

Department of Sociology
University of Calgary

SOCI 333
Contemporary Sociological Theory
Winter 2015

Course Times: Monday 1:00-1:50, Wednesday 1:00-1:50, Friday 1:00-1:50
Course Location: SB105

Instructor: Dr. Dean Curran

Office: SS 918

Email: dcurran@ucalgary.ca

Phone: 403-220-6520

Office Hours: Monday 9:40am-10:50am, Friday 10:00am-10:50am

Course Overview

This is a required course for students majoring in Sociology. This course is intended as an introduction to contemporary sociological theory. Contemporary Sociological Theory provides an introduction to: research areas, issues of concern, theories, methods, and concepts that significantly influence contemporary sociology more generally.

Aims and Objectives

At the end of this course, students should have knowledge and understanding of:

- The dominant theoretical approaches in contemporary sociological theory.
- How these different approaches relate to each other and to developments in contemporary society.

This course should also enhance students' ability to:

- To theorize in a critical and analytical manner about social life.
- Write clearly and cogently about contemporary social theory.
- Make a contribution to existing debates in contemporary sociological theory by fashioning and defending their own arguments.

Theory and Theorizing

In this course it is essential that students engage in a theoretical manner with the course material in their participation and writing. It is essential that students not merely describe and summarize the readings. A theoretical analysis seeks to abstract certain key ideas, arguments, concepts from the specific content of a text and then reconstructs the arguments, ideas, or concepts in such a way that we are able to better grasp the relations between different ideas and concepts. This process of abstraction and reconstruction may be for the purpose of: better understanding a specific concept of a theorist (such as Weber's "rationalization" or Durkheim's "anomie"); better understanding the relation between the different concepts of a specific thinker (such as how Marx's theory of class relates to his theory of value); or better understanding the relation between two thinkers' conception of social reality (such as the connection between Marx's understanding of "alienation" and Durkheim's "social facts"). This improved understanding

through the process of abstraction and reconstruction may be for such purposes such as: (1) helping to better understand the theorist's work in their own terms, (2) critiquing the work of the thinker, or (3) identifying how to apply the basic theories of a thinker to a very different context than the one for which they were originally formulated.

Required Texts

- Scott Appelrouth and Laura Edles (2011) *Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era: Text and Readings*, 2nd edition. Sage [Henceforth *Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era*]
- Readings on D2L

Students are expected to bring the readings to the class to discuss the material.

Teaching and Learning

Format of the Course

- 13 three X a week 50 minute lectures and discussions (with exceptions of weeks with reading days).
- 4 critical reading summaries (Due at the beginning of the Wednesday or Friday lecture)
- 2 Theory Papers (Due Weds March 4th, 2015 & Weds April 15th, 2015)
- 1 Final Exam (To be scheduled in the exam period)

Course Assessment

Participation: 10%

4 one-page reading summaries: 10% (2.5% each)

Theory Paper #1: 20% Due Weds March 4th, 2015

Theory Paper #2: 30% Due Weds April 15th, 2015

Final Exam: 30%

Course Participation (10%)

Students are expected to regularly attend the lectures and to have completed the readings prior to the Wednesday lecture. It is important that each student be prepared to contribute to the discussion of the readings, both for their own learning and for the benefit of the class as a whole. It is particularly important that students who hand in their critical reading summary for a given week be prepared to discuss the texts for that week.

4 Critical Reading Summaries (4x2.5%=10%)

These summaries will be marked pass or fail based on the level of critical engagement with the texts. They are expected to be between 400 and 500 words in length and to outline the argument of one of the texts and provide a critical analysis of this argument. They must be handed as a print copy in before the Friday lecture of the week. To hand in the reading summaries in it is necessary to attend the lecture. It is particularly important that students cite specific page numbers multiple times in their reading summaries (i.e. (Foucault 2010: 367)). Course summaries can be on one reading, but the reading must be longer than ten pages.

Theory Papers

The theory papers are a core component of assessment for this course. The paper assignments are intended to enable students to develop a substantive theoretical paper and to further develop the

skills associated with this task. The readings in this course are intended to provide an in-depth introduction to many of the key debates in contemporary sociological theory. Students are heavily encouraged to plan ahead and consult with the instructor regarding their proposed essay topics.

Theory Paper #1 (20%) Due Weds March 4th, 2015

The first theory paper involves a comparison or contrast of the key ideas of two key thinkers in the first half of the course (week 1-5). This paper is due in the seventh week of class. This paper should be 1800 words with 10% (i.e. 180 words allowance) on either side.

