

# SHOWING THEORY TO KNOW THEORY

Ballamingie & Szanto, eds.

In *The Elements of Style*, Strunk and White famously implore us to *show* rather than *tell* what we want to express. In contrast, theoretical work seems perpetually prone to the latter. Nonetheless, abstraction and disciplinary jargon remain useful, synthesizing complex ideas into shorthand terminology. *Showing Theory to Know Theory* helps demystify theoretical concepts, making abstract-yet-valuable ideas more accessible by “showing” (rather than “telling”) how they are meaningful and usable in day-to-day situations.

A collaborative, open educational resource, *Showing Theory* brings together a collection of short pedagogical texts that help new learners understand complex theoretical concepts and disciplinary jargon from the critical social sciences. Each entry “shows” an element of theory using an illustrative vignette—a short, evocative story, visual or infographic, poem, described photograph, or other audio-visual material. Of use across disciplines and community contexts, the book aims to democratize theory while linking it to practical, grounded experience.

Ranging across terms from *neoliberalism* to *genealogy*, *racial passing* to *social nature*, these vignettes make theoretical concepts accessible without becoming diluted or “dumbed-down.” Learners and teachers are invited to curate their own collection of terms to create a package that is specific to their area of study or exploration. A customized Zotero library features all entries as well as supplemental readings and resources. Each is tagged with relevant keywords, offering a filtering option for readers with specific foci.

[www.ShowingTheory.net](http://www.ShowingTheory.net)

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Understanding social science concepts  
through illustrative vignettes



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