U.S. These movements catalyzed discussions on racism in higher education, inspired #ScholarStrike (Flaherty 2020), and reignited the topic of epistemological segregation in sociology. Subsequently, sociology faculty were encouraged to answer the call to expand the sociological canon and include the scholarship of diverse theorists within their courses (ASA 2020). Amid this call to action, questions remained about *which* theorists would be included in this expansion.

### Statement of the Problem

The extant research that has explored epistemological segregation has focused, in part, on graduate-level classical theory syllabi at the most elite sociology programs in the U.S. This research has revealed that only a few theoretical orientations were included in these courses, among them structural-functionalism and conflict theory (Wyse 2014a). Further, the research has

also revealed that despite a collection of diverse theorists within these syllabi, the scholarship of Karl Marx, Max Weber, Émile Durkheim, and Frederick Engels comprised most of the required readings (Wyse 2014a). Moreover, she has demonstrated that while early women sociologists may appear in classical sociology syllabi, the dissemination of their work – or diffusion – remains weak (Thomas and Kukulian 2014). Thus, while early women sociologists were included in classical theory courses, they were allotted less time than men on the syllabi. The extant literature on this topic has provided insight on epistemological segregation, however, it has focused on classical theorists of color and women more broadly, and the diffusion of their work at the most elite U.S. doctoral programs.

Epistemological segregation has subjugated the contributions of many diverse theorists, among them Black women. Moreover, Black women have well documented their experiences with discrimination in educational settings, and the ways that their intellectual contributions have been subjugated both in and outside of the academy (Collins 2000; Cooper 1892; hooks 1994; Taylor 2017). More recently, movements like *Cite Black Women* (Cite Black Women 2021) have raised awareness of the erasure of Black women's intellectual contributions in a variety of disciplines, including sociology (Smith, et al. 2021). This point is critical since the scholarship of classical Black women sociologists has been credited for both their methodological approaches (Aldridge 2009; Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley 1998; Wright 2009), as well as their contribution to a more complex understanding of the social world (Collins 2000; Collins and Bilge 2016; Duster 2021; Society for the Study of Social Problems 2021; Wingfield 2019; Wright 2009). What remains to be explored, then, is the diffusion of classical Black women's scholarship in graduate-level classical theory courses at both elite *and* non-elite PhD-granting

institutions following the recent movement to expand the sociological canon. Further, it is critical to understand how faculty develop these courses and the factors they consider when deciding on which classical theorists to include in them. Therefore, the problem that my research examines is the exclusion of classical Black women sociologists from graduate-level classical theory courses in U.S. doctoral programs. This research uses an empirical approach to examining this problem following the 2020 call to expand the sociological canon. This is important because the subjugation of Black women's knowledge has negative effects on the discipline of sociology, namely a loss of a comprehensive examination of society (Brunsma, et al. 2010).

### Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the current study was to explore the diffusion of classical Black women theorists' scholarship in graduate-level classical theory courses that were offered following the 2020 call to action to expand the sociological canon. Additionally, this study was designed to examine how classical theorists are constructed in language on the syllabi, as well as how faculty developed these courses, and their decisions for including or not including classical Black women theorists' work. This research was guided by three questions: 1) Are classical Black women sociological theorists included in the syllabi of graduate-level classical theory courses? If so, how? If not, why not? 2) How are classical Black women sociological theorists conceptualized in the syllabi of graduate-level classical theory courses? and 3) What factors influence faculty decisions about which scholars they include in graduate-level classical theory courses? The study was designed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the diffusion of classical Black women theorists' scholarship in graduate-level classical theory courses that not

only explored their inclusion and exclusion from these courses, but also explored the causes for this phenomenon.

### Significance of the Research

The study is significant because it has implications for understanding the inclusion and exclusion of classical Black women's scholarship in three ways. First, previous studies have provided insight into the inclusion and exclusion of people of color (Wyse 2014a) and women (Thomas and Kukulan 2014) in graduate-level classical theory courses. This study specifically explores the diffusion of classical Black women theorists in these courses empirically, and considers how both racism and sexism have historically shaped their exclusion from the sociological canon. Second, this study focuses on the diffusion of classical Black women's scholarship following the call to action from professional sociological organizations to expand the sociological canon in 2020, assessing the response to this call through the analysis of course syllabi. Third, this study explores the reproduction of the knowledge by sociology faculty, who – as elites – shape the sociological canon through the development of graduate-level classical theory courses.

### Structure of the Subsequent Chapters

The subsequent chapters of this dissertation are outlined in this section. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the existing scholarship that outlines the history of exclusion of knowledge produced by diverse theorists – or epistemic exclusion – in the discipline of sociology, with a focus on how diverse theorists and their contributions were erased from the discipline's history. While noting how this exclusion affected White women and Black men, this chapter also



includes an overview of the concept of *systemic gendered racism* and how it applies specifically to the subjugation of Black women's knowledge production and the dissemination of that knowledge. Additionally, the chapter provides a review of the literature from Black women scholars who have documented their own epistemic exclusion for over 100 years. The chapter continues with an overview of Jackson's (1968) concept of the *hidden curriculum*, which describes the latent function of schools in socializing children to understand the social expectations of propriety. The chapter then outlines how this concept was expanded by Apple and King (1977) and later applied to institutions of higher education and syllabi. This concept is relevant for this study, as it explicates the dissemination of valued knowledge in classical theory courses as a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1973) – or valued goods – for graduate students. Finally, the chapter concludes with an overview of Black feminist thought, the framework used for this study. Patricia Hill Collins introduced *Black Feminist Thought* (2008) as a critical framework that emerges from the lived experiences of Black women. While focusing on many facets of Black women's lives, Black feminist thought simultaneously explores the lineage and value of Black women's knowledge production. The framework also explores the subjugation of Black women's knowledge, and the mechanisms that are employed to justify the exclusion of Black women from intellectual traditions. As a framework, Black feminist thought provides insight into both the presence of Black women's intellectual contributions to sociology's history and their absence from graduate-level classical theory courses.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed explanation of the research methods used for each phase of the study and presents the results from Phase 1. Phase 1 consisted of descriptive statistics of the classical theorists who were included in the sample of syllabi. Phase 2 used critical discourse

analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 2002, 2003; Gee 2011a, 2011b; van Dijk 1993, van Dijk 1997a, van Dijk 1997b) to examine the constructions of classical theorists in syllabi, how language frames the scholarship of classical theorists as both a social good and a “common language” within the sociological community. Additionally, this analysis provided insight specifically on how classical Black women theorists were constructed in the syllabi. Phase 3 used semi-structured qualitative interviews to explore how faculty decided which classical theorists to include in their courses.

Chapters 4 and 5 present the findings of Phases 2 and 3 of the study. Chapter 4 presents the results of Phase 2 of the study, which explored how discursive practices produce, reproduce, and challenge dominance in the text of graduate-level classical theory syllabi. Phase 2 was guided by two analytic questions – 1) What is a social theorist? and 2) Why do graduate students need to know about them? Chapter 5 outlines the findings of the interviews with faculty whose syllabi were analyzed in the previous phases of the study. Specifically, the chapter provides an analytic story of how faculty selected classical theorists to include in their graduate-level classical theory courses. Chapter 6 - the concluding chapter - discusses the relationship between the findings of all phases of the study. It also outlines the study’s limitations and contributions, as well as directions for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

To investigate the diffusion of classical Black women theorists' scholarship in graduate-level classical theory courses, it is important to understand the historical and political factors that have contributed to the exclusion of their contributions. This literature review is organized to outline the basis for the current study regarding the diffusion of classical Black women's scholarship into graduate-level classical theory courses. This chapter focuses on the history of epistemic exclusion in sociology that is rooted in both racism and sexism. Additionally, the scholarship of Black women is used to illustrate the long history of their exclusion from both social movements, as well as the academy. Also, this chapter focuses on the concept of the hidden curriculum and the extant literature that has examined syllabi from graduate-level courses is reviewed. Finally, the literature review concludes by outlining the use of Patricia Hill Collins' Black feminist thought as the theoretical framework for this study.

### A History of Exclusion

Scholars have critically reflected on the history of sociology in the U.S., critically examining the development of the discipline (Connell 1997; Go 2020; Morris 2017; Romero 2020; Wright 2020). Specifically, Go (2020) discussed the 1904 International Congress of Arts and Sciences as the starting point of the discipline's exclusionary practices. Against the backdrop of the World's Fair and its exploitation of people of color, a group of sociologists – all White men – met to discuss the state of the discipline. While arguably being a site for the origins of U.S. sociology, it is important to note that people of color and women who were contributing to

the emerging discipline were not invited to this meeting. Thus, because of the foundations set by the participants of the Congress in 1904, the discipline of sociology became situated from the vantage point of these White men, and, subsequently, the scholarship produced by these men became situated at the top of the hierarchy of sociological knowledge.

It was during the 1904 Congress that the structure of the discipline was established as a binary system that placed positivist approaches in direct opposition against other methodological approaches, with the former being valued over the latter. From the perspective of the conference participants, studying sociology required that the researcher needed to be completely detached from society, using objectivity and rational logic to observe and report the universal laws of the social world. Underlying this, however, were the eugenicist views of the sociologists who attended this Congress, who believed that people of color were incapable of producing knowledge. These scholars operated “from the standard assumption that non-European, non-U.S. places represent the provincial and particular, whereas European and American cases represent the universal” (Go 2020: 90). Thus, the exclusion of people of color, as well as their knowledge, became a *structural* issue that was racialized. Much like the colonization that was initiated by the U.S. globally, the White men who laid claim to the discipline of sociology decided that people of color - among other marginalized groups - were intellectually unfit for the rigors of empirical analysis and lacked the ability to truly understand the social world.

These exclusionary practices continued during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and can be recognized in the development of the sociological canon. In tracing the origins of U.S. sociology, Connell stated that “Sociology was formed within the culture of imperialism and embodied a cultural response to the colonized world” (1997:1519). Thus, Connell argued the sociological canon

should be understood as something that was constructed from historical and cultural contexts. As an emerging discipline, there were numerous attempts to synthesize the diverse areas of sociology. Connell noted that among many scholars who led these attempts were Talcott Parsons and C. Wright Mills. Parsons' *Structure of Social Action* (1937) presented the "theory of social action" and argued that this theory could be found in the work of Alfred Marshall, Vilfredo Pareto, Max Weber, and Émile Durkheim. Two decades later, Mills published *Sociological Imagination* (1959) in which he defined the "classical social analyst," of which Marx, Weber, and Durkheim were included as exemplars. While there was not always consensus on which theorists should be upheld as founders of the discipline, *Structure of Social Action* and *Sociological Imagination* were among texts that established what Connell calls a "canonical view" of sociology, which espoused that only a few scholars were considered to be key figures in the discipline and that the discipline should center only a few concepts and issues. These two texts, among others, that Connell noted, provided an "intellectual but also a symbolic solution to the internal disintegration" (1997:1540) within the discipline. In the development of the sociological canon, however, there was a narrow selection of ideas that were canonized, and thus race and gender were not considered core concepts of the discipline. Further, Connell noted that there was a narrow selection of theorists who were included in the canon, and women and people of color were not included in it.

Despite their exclusion from the 1904 Congress and the influential texts that were synthesizing the discipline, women and people of color were producing knowledge about the social world. In *The Women Founders*, Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley (1998) demonstrated that women have been written out of the history of the discipline. The authors use

the term “written out” to indicate that women were part of the early development of the discipline and were later erased from its history. Profiling 15 women founders, Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley argued that like the men who have been regarded as founders of sociology, there were women who were active members of the sociological community and were celebrated for their theoretical and empirical contributions. Despite their contributions, these women were regarded as secondary to men in the discipline. Additionally, Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley noted that during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, elite figures in the discipline “arrived at the consensus that the appropriate role for the sociologist was that of the intellectual committed to scientific rigor, value-neutrality, and formal abstraction” (14). Deegan (1981) further emphasizes this point, stating that because women during sociology’s classical period were engaged in what was considered “applied sociology” such as social work and activism, their contributions were considered important, yet *different* from those of men in the academy. In other words, contributions that were categorized as “applied sociology” became feminized. Thus, because women in the classical period were engaged in research, scholarship, *and* activism, they were excluded from being considered sociologists.

In addition to the exclusion of women from the larger sociological community, Black scholars were also excluded. Wright (2002, 2009, 2020) discussed how within the history of the discipline, the contributions of Black scholars and the institutions that they developed to conduct research have been largely ignored. As an example, the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory – also known as The Atlanta School – is not often credited for its knowledge production as part of the origins of U.S. sociology, even though its existence predates the Chicago School (Wright 2009). Moreover, the Atlanta School and the Tuskegee Institute were among other laboratories that

housed diverse contributors - including activists and students - among formally trained social scientists (Wright 2009, 2020). This aforementioned literature generally discussed the exclusionary practices in the discipline of sociology. For women, this exclusion was based on sexism. For Black scholars, it was based upon racism. However, further discussion is warranted for Black women who experienced this exclusion based on both racism and sexism.

### The Subjugation of Black Women's Knowledge and Systemic Gendered Racism

#### In Their Words: The Subjugation of Black Women's Knowledge

Within discussions of knowledge production, questions remain about whose knowledge is prioritized. In the book *Black Feminist Thought* (2000), Collins writes,

...Black social and political thought has been limited by...the secondary status afforded the ideas and experiences of African-American women. Adhering to a male-dominated ethos far too often equates racial progress with the acquisition of an ill-defined manhood has left much U.S. Black thought with a prominent masculinist bias (6-7).

Scholars have commented on the subjugation of Black women's contributions to the discipline of sociology, despite the critical analyses they put forth (Wingfield 2019; Wright 2009). Moreover, Black women have discussed the exclusion they experience within their own scholarship.

Sociologist Anna Julia Cooper (1858-1964) developed a body of scholarship that examined the unique standpoint of Black women. Within her scholarship, she unapologetically challenged the pervasiveness of both racism and sexism in U.S. society (May 2007), using her life experiences in part as the basis for developing her theoretical perspective (Aldridge 2008). In

*A Voice from the South: By a Black Woman from the South* (1892), Cooper directly outlined the dual nature of Black women's oppression. First, she expounded on the precarious nature of womanhood and posited that race distinguishes Black women's social standing from that of White women. She wrote that since English women were protected in society they were "beset by no such snares and traps as betray the unprotected, untrained colored girl of the South" (12). Thus, Cooper pointed to the privilege that White women hold in society based on their racial identity. Further, she noted that Black women, despite their gender identity, were relegated to a different social status, and therefore unworthy of the same protections that were bestowed upon White women. Cooper also addressed Black women's experiences with sexism. She stated, "...as our Caucasian barristers are not to blame if they cannot quite put themselves in the dark man's place, neither should the dark man be wholly expected fully and adequately to reproduce the exact Voice of the Black Woman" (165). Cooper asserted here that Black women's voices were secondary to those of Black men, who were viewed as the arbiters of knowledge on race in the U.S. By exploring the juxtaposition of racism and sexism, Cooper also asserted the necessity of Black women being regarded as the experts of their own unique lived experiences, and further, having their knowledge production seriously considered. Cooper also advocated for Black women to be educated, noting that Black women's advancement into higher education would provide a more complex investigation of society, and have greater implications for positive change in the Black community.

Academics have contemplated why Cooper's contributions have been ignored. She has been regarded as a prolific intellectual within a legacy of early Black women theorists who contributed greatly to our understanding of the social world. As someone who was engaged in



social justice, however, she was neither invited nor welcome into the academy (Aldridge 2008). Additionally, her exchanges with W.E.B. DuBois have illuminated the lack of recognition for her intellectual contributions and general criticism of her writing (Moody-Turner and Cooper 2015). Finally, because of the economic disenfranchisement Cooper experienced as a Black woman, she was unable to finance the publication of her scholarship, which meant that her work was not widely circulated (May 2007). Therefore, scholars point to racism and sexism as part and parcel of the marginalization of her work today (May 2007:2).

Cooper's scholarship emerged in the same era of the Black women's club movement, a space where the contributions of Black women were not only appreciated but also utilized to inform social justice activities (Shaw 1995). However, the pervasiveness of racism and sexism in Black women's lives that Cooper discussed in the late nineteenth century persisted into the twentieth century. Black women, their scholarship, and their political concerns were still widely marginalized within larger social movements. Barbara Smith, Beverly Smith, and Demita Frazier - the founders of the Combahee River Collective (CRC) - explicitly discussed how their knowledge as Black women was disregarded. Founded in 1974, the CRC was born out of the exclusionary practices and limited perspectives of other social movements. White feminist organizations did not include race in their analysis of women's oppression. Within the Black liberation movement, which was predominantly led by Black men, gender discrimination was of little – if any – concern (Taylor 2017). The founders of the Combahee River Collective also experienced homophobia within the National Black Feminist Organization, further encouraging them to develop their own space and organize independently (Taylor 2017; Collins and Bilge 2016).

Upon its formation, the CRC wrote a collective statement that outlined its objectives. The statement addressed how racism and sexism form the unique type of oppression that Black women experience. Further, they highlight the continued disregard for the multiple forms of oppression that they experience within political organizations. The CRC also asserted that Black women's intellectual contributions have been ignored by White women, and thus described the limitations of feminist thought and movements that neglected to incorporate race into their analysis. The statement also addresses how Black women's intellectual contributions were mocked by Black men, who employed sexist tactics to reduce Black women solely to their physical appearance. In this way, Black women's intellect was disconnected from the ideal of beauty, a characteristic that was inherently connected to Black women's value.

The Combahee River Collective statement is a clear demonstration of how Black women's political concerns and epistemologies have been overlooked in social movements, despite their desire to work in solidarity with members of other social movements (Taylor 2017). Determined to amplify the voices of Black women, CRC co-founder Barbara Smith established a publishing company, *Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press*, in 1980. It was under *Kitchen Table* that Smith was able to publish several works, including *Home Girls* and *This Bridge Called My Back*, therefore modeling how Black women have created their own spaces to publish their contributions when it is either ignored or undervalued in other spaces.

During the mid-twentieth century, Black women began entering the academy as faculty (Collins and Bilge 2016). Despite having the opportunity to enter the ivory tower, Black women found that the discrimination that marginalized them and their knowledge production in social justice movements was also found in higher education (Collins and Bilge 2016). In *Teaching to*

*Transgress*, hooks (1994) writes that while White women were encouraged to produce feminist scholarship within the academy, the scholarship that centered on the realities of Black women was disregarded due to the unwillingness to incorporate race into the discourse on feminism. Additionally, hooks discussed how among the faculty, Black women were excluded from professional networks that provided opportunities for career mobility, thus making Black women outsiders within the academy. By having to contend with both racism and sexism, Black women were designated as the “Other.” As the “Other”, Black women occupy a position of invisibility and hypervisibility, being disposable as a threat, but also essential as the barometer by which other groups can define their normality (Collins 2000; Strings 2019).

### Systemic Gendered Racism

Lorber (1994) asserted, “there are cross-cutting racial and class statuses within each gender status that belie the universal pattern of men’s domination and women’s subordination implied by the concept of patriarchy” (3-4). Further, she writes that in stratification systems, “race, class, and gender intersect to produce domination by upper-class white men *and* women and subordination of ...women *and* men of color” (4). Thus, intersectionality – a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) – becomes critical to understanding the complex experiences that Black women have with discrimination. The concept of intersectionality allows for an understanding of how power is organized by multiple axes of social division that are interconnected (Collins and Bilge 2016). Thus, Black women experience discrimination differently than other marginalized groups - among them White women and Black men - based

upon two intersecting subordinated social identities - race and gender (Collins and Bilge 2016; Crenshaw 1991; Melaku 2019).

In *Understanding Everyday Racism*, Philomena Essed (1991) stated that both racism and sexism “narrowly intertwine and combine under certain conditions into one hybrid phenomenon” (31). She added that the gendered racism that Black women experience is shaped by how gender roles are racialized. As an example, when Black women are discriminated against, it is unclear whether the discrimination is due to racism or sexism, as the discrimination can be contextualized as the result of either race or gender. Thus, she proposed that Black women’s encounters with racism are best defined as *gendered racism*.

Essed’s concept of *gendered racism* was later expanded. In *Doing Business With Beauty: Black Women, Hair Salons, and the Racial Enclave Economy*, Adia Harvey Wingfield (2008) asserted, that systemic racism materializes for men and women in different ways based upon gender (7). Like Essed, Wingfield asserted that the concept of systemic racism encapsulates the history of White-on-Black discrimination that has been institutionalized in the U.S. Wingfield elaborated that as a concept *systemic gendered racism* “focuses on the historical, continuing systemic racism that is endemic to U.S. society, and argues that this racism is gendered in the ways that it impacts minorities” (7). The concept of systemic gendered racism emphasizes that the racism that is embedded within social structures is gendered. Wingfield identifies educational institutions as a site of systemic gendered racism, where the intellectual contributions of minoritized scholars are minimized or excluded entirely. Regarding its effect on Black women, she discussed how systemic gendered racism materialized for them as low wages, workplace discrimination, and a lack of access to powerful social networks. The concept of systemic

gendered racism further explicates the subjugation of Black women's knowledge within institutional structures, providing a name for this specific unique form of discrimination that Black women have outlined in their scholarship. With an understanding of the extensive history of the subjugation of Black women's knowledge and a concept that crystallizes it, understanding how this subjugation occurs in higher education is critical.

### The Hidden Curriculum

Central to the proposed study is an understanding of the structure and function of educational institutions. In *Life in Classrooms*, Philip Jackson (1968) noted that the role of schools is two-fold – it is both a space for learning and a space for socialization. Because students spend a significant amount of time in school, they develop a familiarity with the routines, values, and expectations that are established in that space. Jackson also observed that since students are away from their parents while in school, teachers become part of the new system of authority figures for students within the educational setting. This observation is important, as teachers both implement and validate the educational curricula.

