

Call for Papers

The Second Annual
SOCIAL THEORY FORUM
April 6-7, 2005
University of Massachusetts Boston

Theme:

**Theories and Praxes of Difference:
Revisiting Edward Said in the Age of New Globalizations**

In this age of new globalizations, when technologies of mass communication and terrestrial and space transportation have made the image and the experience of our shared planet an artifact of our actual and virtual everyday lives, and seemingly brought us together in unprecedented ways, we seem to be drifting apart and fragmenting more and more. The gap between rich and poor people, regions, and nations has steadily grown world-wide; our claimed dialogues of civilizations, or discourses on class, race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, etc., have turned into clashes in disguise despite our politically-correct denials; and our United Nations has turned from an institution originally conceived to prevent imperial world-wars into an increasingly virtual opera that camouflages our imperial aspirations. The many faces of our newly discovered overt terrorisms, flagrantly vicious or subtle, often hide the deeper, long-term, and large-scale terrorisms of our old, neo-, and “post” colonialisms as embedded in our practices of economic exploitation, cultural conversion, and political repression -- to such an extent that even our scholarly dialogues and theoretical discourses in search of alternatives and solutions are doubted, ridiculed, or symbolically terrorized.

The Second Annual Meeting of the Social Theory Forum, to be held on April 6-7, 2005, at the University of Massachusetts Boston, will be devoted to the theme “Theories and Praxes of Difference: Revisiting Edward Said in the Age of New Globalizations.” The life and works of the late Edward Said, the prolific thinker, scholar, and cultural critic will be revisited to serve as a guiding (though not necessarily exclusive) theme to explore our meanings and theories of difference in the applied settings of our self, global, and world-historical narratives. Said’s writings exposed the underpinnings of the Orientalist looking glass self images of the East in the mind of the West, and ushered a lively, sophisticated, and long lasting critical dialogue in our academic and public forums -- leading among others to debates on Occidentalism as well, that is, the romanticizations of the West in the eyes of the East. Our dialogue on difference will pay special attention to the context of the allegedly new globalizations of the long-inherited clashes of our colonialisms and anti-colonialisms -- in the hopes of finding creative and

peaceful ways out of the vicious cycles in favor of authentic selves and liberating world-histories.

The conference-workshop will feature both invited and submitted papers and presentations, accompanied by audiovisual materials. Please send completed existing papers (preferable) or two-page abstracts or proposals as email attachment (Word format) in triplicate to the email addresses of co-organizers as listed below, by **December 15, 2004**. Upon selection and notification of approval by the organizing committee, submitters must send completed paper manuscripts (around 20-30 pages) by **February 15, 2005**. Proceedings of the conference will be peer-reviewed by anonymous referees for possible publication in an issue of *The Discourse of Sociological Practice*, the printed and online journal of the Department of Sociology at UMass Boston.

Co-organizers:

Mohammad Tamdgidi (initial contact for inquiries)
Assistant Professor of Sociology, UMass Boston
mohammad.tamdgidi@umb.edu

Jorge Capetillo-Ponce
Assistant Professor of Sociology, UMass Boston
jorge.capetillo@umb.edu

Glenn Jacobs
Associate Professor of Sociology, UMass Boston
glenn.jacobs@umb.edu

Forthcoming

The Discourse of Sociological Practice, Vol. 6, Issue 2, Fall 2004.
Proceedings of the First Annual Social Theory Forum, held on April 7, 2004 at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Theme: "Liberating Social Theory: Inspirations from Paulo Freire for Learning, Teaching, and Advancing Social Theory in Applied Settings"

For inquiries contact
Professor Siamak Movahedi, Department Chair and Journal Editor
siamak.movahedi@umb.edu

About the Social Theory Forum (STF)
Department of Sociology
UMass Boston

Histories of sociology tell us how the discipline was formed in the nineteenth century struggles to understand the combined upheavals of socio-political revolutions and the industrial revolution that gradually expanded throughout the world. These events radically changed the established order and posed various questions that are still with us today: questions about class, race, community, gender, the nature of social integration, and processes of social change, among others. But as we all know, the world again changed radically during the twentieth century, with great implications for social theory.

The Social Theory Forum (STF) is a series of conference-workshops organized jointly by the sociology and other interested faculty and students at UMB in order to creatively explore, develop, promote, and publish cross-disciplinary social theory in an applied and liberating (critical) framework. STF will offer the faculty and students of UMass Boston and other area colleges and universities an interactive medium to discuss various aspects of the way in which particular theoretical traditions can be relevant to present everyday issues, the current state of social theory, and the future of social theory—recognizing that it is caught between its past successes and a situation that threatens to make its achievements less relevant if it does not deal successfully with the prospects of continuity and change.

STF's goals are:

- To critically engage with and evaluate classical and contemporary social theories in a cross-disciplinary and comparative cross-cultural framework in order to develop new integrative theoretical structures and practices;
- To foster individual and collective self-reflexivity in exploring social theories in global and world-historical contexts to aid people effectively address social problems and engage in liberatory social struggles;
- To foster interactive and dialogical learning experience and research in theory within and across faculty, students, and community divides on and off-campus, characterized by respect for the dignity and empowerment of ordinary individual lives and opinions in everyday life;
- To foster dialectical exchange of ideas open to constructive and integrative exploration of diverse and conflicting viewpoints, modes of thinking, and world-views;
- To foster theoretical education and research within a praxis-oriented and applied sociological framework capable of addressing concrete issues arising from intrapersonal, interpersonal and global contexts;
- To foster theoretical education and research as practices of freedom in favor of transformative and emancipatory personal and global social experience.

Mohammad Tamdgidi, Assistant Professor of Sociology (mohammad.tamdgidi@umb.edu)

Jorge Capetillo-Ponce, Assistant Professor of Sociology (jorge.capetillo@umb.edu)

Glenn Jacobs, Associate Professor of Sociology (glenn.Jacobs@umb.edu)

Correspondence Address

Attn.: Social Theory Forum • Department of Sociology

University of Massachusetts Boston • 100 Morrissey Boulevard • Boston, MA 02125 • U.S.A.