

Re-Write Classical Sociological Theory, Re-Shape the Discipline

A Collaborative Wiki Project for Undergraduate Classical Theory Courses

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Problem Statement

Classical Social Theorists are engaging with the most basic questions concerning life, society and the individual. If they are taught in a particular way, the theories are actually fairly simple ideas that any student can understand. Students can engage with the material from where they are situated in the world; the theories become relevant to them. In order to facilitate this process, students need to feel a sense of ownership of their academic work and should feel like active participants in knowledge production, rather than passive consumers. I have created a wiki for my students to collaboratively rewrite the texts into their own words, adding in contemporary examples. Once they have rewritten the classical texts they are used for a purpose of the students' choosing, for example a zine, poster, or website.

Pedagogical Background

Classical Sociological Theory can be intimidating to students—many of the texts have been translated, and all of them are written over 100 years ago. This is in addition to the very challenging theoretical ideas. Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Du Bois, and Freud are canonized and thus seen as an authority, and an esoteric one at that. Often this is the biggest hurdle for students—they think they cannot understand the work. Theory is often seen as something above students' heads, or as something external to their real, material lives.

The first reading of the class is the Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx (collaboratively written with Engels—imagine what those two could have done with a wiki!). The exercise will be to rewrite the portion of the Manifesto that we will have discussed in class. After a few semesters of working out the kinks and bugs I might consider doing this for each of the theorists we discuss. This process will put students in the role of knowledge producers, rather than mere consumers.

Issues within the Discipline

Within the discipline of Sociology this type of a project is relevant because it can be a way to challenge and engage critically with the unquestioned privileged status given to these texts. Jeffery Alexander (1987) claims this privileged status is granted by the belief that we are supposedly able to get as much out of these older texts as we are to get out of any contemporary work. The way these texts are read, then, still shapes the discipline. Connell (1997) makes the argument that as the texts represent what is sociological, “they influence what kind of discussion counts as sociological theory, what theoretical language sociologists are to speak in, and what problems are most worth speaking about.” Further, he says, that “canon,” originally meaning a rule or edict of the Church, overemphasizes the importance of a few great men at the same time excluding and discrediting the noncanonical. He points out the irony in this because the sociologists of the late 19th century were not like this—“they had a sense of adventure, a skepticism about authority, and a breadth of interest, which we could still do with”.

Connell argues “the classical canon in sociology was created, mainly in the United States, as part of an effort at reconstruction after the collapse of the first European-American project of sociology”. Connell argues that, ironically, the same circumstances that produced the canon also produced a disjunction in academic sociology between “theory” and “research.” Although the canon provides symbolic legitimation for the discipline, the “founding fathers” did not and still do not motivate the empirical work, even when scholars are discussing the methodological aspects of the canon. Connell goes on to argue that it becomes “important to consider not only which *writers* are included and excluded, but also which *problems*”. This is why having students re-write the text becomes an interesting project. They can *literally* bring their own problems into the work. Gender, sexuality, race, and imperialism were not considered core issues in the canon formation, but this project allows students to bring them back, along with any other issues in their lives.

The Benefits of Technology

Once students integrate their own lives into the material, the use of the internet facilitates bringing the material into others' lives. By virtue of putting *anything* on the internet, one is widening the audience from that of just the traditional group of students and instructor. The form this project will assume is that of a wiki. A wiki can refer to a website, or software that a

website runs. It has three important features: you do not need to download any software to use the program; it is easy to figure out how to use; and it is designed to support collaborative projects (Konieczny, 2007). Meijas (2011) argues wikis engender a new understanding of the potential of digital media by forcing learners to rethink the way they write. Part of that rethinking is writing for a broad audience, rather than just for the instructor. This changes the agency of the student because it allows them to select, in some ways, the audience for their work— and thus may change the personal significance of their work as well.

What would be unique about this specific project, however, is that it forces them to rethink what they *read* as well. Terry Anderson (2008) has argued that effective learning does not happen in a content vacuum. He argues that each discipline contains its own worldview that provides its own way of talking about knowledge—students need to be given opportunities to participate in the discourse. This project allows them to put the discourse into their own words. This, in conjunction with other projects throughout the semester, will allow students to feel comfortable participating in the classical discourse of sociology, but also able to *produce their own contemporary social thought*.