From his observations, Jackson outlined two distinct types of curricula that are disseminated within schools. The first he named the “official” curriculum, which is comprised of the academic course materials and various assessments designed to measure student learning (34). This includes, but is not limited to, deskwork completed during school hours and homework that is completed away from school. The second curriculum - the “hidden” curriculum - describes the implicit institutional expectations to which students are expected to conform. While the official curriculum is centered on testing student aptitude, the hidden

curriculum, by contrast, assesses a student's conformity to expectations of propriety. Jackson notes examples of the hidden curriculum including punctuality, submitting assignments by established deadlines, and raising one's hand to be acknowledged before speaking. Thus, in the classroom, the distribution of rewards or punishments from teachers are dependent upon students' adherence to *both* curricula. Further, according to Jackson, a student's mastery of both the official and hidden curricula is crucial, as the elements of both curricula will eventually translate to the workforce, where suppressing individuality and conforming to institutional expectations are also vital for professional success.

Since Jackson introduced the concept of the hidden curriculum, it has been elaborated upon by other scholars. Apple and King concurred with Jackson's assessment that the hidden curriculum is a tool used for student socialization (1977). The authors posited, however, that the hidden curriculum is neither as concealed nor as abstract as some educators believed. They argued that as an institution, schools must be situated within the economic and political contexts. Within the context of an industrialized society, there is an unequal distribution of not only economic capital, but also highly valued knowledge - or cultural capital (Bourdieu 1973) - that confers social status. Schools, then, serve as the primary sites for the introduction to and distribution of cultural capital by legitimating specific forms of knowledge. Apple and King noted that because all knowledge is not highly valued, "not all groups' visions are represented and not all groups' meanings are responded to" (343). Further, Apple and King expounded that early curriculum developers understood the need to maintain social control through the institution of education. Thus, Apple and King suggested that there is not only one, but rather two forms of the hidden curriculum. One way that the early curriculum workers believed that

social control could be achieved was through the maintenance of specific behaviors, which were regarded as “weak” mechanisms of social control. These curriculum workers also proposed that educational institutions implement “strong” forms of social control, which are the “essential elements in the preservation of existing social privilege, interests, and knowledge, which were the prerogatives of one element of the population, maintained at the expense of less powerful groups” (345). Apple and King noted that this strong form of social control was implemented - in part - to ensure “expert and scientific control of society” (345). Additionally, the implementation of the strong form of the hidden curriculum was critical, as they believed it would either eliminate people of color from the workforce altogether or socialize them, making them more palatable within the larger society.

In addition to revealing the workings of the hidden curriculum, Apple and King also discuss the role of teachers in its implementation as two-fold. On the one hand, the teacher has very little autonomy over the curriculum, given the established expectations of the institution. On the other hand, because the teacher is the authority figure leading the classroom, “their denotations become the frame from which the students learn” (349). Thus, teachers become critical in the educational process, as they disseminate the curriculum through the frame of their values and perspectives. Apple and King’s expansion of the concept of the hidden curriculum not only emphasizes the socialization of students but also what is considered valued knowledge and its transmission. While the concept of the hidden curriculum emerged from observations within elementary schools, it is also applicable to higher education, embedded within the discourse and the professionalization of future academicians. This leaves questions about *which* knowledge and *whose* knowledge is valued and included within the classroom. Within higher education, the

hidden curriculum takes on many forms, underpinning inequalities based upon race, class, and gender (Margolis et. al. 2001). The syllabus provides insight into these inequalities.

### The Significance of the Syllabus

Outlining course objectives, pedagogical practices, and classroom expectations, the syllabus is a critical tool for the socialization of students (Emerick 1994; Sulik and Keys 2014). Additionally, the syllabus is a document that disseminates both the official curriculum and the hidden curriculum. As it relates to graduate-level courses, extant literature points to the reproduction of inequalities within graduate and professional programs, with graduate students of color contending with antiquated frameworks in courses that exclude both them and their knowledge base (Moore 2007).

In studying the experiences of women of color in graduate sociology programs, Margolis and Romero (1998) found that the participants negotiated both the weak and strong forms of the hidden curriculum. Specifically, participants reported both the infrequency of course offerings focused on the topics of race and gender, as well as how infrequently race and gender were mentioned within their *required* courses. The students also noted an overall lack of inclusion of scholars of color in the graduate curriculum. Margolis and Romero found that doctoral programs perpetuated a hierarchy of knowledge by neither engaging the study of race nor incorporating scholars of color into the curricula. They also noted that “Required courses in theory and methods are similarly silent on race and gender and are restricted to narrow sociological traditions” (20). The result, therefore, was that legitimacy is given to the scholarship that was made *visible* within the curriculum. Simultaneously, all scholarship that is not included in the



syllabus becomes invalidated. According to Margolis and Romero, “The message is that U.S. sociology (that is, sociology from a White, male, middle-class, and heterosexual perspective) is *the* legitimate form of sociology – others are either illegitimate or less valuable forms of knowledge” (21).

Extant literature on the reproduction of knowledge in graduate sociology curricula has also focused on analyzing syllabi empirically. Thomas and Kukulan (2004) examined the inclusion of early women sociologists in graduate-level classical theory courses. They hypothesized that the professional socialization that occurs in classical theory courses influences the theoretical orientation of doctoral students. Accordingly, doctoral training influences which classical theorists faculty ultimately incorporate into the courses they teach, particularly classical theory. To assess which classical theorists are included in classical theory courses, the researchers analyzed 46 graduate theory syllabi from PhD-granting sociology programs in the U.S. To demonstrate which theorists were considered foundational to the discipline, the researchers first calculated the number of syllabi that each classical theorist appeared on in the sample. Next, to determine the depth of their significance, the researchers calculated the amount of time that each theorist was studied in each course. While there were a variety of scholars included in the classical theory courses, early women sociologists only appeared on 17% of the syllabi in the sample. Moreover, the scholarship of women was not explored in as much depth as men who appeared on the syllabi, with the scholarship of women being reviewed for less time than the scholarship of men. Thomas and Kukulan’s research on graduate-level classical theory courses demonstrated that compared to men, the contributions of early women sociologists were

not included as often in these courses and that less time was allotted to the review of their scholarship.

Wyse (2014) studied the reproduction of knowledge in American sociology. Focusing on the most elite doctoral-granting programs, Wyse analyzed syllabi from required theory courses offered during the 2011-2012 academic year to determine how these courses engaged race and gender using multiple analyses. The findings of the qualitative analysis demonstrated that knowledge production was situated within specific theoretical orientations, among them structural-functionalism, micro-sociology, and conflict theory. The syllabi were also analyzed to determine which theorists were included in theory courses and the selection of required readings. While there was a diverse collection of scholars represented on the syllabi, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Émile Durkheim, and Frederick Engels were represented in half of the syllabi and had the greatest number of required readings of any classical theorist in the sample. In addition to the analysis of syllabi, Wyse also conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 faculty to understand how race structures knowledge production. The interviews with faculty revealed that race is not discussed as part of theoretical orientations, but rather treated as a variable within empirical research, positioning race theory as immaterial to American sociology. The findings of the analyses by Wyse show that while there is a diverse collection of theorists who are included in syllabi of required theory courses, those with marginalized identities - and their scholarship - were engaged less frequently. Further, from the interviews with faculty, it was concluded that race theory is not part of theoretical orientations within the discipline of sociology, thus reproducing structural inequalities of knowledge.

The aforementioned studies examined the content and development of graduate-level theory courses. These studies demonstrated that syllabi represent what is considered essential to a future academician's foundational understanding of sociology, with the scholarship of White men being prioritized over the scholarship of other theorists. These studies frame the discipline of sociology as a White institutional space. This concept was defined by Wendy Leo Moore in *Reproducing Racism* (2007) as the "institutional norms, policies, and procedures that make these institutions normatively white spaces, including the history of the institutions, the racialized practices, and policies of administrators, and the dominant white culture and discourse that often employ racism to signify students of color as outsiders in these spaces" (26). Moore discusses that this concept not only includes the physical space of an educational institution, but also applied it to curricula that have historically been framed without the contributions of marginalized scholars (28). What remains to be investigated, however, is the inclusion and exclusion of classical Black women theorists in graduate-level classical theory courses. Further, the factors that influence the development of graduate-level classical theory courses should also be investigated. Finally, the extant research that explores graduate-level classical theory courses is focused on the most elite graduate programs in the U.S., which leaves questions about the development of classical theory courses at non-elite institutions.

### Black Feminist Thought as a Theoretical Framework

The subjugation of Black women's knowledge has detrimental effects on the discipline of sociology, namely a loss of holistic values (Brunsma et al 2010). Due to systemic gendered racism, concepts such as intersectionality have been subjugated, allowing for

compartmentalization – rather than a comprehensive analysis – of people’s lived experiences with oppression (Brunsma et al 2010). Nearly one hundred years after Cooper’s *A Voice from the South*, Patricia Hill Collins introduced *Black Feminist Thought* (2008) – outlining an informative framework that centers on Black women. Black feminist thought as a theory emerges from the lived experiences of Black women both in and outside of the academy resisting social injustice. Unlike other academic theories, Black feminist thought is not confined in its manifestation, taking on many creative forms, including poetry and song. It is a critical theoretical framework that emphasizes epistemologies and praxis simultaneously. While it is a social theory of Black women’s collective thought, it does not assume that Black women as a group experience oppression in the same way or are exempt from oppressing one another. As a framework, Black feminist thought acknowledges the shared experiences among Black women while also recognizing the differences in their lived experiences, their knowledge production, and how their knowledge is subjugated.

Historically, Black women’s unique standpoint has informed their knowledge production. For example, Collins asserts that Black women’s knowledge was developed because of segregation. Through living and socializing in predominantly Black spaces, Black women co-created knowledge alongside people with whom they identified. Simultaneously, their experiences as employees – primarily in domestic work – required them to be in close proximity with elite Whites, allowing them to further understand the intricate workings of dominance. Within domestic work, Black women would build relationships within these white families – particularly with their children – while simultaneously knowing that they were not part of these families, thus relegating Black women to a unique position on the margins of power – a social

location otherwise referred to as the outsider within (Lorde 1984). It is this location as the outsider within that has informed Black women's understanding of their unique position in society.

Collins (2008) asserted that there is value in Black feminist thought, noting that: "Black women intellectuals have laid a vital analytical foundation for a distinctive standpoint on self, community, and society and, in doing so, created a multifaceted, African-American women's intellectual tradition" (2-3). Collins noted that despite the tremendous intellectual contributions from Black women, these contributions are unknown and undervalued. Collins also outlined why Black women's intellectual contributions have long been hidden. For dominant groups to maintain power, it is necessary that any knowledge produced by marginalized people be subjugated. Therefore, the subjugation of knowledge produced by marginalized people is not by mistake, but rather is an intentional practice that allows those in power to retain it. Simultaneously, this subjugation gives the impression that marginalized people consent to the ideas of those in power, thereby, participating in their own oppression.

Specific to Black women, Collins noted that Black women's exploitation in the labor market, experiences with oppression in politics, and the controlling images that are attributed to them contribute to their oppression and justify the diminishing of their ideas. As Collins noted, "Taken together, the supposedly seamless web of economy, polity, and ideology function as a highly effective system of social control designed to keep African-American women in an assigned, subordinate place" (5). Historically, Black women were denied the opportunity to be educated, leaving them unable to participate in knowledge production. However, once they had

access to education, they were still denied leadership positions within institutions that validate knowledge.

In *Black Feminist Thought*, Collins explored the process of knowledge production, and how it ultimately works to subjugate Black women's intellectual contributions. She explained that "Because elite White men control Western structures of knowledge validation, their interests pervade the themes, paradigms, and epistemologies of traditional scholarship" (251). Thus, the group that controls knowledge validation also validates the methods used to examine the social world. Therefore, positivist approaches, defined in part by an emphasis on placing distance between the researcher from the object of study and the absence of emotion from research, have been viewed as the best approach to scientific analysis. Therefore, Collins acknowledged that Black women's intellectual contributions are not only subjugated because of their epistemologies, but also because of the methodologies that they employ to conduct research. Additionally, regarding the use of positivist approaches, Collins stated, "Such criteria ask African-American women to objectify ourselves, devalue our emotional life, displace our motivations for furthering knowledge about Black women, and confront in an adversarial relationship those with more social, economic, and professional power" (255). Thus, positivist approaches do not align with Black women's experiences or their knowledge production, which also justifies the suppression of their contributions.

The framework of Black feminist thought illuminates the legacy of Black women's knowledge production. It addresses its import, as well as the mechanisms at work to subjugate it. For this study, Black feminist thought is key, as it expounds on the social, political, and economic factors that first worked to deny Black women's access to education, and later, worked

to subjugate the knowledge they produced. More importantly, Black feminist thought outlined the rich legacy of Black women's knowledge production, which includes Black women both inside and outside of the academy. This framework, therefore, becomes key in examining the inclusion and exclusion of classical Black women theorists in graduate-level classical theory courses, as it establishes Black women's long intellectual history which dates to the classical period of sociology. Black feminist thought provides insight into both the presence of Black women in sociology's history and their absence from graduate-level classical theory courses.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODS

### Introduction to the Methods (Overview of the Approach)

This study examined the diffusion of classical Black women's scholarship in graduate-level classical sociological theory courses and was guided by the following questions: 1) Are classical Black women sociological theorists included in the syllabi of graduate-level classical theory courses? If so, how? If not, why not? 2) How are classical Black women sociological theorists conceptualized in the syllabi of graduate-level classical theory courses? and 3) What factors influence faculty decisions about which scholars they include in graduate-level classical theory courses?

As a contract and a guide for higher education courses, the syllabus is an outline of institutional practices and serves as a mechanism for the socialization of students (Moore 2007; Sulik and Keys 2014). Moreover, syllabi indicate which knowledge is deemed as legitimate or illegitimate based upon which scholars are included (Margolis and Romero 1998). Because syllabi indicate which classical theorists are included in graduate-level classical sociology theory courses, they serve as the basis for answering the research questions posed for this study.

This study was completed in three phases. In Phase 1, a preliminary quantitative analysis was conducted to assess the inclusion of classical theorists by race and gender. By conducting this preliminary analysis, the syllabi were analyzed to determine the breadth of classical theorists included in the syllabi, and if classical Black women theorists were included.

In Phase 2, the syllabi collected in Phase 1 were analyzed using critical discourse analysis (CDA). As a methodology, CDA analyzes language to examine the reproduction of power



through text (Fairclough 2002, 2003; Gee 2011a, 2011b; van Dijk 1993, 1997a, 1997b). Further, CDA examines how discursive practices are enacted by social groups to signify their collective values (Gee 2011b). In addition to outlining the course schedule and required reading materials, syllabi contain other components such as course descriptions, learning objectives, and teaching philosophies which allow for an exploration of how social inequalities are perpetuated within discursive practices in text. Accordingly, CDA was used in Phase 2 to examine how social theorists are constructed in the syllabi of graduate-level classical theory courses.

While the analysis of the syllabi in Phase 1 provided insight into the diffusion of the scholarship of classical theorists and the analysis in Phase 2 examined the conceptualization of classical sociological theorists, it was also important to understand *how* graduate-level classical theory courses are developed. Specifically, it was important to understand how the faculty who teach these courses made meaning of these courses and why they selected the classical theorists that appeared in their syllabi. In Phase 3, a sample of faculty who taught the graduate-level classical sociological theory courses that were analyzed in Phases 1 and 2 were interviewed to understand the factors that contributed to their decision-making processes in selecting theorists to include in their classical theory courses. These interviews were analyzed using constructivist grounded theory, an iterative methodological approach that allows for the development of new theories through emerging data and an understanding of social processes (Charmaz 2014).

## Phase 1

### Sample

The syllabi analyzed in this study were collected from doctoral programs in the U.S. since these programs are the site for training future academicians (Margolis and Romero 1998; Thomas and Kukulian 2004). Additionally, the sample was comprised of syllabi from graduate-level classical theory courses because these courses provide a foundational understanding of the discipline of sociology (Thomas and Kukulian 2004). For this study, classical theory courses were defined as the first required theory course in a sociology department that provides the history and background of sociology that doctoral students must complete as part of the department's degree requirements.

To collect syllabi for analysis, sociology doctoral programs listed in the 2020 U.S. News and World Report Rankings (Appendix C) were used to develop the sample of institutions that were selected for the study. This rankings list was used for three reasons. First, the U.S. News and World Report Rankings are the most widely used list for institutional rankings (U.S. News and World Report 2021). Second, it is a source constructed from a methodology of peer assessment (U.S. News and World Report Rankings 2021). Third, as a national rankings list, it allowed for geographic variations in the sample. While previous research has explored the inclusion of diverse scholars in syllabi from the highest-ranking, or elite, sociology graduate programs in the U.S. (Thomas and Kukulian 2004; Wyse 2014), this study focused on PhD-granting programs at all levels of the U.S. News and World Report Rankings.

## Sampling Strategy

To ensure that institutions throughout the 2020 U.S. News and World Report Rankings were represented in the sample, a stratified sampling method (Berg 1995) was used to develop the sample of syllabi. To produce the sample, the 2020 U.S. News Rankings for sociology graduate programs was downloaded into an Excel document. The 2020 rankings included a total of 106 institutions. Three of the institutions were removed from the list because they only granted a master's degree. Next, the remaining 103 institutions were divided into five tiers, following the model of top 20, which espouses that the top 20 institutions in a ranking influence all other institution within that ranking (Gross 1970). Tier 1 included the top 20 sociology doctoral programs. Tier 2 included programs ranked between 21 and 40. Tier 3 included programs ranked between 41 and 60. Tier 4 included programs ranked between 61 and 80. Tier 5 included programs ranked between 81 and 106.

## Data Collection

For this study, syllabi were collected from institutions that offered graduate-level classical theory courses offered during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic years following the call to action to expand the sociological canon (ASA 2020). To collect syllabi, 10 institutions were randomly selected from each of the five tiers using a random number generator. When the original 50 institutions were randomly selected, the web pages of each of those institutions' sociology departments were searched and reviewed to determine the course number and course name for the graduate-level classical theory courses they offered. Next, the department's

websites were searched to determine if the course syllabus was available from the academic years that were outlined in the inclusion criteria. If the syllabus was not available on the department's website, the department was contacted directly to determine the best way to obtain the syllabus. From this point, the syllabi were obtained from a department administrator, or by directly contacting the faculty members who taught the courses during the 2020-2021 or 2021-2022 academic years. If a syllabus could neither be located on the department's website nor obtained by contacting the department, that department was removed from the list of institutions, and another institution was selected from the same tier using the random number generator. In this process, of the 103 institutions that met the inclusion criteria for the study, a total of 80 were randomly selected from all five tiers and contacted for syllabi. Of the 80 institutions that were contacted, 62 syllabi were collected. Of the 62 syllabi collected, 12 syllabi were from graduate-level classical theory courses offered prior to 2020, and therefore did not meet the inclusion criteria. The remaining 50 syllabi met the inclusion criteria. Ten syllabi were collected from each of the five tiers.

### Preliminary Analysis

As a preliminary test of the diffusion of classical theorists, the sample of syllabi was analyzed quantitatively to determine 1) which classical theorists were included on the syllabi and 2) the number of syllabi they were included on. Ritzer defines sociological theory as possessing three main characteristics: "wide range of application, deal with centrally important social issues, and have stood the test of time" (2011:2). Using the framework of Black feminist thought, I applied this definition to a broader range of theorists, including those whose scholarship had

been historically ignored or suppressed. Further, in line with extant literature that distinguishes classical and contemporary theory based on the end of World War II (Ritzer 2011), I am defining classical sociological theorists as those who published scholarship prior to 1951.

Fifty-seven classical theorists were identified in the sample. I first conducted a univariate analysis of the frequency of each theorist's appearance in the sample of syllabi. Each syllabus was analyzed to determine which classical theorists were included. The names of these theorists were compiled into a table, along with the percentage of syllabi in which they were included (Appendix F). The calculation of the frequencies of individual theorists demonstrated that Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Émile Durkheim appeared on nearly all the syllabi in the sample. Marx appeared on 98% (N=49) of the syllabi, Weber appeared on 96% (N=48) of the syllabi, and Durkheim appeared on 94% (N=47) of the syllabi. W.E.B. DuBois appeared almost as frequently as Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, and was included on 76% (N=38) of the syllabi. Friedrich Engels and Georg Simmel appeared in nearly half the sample – Engels appeared on 48% (N=24) of the syllabi and Simmel appeared on 44% (N=22). The remaining 51 theorists were included in less than half of the sample. Further, 22 of the theorists only appeared in the sample once. The two Black women in the sample – Anna Julia Cooper and Ida B. Wells – were among the classical theorists who appear on less than 15% of the syllabi. Cooper appeared on 14% (N=7) of the syllabi and Wells appeared on 10% (N=5) of the syllabi.

After calculating the frequencies of each theorist's appearance in the sample, additional analyses were conducted. To conduct these analyses, I designed a dataset that initially included three variables – Race, Gender, and Race and Gender. These variables were treated as categorical: Race (1 = White, 2 = Non-White), Gender (1 = Men, 2 = Women), and Race and

Gender (1=White Men, 2= Non-White Men, 3 = Non-White Women, and 4 = White Women). After developing these categories, I used Stata to create descriptive statistics for each of these categories. Among the 57 classical theorists, for the variable Race, 91% (N=52) were White and 8% (N=5) were Non-White. For the variable Gender, 81% (N=46) were Men and 19% (N=11) were Women. In the analysis of the variable Race and Gender, 75.4% (N=43) were White men, 15.8% (N=9) were White women, 5.3% (N=3) were Non-White men, and 3.5% (N=2) were Non-White women. The descriptive statistics show that White men had the highest frequency, followed by White women, Non-white men, and Non-White women. From this analysis, it was concluded that regarding race, the majority of the classical theorists in the sample were White, and that regarding gender, the majority of the classical theorists were men. Regarding race and gender, the majority of classical theorists were White men and Non-White women did not have the same representation as other groups. These descriptive statistics illustrate the diffusion of classical theorists and suggest further investigation into their construction in graduate-level classical theory courses. Table 1 summarizes these findings.

*Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Theorists in the Sample (N=57)*

	n	%
<b>Race</b>		
White	52	91
Non-White	5	8
Total	57	100.0
<b>Gender</b>		
Men	46	81
Women	11	19
Total	57	100.0
<b>Race and Gender</b>		
White men	43	75.4
White women	9	15.8
Non-White men	3	5.3
Non-White women	2	3.5
Total	57	100.0

## Phase 2

### Data Analysis

In Phase 2, the course descriptions were analyzed using critical discourse analysis (CDA) to assess how social theorists are constructed in the syllabi of graduate-level classical theory courses. To complete the analysis, the sample of 50 syllabi collected in Phase 1 was first analyzed to determine if they included course descriptions that conceptualized social theorists. Of the 50 syllabi collected in Phase 1, 82% (N=41) included course descriptions that conceptualized classical theorists. The 41 syllabi that included course descriptions were then uploaded into NVivo, as this software allows for the analysis and organization of qualitative data.

CDA is rooted in understanding how discourse is used in the production, reproduction, and challenge of dominance. From the perspective of CDA, the role of discourse is defined as the “exercise of social power by elites...that results in inequality” (van Dijk 1993:250-251). Specifically, CDA allows for the analysis of the enactment of power relations that are institutionalized through text (van Dijk 1993). In addition to analyzing the production, reproduction, and challenge of dominance, scholars of CDA employ different building tasks to further analyze the specific objectives of using language to enact power relations (Gee 2011b, 2014).

From the perspective of CDA, language is an action that can be used to complete many tasks. Specifically, Gee (2011a, 2014) theorizes that “building tasks” are exercises that allow critical discourse analysts to understand how language is being used in power relations. For this study, three of the tasks outlined by Gee (2011a, 2014) are used to analyze the sample of syllabi. The first is the *Sign Systems and Knowledge* task. Regarding this task, Gee notes, “We use language to build up or tear down various...ways of knowing the world” (2011a:33). From this perspective of CDA, language is used to amplify or devalue specific epistemologies. The second is the *Politics* tool, which involves a “situation where the distribution of social goods is at stake” (2011a:31). In this tool, Gee describes a social good as “anything that a social group...takes as a good worth having” (2011a:31). Thus, from the perspective of CDA, the distribution of goods (and their acquisition) translates to power and status in society. The third tool is the *Identities* tool, which Gee describes as the use of language “to get recognized as taking on a certain identity or role: that is, to build an identity here and now” (2011a:31). The *Identities* tool, therefore, espouses that language can also be used to signify one’s belonging to specific groups.



Thus, in this tool, language is used to build an identity that can be recognized by others who share that same identity (Gee 2011a, 2014). Further, language also allows members of social groups to invite others into the group with the use of language (Gee 2014).

The first question that guided Phase 2 of the study was “What is a social theorist?”. Using the *Sign Systems and Knowledge* tool, CDA was used to understand how classical social theorists are constructed in graduate-level classical theory courses offered in U.S. institutions. By analyzing the construction of classical theorists in the syllabi of these courses, the underlying assumptions about who is considered social theorists and which criteria warrant their diffusion in the syllabi of graduate-level classical theory courses can be understood. Using the *Politics* tool, course descriptions were also analyzed noting the patterns of how classical social theorists were described and contextualized. Close attention was given not only to the explicit descriptors of these theorists but also to the implications within the descriptions, as well as what was *not* included in the descriptions. A second question also guided this phase: “Why should classical social theorists be studied?”. The *Identities* tool of CDA was used to analyze course descriptions to understand the objectives for studying classical social theorists in graduate-level classical theory courses. The themes that emerged from these analyses will be explored in Chapter 4.

### Phase 3

#### Sampling Strategy and Recruitment

In Phase 3 of the study, a purposive sampling strategy was used to select information-rich cases connected to the phenomenon being analyzed (Berg 1995). The sampling strategy for Phase 3 was informed by Phases 1 and 2. Faculty whose syllabi were analyzed in Phases 1 and 2

comprised the subsample of faculty who were invited for an interview about the development of their graduate-level classical theory courses. The faculty selected for the interviews included those whose syllabi represented a range of approaches to teaching graduate-level classical sociological theory courses identified in the quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted in Phases 1 and 2, including those who incorporated the scholarship of classical Black women theorists in their syllabi and those who did not. Further, the faculty selected for the interviews represented doctoral-granting institutions throughout the 2020 U.S. News and World Report Rankings.

Following the approval of the recruitment materials by the University of Central Florida (UCF) Institutional Review Board (IRB), faculty who were selected through purposive sampling were invited to participate in an interview about their graduate-level classical theory courses via email. Of the 26 faculty who were invited to interview, 12 did not respond to the invitation, four declined to participate, and 10 agreed to participate in an interview.

### Data Collection

In Phase 3, the data were collected from of semi-structured qualitative interviews conducted with faculty regarding the development of their theory courses. Faculty who agreed to participate in an interview were sent a follow-up email with a link to a Qualtrics survey that captured their demographic information, current professional title, and the length of time that they have served in that role (Appendix D).

Due to geographic distance (Deakin and Wakefield 2014), interviews were conducted using Zoom conferencing software. Using Zoom allowed participants to interview on camera,

off-camera, or dial in by phone. Nine of the participants completed their interviews with their cameras on, and one participant dialed in to Zoom by phone for their interview.

To understand how graduate-level classical sociological theory courses are developed, the interviews with participants were semi-structured for three reasons. First, semi-structured interviews allowed me to probe beyond the prepared questions and encourage two-way communication between myself and the participants (Berg 1995; Creswell and Creswell 2018). Second, semi-structured interviews included predetermined questions that were asked of each participant and allowed for a comparison of their responses during the data analysis (Babbie 1983). Third, semi-structured interviews allowed me to ask the participants probing questions about the development and content of their classical theory courses to capture the nuances of their specific courses (Berg 1995).

The interview schedule (Appendix E) included questions focused on the participants' professional backgrounds, graduate training, and how they designed their theory courses. As an interviewer, I was conscious of both the personal and professional dynamics that existed within the interviews. Therefore, it was critical to conduct the interviews in a way that was conversational, engaging in active listening that allowed me to understand the participants' points of view regarding the larger themes of the research (Lillrank 2014).

To start the interviews, I provided a thorough explanation of the study and read the IRB-approved consent form to each participant. I obtained verbal consent from the participants in place of signatures, to ensure that their identities remained confidential and minimize the risk of their identities being linked to any data collected for the study. Also, each interview was recorded with the consent of the participants to ensure the accuracy of the data collected. During

the interviews, I also took notes documenting my observations and ideas that emerged. All interview recordings and notes were stored in a password-protected folder that only I had access to.

### Sample

Table 2 displays the data collected from the Qualtrics survey. At the time of the interviews, 30% (N=3) of the participants were Assistant Professors, 40% (N=4) were Associate Professors, and 30% (N=3) were Professors. Sixty percent (N=6) of the participants served in their current professional roles for 10 years or less at the time of the interview. Regarding gender, 60% (N=6) of the participants were women and 40% (N=4) were men. All the participants identified as White.

*Table 2 Demographic Information of Interview Participants (N=10)*

	n	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Women	6	60
Men	4	40
Total	10	100.0
<b>Race</b>		
White	10	100
Total	10	100.0
<b>Professional Title</b>		
Assistant Professor	3	30
Associate Professor	4	40
Professor	3	30
Total	10	100.0
<b>Years in Professional Role</b>		
0-5 Years	4	40
6-10 Years	2	20
21-25 Years	2	20
26-30 Years	2	20
Total	10	100.0

### Data Analysis

Constructivist grounded theory (CGT) was used to analyze the interview transcriptions. It is an interpretive process, as the researcher develops meaning through their interaction with the data, allowing for the construction of theory (Charmaz 2014). According to Charmaz, CGT deeply integrates the researcher's point of view, and data are treated as partial and contextual (2014). Moreover, constructivist grounded theory is complimentary to interview data, as they are both emergent processes (Charmaz & Belgrave 2014).

To begin analyzing the data collected from the interviews, I uploaded the Zoom recordings to Otter software. Using Otter provided immediate speech-to-text transcription and allowed me to remain close to the data. As I transcribed the interviews, all identifying information (e.g., names, institutional affiliations, etc.) was redacted to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. When the transcriptions were completed, I engaged in the process of winnowing the data (Creswell and Creswell 2018; Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012), by extracting the excerpts of the transcriptions that aligned with the research question that guided Phase 3 and placing those excerpts in a separate document for analysis. The extracted excerpts were then uploaded into NVivo for analysis.

In line with CGT, the selected excerpts of the transcripts were coded in three stages. Coding in this way assisted me in refraining from assigning any preconceived notions I held during the analysis of the data (Charmaz 2014). Additionally, I wrote memos throughout the analysis of the transcripts (Charmaz 2014). I first engaged in the process of open coding, examining the data word-by-word and line-by-line. During the open coding process, I analyzed the data word-by-word to first deconstruct the data (Charmaz 2014). I then analyzed the excerpts line-by-line to examine the nuances within the data (Charmaz 2014). As an example, codes related to “core set of concepts,” “conservative approach,” “no deviation,” and “theoretical toolkit,” were prevailing in the data and provided insight into how participants decided which classical theorists would be included in their courses.

In the second stage, I engaged in focused coding, during which the most frequent codes that emerged during the first stage were used to organize larger portions of the data and strengthen its analytical direction. From this stage of the analysis, several themes emerged,

including “vocational expectations”. In the third stage, I analyzed patterns within the focused codes to develop categories that conceptualize the development of graduate-level classical theory courses. As CGT is not necessarily a linear process, I continued to analyze the initial codes, focused codes, categories, and memos to remain open to the data and develop a strong analytical direction. From the analysis of the data, five themes emerged, which will be explored in Chapter 5.

As a note, in the results chapters of this study (Chapters 4 and 5), I have deidentified both the excerpts of syllabi and the quotes from interview participants. I have reflected on the potential risk to the institutions from where I collected syllabi and those participants who are untenured amid our current climate where there is an ongoing effort to erase the contributions of diverse historical figures and agitation for those who elevate these contributions in the courses they teach. The confidentiality that was promised to participants allowed them to speak freely in the interviews without any identifiers being attributed to them. Therefore, all data have been deidentified as an ethical consideration.

### Statement of Reflexivity

Since the age of four, I have been in educational institutions; at times as a teacher, sometimes as an administrator, but primarily as a student. As a product of the Chicago Public School system, I was fortunate to receive a world-class education during my formative years, being introduced to a variety of scholars and pedagogical approaches. In that process, I was introduced to several prominent historical figures, among them Ida B. Wells. While she was framed as a journalist, I knew she was someone of great intellect and tremendous courage.

However, as I continued to advance in my education, I heard about her much less in my studies. We would be reacquainted occasionally, usually (briefly) during Black History Month, or in that one African American Studies course that was only offered twice per decade. We finally met again at the start of my doctoral studies, as she was featured prominently during the first week of my classical theory course. As elated as I was to see a Black woman on the syllabus, I wondered if *all* sociology graduate students were able to engage her in this way, and if not, *why* not. My journey with Ida - from kindergarten to classical theory - is how I arrived at this research project.

I recognize how both my experiences and identities may influence this work. I am clear that my educational experiences and my formative years on the South Side of Chicago have shaped my perspectives on the exclusion of Black women from the graduate-level classical theory courses in sociology. I am also aware that my identity as a Black woman may impact the research process, particularly on how participants engage me in discussions of race gender. As a graduate student, I am also aware of the power dynamics present as I interview faculty during this study, and how this dynamic may impact how I engage with them in a series of inquiries about their courses. Simply put, I am a Black woman investigating the epistemic exclusion of Black women from the classical sociological canon. Consequently, I acknowledge that my work may be regarded as an exercise in “me-search.” Further, I understand all too well the negative perceptions that pervade others’ minds as it pertains to Black women, and how these perceptions raise unfounded concerns regarding integrity in this research.

Amid this, I approach this work as a *womanist*. Coined by Alice Walker (1983), the term *womanism* is defined as a commitment to the survival and wellness of all people. At its core, *womanism* is centered on the tenets of human solidarity through social justice. Therefore, I am



conducting this work as a womanist who is profoundly committed to transforming it for the next generation of emerging scholars in our discipline. I completed this project in response to the call to action to expand the sociological canon, highlighting the causes for the exclusion of the contributions of Black women who produced scholarship in sociology's classical era.

## **CHAPTER 4: CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF CLASSICAL THEORISTS**

Language serves multiple functions. It allows people to communicate, convey ideas, and develop relationships (Gee 2014). Language is also used to construct the social world and facilitate social practices (Gee 2014). Additionally, people use words and communication to value ways of knowing the world and to exchange social goods (Gee 2014). Therefore, language is not only a mechanism that allows people to *navigate* the social world, but also a mechanism by which to *situate* themselves and others within it.

This chapter examines the use of language to contextualize sociological theorists and situate them in the overall professionalization of graduate students. Further, this chapter examines how the language used in the syllabi of graduate-level classical sociological theory courses reproduces racial and gender biases in the sociological canon. In this chapter, I will first explain the method of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and how it was used as a tool to analyze the course descriptions in the syllabi that were collected in Phase 1 of the study. Second, in line with the method of CDA, I will outline my sociopolitical stance in approaching this analysis. Third, I will provide an overview of how the sociological canon was critiqued in these courses using extant literature on the topic. Finally, I will share the findings from the critical discourse analysis conducted on the course syllabi collected.

### Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA): Examining Power and Language

Scholars of various disciplines have used discourse analysis to examine the use of language. Discourse analysts have studied a variety of areas including the differences in the use

of language by people of different genders (Coates 2012), discourse and grammar (Cumming and Ono 1997), and queer linguistics (Leap 2012). Specifically, linguists and social scientists have engaged this approach with a critical lens, researching the use of language to examine the reproduction of power dynamics in society (Blackledge 2012). As a methodological approach, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is one tradition within the family of critical discourse studies. While it has been noted that CDA has no singular theoretical paradigm or methodological approach (Blackledge 2012), it does contain three core tenets. First, CDA views language as a social practice that connects individuals to the community. Second, CDA espouses that language serves simultaneously as the site for the enactment of discriminatory practices as well as the site for contesting discrimination. Third, the perspective of CDA recognizes that language gains power through its use by powerful individuals. Thus, the common thread among critical discourse analysts is the understanding that language is a social practice that is used by those in power to maintain inequalities, while also being used by those who are averse to oppression to combat social inequalities. The wider applicability of CDA can be seen in the research of the scholars who have used it. For example, López-Bonilla (2011) used CDA to explore the personal experiences of two distinct groups of Mexican high school students – one group facing punitive action, and the other group experiencing successful matriculation through high school – to understand how they make sense of their educational experiences and identities. As well, Carter et al. (2022) used CDA to examine how Black women were constructed in quantitative health science research on breastfeeding. CDA can be used to examine social inequalities in language, a social practice that is often taken for granted.

As outlined in chapter 3, the *Sign Systems and Knowledge* tool was used to understand the implicit assumptions embedded in the construction of classical social theorists in the syllabi of graduate-level classical theory courses. Additionally, the *Politics* tool was used to understand the contextualization of classical theorists as a social good that is compulsory for the professionalization of graduate students. Finally, the *Identities* tool was used to understand how course descriptions emphasized the relevance of knowing specific classical theorists to graduate students' professional identity as a sociologist. As a note, the excerpts from course syllabi included in this chapter have been deidentified as an ethical consideration for the institutions, departments, and faculty associated with them.

### Sociopolitical Stance

In discussing the principles of CDA, van Dijk (1993) noted that using this form of analysis is inherently political. Further, van Dijk explains that critical discourse analysts have a very specific aim – to make plain the reproduction of power and dominance in discourse. In short, as van Dijk declared, “CDA explicitly defines and defends its own sociopolitical position. That is, CDA is biased - and proud of it!” (2001:96). Thus, the analysis should preclude any neutral stance in approaching the research and assert solidarity with those who are oppressed. Therefore, I approach this work as a Black Feminist scholar, seeking to elucidate the epistemic exclusion of classical Black women sociologists from the sociological canon in this historic moment positioned between the calls to action to diversify the classical sociological canon and resistance to the inclusion of diverse theorists.

### Reckoning with History: The Inclusion of Critical Readings on the Sociological Canon

Phase 1 of this study focused on the diffusion of the original scholarship of classical theorists in graduate-level classical theory courses. It is important to note that in addition to the primary and secondary readings of classical theorists, the syllabi also included literature that explored the construction and critiques of the classical sociological canon. Irrespective of the collection of theorists included in the syllabi, the course descriptions noted the “sociological canon” as a point to be addressed in the course.

Forty-two percent (N=21) of syllabi included readings that contextualized the sociological canon. Syllabi from all tiers within the sample included these types of readings, however, these readings were found more frequently in the syllabi from Tiers 1 and 2 - the most elite U.S. institutions - as well as in Tier 4 (Table 3). While it is not conclusive that these readings were included as part of the course materials in response to the 2020 calls to action to diversify the canon, it is important to note that these readings were among the required course materials, irrespective of the diffusion of classical Black women’s scholarship into the course. When included, these readings were usually placed during the first week of the course, feasibly setting a tone for the subsequent readings and further discussion on the development of the sociological canon. Among the articles included were R. W. Connell’s “Why is classical theory classical?” (1997), Randall Collins’ “The Sociological Guilt Trip: Comment on Connell” (1997), and Julian Go’s “Race, Empire, and Epistemic Exclusion” (2020). Thus, the canon and its construction were discussed in the courses analyzed in the sample. Despite the diffusion of the scholarship of classical theorists on the syllabus, the inclusion of these articles indicates a broader conversation about the sociological canon in graduate-level classical theory courses. As

one syllabus noted, “Whether or not practicing sociologists need a classical canon is a question that we will consider along the way.”

*Table 3 Percentage of Syllabi that Included Readings on the Sociological Canon by Tier (N=21)*

	n	%
<b>Tier</b>		
1	5	23.8
2	6	28.6
3	3	14.3
4	5	23.8
5	2	9.5
Total	21	100.0

#### “What is a social theorist?”

Of the 50 syllabi collected for this study, 82% (N=41) of syllabi included course descriptions that conceptualized social theorists (Table 4). Using the *Sign Systems and Knowledge* tool, two distinct categories emerged from the syllabi – *Hierarchical* and *Corrective*. Each of these categories will be explained below.

Table 4 Categorization of Syllabi by Tier (N=50)

	n	%
<b>Percentage of Syllabi With Course Descriptions</b>		
1	7	14
2	10	20
3	7	14
4	8	16
5	9	18
Total	41	82
<b>Percentage of Syllabi Without Course Descriptions</b>		
1	3	6
2	0	0
3	3	6
4	2	4
5	1	2
Total	9	18

### Hierarchical

Sixty-six percent (N=27) (Table 5) of syllabi in the sample were categorized as *Hierarchical* and constructed theorists in ways that were hierarchical. Specifically, syllabi in this category contextualized social theorists as existing in a particular hierarchy where value is only assigned to the theorists who are situated at the apex of said hierarchy, and to whom all other theorists are subordinate. More specifically, course descriptions in this category stated that the focus of the course would be centered on these theorists and their scholarship. For example, one syllabus read: “[This course] is the first semester of a year-long course surveying the theories and practices of sociology. During this semester, we trace the lineaments of major theoretical approaches in contemporary sociology and related social sciences.” The use of the word “major” was found throughout syllabi in this category and denoted that the theoretical paradigms being reviewed in the course carry significant value. Additionally, employing the word “major”

suggests that there *are* other classical theorists, but that their scholarship is considered less important than the contributions of the theorists who appear on the syllabus.

Within this category, social theorists that are included in the syllabi are viewed as founders of sociology, in part, due to their perceived impact on the discipline. These theorists are unambiguously named. One syllabus stated:

...we will examine some of the seminal writings of eleven major nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century thinkers (Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer, Ferdinand Tönnies, Emile Durkheim, Georg Simmel, Max Weber, Charles Cooley, George Herbert Mead, Ferdinand Saussure, and Sigmund Freud) whose work has greatly influenced the way we think sociologically.

In line with the previous excerpt, the eleven theorists included in the syllabus are described as “major” thinkers, denoting their importance to the discipline of sociology. Additionally, in this excerpt, their writings are described as “seminal” indicating that their scholarship has enduringly shaped sociological thought. Finally, of note is that the eleven theorists named in this syllabus are all European and American White men.

Throughout the course descriptions in the *Hierarchical* category, three theorists and their scholarship are consistently named as central to the discipline of sociology – Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Émile Durkheim. As one syllabus notes, “Major schools of thought in Sociology, as we know them today, originated from the writings of Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Simmel.” Syllabi in this category also position these three theorists as foundational to sociology.

Discussing the contributions of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, one course description read:

[Marx, Weber, and Durkheim] are regarded as foundational thinkers in



sociology who develop[ed] powerful paradigm[s] which subsequent scholars develop and expand. Marx's influence can be seen in critical sociology and some versions of structuralist analysis. Durkheim is often seen [as] the predecessor to more structural variants of sociology (e.g., functionalism, structuralism)...Weber meanwhile influences a wide spectrum of sociologists – he is regarded as both an advocate for a positivist version of sociology and the pioneer of a more interpretative form of sociology.

From this course description, Marx and Durkheim are credited with establishing not only theoretical paradigms, but also entire schools of sociological thought. Further, the course description implies that their contributions still have relevance and a following within contemporary research. Moreover, Weber is specifically noted as advocating for both positivist and interpretivist approaches to examining the social world. Together, Marx, Weber, and Durkheim are contextualized as developing both frameworks and methodologies to analyze the social world. This contextualization as dynamic scholars also extends to them being credited for the exactitude of their scholarship:

Major schools of thought in Sociology, as we know them today, originated from the writings of Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Simmel. The key themes and rigorous modes of analysis of each theorist will be discussed in detail... The many ways in which the classical theorists help us to understand complex societies today will remain our focus.

