



# UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Faculty of Arts  
Department of Sociology  
Sociology Department Home Page: <http://www.soci.ucalgary.ca>

SOCI 631  
Seminar in Sociological Theory  
Fall 2018

**Course Times:** Tuesday 9:30am–12:15pm  
**Course Location:** SS 921

**Instructor:** Dean Curran  
**Office:** SS 918  
**Email:** [dcurran@ucalgary.ca](mailto:dcurran@ucalgary.ca)  
**Phone:** 403-220-6520  
**Office Hours:** Tuesday 12:40pm–1:50pm, Thursday 3:25pm–4:15pm, or by appointment

## Course Overview

This is a required course for Master's students in Sociology. This course is intended as an advanced introduction to classical and contemporary sociological. Some of the key themes that will be addressed in this course are: the rise of social theory, as well as the different analyses in classical and contemporary social theory of the development of capitalism, modernity, inequality, industrialism, and individualism. These themes will be developed by the reading of secondary sources and primary source sociological 'classics' by Marx, Weber, Foucault, Bourdieu, and Brown.

## Aims and Objectives

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

- The dominant theoretical approaches in classical and contemporary sociological theory.
- How these different approaches relate to each other and how these different theories relate to some key developments in contemporary social theory.

This course should also enhance students' ability to:

- Theorize in a critical and analytical manner about social life.
- Write clearly and cogently about classical and contemporary social theory.
- Make a contribution to existing debates in 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 presentations, 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.

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## Required Texts

- Anthony Giddens (1971) *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*. Cambridge University Press.
- Karl Marx (1983) *The Portable Karl Marx*. (Ed.) E Kamenka. Penguin
- Max Weber (2001) *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Routledge.
- Michel Foucault (1990) *History of Sexuality*, Vol 1. Viking.
- Pierre Bourdieu (1990) *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford University Press.
- Wendy Brown (2015) *Undoing the Demos*. Zone Books.
- P. Baert & F.P. da Silva (2010) *Social Theory in the Twentieth Century and Beyond*. Polity

All of these books were requested for the bookstore – though cheaper used copies of these books are generally available online and at used bookstores.

**Note:** Students are expected to bring the week's readings to the seminar to discuss the material.

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## Teaching and Learning

Format of the Course

- 12 seminars, which will involve presentations and extensive discussion of the text
- 2 presentation/serving as key discussant by each student
- 2 Papers, 1 short paper and 1 term paper

## Course Assessment

Participation: 15%

Brief Presentation/Discussion: 20%

1st Paper (2000 words): 25% (Due: October 30th, 2018 by 4:00pm)

Term Paper: 40% (4000–5000 words) (Due December 6, 2018 by 4:00pm)

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### **Course Participation (15%)**

Students are expected to regularly attend the seminars, and are expected to be punctual. Presentations will be at the beginning of class and it can be distracting to have people interrupting to enter the class during one's presentation. Students are expected to have completed the readings prior to the seminars. 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 seminar as a whole.

### **2 Short Presentations/Discussant (20%)**

Given that this is a graduate course, with capped enrollment, student participation and contribution is fundamental to this course. Each student will briefly present (approximately 5 minutes) and then serve as key discussants for the associated reading for two different weeks over the course. The brief presentations/discussant role will run from week 3 to week 12. Since the schedule of the presentations will depend on final enrollment for the course, more information will be provided on presentations in week two.

### **Short Paper (25%)**

The first paper should be a 2000 word paper (10% allowance either way, including references) that compares a key part of the theoretical framework of two of the first three theorists that are substantively covered in this course: Marx, Weber, and Foucault.

### **Theory Paper (40%)**

The theory paper is 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 envisioned to provide an advanced introduction to key threads in classical and contemporary social. Students are heavily encouraged to plan ahead and consult with the instructor regarding their proposed essays. The paper should be between 4000 to 5000 words (references inclusive).

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### **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.

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### **1 Submission and Late Policy**

All written submissions should be in 12 font with standard margins and should include a **word count** on the document. The paper will receive a late penalty of THREE (3) 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.

### **2 Instructor Contact Policy**

**Email:** 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.

**3 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.

**4 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. (Marx 1848: 139) is recommended).

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

**Grading Scale**

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

F.1.2 Graduate Studies Grading System

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percent Range</b>	<b>Grade Point Value</b>	<b>Graduate Description</b>
A+	95-100	4.00	Outstanding performance
A	90-94	4.00	Excellent performance
A-	85-89	3.70	Very good performance
B+	80-84	3.30	Good performance
B	75-79	3.00	Satisfactory performance
B-	70-74	2.70	Minimum pass
C+	67-69	2.30	Failure. All grades below "B-" are indicative of failure and will not count toward graduate program requirements.
C	63-66	2.00	
C-	60-62	1.70	
D+	55-59	1.30	
D	50-53	1.00	
F	49 or less	0.00	

**Course Notes – departmentally standard**

**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 re- assessed grade may be raised, lowered, or remain the same.

## 2. **Handing in Papers, Assignments**

The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.