This is a new approach to teaching classical theory because in using a technology that explores the relationship between the individual and the collective, it is forcing students to confront the very subject matter they are learning. *What is the relationship between the individual and society?* You can see each classical theorist addressing this in some way, and this project has students engage with their own role as an individual but within the context of larger social conditions. Vie and deWinter (2008) point out that wikis challenge the thought that ideas are a unique product of individual labor and can thus “belong” to a single person. This makes students confront not only the text they are reading, but also the text that they are producing. This is particularly relevant in a Classical Theory course because of the authority granted to the canon. The five theorists taught over the semester can be taught in a way that makes their texts and ideas seem like they are single handedly produced (in fact, I admit I reify this myself by never giving Engels credit for the manifesto!). However, using wikis in this way may draw the students to think critically about how academic work, authorship, and indeed *thought itself* manifest themselves as social productions. This is a kind of meta-sociology, or sociology of sociology that I try to cultivate in my class.

However, Caeton (2008) argues that wikis undermine the authority of authors while still

maintaining the authority attributed to the seemingly solidified products of discourse. Which is why there is a second step to the assignment, which is to transform the newly produced text into a distributable product that does not reify knowledge by leaving the text up as a straightforward solid product. Zines and posters are distributable products that engage with an audience in a political way taking what they have learned throughout the semester one step further—turning the theory into a practice.

Vie and deWinter (2008) argue that by challenging the authority of the single authorial voice, wikis call into question traditional notions of intellectual property as a market commodity. This is a way for Classical Theory students to practice the theory, not just read it. One of the main questions covered throughout the semester is how does structure shape agency? This serious question is addressed by this project on multiple levels, hopefully getting through to the students on multiple fronts. Students must confront this in their own work. Vie and deWinter ask “can wikis be used as pedagogical tools that challenge capitalist power structures while still providing students the necessary skills to succeed in diverse writing environments?” This is the goal I hope to produce—students will be reading about the challenge to capitalist power structures while also using their own writing as a practice of subversion.

Disrupting the Academy

This is a challenge to the nature of the Academy in that students are not producing their own material as individuals but are part of the collective—producing in a commons. This is part of a larger project of mine as an instructor; at some point I hope to stop grading my students work. I will continue to give them feedback, but will have students use consensus style discussions to create their own rubrics and have grading teams where they can help each other to learn how to self-assess—I see this wiki project as a step in that direction. This helps me to disrupt the conventional approach to teaching which uses the teacher-as-authority model. As Vie and deWinter state: “wikis bolster the view that no individual can ‘own’ ideas—there is no solitary author”. This is the larger project of teaching students ideas while also disrupting the notion of what an idea is and how they are produced.

Personas and Use Case-Scenarios

The student personas are ideal types, in Weberian terms, of students I have experienced in the past five years of teaching. I did not base them on students from this semester as they would

also be participating in the proof of concept, however, some of my students do share some of the traits. The faculty persona is, of course, based on myself.

Personas

Tech-savvy Tommy: Tommy is not particularly fluent in Classical Theory but he has used wikis in classes before. He has all of the technical skills down, but does not fully understand how to collaborate yet. He thinks that he will be fine in the course because of how much the wiki project is emphasized and how good his tech skills are generally.

Luddite Lucy: Lucy is an older student who takes school very seriously. She is comfortable participating in class discussion and talking with her classmates after school. However, because of the generation gap she is conscious that she might lag when it comes to the technological skills. She has heard the instructor say that they will do tutorials and that it is not that complicated, but she is still nervous. She even considered dropping the course to one that did not require technology. She stayed because no other section fit her schedule.

Capitalist Carlton: Carlton thinks Karl Marx is a joke. His dad works on Wall Street and is good friends with Bill O'Reilly. Carlton is used to participating in a certain rhetoric that he hears at home. If he had to re-write Marx he would re-write the theory to support Capitalism.

Faculty Farrah: Farrah is excited to try to have her students collaborate and to have more ownership over the material, especially by literally putting it in their own words. She has some technological skills but is a little nervous about what might happen if she has to troubleshoot.

Use Case Scenario

Tech-savvy Tommy: Tommy initially feels confident logging in and getting started. He sets the trend for other students by demonstrating things students did not know they could do on the wiki. For example, he leaves a comment for Capitalist Carlton about the nature of one of his revisions. Luddite Lucy sees this and asks Tommy for help.