This excerpt notes that both the themes developed and methods that were employed by Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Simmel serve as templates for developing academically rigorous

scholarship. Moreover, their scholarship is appraised as serving as models for understanding contemporary societies more than one century after being produced.

Another course syllabus notes that Marx, Weber, and Durkheim were integral to the analytical approach to the study of society:

Our purposes are to develop a reading of their visions of sociology, their analyses of the character of modern society and the source of social order and social change, and their understanding of human action and the nature of social power.

The three set out systematically the defining characteristics of modern western societies and their problems. We will approach their work thematically. We also hope to get a sense of the methodologies they proposed for the study of society.

Similarly, another course description read:

This course provides a foundation to the theories through which sociology has emerged and evolved as a discipline. We engage with the works of core classical theorists who shaped the discipline: Marx, Weber, and Durkheim... We use classical texts to address sociological topics that remain central to the field, including capitalism, power, inequality, class, culture, and identity. We also examine how contemporary sociologists have used and revised these classical approaches and methodologies. Through readings, assignments, and class discussions, we approach classical sociological theories in a way that is:

- (1) Rigorous – focusing on close readings of primary classical texts.
- (2) Relevant – pairing classical texts with contemporary sociological research.
- (3) Usable – examining how to employ these approaches in primary research.

From these excerpts, a social theorist is considered valuable, in part, due to the broader applicability of their paradigms to modern society. Moreover, in this category, a social theorist is defined as one whose ideas have relevance in analyzing contemporary society.

While some course descriptions within the *Hierarchical* category centered the contributions of Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and other European and American White men, W.E.B. DuBois was also explicitly named in this category as a classical theorist and a part of the sociological canon. As an example, one syllabus read: “This course will examine the works of four classical theorists whose ideas have fundamentally influenced the ways we study and understand society: Karl Marx, W.E.B. DuBois, Max Weber, and Émile Durkheim.”

Another course description read:

This graduate seminar is an introduction to the work of Marx, Weber, Durkheim, DuBois, and Freud, five major historical figures in the development of US sociology. Its overarching goal is to understand how theoretical arguments are made: their logics, underlying assumptions, contradictions, and use of evidence. To do this, we will (1) look closely at these classical theorists’ ideas and (2) consider how their ideas relate to past and current social circumstances.

Similar, this course description stated:

Throughout the semester we will explore the work of Karl Marx, Max Weber, Émile Durkheim, and W.E.B. DuBois, arguably the major social theorists of the (European and American) classical tradition. These theorists are ‘major’ not because they have the answers to each of our sociological inquiries, but rather because they help us to ask sophisticated questions about social processes. We

will investigate how they may help us in our sociological endeavors through their key writings, while also paying attention to their own historical and intellectual milieu so that we may understand how and why each theorist developed a specific perception of social reality. To demonstrate their continued import we will also examine their legacy through the work of subsequent adherents...with this class is that we will explicitly explore some of the best tools with which to continue theorizing.

Whereas some course descriptions in this category situated European and American White men at the top of the classical sociological hierarchy, these excerpts included W.E.B. DuBois. The inclusion of DuBois as a part of the sociological canon demonstrates a shift away from the White male epistemology while simultaneously maintaining a patriarchal bias in the canon. Further, while DuBois is named as part of the sociological canon in the *Hierarchical* category, he is the only diverse theorist to be included and explicitly named as a prominent figure and contributor to the discipline in the course description.

Despite the inclusion of DuBois among theorists who have historically been canonized, syllabi in the *Hierarchical* category acknowledge the limitations of the canon. One excerpt read:

In this course, we draw on an admittedly western canon and read European and American texts. The course is by no means exhaustive, and there are a number of less-recognized authors who were also precursors of modern sociological thought. For practical reasons, we will read thinkers who have been formally recognized from within US sociology for their contributions to our understandings of social conflict and social change.

This excerpt demonstrates that despite knowledge of the contributions of less-recognized theorists, graduate-level classical theory courses are a stronghold of the sociological canon (Margolis and Romero 1998). Additionally, this excerpt espouses the idea that prominent scholars are designated as such due to their formal recognition within U.S. sociology (Bhambra 2014; Wright 2012).

In other course descriptions, the focus on the scholarship of a few classical theorists – namely Marx, Weber, and Durkheim – was justified by the time restraints of the course:

Of course, this class will not be a ‘survey’ of the canon in the broad sense of that term. Given the shortness of the quarter and the attempt to link the ‘classic’ reading to ‘current’ readings, we cannot conduct such a survey. We focus mostly on Marx, Weber, and a few others that are well linked to them.

In another syllabus - which only focused on the scholarship of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim - the course description acknowledged that the collection of theorists was not exhaustive, but reiterated that the theorists who *were* included in the course carried more significance than those who were *not*:

In short, it is clear that we are missing a great deal—which you must pursue on your own, preferably in reading groups. Yet I think that the authors we are reading have, at this point, influenced more people in the academy than those we are omitting.

Finally, the course descriptions reassured graduate students that despite the limitations of the scholars who are included in the course, the scholars who are included provide prime examples of how to do sociology:

As we’ll discover, Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Simmel, and Du Bois had

remarkably little in common. What they did share, however, was the ability to do sociology extremely well. Hence, this course will allow you to read exemplary applications of the sociological imagination in ways that will instruct, inform and inspire you.

While syllabi in the *Hierarchical* category acknowledge the limitations of the scholars that are included in graduate-level classical theory courses, they also introduced the idea of critically analyzing the sociological canon throughout the course. As an example:

...as is reflected in the title ‘the making of’ classical theory, we see it as an opportunity for critical reflection on classic texts and on sociology as an institutional and intellectual field. Thus, in addition to learning main themes and arguments, in readings and discussion we also historicize, contextualize, and decenter this canon by exploring these texts’ relationship to the social context in which they were produced, their limitations, their uses in current sociological research, and their ongoing explanatory power.

This syllabus also explained:

...I ask you to approach this class in an exploratory spirit and with an attitude of critical engagement, as we reflect on the traditional canon, explore various critiques, reformulations, and applications, and adjust the syllabus as we go.

While placing value on the scholarship of a select number of classical sociological theorists, syllabi in the *Hierarchical* category also assessed the sociological canon and its construction.

Table 5 Thematic Descriptions of Syllabi

Category	Description	Percentage of Syllabi (N=41)
<b>Hierarchical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Classical theorists are contextualized in a set ranking</li> <li>▪ Value is placed on the theorists at the top of this ranking</li> <li>▪ Centers on a White, male epistemology.</li> </ul>	66
<b>Corrective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Addresses the construction of the sociological canon, and its biases</li> <li>▪ Includes and values the scholarship and contributions of diverse theorists.</li> </ul>	34

#### Corrective

The second category – *Corrective* – presents a paradigm shift regarding the sociological canon by explicitly acknowledging the epistemological segregation that exists in U.S. sociology. Thirty-four percent of the syllabi (N=14) (Table 5) were included in this category, which contextualizes diverse theorists – among them Black women – as social scientists who made strong contributions to the discipline of sociology. The syllabi in this category aim to not only broaden the sociological canon, but also critically analyze it. Namely, syllabi in the *Corrective* category explicitly consider the function and the nuanced conversation surrounding the sociological canon. Finally, the syllabi in this category explicitly name Black women as social theorists and expound on their contributors to sociology’s founding.

Syllabi in the *Corrective* category contextualize the sociological canon, noting how it is both highly regarded and questioned within the discipline. One excerpt read:

Sociology is an odd discipline, both extremely broad but in some ways very unified. It substantively covers the entire range of the social sciences, as well as much of the humanities, and runs the gamut methodologically as well, resulting in academics studying very different things in very different ways occupying the same discipline. Yet it also arguably has a core theoretical identity that stands apart from the other disciplines, situated around a small set of canonical texts that nearly every sociologist has studied. This creates a kind of unity amidst diversity, a sense of shared intellectual history and mission despite the gulfs. But don't take that last sentence too uncritically: this is a discipline with serious divisions, and this canon has almost constantly been contested.

As noted in this course syllabus, the canon serves as a point of connection within the discipline of sociology, as well as a point of contention. Syllabi in the *Corrective* category also discuss the subjective criteria that surround what makes a theorist and their work canonical. For example:

A 'classic' is a work that is widely regarded as foundation[al] and one that should not be ignored by later generations. This can be both because of enduring analytic features found in works that stand the test of time, or for more geopolitical, cultural, organizational, and social network reasons around whose ideas get highlighted and whose get ignored or suppressed.

This course description points to how the sociological canon was developed, noting the idea that canonical works become so due to the strength of their contributions. This course description simultaneously recognizes the politics of knowledge production that work to prioritize scholars and their intellectual contributions while also neglecting others (Collins 1999, hooks 1994).



Course descriptions in this category also addressed the history of the sociological canon and its construction:

Studying classical theory lays bare a great irony that underlies the sociological enterprise. The very discipline that emphasizes the social construction of virtually everything often takes its own socially constructed existence for granted. This is especially true with respect to classical sociological theory. It is now commonplace to canonize Marx, Weber, and Durkheim as the undisputed progenitors of sociological theory, and indeed of sociology in general. Canons, however, are retrospectively compiled and constructed; they do not descend from on high as fully formed scripture.

This excerpt acknowledges the juxtaposition of the discipline of sociology – which is rooted in understanding the construction of social phenomena – and the sociological canon – which is itself constructed (Connell 1997). This further emphasizes the subjective nature of the sociological canon and politics of knowledge production that aim to suppress scholarship that is not produced by White men. Course descriptions in this category acknowledge the contributions of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim while also acknowledging that there were other social theorists whose contributions have had the same influence. As an example:

There is nothing eternally fixed or static about the canon... It is the hypothesis of this course that the canon may be a historical product but it is not arbitrary. Canonical social theorists were in some way pioneers in developing sociology. Their theories of society embraced an understanding of differences between and within nations. At the same time the theories have a historical dimension, which, in

turn, rendered the possibility of a future at odds with the present. They were, in some sense, utopians. Their theories had to be grounded in original empirical research, itself based on a sophisticated understanding of methodology and science. They were philosophers, researchers, and historians as well as theorists of society – its components, its integration, its perpetuation, its transformation. Marx, Weber and Durkheim fit these criteria but they are not the only ones to do so.

As this syllabus notes, there are specific criteria by which theorists and their intellectual contributions are assessed to determine their placement within the sociological canon. Further, while Marx, Weber, and Durkheim meet the criteria to be included in the canon, this excerpt sharply notes that they are not the lone social theorists to put forth dynamic assessments of society. Syllabi in the *Corrective* category also noted the history of the sociological canon and how Marx, Weber, and Durkheim were not always included within it. One syllabus outlines the shifting placement of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim in the sociological canon:

Canons are not born, they are fabricated. They are historical products. So it is true for sociology. Our canon, itself subject to change and dispute, includes the works of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. In modern times the sociological canon was largely created by Talcott Parsons in his two-volume *The Structure of Social Action*, published in 1937. This classic of US sociology argues that Marshall, Pareto, Weber, and Durkheim, unbeknownst to one another, were converging on a novel theory of social action -- Parsons' so-called voluntaristic theory of action – around the turn of the 19th century. Of the four theorists two stuck –

Weber and Durkheim. Over time Parsons was attacked by conflict theorists, many of whom invoked the writings of Marx and Engels as offering deeper insights into the turbulent times of the 1960s. So Marx became part of the canon.

Another syllabus expounded on this point:

Two of the discipline's earliest canon-makers, Talcott Parsons and Alex Inkeles, counted Weber and Durkheim as founding figures but paid little attention to Marx. ...Socialist states revered Marx as the seminal founding father of modern social science, but American sociologists often portrayed his work as oversimplifying, excessive, dogmatic, and radical.

The syllabus also addressed Durkheim's journey to being included in the sociological canon:

Few sociologists would dispute Durkheim's centrality to the discipline; after all, he established the first department of sociology in a European university, at Bordeaux in 1895...Durkheim's approach to sociology was controversial during his own lifetime, and American sociologists in particular ignored or even denigrated his work. No less a scholar than Charles Tilly dismissed Durkheim as 'useless'.

Finally, this syllabus also outlined how Weber's scholarship was received in the U.S., as well as how he identified his professional orientation:

In 1998, the International Sociological Association declared Max Weber's *Economy and Society* the most influential sociological book of the 20th century ...According to Turner (1999), sociologists in the English-speaking world overlooked Weber until the 1950s. Even then, scholars often dismissed Weber as

merely a ‘bourgeois Marx’ (Swedberg 2005: 158). A lawyer by training, Weber himself tended to identify as an economist, not a sociologist.

This syllabus outlines Marx, Weber, and Durkheim’s journey toward being included within the sociological canon. According to the extant literature on these theorists, Marx’s scholarship was viewed by American sociologists as radical (Connell 1997), Durkheim’s scholarship was ignored by American sociologists (Platt 1995), and Weber’s scholarship was initially not well received in the United States (Connell 1997). Thus, these excerpts address the construction of the canon, and how Marx, Weber, and Durkheim have been centered in the sociological canon, while simultaneously highlighting the precarious history of their canonization. As these excerpts point out, at various points in history, even the scholarship of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim were not considered to be academically rigorous, and therefore, did not warrant them being part of the same canon in which they are now centered.

Additionally, the course descriptions in the *Corrective* category also discuss the paradoxes of canonical theorists:

But even though Marx, Weber, and Durkheim present different and conflicting views on society, their perspectives—the questions they ask, the issues they identify—emerge from the historical experiences of European and North American societies. The three of them, in very different ways, saw Euro-American North Atlantic societies as the models for the rest world. The rest of the world was on different stages of becoming modern (i.e., similar to Euro-American North Atlantic societies). And the three of them explained processes of social change as endogenous to nation states, even though the states they

wrote about were in fact colonial empires at the time of their writing.

This excerpt clarifies that while the scholarship of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim are characterized as examining European and North American societies as models that should be emulated, these countries were in fact extending their political and economic power to other nations, thus impacting the social change of these countries. Thus, the explanations that these three men provided on social phenomena did not consider the impact of colonization on social change in the nations they wrote about, thus calling into question the theoretical basis of their scholarship.

Nevertheless, syllabi in this category note that the sociological canon has historically centered the scholarship of White men while disregarding the contributions of diverse scholars:

As we move through the course, you will see that the discipline has been dominated by white males from Europe and the United States. The contributions of women, persons of color, and individuals from nations outside the Northwestern hemisphere have, until recently, been largely ignored.

Beyond exploring the sociological canon's construction, the syllabi in this category acknowledge various streams of social thought that were being developed during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. An excerpt from one syllabus states:

There were...other views on society at the time of the emergence and institutionalization of sociology. Views that constructed theoretical perspectives on society based on different historical experiences, the experiences of the marginalized and the oppressed people of modernity.

Moreover, the syllabi in this category acknowledge the epistemological segregation that has influenced the development of the sociological canon. Specifically, the syllabi in the *Corrective* category address the persistence of both racism and sexism in the development of the sociological canon: “We will also consider ...theorists originally and unfairly excluded from the ‘canon’ due to their race or gender.” In line with the *Sign Systems and Knowledge* task of CDA, syllabi in this category not only value, but also integrate the knowledge of diverse theorists. In addition to addressing the biases that have historically pervaded the canon, the syllabi in this category also reframe who is a social theorist, and who is considered canonical. For example:

To start correcting the Eurocentric bias of the classical sociological canon  
...this course gives a central place to the work of W.E.B. Du Bois, who  
developed a theoretical approach that put racialization and colonialism as the  
pillars of modernity. Moreover, to start correcting the patriarchal bias, we will  
start the course by reading the work of Anna Julia Cooper, who developed an  
early feminist and intersectional approach to the study of modernity.

Another syllabus addresses how the inclusion of diverse theorists expands an understanding of sociological concepts and places them in conversation with other theorists:

Taking into account these contextual factors both yields a better understanding  
of canonical texts and allows us to expand our intellectual horizons beyond  
sociology’s ‘founding fathers’ and to diversify the white, male, European canon.  
By taking up the relationship between the sociological canon and connected  
streams of social thought in the late 19th and early 20th century we become  
exposed to women and people of color driving the conversation around the state

and nationhood (Rosa Luxemburg), women's oppression (Clara Zetkin, Alexandre Kollontai and Anna Julia Cooper), and race and colonial expansion (W.E.B. Du Bois and Cooper).

Through both of these excerpts, the contributions of Anna Julia Cooper are expressly named. Further, the breadth of her contributions to the areas of feminism, intersectionality, and colonialism are explicated, thus conceptualizing the factors that make her a social theorist. In the *Corrective* category, other diverse classical theorists are credited as scholars who not only theorized about society but also provided empirical analyses of social phenomena. Syllabi within the *Corrective* category discuss not only who has been excluded from the canon, but also their specific contributions to the discipline of sociology. In one course description, W.E.B. DuBois' accomplishments and contributions were outlined:

W. E. B. DuBois crossed paths with Weber while studying at the University of Berlin, became the first Black person to earn a doctorate from Harvard University, and went on to found the 'Atlanta School' of sociology.

In this syllabus, the contributions of women were also explicated:

Harriet Martineau, an English social theorist, is widely regarded as the first female sociologist. She produced the first English-language translation of Auguste Comte's work and wrote the first treatise on sociological methods based on her tour of the United States in 1837–8. Indeed, Martineau's writings predate all others we will read in this seminar, including Marx: while Martineau traveled to America, a teenaged Marx wrote poetry and a comedic short story (*Scorpion and Felix, A Humoristic Novel*), having just recently discovered Hegel's

philosophy.

This syllabus also noted the contributions of Charlotte Perkins Gilman:

Finally, the feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman completed the first draft of *Women and Economics*—which, among other influences, incorporated ideas from Marx... in 1898. Gillman criticized the economic dependence of women on men and argued that the gendered division of labor hampered the advancement of the entire human race.

The contributions of diverse scholars are explicated within syllabi in the *Corrective* category.

This syllabus noted DuBois' establishment of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory, a site for the production of rigorous sociological scholarship that has historically been ignored (Wright 2020).

Also, the syllabus noted the contributions of Harriet Martineau, who wrote the first book that outlined sociological methods (Lengermann and Niebrugge 1998). Finally, the syllabus outlines the contributions of Charlotte Perkins Gillman, who espoused women's rights through critical analysis of both class and gender (Lengermann and Niebrugge 1998). Most notably for the purposes of this study, the contributions of classical Black women social theorists were made clear. Expressly, Anna Julia Cooper is noted as providing an early intersectional analysis of race and gender, while also producing scholarship in colonialism. Thus, unlike the *Hierarchical* category, the *Corrective* category highlights the contributions of Black women in sociology's classical period.



### Why should classical social theorists be studied?

In addition to understanding how social theorists are conceptualized within graduate-level classical theory courses, a second question was posed in Phase 2 of the study to understand the objectives for studying classical social theorists. As scholars of CDA have indicated, language is used for several purposes, including the exchange of social goods as well as to build and maintain identities (Gee 2014; López-Bonilla 2011). Following the *Politics* and *Identities* tools of CDA (Gee 2014), course descriptions were analyzed to further understand why specific theorists are included in graduate-level classical theory syllabi. This analysis in Phase 2 was guided by the following question: Why should classical social theorists be studied?

Generally, the course descriptions situated classical sociology theory courses as a space for the training of graduate students. One syllabus noted, “Consider this the beginning – although certainly not the end – of your formation as professional sociologists.” Moreover, the course descriptions commented on classical sociological theory as an integral part of conducting research. One course description read: “Whether or not you think of yourself as somebody who's interested in theory, theorizing is central to all sociological research and writing.” Another course description elaborated on this point, outlining the role of theory in sociological research:

Sociological inquiry can be described as an applied conversation between methods and theory. The point of this class is to help prepare you to play an *active* part in this conversation. Note that this means that our objective is not to simply read and discuss theory, but to provide you with the tools to generate social theory as it applies to methods as well as, in the widest sense, your own social thinking and social life. Our overriding principle will be that every social

action, be it a formal act of social science or seemingly far away from the academic world, involves some sort of social theory. To put it another way, we cannot escape doing theory so we might as well confront it.

Course descriptions also discussed the necessity of understanding not only how to use theory, but also the professional expectations of sociologists as it relates to theory:

The primary goal of the course is to develop skills in analyzing theories and in applying theories to concrete empirical situations. As a sociologist, you should be able to develop theory, derive hypotheses from the theory, and test those hypotheses using appropriate methods. In order to use theory effectively in your research, you need to be able to both identify causal relations and mechanisms in existing theories and apply theories to substantive issues. This course will provide opportunities to practice and develop these skills so that you can use them in your own research.

From these excerpts, sociological theory is framed as integral to the work of sociologists. Theory is contextualized as a necessary component for both understanding *and* examining the social world scientifically. One objective, then, for classical theory courses is to prepare graduate students to recognize, use, and develop theory as part of the process of knowledge production as professional sociologists. As summarized in one syllabus, the review of classical theorists allows faculty to guide students in “building a theoretical toolkit that can be called upon in the years to come.” Thus, classical theory courses are foundational to the training of graduate students by providing an introduction to classical theorists.

In addition to explicating the importance of knowing classical sociological theory and its applicability, the course descriptions also denoted why it is important to know *specific* classical theorists. One course description stated, “There are certain great works that nearly every sociologist knows or ought to know. References will be made to them in scholarship, jokes, lectures in other courses, etc. You should know them.” A syllabus from the *Hierarchical* category emphasized that knowing classical theorists is important not only for the purposes of generating theory and conducting research, but also to be able to engage with contemporary sociological theory:

The classics remain valuable as ideational and theoretical sources that inform contemporary empirical research. Rather than being a purely (and merely) a ‘theoretical’ line of thinking, the classical tradition continues to be close dialogue with contemporary sociological research. In this case, you would not be able to understand or take part in what counts as empirical inquiry in sociology today without having a solid understanding of the classics. Hence, this course is intended to provide you with an introduction to some of this research and, in this way, help to ‘professionalize’ you as a sociologist.