Theory Paper #2 (30%) Due Weds April 15th, 2015

The second theory paper involves a comparison or contrast of the key ideas of two key thinkers in the second half of the course (weeks 6-11). This paper is due in the thirteenth week of class. This paper should be 2200 words with 10% (i.e. 220 words allowance) on either side

Final Exam (30%) (Exam Period)

The final exam will take place during the exam period and will cover the entire course material, both readings and lectures (weeks 1-13).

Submission and Late Policy

Reading summaries must be handed into the instructor as a hard copy before the beginning of the Wednesday or Friday class and will not be accepted after this time. Papers are to be handed in as a hard copy in class to the course instructor the day of class that it is due. The paper will receive a late penalty of FIVE (5) MARKS PER FULL OR PART DAY (a weekend counts as two full days). Any paper more than one (1) week late without a valid extension will receive a mark of zero (0). Accommodations are unlikely to be allowed for late entry other than illness or another serious and documented situation – talk to me prior to the deadline. Please note essays are not to be submitted to the sociology main office.

Instructor Contact Policy

Email: Please use “SOCI 333” in the subject line of all course-related emails. It may take up to 48 hours (not including weekends) for me to respond to you. Email responses will also be kept short. To discuss anything in-depth, come along during office hours.

Office Hours: During office hours you are free to drop by without an appointment at any time. If you are unable to make that time, please contact me in advance so that we can try to arrange an appointment. Office hours are a very effective and efficient way of providing help and I encourage all students to make use of my office hours.

Class Etiquette

Use of cell phones or internet on laptops are disruptive to lectures and discussions and are not permitted. To facilitate focus in class, a two-minute break rule will be instituted, for those who need to go to the bathroom etc. However, the time limits of this break (only 2 minutes), must be respected for this practice to continue.

Laptop Policy

Fridays will be devoted in large part to discussing the texts. In the view of encouraging engagement and discussion, laptops will not be permitted on Fridays. If a laptop is necessary, please speak to me about possible exceptions.

General Referencing Guidelines

1. Always include page numbers of the source you are referencing - just using a date is not enough. Harvard style (in text citations with date and page e.g. (Marx 1848: 139) is recommended). This is important for all writing in the course and failure to properly reference can significantly affect marks in papers and summaries.

Your final letter grade will be determined according to the following schedule:

95-100 A+	67-69 C+
90-94 A	63-66 C
85-89 A-	60-62 C-
80-84 B+	55-59 D+
75-79 B	50-54 D
70-74 B-	49 or less F

Course Notes (Important, but not written by me).

1. **Grade Reappraisal:** Within two weeks of the date the exam/assignment is returned, students seeking reappraisal of examinations or assignments must submit a written response to the instructor explaining the basis for reconsideration of one's mark. The instructor will reconsider the grade assigned and will then book a time with the student to discuss his or her work and rationale. It should be noted that a reconsidered mark may be raised, lowered, or remain the same.
2. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor. **Submission of all course materials must be arranged with the instructor. Do not hand in things to the Sociology Office.**
3. **Academic Misconduct:** Please refer to the website listed below for information on University of Calgary policies on Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html>
4. **Protection of Privacy:** The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) legislation does not allow students to retrieve any course material from public places. Anything that requires handing back will be returned directly during class or office hours. "If students are unable to pick up their assignments from the instructor, they provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment."
5. **Ethical Research:** Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required. Research with human subjects should not be undertaken in this theory course.

6. **Deferrals:** If possible, please provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to write an exam or complete/turn-in assignments on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the health issue rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student. If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, the instructor can require you to write a “make up” test as close in time to the original test as possible or can choose to transfer the percentage weight to another course component. If the instructor schedules a “make up” test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Department of Sociology. Deferred Final Exam Form: Please note that requests to defer a Registrar scheduled final exam are dealt with through the Registrar’s Office. Further information about deadlines, and where paperwork should be taken, is available on the form, which can be found at:
http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/Sp_Su_DFE_App.pdf
 Deferred Term Work Form: Deferral of term work past the end of a term also requires a form to be filled out. It’s available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/defTW.pdf>
 Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 110) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).
7. **Student Representation:** The 2014-15 Students’ Union VP Academic’s email is: Hana Kadri suypaca@ucalgary.ca. The Faculty of Arts has four SU representatives who may be contacted at any of the following email addresses: arts1@ucalgary.ca, arts2@ucalgary.ca, arts3@ucalgary.ca, and arts4@ucalgary.ca. You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters:
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds/role>
8. **Emergency Evacuation:** In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom, please proceed to the assembly point at Professional Faculties - Food Court. Please check these assembly point locations for your other classes at:
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>
9. **Safewalk:** The University of Calgary provides a “safe walk” service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the “Help” phones located around Campus.
10. **Academic Accommodation:** Students who require academic accommodation, must register with Student Accessibility Services (formerly the Disability Resource Centre) at MC 452 (or phone 403-220-8237). Please provide academic accommodation letters to the instructor as early in the semester as possible and no later than two weeks after the course begins.