Luddite Lucy: Lucy apprehensively logs in for the first time and realizes that it actually is pretty intuitive. She struggles finding the right buttons at first but once she firms up her skills on how

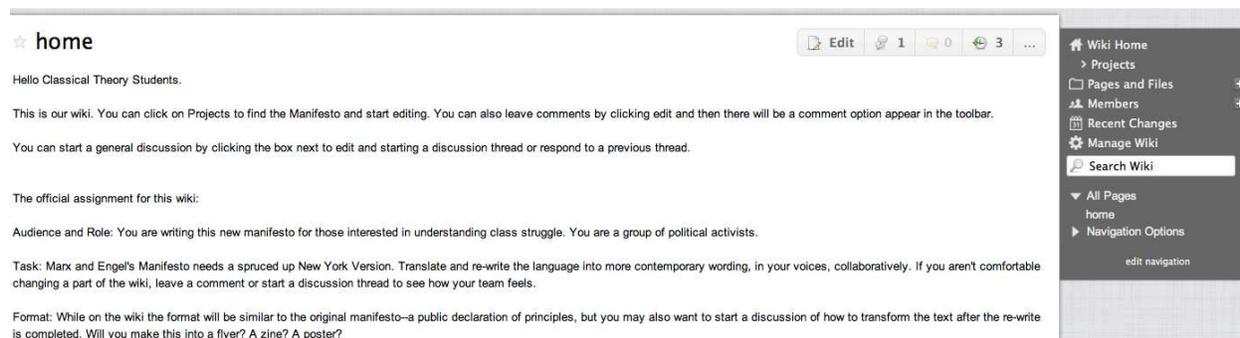
to get to the wiki, she doesn't have a problem using it. For Lucy the issue is not using the technology but navigating between the main page, the wiki project page, and the edit and view pages—she has trouble understanding why everything is in a different place because she doesn't fully understand the logic behind the site. Lucy occasionally types in the wrong place but her students help her out by moving her comments to the appropriate place.

Capitalist Carlton: Carlton has no problem with the technology, but has a problem with the material. He does not like that even the 'conservative' sociologists would like to move away from Capitalism. He tries to undermine Faculty Farrah by rewriting the radical out of Marx. He also does not support the idea of collaboration and says that Wikipedia is written by a bunch of hippies who should get a job; this makes collaboration difficult. Students are apprehensive about changing Carlton's work because of his aggressive presence in class and online.

Faculty Farrah: She sets up the site and tries to hang back. The students seem to be helping each other out when one is struggling which makes her feel good. She has the choice to look at the revision history to see if she wants to grade using that method, but instead chooses to give the same grade to everyone because she can see via the social networking aspect of the site, as well as in class discussion, that everyone is interested and participating. However, she is still struggling with how to assess Carlton's contributions.

Proof of Concept

The proof of concept exists as a wiki located at classicaltheory.wikispaces.com.



Using Wikispaces.com I have set up an account for myself as well as for the three student personas, and eight of my current students have worked on the project as volunteers. I have

created the main site and assigned my students as a team on a project entitled [Communist Manifesto](#).

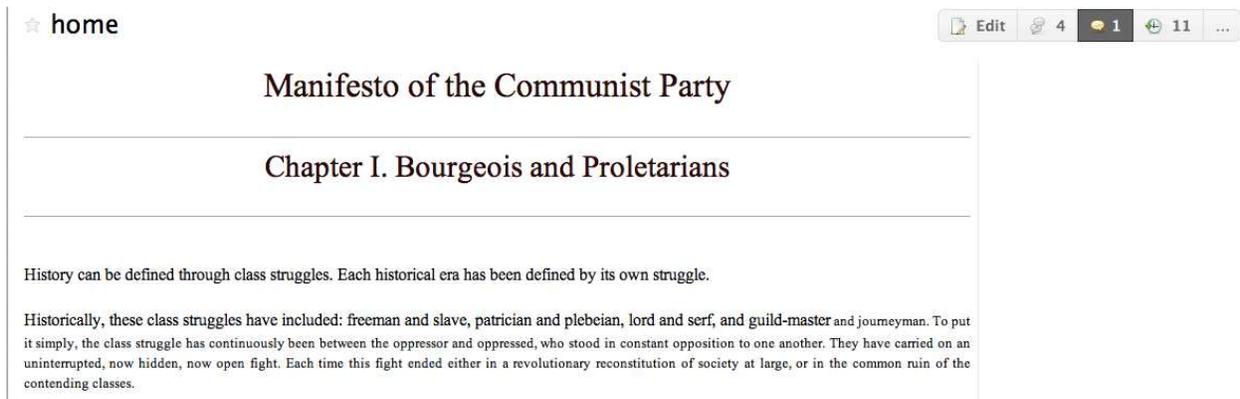
The formal assignment for this project is on the site and reads as follows:

Audience and Role: You are writing this new manifesto for those interested in understanding class struggle. You are a group of political activists.