Another course description outlined specific sociological concepts that have been considered vital in the discipline, in part due to their aptness in the present:

The second goal is to develop an understanding of key concepts that have been foundational to decades of sociological thought, including (but not limited to) the ‘division of labor,’ ‘anomie,’ ‘social inequality,’ ‘alienation,’ ‘rationality,’ and ‘solidarity.’ For each concept, we will consider its use by particular authors and compare the meanings attributed to it by different authors. We will also situate

these concepts' meanings in historical context and trace their shifting use and continued relevance for contemporary sociologists.

These excerpts demonstrate that the theories and concepts developed by classical theorists are framed as having applicability for sociologists today. Therefore, as core theories and concepts, these intellectual contributions of classical theorists remain key components of the professionalization of graduate students, providing them with a foundation upon which to build their own research.

Irrespective of the assemblage of theorists that were included in the syllabi, three classical theorists were noted as being universally known within the discipline of sociology – Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Émile Durkheim. One syllabus described why these theorists were included in the course, stating in part, “These texts constitute common knowledge within our field, will help you learn to theorize, and are inherently interesting!” Further, in the course descriptions, the scholarship of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim are contextualized as a mutual point of connection among all sociologists. A syllabus from the *Corrective* category stated:

For one thing, classical sociological theory is a kind of binding agent for the discipline as a whole. It is hard to name the object of study for sociology beyond ‘society as a whole,’ or ‘social structures,’ unlike political science, psychology, history, or economics, and by consequence sociologists frequently bemoan the discipline’s fragmentation...But no matter how distant another sociologist’s expertise is from your own, you can bet that both of you have had to sit through a graduate seminar called something like ‘classical sociological theory’ and can at least bond over how much you [hated/loved] it!

Specifically in one syllabus, the scholarship of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim was contextualized as being a unifying point in a discipline of diverse subareas:

Sociology is topically, methodologically, epistemologically, and theoretically diverse. The American Sociological Association counts more than 11,000 members distributed across 52 ‘special-interest’ sections...These sections address topics ranging from Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco to Global and Transnational Sociology. For better or worse, the classical theorists represent the least common denominator of our fragmented discipline. Their works serve as the *lingua franca* of all sociologists.

The term *lingua franca* is defined as “a language that is adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different” (Oxford Languages 2022). Thus, asserting the scholarship of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim as *lingua franca* centers their contributions as shared vernacular among sociologists. Notwithstanding classical theorists who made contributions to specific subareas of the discipline nor the contributions of diverse theorists, Marx, Weber, and Durkheim’s contributions become the material that solidifies the discipline, and the “language” that must be known and understood by graduate students to be able to participate in and navigate the sociological community. Furthermore, defining the scholarship of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim in this way devalues the intellectual contributions of other theorists. Describing the scholarship of White men as *lingua franca* renders the contributions of diverse theorists – among them Black women – insignificant and promotes both racial and patriarchal biases within the discipline.

While referring to the scholarship of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim as “must-reads”, one course description outlined the necessity of being familiar with their scholarship, as they constitute an invaluable resource for a sociologist:

Classical social theory is important as an integrative cultural element of the discipline. Put bluntly: you cannot be a functioning member of the sociology tribe without being well-versed in what these classical writers have to say. This constitutes one of the few pieces of common knowledge that holds sociology (a very fragmented and disparate field) together. Hence, this course will provide you with a kind of invaluable field-specific ‘cultural capital’.

Bourdieu (1973) coined the term *cultural capital* to describe the cultural and linguistic proficiencies that one acquires to ensure success in school. Cultural capital can include education and knowledge that is exceedingly valued within society that, when accumulated, translates to social mobility and status. Within the context of education, cultural capital becomes part of *cultural reproduction*, in which the culture of the dominant class is reproduced as a means to conserve the dominant culture (Bourdieu 1973). By framing the scholarship of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim as “invaluable cultural capital”, their work is situated as a cultural asset that will allow graduate students to participate in the sociological community.

Course descriptions outlined the value of being familiar with Marx, Weber, and Durkheim’s scholarship both theoretically and empirically. A syllabus in the *Hierarchical* discussed how their efforts played a role in the formation of the discipline of sociology:

Marx, Weber, and Durkheim established the core empirical questions, ontological assumptions, and epistemological frameworks of our discipline.

What is the nature of ‘society,’ and what makes social life possible? Do individuals precede and constitute society, or does society antedate and constitute individuals? How are structure and agency related? Do social ‘laws’ exist? Which methods, positivist or interpretivist, offer the best tools for understanding social reality? Their answers to these questions continue to inform sociological thinking.

This course description concluded with the following:

Finally, their theories, concepts, and ideas remain influential. Marx, Weber, and Durkheim enjoy tremendous staying power, owing in no small part to their tremendous perspicacity.

This course description defines Marx, Weber, and Durkheim as providing “core empirical questions, ontological assumptions, and epistemological frameworks” of the discipline of sociology. By doing so, Marx, Weber, and Durkheim and their scholarship become appraised as the most important of the discipline. Moreover, by noting the “perspicacity” of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim’s theories, the course description characterizes these theorists as having keen insight into social phenomena. Thus, of any theorists in the field of sociology, Marx, Weber, and Durkheim are the ones who are explicitly identified as classical theorists that a graduate student must know. Therefore, the classical works of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim – three White men – are contextualized as being part and parcel of a graduate’s student training as a sociologist. These are three theorists - among several others – whose work is regarded as universally understood among all in the discipline.

While syllabi in the *Hierarchical* category explain that Marx, Weber, and Durkheim are essential to the training of emerging scholars, syllabi in the *Corrective* category also addressed the necessity and importance of reading their scholarship. An excerpt from a syllabus in the *Corrective* category stated:

It would be impossible to cover all the major works of classical sociological theory in one course, so I view this course as an in-depth introduction to some of the important works in the sociological canon. Classical sociological theory is frequently criticized for its reliance on the work of ‘dead white men.’ As a result, I have made a conscious effort to include some gender and racial diversity by including the works of non-white and women theorists who have made influential contributions to sociological theory. However, as a graduate of a sociology Ph.D. program, you will be expected to be familiar with the works of Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Simmel, and Mead, meaning we still must cover their works.

Despite including scholars with theorists of racial and gender identities, syllabi in the *Corrective* category still include the works of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, as they are still considered essential for graduate students’ training. Graduate students *must* be acquainted with Marx, Weber, and Durkheim as they continue to navigate the discipline and become professional sociologists. This assertion that graduate students must be familiar with these three classical theorists implies that irrespective of the contributions of other classical theorists *and* the efforts to include diverse classical theorists, the “dead White men” will continue to be mainstays of the sociological canon and graduate-level classical theory courses. For classical Black women



sociologists, this means that their contributions – despite their applicability in contemporary sociology – are still not regarded as significant in the discipline.

### Summary

In this chapter, I analyzed the course descriptions of syllabi from graduate-level classical theory courses using CDA to understand the contextualization of classical theorists and the objectives for including them in these courses. The contextualization of classical theorists was understood using the *Sign Systems and Knowledge* tool, and two categories were developed – *Hierarchical* and *Corrective*. The *Hierarchical* category defined a classical theorist as one whose work has influenced the discipline of sociology. According to the syllabi, their work is influential due to its broad application to a variety of social phenomena, as well as in contemporary society. Theorists in this category are noted for both their ability to provide theoretical paradigms and empirical approaches to analyzing the social world. Additionally, the focus on the theorists in this category is justified due to the time constraints of academic terms, as well as their formal designation as prominent theorists within the discipline of sociology. In examining the syllabi in this category, the classical theorists included in this category exist in a hierarchy where predominantly European and American White men are situated at the top. The only other theorist who was included in this category was W.E.B. DuBois, a Black man. Other diverse theorists were not found on the syllabi that were in this category, nor were they explicitly named as prominent contributors to the discipline's foundations. Thus, the syllabi in the *Hierarchical* category placed value on a few scholars, rendering all other theorists and their contributions insignificant. This includes classical Black women theorists, who, as indicated in Phase 1, were

already included in classical theory courses less frequently than all other groups. The contextualization of classical theorists in this category demonstrated what Wingfield (2008) described as systemic gendered racism, which recognizes that the materialization of racism is also gendered by devaluing the contributions of Black women, among other diverse scholars. Despite the extant literature on the history of sociological thought and practice, particularly in the U.S. (Wright 2012, 2020), syllabi in this category did not include these contributions. Thus, from the *Hierarchical* category, when inclusive, sociological thought still maintains a “prominent masculinist bias” (Collins 2000:6-7) with the inclusion of DuBois while negating the contributions of other scholars, among them Black women. In line with the *Sign Systems and Knowledge* tool, language was used to privilege the knowledge of White and male classical theorists, while simultaneously devaluing the knowledge produced by women and non-white scholars.

Using the *Sign Systems and Knowledge* tool, the *Corrective* category acknowledges the construction of the sociological canon and the subjective nature of its construction. Further, it recognizes the promotion and suppression of knowledge, outlining the history of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim’s journey to canonization. The syllabi in this category also address the politics of knowledge production as it relates to the racist and patriarchal biases that have precluded women and non-White theorists from the canon. The syllabi in this category note the numerous streams of sociological thought that emerged during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Like the *Hierarchical* category, course descriptions in the *Corrective* category define classical theorists as being influential and having shaped the discipline of sociology. However, unlike the *Hierarchical* category, syllabi in the *Corrective* category applied this definition more broadly to

include more theorists of a variety of social identities with various epistemological and methodological approaches to the discipline. Syllabi in this category illuminated the specific contributions of these theorists and outlined how their theoretical and empirical analyses provide a nuanced perspective on society, thereby strengthening the foundations of the discipline (Collins 2008, Lengermann and Niebrugge 1998; Wright 2020). What is more, Black women are noted in this category among the classical theorists whose contributions to the discipline are influential and have a contemporary following. Specifically, classical Black women theorists are explicitly named, and their contributions to the discipline are illustrated. Moreover, they are framed as being influential to the discipline both during the classical period and today. In line with the principles of CDA, in the *Corrective* category, language in the course descriptions was used to combat the inequalities that perpetuate racism and sexism in the sociological canon (Blackledge 2012).

The objectives for including classical theorists in graduate-level classical theory courses were examined using the *Politics* and *Identities* tools of CDA. As demonstrated by the syllabi analyzed, course descriptions detailed that the objective of studying classical theorists was not only to serve as a foundation for the training of graduate students. Additionally, they detailed that studying classical theorists – specifically Marx, Weber, and Durkheim – was to acquire the cultural capital that would allow graduate students to develop their professional identities and navigate the sociological community. What is more, syllabi in both the *Hierarchical* and *Corrective* categories emphasized the necessity of being familiar with the scholarship of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim as part of their professionalization as sociologists. In line with the *Politics* tool of CDA, the course descriptions explicated that the scholarship of Marx, Weber, and

Durkheim are a social good – something worth having in their professional “toolkit”. In line with the *Identities* tools of CDA, the scholarship of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim serve as a common language that would situate graduate students in the sociological community. Despite their inclusion and contextualization as social theorists within the syllabi in the *Corrective* category, classical Black women theorists were not contextualized as a necessary part of the “toolkit” that sociology graduate students build in classical theory courses. Thus, the contextualization of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim as a “social good” perpetuates systemic gendered racism in the reproduction of knowledge and the sociological canon.

## **CHAPTER 5: FACULTY CHOICES AND DEVELOPING CLASSICAL THEORY COURSES**

As documents, syllabi are regarded as learning tools that fulfill overlapping functions for institutions and students (Nilson 2010; Parkes and Harris 2002). For the instructor of record, syllabi reflect their expectations, teaching philosophies, and the course materials they choose. Specifically, syllabi of graduate-level classical theory courses outline the theorists that faculty *choose* for these courses. However, further investigation is necessary to understand *how* faculty select classical theorists for their courses.

Phases 1 and 2 of this study examined the content of graduate-level classical theory syllabi both to assess the diffusion of classical theorists and to analyze the language used to construct classical theorists. This chapter outlines the findings of Phase 3, which explored the development of graduate-level classical theory syllabi and the factors that contribute to the inclusion – and exclusion – of classical theorists. In this chapter, I will discuss the findings of semi-structured interviews that were conducted with a subsample of faculty whose syllabi were analyzed in Phases 1 and 2 of this study. I will begin by explaining how constructivist grounded theory was used to analyze the data collected from the interviews. Second, I will share the findings from the analysis and outline the five themes that emerged from the data – Graduate School Training, Professional Expectations of Faculty, Graduate Student Influence, Considering Diverse Theorists, and The Role of Faculty – which will be explained in detail below.

### Constructivist Grounded Theory

Phase 3 of this study used semi-structured interviews with faculty to explore the development of the graduate-level classical theory courses they teach. This phase was guided by the following research question: What factors influence faculty decisions about which scholars they include in graduate-level classical theory courses? Constructivist grounded theory (CGT) (Charmaz 2014) was used to analyze the data collected from participants. As an inductive process, CGT is an analytic approach that focuses on using data collected from participants to develop theoretical frameworks (Charmaz 2014). Building on the foundations established by Glaser and Strauss (1967), Charmaz (2014) described CGT as an interpretive process through which the researcher's interaction with the data is used to construct meaning of the social phenomena. In contrast to objectivist grounded theory which espouses a value-free approach to research, CGT integrates the point of view of the researcher (Charmaz 2014), and therefore, data are viewed contextually during the analysis.

### Coding to Understand Causes

Glaser and Strauss (1967) outlined the tenets of grounded theory, emphasizing the importance of remaining open *to* the data, staying grounded *in* the data, and the simultaneity of data collection and analysis. Additionally, Glaser and Strauss highlighted that in grounded theory, the researcher uses initial coding moving from the smallest unit of analysis (words) to larger units of analysis (lines and segments of data), which are later developed into categories. As larger segments of data are analyzed, various approaches to the focused coding of categories are possible. In *Theoretical Sensitivity*, Glaser discussed that the researcher could analyze the

data to examine “how the substantive codes may relate to each other” (1978:72). Accordingly, the researcher can explore the relationship between focused codes and develop an analytic story.

Glaser (1978) developed 18 theoretical coding families, among them the “Six C’s” - causes, contexts, contingencies, consequences, covariances, and conditions” (1978). Considered by Glaser to be the “bread and butter” of coding in sociological analysis, the “Six C’s” espouse that action leads to outcomes, or consequences (Böhm 2004, Glaser 1978). Thus, to understand the development of graduate-level classical theory courses, categories that emerged from the data during focused coding were analyzed to develop an analytic story that articulated the causes for the diffusion or lack thereof of Black women’s scholarship in graduate-level classical theory courses. Faculty were interviewed to further understand the factors that influenced how they selected theorists for their graduate-level classical theory syllabi.

### Overview of Participants

As noted in Chapter 3, 10 faculty participated in Phase 3 of this study. From the demographic survey that was distributed to the participants, 60% (N=6) of them identified as women and 40% (N=4) identified as men. With regard to racial identity, all the participants identified as White. In response to sharing their professional titles, 30% (N=3) of the participants noted that they were Assistant Professors, 40% (N=4) were Associate Professors, and 30% (N=3) were Professors. At the time of the interviews, over half (N=6) of the participants had served in their professional roles for 10 years or less. As a note, in this chapter, I have deidentified the interview quotes, given the potential risk to the participants, particularly out of consideration for

those without tenure. Because they were assured confidentiality, participants spoke freely, and therefore data have been de-identified as an ethical consideration.

What factors influence faculty decisions about which scholars they include in graduate-level classical theory courses?

Graduate School Training

During the interviews, all participants discussed how they did not receive formal mentorship when they began teaching graduate-level classical theory. Subsequently, they took a variety of approaches to begin the development of their courses, including seeking out insights from colleagues and searching the internet for syllabi of classical theory courses offered at other institutions. Apart from one participant, developing the courses began with the resources they had readily available from the graduate-level classical theory courses they completed in their doctoral programs.

For the participants who used resources from the classical theory courses they completed in graduate school, their graduate training not only served as models for *how* to structure their own courses, but also provided extensive notes on the primary texts of classical theorists that they could refer to. When asked if the doctoral coursework they completed in graduate school was connected to the way they taught classical theory, one participant noted:

I studied at [a theory-focused institution], which was lucky for me, because theory is sort of central to every course you take [there]...So I had that background. I was able to draw on that; but in terms of structuring the course, what I did was I looked at other theory syllabi, and other textbooks as a starting scholar, I wanted



to sort of make sure that I was not coming from left field that I was in keeping with the way theory is traditionally taught. I looked at other examples, and what I was able to do is incorporate my notes from my coursework, and readings from my coursework and my dissertation. It's kind of a mix, different sources from my professors, my notes, textbooks, and looking for other theory syllabi. So I would say there's definitely the connection. I was a very careful note taker, and I use a lot of my notes from the readings and from the lectures in my own teaching.

This participant utilized multiple resources to develop their theory course as a starting scholar, including syllabi from other institutions and classical theory textbooks. Moreover, they stated that there was a connection between their graduate training and the classical theory course they teach. Because they were trained in a doctoral program that emphasized theory, they found the materials from graduate school to be a useful resource that served as a model for how to teach theory.

Upon being asked about the connection between their graduate training and the classical theory course they teach, another participant also discussed how notes from both their graduate theory course and a teaching assistantship served as valuable resources when they began teaching classical theory:

I was taught [classical theory] by [a professor] who's a really renowned theorist, and a historian of sociology. [Their] class was excellent, a really rich introduction to classical theory. And I also [was a Teaching Assistant] for [this professor] twice. So [they] taught theory at the undergraduate level, and that gave me a pretty good knowledge of the texts [they] presented.

This participant added that their graduate school training was the most important factor in the development of their classical theory course, given the solid foundation it provided:

I think just the most significant [factor] was my own training. I'm not a historian of sociology. I am teaching this course, but it's not my core area. It's hard for me to be like, 'These are the three essential Marx things you need to read' based on my own knowledge without falling back on [the fact that] I took this course from a historian of sociology who thought that these were the three essential things I needed to read. It was falling back on people who were the closest I could get to experts in the field and what they thought was important. But also, since I had been trained that way, I had like, 20 pages of notes on each lecture or something like that. I frantically scribbled every word that [the professor] had said. I felt like I already had the notes from when I read [the texts] as a student and made notes in the margin. I felt like I had a really good foundation, especially because I had taken a class and I had been [a Teaching Assistant] twice at the undergrad level. There were certain texts that I have gone over three times. And so once you have like x pages of notes, you've gone over it three times, it felt like a waste not to use that. And there was no clear indication to me that something else would have been better, because the sort of expert in the field had taught this.

Like other interviews, this participant discussed using the notes from the classical theory course they completed in graduate school as the foundation for their own courses. For this participant, their classical theory notes were not only a readily available and invaluable resources for two reasons. First, the participant had extensive notes from the course. Second, the participant was

taught by an expert in classical theory. Therefore, this participant's classical theory notes were a strong foundation for the development of the course they teach.

Most participants discussed how their graduate training provided a basis for the development of their classical theory courses. However, they did not incorporate *every* aspect of their graduate training. In comparing their pedagogical approach to teaching theory to how they were taught theory, one participant shared:

I think it's true in a lot of academic fields that when you enter the field, you form certain kinds of attachments, certain kinds of 'Oh, I want to be like that [faculty member],' you know. Because when you go [into graduate school] you're primed to try to find somebody you want to be like, try to find a model of professional practice you want to be like. So to that extent, I dabble in theory, because the people that formed that model for me when I was in my Ph.D. program - that's what they did, and that's what they taught, and so the way I originally structured my course was very similar to how I was taught in graduate school. But within a year, I was like, 'Man, I can't teach the way [my former professor] could do it,' so I had to change [my course]. But, you look up to the person, but you also say, 'There's certain things that are missing [from their course].'...So I think the kind of the answer to your question is, yes, you're fundamentally shaped by your graduate school experience and how you were taught theory, but you also introduce differences that can ultimately over time become quite big.

In discussing their graduate school training, this participant reflected on how they initially taught theory based upon what was modeled for them as a graduate student. However, after beginning to teach classical theory, they decided that their graduate training was missing some elements and initiated changes to their course.

Additionally, as participants relied on their graduate training to inform how they developed their own theory courses, they also used their graduate training to inform aspects of classical theory courses they did *not* want to replicate, including the collection of theorists on the syllabus. Some participants acknowledged that if they were to model their graduate theory courses after the training they received, they would be reproducing the sociological canon, and only centering the scholarship of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. For example:

I specifically went about trying to *not* do what I experienced as a graduate student, which was like, you know, the dead White guys, exclusively. I didn't feel like that prepared me very well to be a scholar or a sociologist. [I] really committed to trying to think outside the box in terms of like, what is considered the canon, I also had a really specific goal of encouraging students to critique what the canon is in the first place. So, I'd say those are like my main goals...just making space every week to try and think about how to encourage students to think critically about what the canon is in the first place. And how did it get to be that way? So yeah, and again, just sort of like trying to not repeat the mistakes that I experienced with grad students.

This participant recalled that their graduate training only included Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. They felt that only learning about the “dead White guys” was not adequate preparation to be a

sociologist. Therefore, they decided to approach teaching theory in a way that encouraged graduate students to critically think about the sociological canon and its construction.

Participants discussed how they designed their courses in a way that reimaged their graduate training by including more diverse theorists. Thinking about theory graduate training, one participant shared the following:

I kind of made this class exactly like the class I wish I had gotten to take. And so it was really just me making some of those choices and decisions, and just feeling really strongly about making sure that students had a really diverse representation of what the kind of body of sociological theory looks like.