Course Readings

Week One: Introduction to course, Functionalism and Rational Choice
January 12, 14, & 16, 2015

- **Parsons** Section in Chapter 2 “Structural Functionalism” in *Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era*, pp. 22-53.

- **Homans** Section in Chapter 4 “Exchange and Rational Choice Theories” in *Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era*, pp. 121-136 .

Week 2 Critical Theory

January 19, 21, & 23, 2015

- Chapter 3 “**Critical Theory**” in *Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era*, pp. 75-118.

Week 3 Symbolic Interactionism and Dramaturgy

January 26, 28, & 30, 2015

- **Blumer & Goffman** in chapter 5 “**Symbolic Interactionism and Dramaturgy**” in *Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era*, pp. 174-232.

Week 4 Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology

Feb 2, 4, & 6, 2015

- **Schutz, Berger and Luckmann, & Garfinkel** in Chapter 6 “Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology” in *Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era*, pp. 261- 311.

Week 5 Habermas

Feb 9, 11, & 13, 2015

- **Habermas** in Chapter 9 “Contemporary Theoretical Syntheses” in *Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era*, pp. 484- 519.
- Writing Session February 9th.

Reading Week No Class

Week 6 Structuralism

Feb 23, 25, & 27, 2015

- **Ian Craib** (1984) *Modern Social Theory: From Parsons to Habermas*. Brighton: Wheatsheaf, pp. 105-121. **D2L**
- **Frederic Jameson** (1972) *Prison House of Language*. Princeton, NJ. Princeton University Press. **Pp. 3- 39. D2L**

Week 7 Poststructuralism and Postmodernism [First Paper Due March 4th, 2015]

March 2, 4 & 6, 2015

- **Foucault, Baudrillard, & Lyotard** in Chapter 8 “Poststructural and Postmodern Theories” in *Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era*, pp. 381-443.

Week 8 Foucault Continued

March 9, 11, &13, 2015

- **Michel Foucault** ([1971] 1984) “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” in *The Foucault Reader*, P. Rabinow (ed.), New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 76-100. **D2L**
- **Michel Foucault** ([1978] 1990) *History of Sexuality*, Volume 1. New York: Vintage, Part 4, chapter 2 “Method”, pp. 92-102. **D2L**
- **Michel Foucault** ([1980] 1991) “Questions of Method” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller (eds), London: Harvester

Wheatsheaf, pp. 73-86. D2L

Week 9 Bourdieu

March 16, 18, 20, 2015

- **Bourdieu** in Chapter 9 “Contemporary Theoretical Syntheses” in *Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era*, pp. 445-483.
- **Bourdieu** (1977) *Logic of Practice*, “Structures, habitus, practices” pp.52-65. D2L

Week 10 Giddens & Beck

March 23, 25, & 27, 2015

- **Giddens** in Chapter 9 “Contemporary Theoretical Syntheses” in *Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era*, pp. 520-554.
- **Beck, Ulrich** (1992a) ch1 “On the Logic of Wealth Distribution and Risk Distribution” in *Risk Society*, pp. 19-50. D2L

Week 11 Feminist Approaches

March 30 & April 1, 2015 [2 days]

- **Smith, Hill Collins, Chodorow, & Butler** in Chapter 7 “Feminist and Gender Theories” in *Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era*, pp. 312-358, 372-380.

Week 12 Global Society

April 6, 8, & 10, 2015 [possibly 2 days]

- **Wallerstein & Said** in Chapter 10 “Global Society” in *Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era*, pp. 555-584, 619-642

Week 13 ANT and Realism [Theory Paper #2 Due April 15th, 2015]

April 13 & 15, 2015 [2 days]

- **Bruno Latour** *Reassembling the Social*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, “Introduction: How to Resume the Task of Tracing Associations” pp. 1-20. D2L
- **Andrew Sayer** *Realism and Social Science*. London: Sage, *From* Chapter 2 “Realism for Sceptics”, pp. 32-40, 47-51. D2L