Task: Marx and Engel's Manifesto needs a spruced up New York Version. Translate and re-write the language into more contemporary wording, in your voices, collaboratively. If you aren't comfortable changing a part of the wiki, leave a comment or start a discussion thread to see how your team feels.

Format: While on the wiki the format will be similar to the original manifesto--a public declaration of principles, but you may also want to start a discussion of how to transform the text after the re-write is completed. Will you make this into a flyer? A zine? A poster?

They are all placed on one team, and I have pasted an excerpt from Marx's manifesto to translate/rewrite. The instructions for the assignment are on the home page along with instructions for how to access the wiki project from that page. As with the personas, students who have volunteered have done so for different reasons and thus differ in skill level and interest in the project. The current number of students working on this is only a small portion of the students that would work on this if it were in effect as a full course project.



The screenshot shows a wiki page with a top navigation bar containing a home icon and the text 'home'. On the right side of the bar are icons for 'Edit', '4' (views), '1' (comments), '11' (revisions), and a menu icon. The main content area has a title 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' followed by a horizontal line and a subtitle 'Chapter I. Bourgeois and Proletarians' followed by another horizontal line. Below this, the text reads: 'History can be defined through class struggles. Each historical era has been defined by its own struggle.' A second paragraph follows: 'Historically, these class struggles have included: freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, and guild-master and journeyman. To put it simply, the class struggle has continuously been between the oppressor and oppressed, who stood in constant opposition to one another. They have carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight. Each time this fight ended either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.'

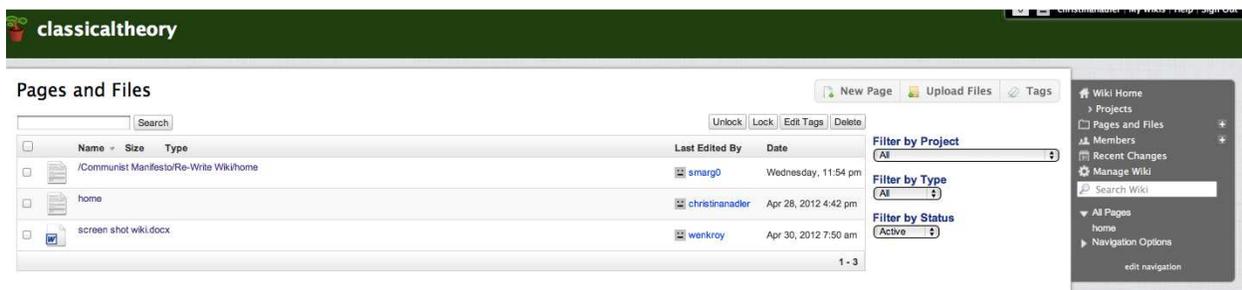
Actual Students' Use of the Wiki

The text is being translated or re-written, typically one line edit at a time, by students logging in and making changes, looking to see what others have changed, and then doing more editing.

Some students have had trouble figuring out what exactly to do on the site, but have discovered useful ways to problem solve for themselves. For example a student (username: wenkroy) had a question that I was not sure how to interpret, and even though she thought that she did not understand the site, she managed to find a way to send me a personal message.



At this point in my use of Wikispaces I did not even know this was a feature. She then figured out how to upload a document of a few screen shots of her problem to a pages and files function of the site (another feature of which I was not yet aware).



This was interesting and inspiring because even though she felt that she was missing out on some technical knowledge—'okay don't laugh at me', she wrote—she was actually very adept at navigating her way around the site and figuring out what she needed to do. She had seen the draft of this proposal and previously had joked that she did not want to be the Luddite Lucy persona, but as it turns out she was the best that one could hope for in that situation. Being initially unsure about her skills lent her to learning many more features of the site than students who felt confident enough to go into the site and start editing.

Persona Students' Use of the Wiki

The personas also had a good time editing the site in various use case scenarios. Capitalist Carlton amended Marx to say that Capitalism was not all bad.