Without formal guidance or mentorship, participants began developing their graduate-level classical theory courses using a variety of resources but relied prominently on their graduate school training. They developed their courses primarily using notes from their graduate training – a resource that was already available to them. While graduate training was used to inform the development of their courses as well as the theorists they included in their syllabus, some participants chose not to replicate every aspect of their graduate training. These participants discussed how as they taught theory, they implemented pedagogical approaches and included classical social theorists that they were not introduced to as graduate students, thus framing the course based on their values (Jackson 1968).

### Professional Expectations of Faculty

Moving into a full-time faculty position in higher education requires managing an array of responsibilities *in addition to* teaching a suite of undergraduate and graduate courses. Through

the interviews, participants provided insight on their professional roles as faculty, specifically discussing the broad range of professional expectations that they are held to. Amid these expectations, participants discussed how two expectations specifically influenced the theorists that they included in their classical theory courses – the professionalization of graduate students and managing their responsibilities as full-time faculty.

### *Professionalization of Graduate Students*

In selecting classical theorists for their courses, all participants considered the various professional expectations that they were held to as faculty. To begin, participants articulated that as faculty who teach classical theory, they had to consider their graduate students and prepare them to engage in the sociological community. Specifically, participants discussed the importance of classical theory courses as the site for the professionalization of graduate students. One participant, who included classical Black women theorists on their syllabus, discussed the role of classical theory courses:

If we didn't have a classical theory class, well, how are people going to be able to communicate at conferences or to other sociologists? Because to some extent, the great books, for example, operate as touchstones that we kind of understand what we're talking about when we do that. So [classical theory] has this kind of important socialization and cultural role within sociology. [I'm] trying to satisfy all of these different objectives, and then you want to be able to socialize [graduate students], because, of course, you have students coming to do graduate sociology who've never done any sociology before; and so they really do need to

read this stuff so that they understand what the discipline is, in some sense.

From this participant's response, they worked to fulfill many objectives in their classical theory course. Among these objectives was to socialize graduate students in preparation to engage in the larger sociological community. Additionally, this participant referred to the works of theorists who have been canonized as "great books" and asserted that these works are "touchstones" that serve of particular importance for students who are new to the discipline of sociology. Thus, because the "great books" serve as a point of connection between graduate students and other sociologists, they were included in this participant's course.

In addition to preparing graduate students to engage among the community of sociologists, participants selected theorists for their courses to prepare graduate students to conduct research. They noted that introducing theorists who have traditionally been canonized was important for their students' training as researchers:

It's really a difficult decision to decide what to include, but I started with the idea that I want to see if I can provide them with sort of the 'must knows,' you know, the people who are [and] the ideas that are central to the field. So that they can hopefully use those ideas to enhance the quality of their research. That's the goal.

For this participant's course, in addition to including classical Black women theorists, they included classical theorists whom they consider "must-knows" - which included Marx, Weber, and Durkheim – because from the participant's perspective, these theorists serve as models of how to do sociological research.

In addition to the responsibility that participants felt to professionalize graduate students, they also discussed the source of these expectations. In response to whether they were

encouraged or discouraged from including specific classical theorists, one participant discussed how their department expected them to teach specific classical theorists:

I have to consider at grad theory certain professional and vocational expectations.

And there is an expectation that students - for better or worse in my department - that they read some Durkheim and that they read some Weber. I'm sort of comfortable throwing [certain canonized theorists] out in the undergrad class.

But in grad theory, I do feel like there's still - for better or worse - the expectation that Marx, Weber, and Durkheim are in there.

This participant noted that when they taught undergraduate classical theory courses, they occasionally did not include Marx, Weber, or Durkheim in the syllabus. However, while including Anna Julia Cooper, W.E.B. DuBois, and Simone de Beauvoir for graduate courses, they were also *expected* by their department to include Marx, Weber, and Durkheim as part of graduate students' training.

Another participant discussed teaching classical theory for the first time following the 2020 call to action to expand the canon and how the culture of their department was a factor they considered as they began teaching the course:

I felt like I had a responsibility to my department, and my department tends to be particularly more conservative in how they view the sociological canon, and it really has been [a] Marx, Weber, Durkheim sort of approach to teaching classical theory. I felt a responsibility, particularly my first time teaching the class not to deviate significantly from that, and I think I felt internal pressure to maintain this.



The participant noted that because their department had a conservative view of the sociological canon, they chose to include Marx, Weber, and Durkheim in their course. However, aside from these three theorists, this participant also included W.E.B. DuBois.

While participants considered the long-term professional goals for graduate students as they selected theorists for their theory courses, they also considered short-term goals, including preparing graduate students for successive courses. Two of the participants taught both classical and contemporary theory and discussed choosing theorists for classical theory that would serve as a foundation for theorists introduced in contemporary. One participant who taught both classical and contemporary theory in their department elaborated on this point:

I don't want anybody to finish my classical theory course without knowing the basics, you know. So it's kind of a tradeoff. I have to make sure that they know the basics so that when we get to contemporary [theory], then we're talking about C. Wright Mills or Dahrendorf or somebody like that. We can talk about that person or those ideas in relation to Marx and Weber. You know, we're talking about Parsons, and functionalism. Well, you can't really understand Parsons, unless you understand Durkheim and Weber. So, yeah, it's a tradeoff.

Participants who taught both classical and contemporary theory discussed developing both courses with the idea of theorists in these courses being “in conversation” with one another. As they developed their courses, they thought about which theorists could be included in contemporary theory that were an extension of a theorist introduced in classical theory, or who could present an opposing view.

Participants also discussed selecting theorists for their courses to prepare students for successive courses offered in their departments:

I do feel like there is a sort of expectation that you do cover certain theorists, and if for no other reason, that there are other subsequent classes that they take, you know, sociology of education, or of race or punishment or something, that there are frequent references to some of those [canonical theorists], for better or worse. And I think that my colleagues have an expectation that if I'm going to teach this class, [there are] at least some people that should be covered.

From these excerpts, the participants explained that as faculty teaching graduate-level classical theory, they were expected to professionalize graduate students by introducing them to classical theorists who are canonized in the discipline, thus, allowing them to engage with the sociological community. Additionally, participants selected theorists as examples for graduate students on how to conduct research. Some of the participants also discussed how they included specific theorists for classical theory courses to prepare graduate students for other courses. All participants spoke about the professional expectations to teach Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, irrespective of the collection of theorists in their syllabus. That it is expected for faculty to teach these three theorists specifically illustrates the continued racial and patriarchal bias of the sociological canon. Also, this expectation negates the contributions of classical Black women, despite the extant literature that outlines the influence of their work.

### *The Responsibilities of Full-time Faculty*

In addition to considering graduate student professionalization, participants also discussed contending with the other professional expectations that are held of full-time faculty and how this affects selecting theorists for classical theory courses. As full-time faculty are expected to conduct research, teach, and engage in service, participants shared how they navigated these responsibilities. When asked whether they thought about adding more scholars of diverse backgrounds to their classical theory course, one participant discussed being advised on how to prioritize their responsibilities as faculty:

I would say one sort of limitation or tension, just like not being able to go as far as I would ideally want sometimes is that when you move into your first Assistant Professor job, like, one thing that's really hammered in I think is that you need to prioritize your research in order to get tenure, and you need to limit the time that you spend on teaching.

In this participant's response, they outlined that they were advised not to prioritize teaching to achieve tenure, and instead to focus on their research. This participant also discussed how time limitations impacted their ability to include theorists in their syllabus beyond the ones they were introduced to in graduate school:

I did find myself at times being like, 'I'm interested in this text, like this could potentially work, but like, I've not read this. I don't have 20 pages of notes on it.' I don't have it sort of structured in my mind. And for me to do that now would be like 50 hours of work and I have [other things] due and I really can't justify that. But that has been, I think, a continuing tension for me, even the second and third

time I taught [the course], I sometimes had to make tradeoffs where I said, ‘Next time, I’d like to do it this way.’ And I think like a misconception that [students] have is that we do our course planning months in advance, but really, it’s just like, panic scramble the week before. And so I would like have this plan of changes I wanted to make and I wasn’t able to implement them. Because I got to that, like, frantic week before I was teaching other courses, I had [other things] due. And I was like, ‘Oh, like, maybe next time,’ you know? I don’t have the hours in the day to revamp this more at this time.

Along with being advised to prioritize research, this participant discussed wanting to change their classical theory course to include classical Black women and other theorists but being unable to do so given the lack of time they had amongst other responsibilities. Despite balancing multiple responsibilities as an Assistant Professor, this participant expressed their desire to include diverse theorists who are not usually canonized when they teach classical theory in the future.

Irrespective of the collection of theorists in the participants’ syllabi, they all addressed balancing research, publications, and teaching, and particularly the time constraints that result from managing these responsibilities. One participant, who included classical Black women theorists in their syllabus, discussed how faculty may not prioritize including diverse theorists in their syllabus given that the teaching responsibilities of faculty are overlooked and undervalued labor:

I could understand that some senior faculty who have a syllabus that, in their view, has been working for them for years, you know, then get asked and

pressured to add in more theorists, I can understand how that could be a bit daunting for them, especially once the legwork is established. 'Cause I can imagine now if somebody came up to me like, 'Oh, you need to make sure you add in this other theorist.' I feel like oh, man, that's a lot of work...And it's often - especially in Ph.D. programs because they're in R1 institutions - is often unrecognized work. And I think that that's, you know, a lot of people put that further down on their list of things that need to get done.

This participant's response provided additional insight into the challenges that faculty experience in including diverse theorists in their courses. Highlighting the labor that changing the syllabus would necessitate, the participant noted that faculty who teach classical theory may not make these changes, given the amount of additional work that it requires. Additionally, the participant notes that for faculty, teaching is a responsibility that is regarded as unimportant, and therefore, becomes a low priority among other responsibilities.

The participants expounded on how the professional expectations of full-time faculty contribute to the classical theorists they included in their courses. Participants selected theorists for their courses, in part, to align with the vocational expectations of graduate students. Additionally, they selected theorists for their courses as a foundation for subsequent courses offered in their departments, such as contemporary theory. This meant that while participants developed the courses based upon their values, the expectations from their institutions and the larger discipline to include particular theorists – namely Marx, Weber, and Durkheim – meant that the inclusion of classical Black women theorists and their contributions was not considered as vital for these courses. Along with the expectation to professionalize graduate students,

participants also navigated the professional expectations of being full-time faculty. Amid their professional responsibilities, participants discussed prioritizing research and publishing over their teaching responsibilities to achieve tenure, thus limiting the time that some of them had available to meaningfully include classical Black women theorists in their classical theory courses. Hence, within the structure of academia that emphasizes research, teaching becomes de-emphasized, and participants continue to teach those theorists with whom they are already familiar.

#### Graduate Student Influence

Participants in this study were asked how they were introduced to theorists who are not usually included in the classical sociological canon. While participants noted how the professionalization *of* graduate students was a factor that they considered in developing their courses, most of them also discussed how graduate student *influenced* their theory courses, particularly the inclusion of theorists who have not been canonized. In addressing the current movement to diversify the sociological canon, one participant noted that graduate students encouraged them to think about the classical sociological canon more expansively:

My best mentors for thinking more deeply about diversity have been graduate students I work with, like, you know, people who are younger, in a context where there's much more kind of questioning of the canon and things like that. I have always had graduate students who pushed me to be more inclusive, you know, to point out weak spots in my vision, [since I'm] coming from the standpoint of like, I pretty much have all the kind of unmarked privileged identities, you know,

White, male, non-recent immigrant, things like that. And so, that's been helpful. Discussing the influence that graduate students had on their classical theory course, this participant observed that their graduate students were trained in a context where the sociological canon had been approached more critically. Therefore, the students have helped encourage the inclusion of classical theorists who have historically been excluded from the canon.

Some of the participants also discussed how graduate students introduced them indirectly to theorists who have been historically excluded from the sociological canon through their course assignments. For example, one participant discussed how they were introduced to DuBois:

I really got interested in [DuBois] because one of my graduate students used him a lot, even in his like undergraduate thesis. He used DuBois' double consciousness and constantly now in his work he uses DuBois a lot, and I was like, well, I probably need to read more. I didn't get DuBois in graduate school at all.

Another participant discussed how their involvement in graduate committees has introduced them to classical theorists that they were not familiar with:

One way that I have been introduced to new theorists is being on graduate committees, because being on those committees the students provide a reading list of authors and ideas they think are important. And so I'm on a committee, so [the student], will give me [their] reading list and say, 'Look, these are the people I'm thinking about studying for my qualifying exams. What do you think of them?' Some of [the theorists] I recognize, some of them I won't. But I'll hang on to those names that I don't recognize and look them up, and tell

[the student], 'This one's good. I'm not familiar with this one, but based on the little bit that I've looked into, it looks good.' And then what will happen is [the student] will write the literature review. And so, I get exposure that way, and then maybe [the student] includes that person in [their] Ph.D. dissertation project. I'll learn more about the author that way. So yeah, like grad students have introduced me to a lot of new people. New ideas.

From these excerpts, it was noted that some participants were introduced to classical theorists through various assignments given to their graduate students, in which these students cited the work of diverse theorists, including Black women.

In addition to learning about classical theorists from individual students' assignments, graduate students also galvanized within their departments to expand the collection of theorists who are included in their classical theory courses. One participant discussed how the students in their department advocated for greater inclusivity of scholars in the classical theory course:

Our department also had a town hall. It was a grad student-initiated town hall that raised a number of issues. And one of the issues was the issue of the grad theory training, and students saying that they felt like, you know, that it was insufficient to just teach Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. And at that point, I had not taught grad theory, but I knew I wanted to, and so I took that call seriously and that students were saying, 'We want more of - at minimum - we want to be reading DuBois. All the other departments are reading DuBois. We want to seriously engage DuBois.' So, I took that into consideration - adding in other theorists.



In this participant's department, the inclusion of diverse theorists began with graduate students. As this participant prepared to teach classical theory, they listened to the request from graduate students in their department to include theorists beyond Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. Their students were particularly interested in engaging DuBois, as other departments were already including his work, and therefore, the participant included DuBois in their course.

Another participant, who had recently begun teaching graduate classical theory, also structured their course with consideration for students' frustrations with the traditional sociological canon. This participant included DuBois in their course, and approached teaching the sociological canon critically:

I felt pressure from the students who had become tired and frustrated with what they viewed as a very male, a very White canon in sociology, and I wanted to prepare my students to have that debate about decolonizing theory. But I felt like they wouldn't be prepared to really have that debate if they hadn't read these texts [from Marx, Weber, and Durkheim]. And so I wanted to take an approach that had them read these canonical texts, but to treat them, not as canon, [or] treat them not as sacrosanct, but as something that we can openly challenge and critique.

In addition to including DuBois in their syllabus, this participant included the scholarship of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. Yet, they responded to students' frustrations with the sociological canon by including canonical texts and contextualizing them in a way that allowed students to think about them critically.

Most participants also discussed that while they included theorists in their courses that graduate students would be expected to know, they also selected theorists that aligned with students' research interests, thus introducing them to more classical theorists. As one participant stated:

I had been finding that among our Ph.D. students, they came writing these amazing statements of purpose [and] had so much energy, and I felt much of the first-year curriculum kind of knocked them off course. And then by year two, they were like, 'What did I come here to do?' I figured first semester, graduate school, they should go back to the thing they came here to study and use these theorists to help them do that. And so, I had a student who's interested in environmental sociology and consumption who brought together Marx and DuBois to analyze processes of alienation and concealment, and so they applied these theorists. To actually be able to utilize theory - that was the learning objective that I felt most committed to. Helping our students not just see these as theorists they have to understand because they're important, but because we want them to be theorists, and we want them to be developing theory that draws on classical concepts, but also brings in contemporary concepts to analyze real world problems that they will be writing their dissertations about. So that was how I approached this class.

This participant recognized that as graduate students in their department advanced through their coursework, the theorists that they were introduced to were not always relevant to their research interests. Accordingly, this participant incorporated DuBois into their classical theory course,

which allowed graduate students to not only become familiar with his scholarship but also apply it to their own.

Most of the participants illuminated how graduate students contributed to the inclusion of diverse scholars within their classical theory courses. Graduate students independently incorporated theorists who are not traditionally canonized into their coursework, prompting faculty to include these scholars in their courses. Moreover, graduate students collectively advocated for changes in their classical theory courses to be inclusive of theorists who are not canonized, prompting faculty to include diverse theorists in their syllabi.

### Considering Diverse Theorists

In developing the syllabi for their classical theory courses, participants discussed how they decided to include diverse theorists. Apart from graduate students who encouraged the inclusion of theorists such as W.E.B. DuBois, Anna Julia Cooper, and Ida B. Wells, participants discussed their motivations to reimagine the sociological canon. As one participant shared, they aspired to represent the diversity of thought in early sociological history:

I was really concerned that this should be a course about ideas rather than about the great people throughout the discipline, and there were a number of reasons for that. I think it's really important to be deliberate about diversity and representing the true diversity of thought across the past. I mean, let's say 150 years, which is what you're talking about, if you're thinking about sociological theory, and to do that, what you need to do is just to take the ideas, because the ideas were kind of all around, like they were in the air. It's a very kind of ahistorical view to say,

‘Well, okay, Weber was the person who talked about rationalization,’ and then you're done. It's really important just to focus on the ideas, and then to think about who else was saying these things. When you focus on the ideas, you see that there's so many more thinkers that you can bring in, rather than just these single people that we look at. When you think about alienation [and] Marx, of course, you've got like Anna Julia Cooper, who's writing about kind of theories of market worth, and thinking about how women are removed from that true species being as it were. And so I think part of the reason for focusing on the ideas is that it really allows you to see this kind of development of thought, rather than just thinking about individual people.

As opposed to organizing their classical theory course around specific theorists, this participant organized their course around specific themes within sociology. Designing the course in this way allowed them to introduce graduate students to more classical theorists and the ideas that emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, including the contributions of Black women.

Participants also discussed the importance of including diverse theorists in classical theory courses to illustrate the foundations of contemporary theory. Participants who included classical Black women sociologists in their syllabus were asked their reason for doing so. As one participant noted:

So you could look at Anna Julia Cooper as in some ways, kind of sort of a precursor to intersectionality. Because she looks at race, class, and gender in her analysis. She's one of the rare thinkers who is actually looking at these three together in an integrated fashion. I know we think of Kimberlé Crenshaw as

really giving it a name right – intersectionality – but I mean, Anna Julia Cooper was writing, I think, from an intersectional perspective, way back then. So it was valuable to include her.

For this participant, connecting contemporary Black women’s intellectual contributions to the contributions of early Black women sociologists was important. As demonstrated by this participant, including Anna Julia Cooper’s work was important in outlining the concept of intersectionality and its early origins in their course.

Another participant, who taught both classical and contemporary theory discussed how they selected theorists for the classical course who could be “in conversation” with theorists in the contemporary course:

I’m always thinking, you know, of the next semester, what I’m doing this first semester, so I knew for sure, that I wanted to teach Patricia Hill Collins in the second semester. I knew that she was going to be there, right. When I’m designing my syllabus I know that I want to end with Patricia Hill Collins because of the substance that she’s talking about. So the question is who do you then have her in conversation with in the first semester? I know because all these second semester scholars [are] having conversation with a first semester scholar, and, I want to end with [Collins]. It doesn’t really make sense to put her in conversation with Engels and Durkheim and Weber. But I ultimately decided to go with for the first semester Anna Julia Cooper, because of the conversation that I felt like she could have. Anna Julia Cooper is anti-Marxist. She’s anti-communist, explicitly so. I thought that that was a cool conversation to have

with her on that. Patricia Hill Collins says something along the lines of like a core tenet or a core principle of Black feminist thought is this idea of the solidarity of humanity and that is something that she credits to Anna Julia Cooper. Once I kind of came to that line in that book, Anna Cooper just seemed like the scholar that I wanted to plug into that hole in anticipating what was going to happen in the [contemporary course]. I think I could have made other theorists work there, but I felt like she was the best person. I also felt like she was the best person because I knew who else I wanted to put her in conversation with. So that was, you know, the reason why those Black women in particular get assigned there. It was sort of working with Patricia Hill Collins sort of backwards, also thinking about the broader field of conversations that they could have with scholars at that time.

Similar to other participants who discussed selecting theorists to connect classical to contemporary paradigms, this participant included Anna Julia Cooper in classical theory to later make a connection to Collins in contemporary theory. In their syllabus, this participant included Cooper in their classical theory course and engaged them with Patricia Hill Collins in contemporary theory as a demonstration of the diversity of ideas within the legacy of Black feminist scholarship. By doing so, they demonstrated that, like other theoretical paradigms in sociology, Black feminist thought has a lineage that extends back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century

While some participants discussed including diverse scholars in their courses, other participants decided to not include diverse scholars when they taught classical theory. Noting the importance of the contributions of diverse theorists, some participants addressed concerns about

how to diversify the sociological canon. When asked if they thought about adding more scholars of diverse backgrounds to their classical theory course, one participant noted:

One of the things is I thought about this course, in a million different ways, when I first sat down to design it. I really felt uncomfortable with what I could imagine could be a tokenist approach – picking a female scholar who was writing around the same time [as Marx, Weber, and Durkheim], picking scholars from the Global South, or picking other Black scholars other than DuBois and just kind of sprinkling them throughout. That didn't feel like a meaningful enough shift for me in ways that connected well to the debates we are having in the discipline. So what I've been mindful of is how to bring in scholars from more diverse backgrounds that feels like it meaningfully engages with the concepts, rather than feeling sprinkled in to diversify a syllabus for diversity's sake.

This participant also shared that they believed that the canon should be changed meaningfully:

I think as we're balancing many factors, recognizing that we need to overhaul the canon. I think if we jump in so quickly all at once and we start, you know, throwing things in, it doesn't feel like it will have the meaningful impact on the discipline than it will if we're more deliberate about it.

