



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Winter 2020

FACULTY OF ARTS

Department of Sociology

Department of Sociology Website: <https://soci.ucalgary.ca/>

COURSE TITLE: Contemporary Sociological Theory			
Course Number	SOCI 333		
Pre/Co-Requisites	SOCI 331		
Instructor Name	Dr Dean Curran	Email	dcurran@ucalgary.ca
Instructor Email Policy	Feel free to contact me over email. Please put your course number and section in your email's subject line, and include a proper salutation, your full name, student ID, and a proper closing in the body of your email. Emails will be answered within two business days, though usually shorter than this – though I do not answer emails over the weekend. Please take that into account when emailing me questions pertaining assignments or exams. If you have a course-related question, please check the course outline first. E-mail is primarily for administrative purposes and does not fit well as a replacement for an office visit. Questions about the course content and readings, concerns about grades, or any other personal issues should be dealt with in person during my office hours.		
Office Location	SS918	Office Hours	Tuesday 10:55am-11:55am Thursday 12:50pm-1:50pm
Class Dates	Tuesday, Thursday		
Class Times	2:00pm-3:15pm		
Class Location	SA 017		

Course Description

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.

Course Objectives

Course 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.

Learning and Discussion

While many truths that we hold may appear self-evident to ourselves, rather than remaining in our silos, a core part of the task of universities and of critical social theory is to critically engage with other viewpoints and to learn to further articulate the reasons for one's views. It is particularly important that we engage in respectful conversation in classroom discussions; likewise, it is important to emphasize that disagreement does not in itself automatically constitute disrespect of other viewpoints. In challenging dominant views in society and our own views, we can further our ability to better understand society as well better enable ourselves to engage in critical debates ongoing in contemporary society.

Required Textbooks, Readings, Materials, Electronic Resources

- S. Appelrouth & L. Edles (2015) *Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era: Text and Readings*. Sage
- Readings on D2L

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

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Wk	Date	Course Topic	Reading
1	Jan 14 & 16	Course Intro & Merton	"Merton" <i>Sociological Theory</i> , p. 59-79 " in S. Appelrouth & L. Edles (2015) <i>Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era: Text and Readings</i> [henceforth <i>Sociological Theory</i>],
2	Jan 21 & 23,	Goffman	"Goffman" <i>Sociological Theory</i> , pp. 255-294
3	Jan 28 & 30	Phenomenology	"Berger & Luckmann" <i>Sociological Theory</i> , pp. 340-359
4	Feb 4 & 6	Critical Theory	"Critical Theory" in <i>Sociological Theory</i> , pp. 81-127
5	Feb 11 & 13	Foucault	"Foucault" <i>Sociological Theory</i> , pp.391-418
	Feb 17-21	Break	
6	Feb 25 & 27	Foucault	"Foucault" <i>Sociological Theory</i> , pp.391-418
7	March 3 & 5	Arendt	Arendt "The Public and the Private Realm" in <i>The Portable Hannah Arendt</i> , pp. 191-218 [on D2L]
8	Mar 10 & 12	Midterm & Bourdieu	"Bourdieu", <i>Sociological Theory</i> , pp. 418-454.
9	Mar 17 & 19	Giddens	"Giddens" <i>Sociological Theory</i> , pp. 592-617
			<i>Giddens Reader</i> excerpts [on D2L]
10	Mar 24 & 26	Gender	"Smith" <i>Sociological Theory</i> , pp. 375-390
			"Hill Collins", <i>Sociological Theory</i> , pp. 164-178
11	Mar 31 & April 2	Race, Ethnicity, & Imperialism	"Said", <i>Sociological Theory</i> , pp. 455-479
			Fei Xiaotong "Special Characteristics of Rural Society" in <i>From the Soil</i> , pp. 37-44 [on D2L]
12	Apr 7 & 9	Habermas & Paper	"Habermas" <i>Sociological Theory</i> , pp. 127-164
13	Apr 14	Review & Discussion	

Methods of Assessment and Grading Weights

Participation: 5%

Midterm: 30% (**Tues March 10, 2020**)

Theory Paper: 35% (**Due Tues April 7th, 2020,**) On D2L Dropbox

Take-home: 30% (**Tues April 21, 2020**)

Class Structure from March 17, 2020

Lectures will be posted on D2L by Tuesday. Course discussion will be held during class time on Thursday on D2L Forums though students can submit comments to the discussion board before Thursday's class if they would like.

Course Participation

Students are expected to regularly attend the lectures and discussions, and to have completed the readings prior to the Thursday class. 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.

Mid-Term (in-class)

The mid-term will take place during class and will be on the readings and lectures of the first seven weeks of the course.

Theory Paper

The theory paper is a core component of assessment for this course. The paper assignment is 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. The paper involves a comparison or contrast of the key ideas of two key thinkers in the course). This paper should be 2000 words with 10% (i.e. 200 words allowance) on either side. In comparing the two thinkers, students are encouraged not just find differences in terms of focus, but in particular, points of agreement and disagreement which in turn generate similarities or differences in the respective theorists.

Final Exam

The final exam will be a take-home. It will cover the entire course material, both readings and lectures. Proper citation practice must be used in the take-home essays. The questions will be placed on D2L on April 14th by 4pm and will be due one week later on D2L, **April 21st, 2020 at 4pm via D2L**. Take-home exams that are late will receive an F grade. **Students are responsible for checking that they have uploaded the correct file – there will be no exceptions for incorrectly uploaded submissions.**

General Referencing Guidelines

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. (Foucault 2015: 139) is recommended)

Submission and Late Policy

The term paper is 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. Take-home exams that are late will receive a mark of F.

