

# Jeffrey Charles Alexander Biography

## Jeffrey Charles Alexander

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

# Contents

<a href="#">Jeffrey Charles Alexander Biography.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Biography.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>

# Biography

Jeffrey Charles Alexander, a longtime faculty member at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), was born in Milwaukee on May 30, 1947, to Frederick Charles Alexander and Esther Lea (Schlossman) Alexander. He received a B.A. from Harvard College in 1969 and a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley (UCB) in 1978. Alexander's academic career has included appointments at UCLA as an assistant professor (1976-81), as a full professor (1981-), and as chair of UCLA's sociology department (1989-92). Additionally, he has been a visiting faculty member or fellow at numerous institutions, including the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton University (fellow, 1985-86), the University of Bordeaux, France (visiting professor, 1994), and the Center for the Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University (fellow, 1998-99). Additionally, Alexander has held elected positions in various associations, including the American Sociological Association and the International Sociological Association, for which he is the co-chair of the Research Committee on Sociological Theory.

Alexander has specialized in the areas of social theory, cultural sociology, and civil society. His many publications include: *Theoretical Logic in Sociology*, vols. 1-4 (1982-83); *Neofunctionalism* (1985); *Sociological Theory Since World War II* (1987); *Action and Its Environments: Towards a New Synthesis* (1988); *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates* (1990); *Rethinking Progress: Movements, Forces, and Ideas at the End of the Twentieth Century* (1990); *Relativism, Reduction, and the Problem of Reason* (1995); *Neofunctionalism and After* (1998); and *Diversity and Its Discontents* (co-edited with Neil J. Smelzer, 1999). He also has served on the editorial boards of several professional publications.

In describing his work in cultural sociology, Alexander has said that he takes a "post-Durkheimian" approach. He has attempted to move in new theoretical directions, linking sociology with literature, political science, and philosophy. *Diversity and Its Discontents*, for example, examined the American "culture wars" of the late twentieth century, which accompanied changes in family structure, immigration patterns, sexual expression, and urban lifestyles. Alexander and various contributors concluded that cultural conflict always has been a part of American life, often more extreme than in recent years, and that there are many unappreciated but strong forces encouraging cohesion in American life.