While this participant included DuBois in their course, they believed that moving too quickly to diversify the sociological canon has consequences for the theorists that are being added. The participant believed diverse classical theorists should be included substantively in the sociological canon and classical theory courses, as opposed to being included without prudence.

Another participant, who described themselves as having a conservative approach to teaching classical theory, articulated that they did not want to include diverse theorists in a way that would give them secondary status in their course:

... if you just kind of throw [DuBois] in, to me that feels like you're letting in – and this is always what happens to BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, People of Color] scholars and women scholars – is they get to come in the back door, they get to sit in the back row, they get that secondary position. And that's that kind of additive approach, I was not going to do that. I was absolutely adamant that I was not going to do that.

This participant articulated their reason for not including diverse theorists in their course. Like other respondents who did not include diverse theorists in their courses, this participant was concerned with including diverse theorists in a way that would contextualize them as subordinate to other classical theorists presented in the course.

From the interviews, participants approached the inclusion of diverse classical theorists differently. Some participants chose to include diverse theorists to reflect the history of sociological thought and connected diverse theorists to key concepts and themes in sociology. Moreover, some participants included diverse classical theorists to connect them with contemporary theorists, demonstrating a lineage of theoretical paradigms. In these approaches, it was noted that participants included classical Black women theorists in their courses. For other participants, however, they decided not to include the scholarship of diverse theorists. These participants were concerned with engaging the scholarship of diverse scholars meaningfully and contextualizing these theorists in a way that upheld their contributions to the discipline.



However, amid a limited exposure to classical theorists, managing professional expectations, and an ongoing conversation about the sociological canon, all participants *considered* including theorists who have historically not been canonized.

### The Role of Faculty

As participants shared how they developed their graduate-level classical theory courses, they all identified these courses as the site for transforming the sociological canon. As faculty who teach classical theory, participants acknowledged that their role was not only to *teach* the canon but also to *change* it. Regarding the canon, one participant explicitly stated that faculty who teach classical theory are central to its transformation: “I think we need to kind of recognize that we're active participants in that process. And we should kind of recognize that we're active in that process and do something about it.” This participant also expressed their appreciation for the recent calls to action to expand the canon:

I like the idea of forcing people to be kind of deliberate, because I do think that part of the reason you end up with a syllabus of all White men is because you just never think about it just becomes a taken-for-granted assumption. I don't think that's a very impressive thing, but I think that is what happens...So I like the idea that people are being forced to be more deliberate about their actions, whether or not that translates into better things, you know, we will see.

In discussing their engagement with the recent calls to action to expand the canon, this participant stated that the sociological canon becomes reproduced because it is presumed that only White men comprise it. Also, in this respondent's view, the recent calls to action may

mitigate this, and encourage faculty who teach classical theory to be deliberate about the theorists they include in their courses.

Participants also discussed the efforts that they believe they should undertake for the canon to change. One participant, who expressed concerns about including diverse theorists substantively, stated the following:

I've taught [classical theory] once, and I have ideas for how I'm going to change it for next year, and then I'll have further ideas and I expect to be adding theorists and taking away theorists and to constantly be growing and that will be an incentive for me to keep reading more and to [be] exposing myself to more theorists and more ideas, and so yeah, I think that [faculty] should be dynamic [in this process].

Stating that faculty should be involved in the efforts to change the canon, this participant outlined their plan to include more diverse theorists as they continue to teach classical theory. To do this, they explained that they planned to become more familiar with the scholarship of diverse theorists to add them meaningfully to their course.

Participants were also clear that the canon will change, and that this change must take place in classical theory courses. While they expressed concerns about how to include diverse theorists in courses, one participant, shared:

So at that point, it felt just really important to me that the only way that the canon changes is when we start to do it at the ground level in the training of our students. You can sit and talk all you want about the importance of it, but unless you make those changes, it's just talk.

While this participant discussed concerns about giving scholars of color secondary status in their course, they did express that the expansion of the sociological canon begins with the training of graduate students in classical theory courses. Also, they asserted that instead of only discussing how these changes need to happen, faculty need to take the lead in making these changes to their classical theory courses by including diverse theorists.

Finally, while understanding that full-time faculty contend with various responsibilities, participants did not believe that this was a reason to not incorporate diverse theorists in their courses. For example, a participant who expressed empathy for the challenges faculty experience in managing research and teaching also noted the following:

I am sympathetic to those concerns that faculty have, but I also don't agree with them. I'm sympathetic that they face those barriers. But we can't just be like, 'Oh, I'm gonna only teach what I was exposed to.' That doesn't make sense in terms of the growth of a discipline. And it doesn't make sense in terms of making a discipline more inclusive. If people really care about growing, expanding, and making the discipline more inclusive, they have to abandon that. You have to be willing to step up and be like, 'I'm gonna read some theorists that I had never read before, and do a bunch of secondary readings to better understanding these things,' right? It takes work. But that should be work that we do. I'm not saying it's easy. I'm not saying that there aren't hurdles to it. I sympathize with those hurdles, but I don't think that is an excuse to not change the syllabus and do the work.

All participants viewed graduate-level classical theory courses as the site for transforming the sociological canon. Despite managing numerous competing responsibilities, they are aware that as faculty, the expansion of the canon begins in their classical theory courses. Further, participants who were not already including diverse theorists described their plans to learn more about the scholarship and contributions of those classical theorists as the beginning of a shift toward epistemic inclusion emphasizing the contributions of Black women.

### Summary

In Phase 3 of this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with faculty who teach graduate-level classical theory courses. The data collected from these interviews were analyzed using constructivist grounded theory (CGT), which allowed for an inductive approach to the analysis. Using the “causes” coding family outlined by Glaser (1978), the data were analyzed to determine the causes for the diffusion – or lack thereof – of Black women’s scholarship in graduate-level classical theory courses. Five themes emerged from the data – Graduate School Training, Professional Expectations of Faculty, Graduate Student Influence, Considering Diverse Theorists, and The Role of Faculty.

In response to the research question “What factors influence faculty decisions about which scholars they include in graduate-level classical theory courses?” an analytic story emerged from the data. Overall, participants unambiguously discussed the lack of mentorship and guidance as they began teaching classical theory. Consequently, they looked to a variety of resources to begin to develop their course. For most participants, the materials available from their doctoral training provided a basis for their own syllabi, given both the availability and

familiarity of the material. While providing a strong basis for developing their course, participants who used materials from their graduate training noted that they had been trained in the epistemological traditions of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, and thus included them on the syllabi of the classical theory courses they teach. However, most participants did not strictly adhere to their doctoral training alone as they taught classical theory, using pedagogical approaches and including classical theorists that they had not been introduced to as graduate students, and thereby expanded the breadth of classical theorists in their own courses.

As full-time faculty, participants discussed managing the expectations that accompany this role. In addition to teaching, they also were responsible for engaging in research and producing manuscripts for publication. Within this, participants were responsible for professionalizing graduate students by introducing them to specific classical theorists, specifically Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. Amid their professional expectations, participants had little time to deviate from the texts they already knew. Further, as full-time faculty, they contended with the institutional expectations of prioritizing research and publications over teaching, further impairing the possibility of including diverse theorists. Due to all of these factors, the scholarship of classical Black women theorists was not included in some of the participant's courses.

Through engagement with graduate students, participants were introduced to diverse theorists and their scholarship. Individually and collectively, graduate students influenced participants to think about including theorists beyond Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. Some participants began including diverse theorists in response to student-led advocacy and research interests. In addition to the influence of graduate students, participants more broadly began

considering the inclusion of diverse theorists in their courses. For these participants, their motivation to include more theorists was rooted in a desire to reflect the diversity of sociological thought that emerged in the classical period. It was in the approach of these participants that the inclusion of classical Black women was addressed, primarily as a way of demonstrating Black women's intellectual legacy in sociology. There were participants, however, who, while considering the inclusion of diverse theorists, expressed concerns about tokenizing these scholars, and expressed a preference to include these theorists substantively in their courses.

Notwithstanding the inclusion of diverse theorists in their courses, participants acknowledged that graduate-level classical theory was the site for the expansion of the sociological canon. As faculty who teach these courses, participants noted that they need to be engaged in an ongoing process of learning the scholarship of diverse theorists and incorporating them into graduate students' training, ultimately shifting the sociological canon.

## **CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

Black women's intellectual contributions have been documented within the discipline of sociology both through the primary texts they developed and the secondary texts that expound upon them. As well, the subjugation of Black women's intellectual contributions has been documented and discussed by Black women and those who support them. For over 100 years, this invisibility and hypervisibility that Black women experience amid the politics of knowledge production have been directly in front of us - in plain sight - all along. Their scholarship has outlined theoretical approaches and empirical analyses that we still draw from today. Yet, from the findings of this study, it appears that their work has been a call for inclusion to which we have yet to respond.

In this research study, I investigated the diffusion of classical Black women sociologists and their scholarship into graduate-level classical theory courses following the call to action to expand the sociological canon in 2020 (ASA 2020). Specifically, this study was guided by three research questions: 1) Are classical Black women sociological theorists included in the syllabi of graduate-level classical theory courses? If so, how? If not, why not? 2) How are classical Black women sociological theorists conceptualized in the syllabi of graduate-level classical theory courses? and 3) What factors influence faculty decisions about which scholars they include in graduate-level classical theory courses? Using descriptive statistics and two qualitative approaches, I investigated the diffusion of classical Black women theorists into graduate-level classical theory courses, the construction of classical theorists in the course descriptions of syllabi, and how faculty develop these courses. This work has not been an interrogation of institutions nor of people who work within them. Rather, this project has been an empirical

approach to understanding the epistemic exclusion of classical Black women theorists from graduate-level classical theory – the essential training ground for future academicians.

In this chapter, I will first outline the key findings from each phase of this study and the meaning of these findings. Second, I will discuss the limitations of the research. Third, I will address the implications of the study's findings. Finally, I will conclude this chapter with directions for future research.

### Key Findings

#### Phase 1

In chapter 3, I presented the findings of a preliminary analysis of the 50 syllabi collected and assessed which classical theorists were included in them. Of the 57 theorists who were included in the sample, only two of them were Black women – Anna Julia Cooper and Ida B. Wells. Together, Wells and Cooper each appeared on less than 15% of the syllabi in the sample. Additionally, they were represented less than other groups, particularly White men. The findings from this preliminary analysis encouraged further exploration into the construction of classical sociological theorists and the development of classical theory courses.

#### Phase 2

In chapter 4, I presented the findings of Phase 2 of the study. Using the *Sign Systems and Knowledge* and *Politics* tools, CDA was used to understand how classical social theorists are constructed in the course descriptions of graduate-level classical theory syllabi. Two questions guided this phase. The first question - What is a classical theorist? - was used to understand how



social theorists are contextualized in graduate-level classical theory courses. Based on the analysis, two categories were developed. The first category, *Hierarchical*, contextualized classical social theorists as existing in a hierarchy, with theorists who were included in the course being assigned more value than those who were not. This category centered the intellectual contributions of European and American White men, framing them as founders of the discipline through their introduction of both theoretical and methodological approaches to exploring the social world. This exception to these theorists was W.E.B. DuBois – a Black man. Scholars who employ CDA note that when examining language, what is *not* stated carries as much importance as what *is* stated. Furthermore, syllabi in this category did not include Black women, thus relegating them among social theorists whose contributions do not have value. The second category, *Corrective*, contextualized and critiqued the sociological canon and its construction. The syllabi in this category addressed the biases in the sociological canon and placed value on the scholarship and contributions of diverse theorists as a way of correcting the historic exclusion of diverse theorists from the sociological canon. Moreover, this category not only included classical Black women theorists, but also explicitly named them and outlined their intellectual contributions. In line with CDA, the language used in syllabi in the *Corrective* category challenged power, and more challenged specifically how systemic gendered racism is used to subjugate the contributions of Black women to the discipline.

The second question posed in Phase 2 of the study was Why should classical social theorists be studied? This question used the *Identities* tool of CDA to explore how the individual and collective identities of sociologists are built based upon their familiarity with classical social theorists. From the analysis, it was found that syllabi that were categorized as *Hierarchical* and

*Corrective* both emphasized the necessity of knowing the scholarship of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Émile Durkheim to engage with other sociologists in the discipline. According to the analysis, syllabi reiterate that knowing these White men's scholarship signaled belonging to the discipline. Therefore, knowing the scholarship of Black women was not essential to one's identity as a sociologist, nor was it necessary to navigate the discipline, and therefore devalued. Placing more value on these White men and their scholarship reinforced systemic gendered racism in academia that belittles the contributions of oppressed groups, among them Black women.

### Phase 3

In chapter 5, I presented the findings of the third phase of the study, where faculty who teach graduate-level courses classical theory in sociology were interviewed about how they select the classical theorists to include in their courses. This phase was guided by the following question: What factors influence faculty decisions about which scholars they include in graduate-level classical theory courses? The data collected from this phase of the study were analyzed using constructivist grounded theory (CGT) to understand the development of graduate-level classical theory courses and the causes for the inclusion and exclusion of classical Black women theorists from them.

Overall, the analysis of the interviews revealed five themes that captured how faculty developed their courses. Participants discussed how they began teaching graduate-level classical theory using the resources from their doctoral programs to begin designing their own courses. Participants used their doctoral training, replicating some aspects of the courses and not others.

This included the process of selecting theorists for their courses. Some participants discussed including Marx, Weber, and Durkheim in their courses, in part because of they already had extensive notes on these courses from their graduate training. Other participants diverted from their graduate training, opting instead to include a greater breadth of theorists aside from those who have been canonized.

Participants also discussed managing the professional expectations of faculty as it related to their classical theory courses. On the one hand, participants were expected to professionalize graduate students and prepare them to engage in the larger sociological community, thus including the scholarship of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, all of whom graduate students will be expected to know as emerging sociologists. On the other hand, due to the expectations of participants to prioritize research, they did not have as much time to dedicate to including diverse theorists in their classical theory courses despite their lack of familiarity with the scholarship of these theorists.

The limitations of time did not prevent participants from including diverse theorists entirely. Participants discussed being influenced by graduate students to include diverse theorists in their courses. Additionally, some participants discussed including diverse theorists in their courses due in part to their contributions and a desire to reflect the diversity of sociological thought that emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Relevant to this study, some of the participants discussed including classical Black women theorists in their courses as a demonstration of the legacy of Black women's knowledge production in sociology. Some participants, however, discussed not including diverse theorists due to a desire to include these theorists and their contributions substantively, and not use an additive approach to the inclusion

of diverse theorists. Finally, participants discussed the importance of their role in expanding the sociological canon by including diverse theorists in their courses.

### Limitations

As with any research, this study has limitations. First, Phase 1 guided the subsequent phases of this project and began with the collection of syllabi for analysis. To develop the sample of syllabi, I used the 2020 U.S. News and World Report Rankings to strategically sample doctoral-granting sociology programs to collect syllabi of graduate-level classical theory courses. This allowed for an assessment of both elite and non-elite institutions, expanding on existing studies of the diffusion of diverse classical theorists at elite institutions. Additionally, it allowed for an assessment of the inclusion of diverse theorists at doctoral-granting sociology programs throughout the U.S. While the U.S. News and World Report Rankings is a highly regarded source for the rankings of undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, it does not include all doctoral-granting sociology programs in the U.S. The doctoral programs considered in the 2020 U.S. News and World Report survey were based on programs that had granted at least five doctoral degrees between 2014 and 2019 (U.S. News and World Report 2022). This disqualified newly established doctoral programs, which may have taken different approaches to teaching graduate-level classical theory and incorporated classical Black women theorists into these courses.

Second, the Covid-19 pandemic began shortly before I started collecting syllabi for this research. Throughout the process of data collection, educational institutions were adjusting to the pandemic. While the process of collecting syllabi was conducted through phone calls and emails,

department administrators and faculty were facilitating these adjustments during Covid-19, and thus, responses to my research inquiries for syllabi were not often prioritized. Further, in line with the inclusion criteria for the study, I collected and included syllabi from classical theory courses offered during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic years in the sample. However, due to the pandemic, some of the institutions that were randomly selected did not have new doctoral cohorts during the 2020-2021 academic year, and therefore did not offer graduate-level classical theory courses during that year. Finally, as syllabi are the intellectual property of faculty, there were some faculty who expressed concerns about sharing their syllabus for this project.

Third, for the final phase of the study, I used purposive sampling to identify faculty to interview about the development of the classical theory courses they teach. Of the 26 faculty who were invited to interview, four declined to participate in the study for various reasons. Among these reasons was not having time to commit to an interview amid managing professional and personal responsibilities during the pandemic, and most women who were contacted expressed this sentiment. Also, despite using a purposive sampling strategy, the recruitment for Phase 3 of the study yielded a small number of participants, all of whom self-identified as White. Although the subsample of faculty included those who both did *and* did not include classical Black women theorists in their syllabi and represented all five tiers developed in Phase 1, a larger subsample of participants would have allowed for greater exploration of the factors that contribute to the development of classical theory courses and a greater exploration of themes in the constructivist grounded theory analysis. Additionally, a larger sample of participants may have included faculty of color who teach classical theory and would have allowed for further analysis of

differences between faculty who teach these courses based upon their racial identity. This is, however, not to assume that faculty of color who teach classical theory would have necessarily taken the approach of including diverse theorists or Black women. Having non-White participants, though, would have been interesting to further explore the personal and institutional factors that influenced their decision-making processes, including but not limited to internalized White supremacy to institutional barriers as faculty of color in the academy.

### Implications

I approached this study as a Black woman, as a sociologist, and as a Black feminist scholar. As a Black woman, my personal experiences generally navigating the world and more specifically navigating educational institutions piqued my interest in pursuing this research. As a Black woman, I am familiar with how Black women in various social arenas are often mined solely to extract their creativity, insights, and – dare I say – brilliance. And it’s infuriating. It is as if the historical expectations that Black women’s mental, physical, and emotional labor should be readily accessible to all have never been extinguished. As a sociologist, I am deeply concerned with the future of the discipline, particularly following the call to action to diversify the sociological canon in 2020. What is more, I am concerned with rising scholars, the scope of their training, and the theorists that they are introduced to through that process. As a Black feminist scholar, I view my aforementioned personal and academic concerns as deeply interconnected. I observe (and experience) how Black women in the academy are a source from which people readily and audaciously extract what they need, rarely with reciprocity nor with gratitude, almost always overlooked – or worse – completely uncredited. These observations

(and experiences) are the starting point for this research project, employing Black women's theoretical contributions as a framework for an empirical approach to understanding the subjugation of their knowledge.

The findings of this study provide insight into which theorists are included in graduate-level classical theory courses, how classical theorists are contextualized, and the factors that influence the development of graduate-level classical theory courses. Therefore, this study has implications for the reproduction of knowledge, epistemic inclusion, and graduate student training.

The study has implications for understanding the reproduction of knowledge and the sociological canon. Previous studies have explored the inclusion of women and non-White classical theorists with a specific focus on the most elite doctoral-granting programs in the U.S. (Thomas and Kukulian 2004; Wyse 2014). From the analyses conducted in the current study, it is clear that the sociological canon still centers White men, specifically Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. Moreover, this was not only seen in the top 20 institutions, but also seen in all tiers of the U.S. News and World Rankings. Thus, because institutions reproduce their cultural practices and distribute cultural capital (Bourdieu 1973, 1998), Marx, Weber, and Durkheim remain centered in graduate-level classical theory courses. Further, this study demonstrated that in sociology doctoral programs, classical theory remains the site for graduate student professionalization, with the inclusion of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim as a key component of this training (Connell 1997). What does this mean for classical Black women theorists? As mentioned in chapter 3, White men had a higher frequency than the other groups, particularly Black women. Further, there were only two Black women in the sample – Ida B. Wells and Anna

Julia Cooper. Additionally, in the analysis of the construction of classical theorists in Phase 2, it was found in the *Hierarchical* category that a classical social theorist was conceptualized as one's whose intellectual contributions have broader applicability and have proven to be relevant even in contemporary sociology. Despite their well-documented contributions to feminist theory, race theory, and intersectionality, Black women were still not constructed as valued contributors to the discipline of sociology in the language of the syllabi. Further, their scholarship was also not considered to be part of the cultural capital that graduate students acquire in classical theory courses. The implications of these findings, then, is that the scholarship of White men still pervades the discipline of sociology (Collins 2008). The lack of formal recognition of classical Black women theorists as part of the sociological canon demonstrates the impact of the politics of knowledge production as it relates to Black women. Finally, it illustrates that language is a specific mechanism by which systemic gendered racism is perpetuated in sociology.

This study also has implications for managing professional expectations and the inclusion of classical Black women theorists. In this study, interview participants discussed how the professional expectations of faculty pose a challenge to including diverse classical theorists in their courses. Within their courses, they are expected to fulfill an array of expectations, among them to familiarize graduate students with these specific classical theorists as part of their professionalization. Additionally, the institutional emphasis on engagement in research and de-emphasis on teaching left participants with minimal time to engage the scholarship of classical Black women theorists. Further, because research and publications are the criteria for the achievement of tenure and continue to rise (Warren 2019), faculty may not prioritize including classical Black women theorists in their courses. Thus, the structure of institutions prevents



faculty from substantively including women and non-White classical theorists in their graduate-level classical theory courses. Following the 2020 call to action to expand the canon, professional organizations have hosted workshops (ASA 2020) and developed resources (Confronting the Canon Crowdsourcing List 2020) to support faculty as they include women and non-White classical theorists. In the future, these organizations should continue these efforts in annual meetings and virtual activities to further support faculty to include classical Black women theorists substantively in their courses.