Technology Use

Class Etiquette

Use of cell phones or internet on laptops distracts other students and the instructor and hence is not permitted. Based on previous feedback from students, the policy for this class will be that laptops without the use of internet is permitted, but that if laptops are used for other than taking notes, permission to use a laptop will be withdrawn.

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. In lieu of face-to-face office hours, students can email in questions or connect via Zoom with the instructor during office hours.

Grading Scale

Letter grades will be assigned and submitted to the registrar based on the following scale:

Grade	Percent range	Grade Point Value	Description
A+	95 – 100%	4.0	Outstanding performance
A	90 – 94.99%	4.0	Excellent performance
A-	85 – 89.99%	3.7	Approaching excellent performance
B+	80 – 84.99%	3.3	Exceeding good performance
B	75 – 79.99%	3.0	Good performance
B-	70 – 74.99%	2.7	Approaching good performance
C+	67 – 69.99%	2.3	Exceeding satisfactory performance
C	63 – 66.99%	2.0	Satisfactory performance
C-	59 – 62.99%	1.7	Approaching satisfactory performance
D+	55 – 58.99%	1.3	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject
D	50 – 54.99%	1.0	Minimal Pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.
F	<50%	0	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.

Handing in Papers, Assignments

1. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.
2. **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 can provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are only available online.

Research Ethics

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 Faculty 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.

Copyright Legislation

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf>) and requirements of the Copyright Act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of

unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Instructor Intellectual Property

Course materials created by professor(s) (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the professor(s). These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the professor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

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.html>

Absences and Deferrals

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. Evidence in the form of documentation must be provided. For statutory declarations, original notarized notes must be provided. Instructors may request that evidence in the form of documentation be provided. If the reason provided for the absence is acceptable, instructors may decide that any arrangements made can take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test. For information on possible forms of documentation, including statutory declarations, please see

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

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 can be found at:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams>

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:

https://live-ucalgary.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/1/deferred_termwork15_0.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).

Academic Accommodation

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

Wellness and Mental Health Resources

The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness and academic success, and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive support when needed. We encourage you to explore the excellent mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support or skills-building available through Student Wellness Services (Room 370 MacEwan Student Centre, <https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/services/mental-health-services>) and the Campus Mental Health Strategy (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>).

Student Success Centre

The Student Success Centre provides services and programs to ensure students can make the most of their time at the University of Calgary. Our advisors, learning support staff, and writing support staff assist students in enhancing their skills and achieving their academic goals. They provide tailored learning support and advising programs, as well as one-on-one services, free of charge to all undergraduate and graduate students. For more information visit: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success>

Student Ombuds Office

The Student Ombuds Office supports and provides a safe, neutral space for students. For more information, please visit www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/ or email ombuds@ucalgary.ca.

Student Union (SU) Information

The SU Vice-President Academic can be reached at (403) 220-3911 or suvpaca@ucalgary.ca; Information about the SU, including elected Faculty Representatives, can be found here: <https://www.su.ucalgary.ca>.

Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points

Assembly points for emergencies have been identified across campus. Assembly points are designed to establish a location for information updates from the emergency responders to the evacuees; from the evacuated population to the emergency responders. For more information, see the University of Calgary's Emergency Management website:

<https://live-risk.ucalgary.ca/risk/emergency-management/evac-drills-assembly-points/assembly-points>

Safewalk

Campus security will escort individuals, day or night, anywhere on campus (including McMahon Stadium, Health Sciences Centre, Student Family Housing, the Alberta Children's Hospital and the University LRT station). Call 403-220-5333 or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk>. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot pay booths. Please ensure your personal safety

Criteria for Papers:

This is a checklist to help evaluate a paper submitted in this course. The greater degree to which each question can be answered positively to a high level, the better the paper.

Thesis Statement

Is it identifiable and clear?

Is it manageable rather than being too broad for a short paper?

Is it something substantive and does it provide the key argument(s) of the paper?

Does the paper actually then closely follow the thesis?

Theoretical Understandings

Does the paper identify the key elements of the concepts that it is discussing?

Does it explain these concepts clearly and accurately and in sufficient depth?

Does its further discussion of the concepts demonstrate an overall understanding of the theorists involved in the paper, as well as integrating other literatures into the paper well?

Does it move beyond simply describing or summarizing the readings to analyze them and their underlying reasons and understandings?

Can it apply these concepts to new contexts and arguments in an insightful way?

Does the paper manifest a critical understanding of the subject matter of the paper?

Does the paper manifest a certain level of originality or creativity in understanding and critically analyzing the theorists discussed?

Writing Quality

Is the grammar and spelling correct?

Is it clear what the meaning of the sentences and paragraphs is?

Does it follow a clear structure, and provide the reader with an understanding of where the argument is proceeding, rather than being disorganized or disjointed?

Evidence

Does the paper provide reasons for the arguments and conclusions that it makes?

Are the reasons provided clear and persuasive?

In making claims about a certain thinker's ideas does it provide proper evidence of these claims through proper citation (book and page number) and argumentation?

Grade Level

A: The paper will be very good in all these dimensions.

B: The paper will be good on all of these dimensions, or adequate on some dimensions and very good on other dimensions.

C: The paper will be satisfactory on all of these dimensions, or poor on some and good (or very good) on others.

D: The paper is poor on some of these dimensions and satisfactory on some of these dimensions.

F: The paper will be poor on these dimensions or inadequate on one or more of these dimensions.