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part because they are not all bad. Capitalism has paved the way for innovation because we are driven by competition. There are a lot of good things about Capitalism.

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to relations between man and his "natural superiors", and has left remaining no other connection between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment". It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom — Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

techsavvytommy Yesterday 7:34 pm
Capitalist Carlton,
I think you are missing the point here...
Or at least missing the nuances of
Marx's argument. Have you read the
next Paragraph.
--Tech Savvy Tommy

LudditeLucy Yesterday 7:38 pm
Why does it let me reply here, but not
when I am editing?
-LudditeLucy

Reply

Tech Savvy Tommy used the comment function to leave him a message saying that he missed the point. No actual student has used the comment form, and no one has used the discussion forum to leave posts (a blog like feature).

home Edit 4 1 15 ...

+ New Post Search Posts

Subject	Author	Replies	Views	Last Message ^
Comment added: Capitalist Carlton, ...	techsavvytommy	1	3	May 2, 2012 7:38 pm by LudditeLucy
Comments	christinanadler	1	4	Apr 27, 2012 4:03 pm by christinanadler

1 - 2

I had started a thread to see if students would respond and start a discussion there, but no one took up this opportunity. This is part of the motivation to integrate the WordPress and wiki sites in the full version of this project, so that blogging will be in the same place and perhaps more students will take advantage of it.

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part because they are not all bad. Capitalism has paved the way for innovation because we are driven by competition. There are a lot of good things about Capitalism.

Tech-SavvyTommy - how did you get that yellow box there? Can you help me out with that. Thanks -- Luddite Lucy

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound relations between man to and his "natural superiors", and has left remaining no other nexus connection between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment". It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom — Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

Another issue with the comment function of Wikispaces is that you cannot see the comments when editing the site. In this persona use-case scenario, Luddite Lucy had seen that Tech-

Savvy Tommy had a comment, but once clicking edit she could no longer see where it went. She used the edit feature to leave a comment in the text of the Manifesto: this is what is highlighted in red. Interestingly, an actual student felt comfortable enough to delete Luddite Lucy's comment when she was editing the next paragraph. This is exactly what I was hoping would happen—students would help each other learn the etiquette of the site.

End Result

On Wikispaces you can view the recent changes, but there is no function to have students write a rationale for the changes. This is a feature I recommend be added.

▼ Tuesday, May 8		
	/Communist Manifesto/Re-Write Wiki/home edited ... History can be defined through class struggles. Each historical era has been definex	👤 vmarilyn 11:21 am
▼ Sunday, May 6		
	/Communist Manifesto/Re-Write Wiki/home edited ... History can be defined through class struggles. Each historical era has been definex	👤 Merpina 1:43 pm
▼ Saturday, May 5		
	👤 vmarilyn joined Communist Manifesto/Re-Write Wiki	👤 christinanadler 12:41 pm
	👤 Merpina joined Communist Manifesto/Re-Write Wiki	👤 christinanadler 12:41 pm
	👤 Merpina joined classicaltheory	👤 christinanadler 12:41 pm
▼ Thursday, May 3		
	/Communist Manifesto/Re-Write Wiki/home edited ... Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a correspond	👤 swesterv 8:33 am
▼ Wednesday, May 2		
	/Communist Manifesto/Re-Write Wiki/home Comment reply Why does it let me reply here, but not when I am editing? -LudditeLucy	👤 LudditeLucy 7:38 pm
	/Communist Manifesto/Re-Write Wiki/home edited ... Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a correspond	👤 LudditeLucy 7:37 pm
	/Communist Manifesto/Re-Write Wiki/home edited ... We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course	👤 techsavvytommy 7:34 pm
	/Communist Manifesto/Re-Write Wiki/home Comment added Capitalist Carlton, I think you are missing the point here... Or at least missi	👤 techsavvytommy 7:34 pm
	/Communist Manifesto/Re-Write Wiki/home edited ... We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course	👤 CapitalistCarlton 7:32 pm
	/Communist Manifesto/Re-Write Wiki/home edited ... Historically, these class struggles have included: freeman and slave, patrician and f	👤 swesterv 11:57 am
▼ Tuesday, May 1		
	/Communist Manifesto/Re-Write Wiki/home edited ... Chapter I. Bourgeois and Proletarians History can be defined through class struggle:	👤 smarg0 9:29 pm
	/Communist Manifesto/Re-Write Wiki/home edited Manifesto of the Communist Party Chapter I. Bourgeois and Proletarians ... class strug	👤 LudditeLucy 8:52 pm
	/Communist Manifesto/Re-Write Wiki/home edited Manifesto of the Communist Party Chapter I. Bourgeois and Proletarians The history o	👤 smarg0 10:38 am

The students have continued to edit the wiki; below you can see the final version with 19 total edits with all of the edits marked (red is what has been deleted and green is what has been inserted).

home Edit 5 19 ...