The data collected from the interviews revealed how graduate-level classical theory courses are developed, and further, illustrated how classical Black women theorists become included and excluded from these courses. Interview participants in this study shared how their classical theory courses are developed with consideration for vocational expectations and based upon their own perspectives on classical theorists and the sociological canon. This aligns with the concept of the hidden curriculum, which espouses that curricula are developed with consideration for institutional expectations *and* based upon the values of the educator leading the course (Jackson 1968). With regard to institutional expectations, the findings of this study demonstrate that there are external pressures for faculty to teach graduate-level classical theory to fulfill expectations that are rooted in maleness and whiteness. We can surmise that this is in part due to the pressures and expectations of authenticity, and what it means to be a “real sociologist.” Additionally, it must be noted that these pressures and expectations are part and parcel of what reproduces the sociological canon by perpetuating the canonical view (Connell 1997), which limits graduate students’ exposure to more classical theorists. Further, these expectations become a mechanism for maintaining White institutional spaces by reproducing the

sociological canon, which was developed by White men at a time when women and non-White theorists were excluded from the discipline (Moore 2007). These expectations implicitly require that faculty who teach graduate-level classical theory by leading with maleness and Whiteness.

This also extends to the participants' insight on how classical theory courses are being taught. In line with the concept of the hidden curriculum, with regard to the values of the educator, the findings of this study demonstrate that classical theory *is* being taught in a variety of ways. Some participants – namely women – expressed holding a more conservative view of the canon, and therefore made Marx, Weber, and Durkheim central to their courses. This speaks to the possible tensions between faculty members' values and the professional expectations they experience to be viewed as a “real” sociologist among their colleagues. Most importantly, the findings conclude that classical theory *could* be taught differently with a broader range of epistemological orientations included. Participants who included classical Black women theorists in their courses did so for a few reasons, among them the desire to make courses relevant for graduate student research and to reflect the range of theoretical perspectives that emerged during sociology's classical period. It is also important to note that amid their professional responsibilities, the faculty who included classical Black women theorists *created* the time and sought out the resources to do so. This reveals that diffusing classical Black women theorists into graduate-level classical theory *is* possible. Finally, participants stated that the change in the sociological canon requires a bottom-up approach, noting that the transformation of the canon is the site of this change. Therefore, it becomes imperative for faculty who teach these courses to strategize how they can increase the diffusion of classical Black women theorists into their courses, perhaps learning from other faculty who teach these courses. Thus, graduate-level

classical theory courses *are* the site at which the sociological canon can begin expanding to include the works of classical Black women theorists.

Finally, graduate students were influential in the diffusion of classical Black women theorists in graduate-level classical theory courses. This demonstrated that graduate training it is not a unidirectional process, but at times guided by students, creating a mutual exchange between them and their teachers. This exchange models the tenets of pedagogical approaches where the instructor and the student are both engaged in the learning process (hooks 1994; Ikeda 2010; Inukai 2018). Thus, the transformation of the canon may be further facilitated by this approach to teaching classical theory. However, for faculty who teach graduate-level classical theory, this use of engaged pedagogy should be approached with caution, as a reliance on graduate students to facilitate the diffusion of diverse theorists can have negative implications, particularly for graduate students of color, whose labor is often relied upon in these settings.

From the primary finding of this study, it can be concluded that classical Black women theorists are absent from syllabi of graduate-level classical theory courses. Moreover, the diffusion of their work is not prioritized widely by theory faculty, thus reproducing the sociological canon. What is more, the lack of diffusion of the scholarship of classical Black women theorists carries the potential for new scholars to reproduce the sociological canon in new ways.

#### Directions for Future Research

At the conclusion of this research, I wonder where the discipline of sociology would be had we moved beyond mere consideration for classical Black women's scholarship, and

substantively diffused their work into graduate-level classical theory courses. Additionally, the 2020 call to action will need a sustained response in subsequent years. There are some directions for future research that are based on this study. First, this study begins to reveal which theorists are included in graduate-level classical theory courses. However, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, faculty navigated many changes in this process. Consequently, it is likely that this adjustment to teaching in the pandemic did not allow faculty to include diverse theorists in classical theory courses. Thus, the inclusion of Black women's scholarship – among other diverse theorists – was not prioritized. Aside from these mitigating factors, the attempt to transform the canon was not going to be an instantaneous process. However, as the conversation about transforming the canon continues, it will be important to see how the sociological canon transforms over time, and how to assess which classical theorists are included in these courses in the subsequent years following the 2020 call to action. Therefore, future research should include the continued analysis of syllabi of graduate-level classical theory courses to assess the diffusion of classical theorists and the reproduction of the sociological canon over the next 10 years.

Second, future research should focus on the diffusion of the scholarship of other diverse classical theorists, as well as their contributions to the discipline. This study employed an intersectional approach, focusing on the racial and gendered biases embedded in the construction of the sociological canon. Moreover, this study has focused specifically on the diffusion of classical Black women's scholarship. As noted in the findings of this study, other groups of diverse scholars were included (and not included) in the syllabi of classical theory courses. Additionally, extant literature reveals that there are scholars living at different intersections who contributed to the discipline of sociology but have not been recognized for their contributions.

For example, Brooks and Wright (2021) outlined the contributions of Augustus Granville Dill - a Black queer sociologist - to Black public sociology. Eilbaum (2022) and Walsh (2004) discussed the contributions of Mexican sociologist Manuel Gamio to the Chicago School and the understanding of the process of acculturation. Thus, research beyond this study should focus on exploring other groups of diverse classical theorists, their contributions, and the factors that contribute to the lack of diffusion of their scholarship into graduate-level classical theory courses.

Third, as demonstrated by this study, graduate students played a role in the inclusion of diverse theorists in graduate-level classical theory courses, actively working to transform the construction of the sociological canon. Also, social media connects students beyond their departments and engages them in conversations about citational politics. Further research can clarify how graduate students are introduced to diverse theorists. Future research could also be conducted to understand graduate students' perceptions of this movement to expand the canon since they are the rising scholars who are being trained at this time. Finally, future projects can incorporate classroom observations that allow for an analysis of the interaction between the faculty and graduate students as they engage classical theorists. Thus, research that explores the graduate student experience is critical for creating a comprehensive picture of this historic moment.

Fourth, the 2020 U.S. News and World Rankings included 10 Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) (HACU 2022) and one Historically Black College/University (HBCU) (U.S. Department of Education 2022). Given these designations, future research should examine how graduate classical theory is taught at those institutions. This research can provide insight into any

differences in the inclusion of diverse theorists compared to predominantly White institutions (PWIs).

Finally, future research should examine the diffusion of diverse theorists in other graduate-level sociology courses in U.S. institutions. This study examined the syllabi of graduate-level classical theory courses, in part, because it is a course that is required in many graduate programs, serving as an entry point for graduate students' training. However, it is important to note that it is not the *only* required course that graduate students in sociology are required to take. As well, classical theory is not the only course in which students are introduced to classical theorists. Graduate programs offer a variety of required and elective courses that also introduce classical theorists to students. Future research can examine required courses such as Research Methods and Contemporary Theory, and elective courses such as Race Theory and Feminist Theory to explore the diffusion of classical theorists, providing more insight into the entirety of graduate theory training and the classical theorists that graduate students are introduced to. By continuing research on the diffusion of classical theorists in graduate sociology programs, we can work toward ensuring that our successors in the discipline are introduced to a range of classical theorists and their contributions – an important step toward challenging epistemic exclusion in the future of our discipline.

## **APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL FOR NON-HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH**



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Institutional Review Board  
FWA00000351  
IRB00001138, IRB00012110  
Office of Research  
12201 Research Parkway  
Orlando, FL 32826-3246

**NOT HUMAN RESEARCH DETERMINATION**

July 12, 2021

Dear [Ashley Stone](#):

On 7/12/2021, the IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	An Analysis of Graduate Classical Sociology Theory Syllabi
Investigator:	<a href="#">Ashley Stone</a>
IRB ID:	STUDY00003271
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• HRP-251- FORM - Faculty Advisor Scientific-Scholarly Review fillable form-SC.pdf, Category: Faculty Research Approval; • HRP-250-FORM- Request for NHSR (1).docx, Category: IRB Protocol;

The IRB determined that the proposed activity is not research involving human subjects as defined by DHHS and FDA regulations.

IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities are research involving human in which the organization is engaged, please submit a new request to the IRB for a determination. You can create a modification by clicking **Create Modification / CR** within the study.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or [irb@ucf.edu](mailto:irb@ucf.edu). Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

Kamille Birkbeck  
Designated Reviewer



## **APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH**



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Institutional Review Board  
FWA00000351  
IRB00001138, IRB00012110  
Office of Research  
12201 Research Parkway  
Orlando, FL 32826-3246

### EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

September 27, 2021

Dear Ashley Stone:

On 9/27/2021, the IRB determined the following submission to be human subjects research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Exploring the Development of Graduate-level Classical Theory Courses
Investigator:	Ashley Stone
IRB ID:	STUDY00003408
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• HRP-251- FORM - Faculty Advisor Scientific-Scholarly Review fillable form Complete.pdf, Category: Faculty Research Approval;</li><li>• Demographic Survey, Category: Survey / Questionnaire;</li><li>• Interview Questions copy.docx, Category: Interview / Focus Questions;</li><li>• Recruitment Script (Email and Phone).docx, Category: Recruitment Materials;</li><li>• Updated Explanation of Research, Category: Consent Form;</li><li>• Updated Request for Exemption, Category: IRB Protocol;</li></ul>

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made, and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please submit a modification request to the IRB. Guidance on submitting Modifications and Administrative Check-in are detailed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request so that IRB records will be accurate.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or [irb@ucf.edu](mailto:irb@ucf.edu). Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kamille C. Birkbeck". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'K'.

Kamille Birkbeck  
Designated Reviewer

## APPENDIX C: 2020 U.S. NEWS AND WORLD RANKINGS REPORT SOCIOLOGY GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Ranking	School	Peer Score	Number
1	Harvard University	4.7	1
1	Princeton University	4.7	2
1	University of California--Berkeley	4.7	3
1	University of Michigan--Ann Arbor	4.7	4
5	Stanford University	4.6	5
6	University of North Carolina--Chapel Hill	4.5	6
6	University of Wisconsin--Madison	4.5	7
8	University of California--Los Angeles	4.4	8
8	University of Chicago	4.4	9
10	Northwestern University	4.3	10
11	Columbia University	4.2	11
11	New York University	4.2	12
11	University of Pennsylvania	4.2	13
11	University of Texas--Austin	4.2	14
15	Duke University	4.1	15
15	Indiana University--Bloomington	4.1	16
17	Cornell University	4	17
17	Ohio State University	4	18
17	Pennsylvania State University--University Park	4	19
17	University of Minnesota--Twin Cities	4	20
17	University of Washington	4	21
22	Yale University	3.9	22
23	University of California--Irvine	3.8	23
24	Brown University	3.7	24
24	University of Arizona	3.7	25
24	University of Maryland--College Park	3.7	26
27	Johns Hopkins University	3.6	27
28	CUNY Graduate School and University Center	3.5	28
28	Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey--New Brunswick	3.5	29
30	University of California--Davis	3.4	30

30	University of Massachusetts—Amherst	3.4	31
32	University of California--Santa Barbara	3.3	32
32	University of Notre Dame	3.3	33
32	University of Virginia	3.3	34
32	Vanderbilt University	3.3	35
36	Emory University	3.2	36
36	University at Albany--SUNY	3.2	37
36	University of California--San Diego	3.2	38
36	University of Iowa	3.2	39
40	Stony Brook University--SUNY	3.1	40
40	University of Southern California	3.1	41
42	Boston College	3	42
42	Michigan State University	3	43
42	University of Colorado--Boulder	3	44
42	University of Illinois--Chicago	3	45
42	Washington State University	3	46
47	Boston University	2.9	47
47	Brandeis University	2.9	48
47	Florida State University	2.9	49
47	North Carolina State University	2.9	50
47	Northeastern University	2.9	51
47	Texas A&M University--College Station	2.9	52
47	University of Georgia	2.9	53
47	University of Illinois--Urbana-Champaign	2.9	54
47	University of Oregon	2.9	55
47	Virginia Tech	2.9	56
57	Bowling Green State University	2.8	57
57	Purdue University--West Lafayette	2.8	58
57	Temple University	2.8	59
57	University of California--Riverside	2.8	60
57	University of Florida	2.8	61
57	University of Pittsburgh	2.8	62
63	Syracuse University	2.7	63
63	University of Connecticut	2.7	64
63	University of Delaware	2.7	65
63	University of Nebraska--Lincoln	2.7	66
67	Arizona State University	2.6	67

67	New School	2.6	68
67	Teachers College, Columbia University	2.6	69
67	University at Buffalo--SUNY	2.6	70
71	Georgia State University	2.5	71
71	University of California--San Francisco	2.5	72
71	University of California--Santa Cruz	2.5	73
71	University of Utah	2.5	74
75	Louisiana State University--Baton Rouge	2.4	75
75	University of Cincinnati	2.4	76
75	University of Kansas	2.4	77
75	University of Oklahoma	2.4	78
75	University of South Carolina	2.4	79
80	American University	2.3	80
80	Case Western Reserve University	2.3	81
80	George Mason University	2.3	82
80	Iowa State University	2.3	83
80	University of Miami	2.3	84
80	University of Missouri	2.3	85
80	University of New Mexico	2.3	86
87	Baylor University	2.2	87
87	Binghamton University--SUNY	2.2	88
87	Howard University	2.2	89
87	Kansas State University	2.2	90
87	Loyola University Chicago	2.2	91
87	Tulane University	2.2	92
87	University of Kentucky	2.2	93
87	University of New Hampshire	2.2	94
87	Wayne State University	2.2	95
96	Colorado State University	2.1	96
96	Kent State University	2.1	97
96	Oklahoma State University	2.1	98
96	Portland State University	2.1	99
96	University of Alabama--Birmingham	2.1	100
96	University of Tennessee--Knoxville	2.1	101
102	University of Central Florida	2	104
102	University of Hawaii--Manoa	2	105

## **APPENDIX D: QUALTRICS DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY**

### **PAGE 1**

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

#### **What is the purpose of this research?**

The purpose of this research is to explore the development of graduate-level classical sociology theory courses. Specifically, this research will explore the factors that influence faculty decisions about which scholars they include in these courses.

#### **Why are you being asked to participate in this study?**

You are being asked to participate in this study because you were identified as a faculty member who teaches graduate-level sociology classical theory in a doctoral-granting program. Additionally, the syllabus from the graduate-level sociology classical theory course that you teach was analyzed to assess the scholars included in the course. This study involves 2 parts: a brief demographic survey and a semi-structured interview.

#### **Part 1: Demographic Survey**

You will first be asked to complete a brief demographic survey. The demographic survey takes less than 10 minutes. If you consent to take part in the research study, the survey will also be used to schedule your interview. Once you complete the survey, the principal investigator will reach out to schedule an interview. If you decide not to participate in the focus group, data from your structured interview will be included in the study.

#### **Part 2: Semi-structured Interview**

Part 2 of this research involves participating in a semi-structured interview with the principal investigator. The interview should last approximately 60 minutes. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, interviews will take place on Zoom, or you can be interviewed by phone.

The semi-structured interview will include questions about the development of the graduate-level theory course that you teach, as well as the content of your course. As a participant, you can refuse to answer any questions and can end the interview at any time.

Interviews will be both be audio and video recorded during this study only with your consent. If you do not want to be recorded, you can still participate in the study. Otter.ai software will be used to record interviews. Otter.ai software encrypts audio files using 256-bit Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) and utilizes Secure Sockets Layer (SSL)/Transport Layer Security (TLS) to protect data. Files stored in Otter.ai can only be fully controlled by the principal investigator and cannot be accessed by Otter.ai without the explicit permission of the principal

investigator. Should you not want to be recorded and still wish to participate in the interview, notes will be taken manually by the principal investigator.

**What about privacy and confidentiality?**

During the study, identifiable private information may be collected in recordings and interview notes, including your name and email address. Only the principal investigator for this study will have access to the identifiable information that is collected during the study. All data collected from the Qualtrics survey, interviews (including handwritten notes and audio and video) recordings will be stored on OneDrive in a password-protected folder that only the principal investigator can access. All data will be stored in this password-protected folder in OneDrive for a minimum of five years after the study closes. Identifiable information collected during this study will be removed from any publications that are produced from these findings.

**Who should you contact if you have questions?**

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, you should contact:

Ashley Stone,  
Principal Investigator and Graduate Student,  
Sociology Program,  
College of Sciences  
at (407) 823-3744 or by email at [aystone@knights.ucf.edu](mailto:aystone@knights.ucf.edu).

or

Dr. Shannon K. Carter,  
Faculty Supervisor,  
Department of Sociology  
at 407-823-4593 or by email at [skcarter@ucf.edu](mailto:skcarter@ucf.edu).

**IRB contact about your rights in this study or to report a complaint:** If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or have concerns about the conduct of this study, please contact Institutional Review Board (IRB), University of Central Florida, Office of Research, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901, or email [irb@ucf.edu](mailto:irb@ucf.edu).

**[Participant will be prompted to respond to the following statement:]**

By continuing on to the next page of this survey, you are consenting to participate in the demographic survey for this study.

Yes (If this option is selected, the survey will continue to Page 2)



No (If this option is selected, the survey will end)

## **PAGE 2**

### **Demographic Survey Questions**

1. Your email address will be used solely for purposes of sending you communication about this study, including sending you the approved consent form for the interview, as well as confirmation of the date and time of the interview. Please provide your email address.
2. How would you prefer to be interviewed?
  - a. Video
  - b. Phone (If this option is selected, the respondent will be asked to provide a phone number.)
3. Gender
  - a. Female
  - b. Male
  - c. Non-binary
  - d. Other
4. Race
  - a. American Indian or Alaskan Native
  - b. Asian
  - c. Black or African American
  - d. Native Hawaiian
  - e. White
  - f. Other
5. What is your professional title?
6. How long have you served in your current professional role?
7. What are your research areas?
8. Please share your availability for an interview.

## **PAGE 3**

Thank you for completing this survey! You will be sent a confirmation email that includes a copy of the consent form for the interview and the date and time for the interview.

## **APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

**[The consent form for the study will be read before the start of the interview.]**

### **Part I. Teaching Graduate Classical Theory**

- How long have you been teaching [name of the course]?
- Describe your teaching philosophy for this particular course.
- What do you want students to learn in your theory course?
- What do you want students to know about classical sociological theory and theorists?
- Were you mentored as you started teaching this course?

### **Part II. Content of the Graduate Classical Theory Course**

- In reviewing your classical theory syllabus, I can see the collection of theorists that are reviewed in the course.
  - a. How did you decide on which theorists to include?
  - b. What factors did you consider as you selected theorists for the course?
  - c. Were you encouraged to include specific scholars? Were you discouraged from including specific scholars?
  - d. (If applicable) What prompted you to include the scholarship of Black women in your course?
- What factor has the most significant impact on which theorists you choose to include in the syllabus?

### **Part III. The Movement to Diversify the Discipline**

- Recently, there has been a call to action from professional organizations including the American Sociological Association and the Society for the Study of Social Problems to reckon with this history of sociology and expand the canon of classical theorists.
  - a. Have you followed or engaged in this conversation? If so, how?
- (If applicable) Have you thought about adding more scholars of diverse backgrounds to your classical theory course? If so, who?

### **Part IV. Institutional/Departmental Context**

- Are there other theory courses offered in the program? (If yes) Does that impact what you teach or don't teach in your course?
- How does your course fit with the departmental learning goals for graduate students (e.g. For example, the comprehensive exam that includes theory questions, or dissertations)?

### **Part V. Professional Training**

- How is the coursework you completed in graduate school connected to the way you teach your theory course?
- In your course, do you only include scholars that you read in graduate school?
- (If applicable) Where did you gain exposure to theorists who are not usually included in the classical sociological canon?

**Part VI. Additional Comments**

- After reflecting on your experiences, is there anything else you would like to add?
- Is there anything you would like to ask me?

## APPENDIX F: TABLE OF THEORISTS

Frequency of Theorists in Percent (N=50)		
1.	Karl Marx	98
2.	Max Weber	96
3.	Emile Durkheim	94
4.	W. E. B. Du Bois	76
5.	Friedrich Engels	48
6.	Georg Simmel	44
7.	George Herbert Mead	36
8.	Adam Smith	20
9.	Charlotte Perkins-Gilman	16
10.	Talcott Parsons	16
11.	Anna Julia Cooper	14
12.	Harriet Martineau	12
13.	Robert K. Merton	12
14.	Theodor Adorno	12
15.	Max Horkheimer	12
16.	Alfred Schutz	10
17.	Thomas Hobbes	10
18.	Jean-Jacque Rousseau	10
19.	Jane Addams	10

20.	Ida B. Wells-Barnett	10
21.	Auguste Comte	10
22.	Charles Horton Cooley	8
23.	Herbert Spencer	8
24.	Immanuel Kant	8
25.	Herbert Marcuse	8
26.	Alexis de Tocqueville	6
27.	William Isaac Thomas	6
28.	Marcel Mauss	6
29.	Antonio Gramsci	6
30.	Simone de Beauvoir	6
31.	Herbert Blumer	6
32.	C. Wright Mills	4
33.	Robert E. Park	4
34.	Ernest Burgess	4
35.	George C. Homans	4
36.	John Locke	2
37.	Karl Polanyi	2
38.	Francis Galton	2
39.	Ferdinand Tonnies	2
40.	Thorstein Veblen	2
41.	Friedrich Nietzsche	2

42.	Georg Hegel	2
43.	Marianne Weber	2
44.	Florian Witold Znaniecki	2
45.	Frances Donovan	2
46.	Mary Wollstonecraft	2
47.	Ibn Khaldun	2
48.	Lewis Mumford	2
49.	Norbert Elias	2
50.	E. Franklin Frazier	2
51.	Annie Marion MacLean	2
52.	Sophonisba Breckinridge	2
53.	Louis Wirth	2
54.	Kingsley Davis	2
55.	Wilbert E. Moore	2
56.	Melvin Tumin	2
57.	Henri de Saint-Simon	2

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