Comparing christinanadler Apr 28, 2012 4:44 pm to christinanadler just now
Deleted, Inserted View WikiText Review Changes

Manifesto of the Communist Party
Chapter I. Bourgeois and Proletarians

~~The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of~~

History can be defined through class struggles. ~~Freeman~~ Each historical era has been defined by its own struggle. Historically, these class struggles have included: ~~freeman~~ and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, and guild-master (3) and journeyman. In a word, and journeyman. To put it simply, the class struggle has continuously been between the oppressor and oppressed, who stood in constant opposition to one another, another. They have carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight. Each time this fight that each time ended, ended either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

In the earlier epochs of

If we look at the early times in history, we find see that in almost everywhere all societies a complicated arrangement of society into social order has existed. These orders have been various orders, a manifold gradation and of many levels of social rank. In For example, in ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves and slaves made up the social order, in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs, and serfs composed to social structure. In both of these examples subordinate gradations were present in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations. The the classes.

Class antagonisms still exist within society, even after the advent of modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but capitalism. Instead of changing it for the better, it has established new classes, new conditions of oppression, and new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, era, the era of capitalism, possesses, however, this a distinct feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, opposing sides, into two great classes directly facing each other — Bourgeoisie and Proletariat, the 1% and the 99%. Another feature is that within the class antagonism exists fighting with each other. Therefore, even though the 99% consists of such a large group, there is too much disagreement within to unite and successfully fight.

From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie, 1% were developed.

The substitution of the 1% and 99% for Bourgeoisie and Proletariat is a fundamental change.

The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The 1%. The opening of East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonisation of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave led to commerce, to navigation, to industry, and industry. Such an impulse had never before been known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a society was the rapid development, development of capitalism.

The feudal system of industry, in which industrial production was monopolised by closed guilds, now no longer sufficed for the growing wants of the new markets. The manufacturing system took its place. The guild-masters were pushed on one side by the manufacturing middle class; division of labour between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labour in each single workshop.

Meantime the markets kept ever growing, the demand ever rising. Even manufacturer human labor, the manufacturers, no longer sufficed. Thereupon, As a result, steam and machinery revolutionised industrial production. The place of manufacture was taken by the giant, Modern Industry; the place of the industrial middle class by industrial millionaires, the leaders of the whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeois.

Modern industry has established the world market, for which the

The discovery of America paved the way, way for modern industry, and thus, the establishment of the world market. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, and to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry; and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages.

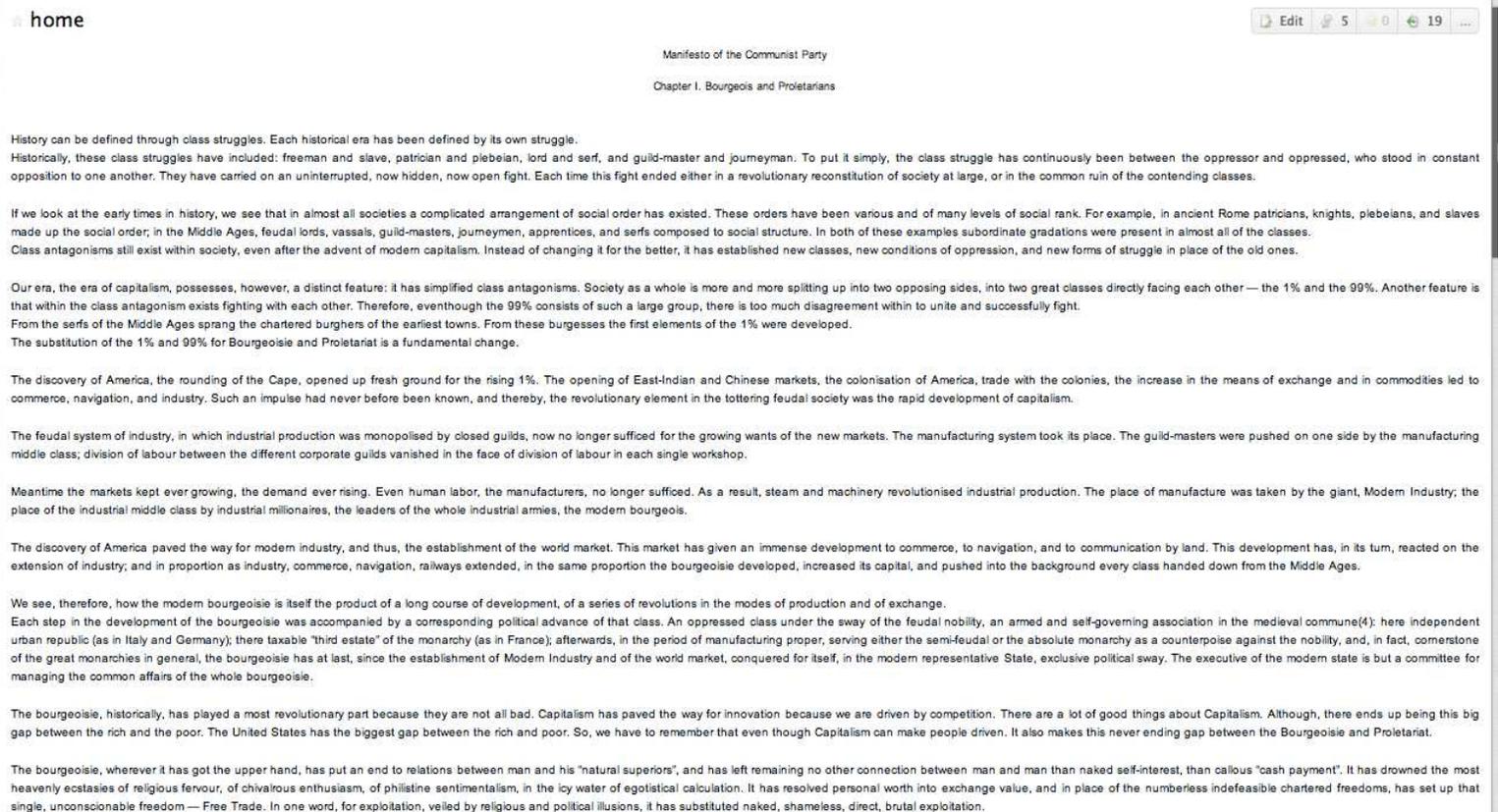
We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange.

Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the medieval commune (4) commune(4); here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany); there taxable "third estate" of the monarchy (as in France); afterwards, in the period of manufacturing proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, cornerstone of the great monarchies in general, the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part, part because they are not all bad. Capitalism has paved the way for innovation because we are driven by competition. There are a lot of good things about Capitalism. Although, there ends up being this big gap between the rich and the poor. The United States has the biggest gap between the rich and poor. So, we have to remember that even though Capitalism can make people driven. It also makes this never ending gap between the Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound relations between man to and his "natural superiors", and has left remaining no other nexus connection between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment". It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom — Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

The final text of the rewritten manifesto reads as follows:



home

Manifesto of the Communist Party
Chapter I. Bourgeois and Proletarians

History can be defined through class struggles. Each historical era has been defined by its own struggle. Historically, these class struggles have included: freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, and guild-master and journeyman. To put it simply, the class struggle has continuously been between the oppressor and oppressed, who stood in constant opposition to one another. They have carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight. Each time this fight ended either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

If we look at the early times in history, we see that in almost all societies a complicated arrangement of social order has existed. These orders have been various and of many levels of social rank. For example, in ancient Rome patricians, knights, plebeians, and slaves made up the social order; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, and serfs composed to social structure. In both of these examples subordinate gradations were present in almost all of the classes. Class antagonisms still exist within society, even after the advent of modern capitalism. Instead of changing it for the better, it has established new classes, new conditions of oppression, and new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our era, the era of capitalism, possesses, however, a distinct feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two opposing sides, into two great classes directly facing each other — the 1% and the 99%. Another feature is that within the class antagonism exists fighting with each other. Therefore, even though the 99% consists of such a large group, there is too much disagreement within to unite and successfully fight. From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these bourgeois the first elements of the 1% were developed. The substitution of the 1% and 99% for Bourgeoisie and Proletariat is a fundamental change.

The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising 1%. The opening of East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonisation of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities led to commerce, navigation, and industry. Such an impulse had never before been known, and thereby, the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society was the rapid development of capitalism.

The feudal system of industry, in which industrial production was monopolised by closed guilds, now no longer sufficed for the growing wants of the new markets. The manufacturing system took its place. The guild-masters were pushed on one side by the manufacturing middle class; division of labour between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labour in each single workshop.

Meantime the markets kept ever growing, the demand ever rising. Even human labor, the manufacturers, no longer sufficed. As a result, steam and machinery revolutionised industrial production. The place of manufacture was taken by the giant, Modern Industry; the place of the industrial middle class by industrial millionaires, the leaders of the whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeois.

The discovery of America paved the way for modern industry, and thus, the establishment of the world market. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, and to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry; and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages.

We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange. Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the medieval commune(4); here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany); there taxable "third estate" of the monarchy (as in France); afterwards, in the period of manufacturing proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, cornerstone of the great monarchies in general, the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part because they are not all bad. Capitalism has paved the way for innovation because we are driven by competition. There are a lot of good things about Capitalism. Although, there ends up being this big gap between the rich and the poor. The United States has the biggest gap between the rich and poor. So, we have to remember that even though Capitalism can make people driven. It also makes this never ending gap between the Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to relations between man and his "natural superiors", and has left remaining no other connection between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment". It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom — Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

One of the more common additions is the current rhetoric surrounding the 1% and the 99%. Another common change was updating the language to a more contemporary wording, or more simple language. For example, one student changed 'nexus' to 'connection' and another changed 'great hostile camps' to 'opposing sides'. Overall, I was pleased with the proof of concept and to see how students would approach the wiki. Although Wikispaces has worked well, I would like to have the wiki integrated into the blog site that I am already using in my courses via WordPress.

Full Version

The syllabus allots fifteen percent for this project as the first step in letting students know that the collaboration is valued, in some cases, more than their individual work. Students receive this assignment on the second day of class, as the Communist Manifesto is their first reading. WordPress has a [plugin](#) that enables the creation of a wiki inside the [WordPress dashboard/CMS](#). Using this plugin allows the site to only have one login, making it easier for

students, as well the instructor, to keep track of where their work is. This plugin is mature (last updated 12/15/2011), and well supported. Although the plugin has been downloaded over 15,000 times, there were no links to current installs on other sites. Installation does not require additional databases, or software on the server. Students access the wiki via the menu bar on the homepage. To edit the wiki they use their own account username—I would create accounts for all of my students (about 40). Students get started on this project right away. The students have been made aware of the main class site on their first day of class, ClassicalTheory.org. They make edits in small portions, normally going in and just changing a line or two. Students look to see if other students have made more changes and then they make another edit. The site will look like largely the same as [the current wordpress.com](http://the-current.wordpress.com) site that I am using, but will have the ability for plugins and more customization and, of course, a wiki page.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the 'Classical Theory' WordPress blog. At the top, a dark navigation bar contains links for 'Home', 'About', 'Course Information', and 'Wiki Project'. A green arrow points to the 'Wiki Project' link. Below the navigation bar is a header for 'Classical Sociological Theory Spring 2012'. The main content area is divided into three columns:

- Central Column:** A post titled 'Classical Theory' by Christina, dated February 20, 2011. The post content includes a greeting, a description of the blog, and instructions for commenting and finding resources.
- Recent Posts Sidebar:** A list of recent posts with links, including 'New York City Housing Authority Scholarship for CUNY Students', 'May Day Reflections', 'May Day Reflections', 'Schedule for Tomorrow's Free University', and 'Want to Make Signs for Tuesday?'.
- Group Blogs Sidebar:** A list of group blogs, including 'Classical Rajas', 'Lalipapa', 'Classy Sociology', 'Classical Theory 4', 'Sociology Rockaf', 'Group 6's Blog', and 'Group VII'.

At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with the text: '***If you have a direct question for me, you should email me.'

Conclusions

This project is doable and important. The students who have participated in the proof of concept have expressed that they find this project interesting and of value. The pedagogical value is clear in that it disrupts the traditional hierarchy of the classical sociological canon as well as the forces the students to engage in important questions raised by the canon, such as the role of the individual in society. The use of the wiki facilitates the kind of learning environment that teaches not just theory, but the production of theory and thought.

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