### **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.

**Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department.** They are only available online.

## 3. **Ethics 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 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.

## **Emergency Evacuations**

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom, please proceed to the assembly point at Social Science - Food Court

## **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-5.html>

## **Deferrals**

When possible, please provide advance notice 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, misreading the syllabus, and scheduling conflicts with other classes or employment 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:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/student-forms>

**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://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred\\_termwork15\\_0.pdf](https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/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).

## **Student Representation**

The 2018-19 Students' Union VP Academic is Jessica Revington ([suvpaca@ucalgary.ca](mailto:suvpaca@ucalgary.ca)).

For more information, and to contact other elected officials with the Student's Union, please visit this link: <https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/>

You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/contact>

## **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.

## **Academic Accommodation**

The student accommodation policy can be found at: [ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy](http://ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy).

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities [ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy](http://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy).

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

## **Student Resources**

[SU Wellness Centre](#)

[Campus Mental Health Strategy](#)

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## Course Readings

Wk	Date	Reading	Course Topic
1	11-Sep	Giddens (1971) <i>Capitalism and Modern Social Theory</i> , pp 1-64	<b>Marx</b>
2	18-Sep	Karl Marx (1983) <i>The Portable Karl Marx</i> . (Ed.) E Kamenka pp. 87-158	<b>Early Marx</b>
3	25-Sep	Karl Marx (1983) <i>The Portable Karl Marx</i> . (Ed.) E Kamenka, pp. 158–183, 203–241, 432–465.	<b>Mature Marx</b>
4	02-Oct	Giddens (1971) <i>Capitalism and Modern Social Theory</i> , pp 119-184, 185-198	<b>Weber; Marx &amp; Weber</b>
4	02-Oct	Max Weber <i>Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> , part I, pp. 1-36.	<b>Weber</b>
5	09-Oct	Giddens (1971) <i>Capitalism and Modern Social Theory</i> , pp 65-118, 199-204	<b>Durkheim</b>
5	09-Oct	Max Weber <i>Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> , part II, pp. 67-123	<b>Weber</b>
6	16-Oct	Michel Foucault (1990) <i>History of Sexuality</i> , Vol 1, pp. 3-80	<b>Foucault</b>
6	16-Oct	P. Baert & F.P. da Silva (2010) <i>Social Theory in the Twentieth Century and Beyond</i> , pp. 185-214	<b>Foucault</b>
7	23-Oct	Michel Foucault (1990) <i>History of Sexuality</i> , Vol 1, pp.81-159	<b>Foucault</b>
7	23-Oct	P. Baert & F.P. da Silva (2010) <i>Social Theory in the Twentieth Century and Beyond</i> , pp. 155-184	<b>Giddens</b>
8	30-Oct	P. Bourdieu (1990) <i>The Logic of Practice</i> pp. 1-65	<b>Bourdieu</b>
8	30-Oct	P. Baert & F.P. da Silva (2010) <i>Social Theory in the Twentieth Century and Beyond</i> , pp. 12-42	<b>Structuralism</b>
9	06-Nov	P. Bourdieu (1990) <i>The Logic of Practice</i> pp. 66-134	<b>Bourdieu</b>
9	06-Nov	P. Baert & F.P. da Silva (2010) <i>Social Theory in the Twentieth Century and Beyond</i> , pp. 42-48, 52-81	<b>Pragmatism; Functionalism</b>
10	13-Nov	No Class	
11	20-Nov	W. Brown (2015) <i>Undoing the Demos</i> , pp. 9-78	<b>Brown</b>
11	20-Nov	P. Baert & F.P. da Silva (2010) <i>Social Theory in the Twentieth Century and Beyond</i> , pp. 125-152	<b>Rational Choice</b>
12	27-Nov	W. Brown (2015) <i>Undoing the Demos</i> , pp 79-151	<b>Brown</b>
12	27-Nov	P. Baert & F.P. da Silva (2010) <i>Social Theory in the Twentieth Century and Beyond</i> , pp. 215-280	<b>Habermas. Globalization</b>
13	04-Dec	W. Brown (2015) <i>Undoing the Demos</i> , pp. 175-222	<b>Brown; Sacrifice</b>
13	04-Dec	P. Baert & F.P. da Silva (2010) <i>Social Theory in the Twentieth Century and Beyond</i> , pp. 285-305	<b>Globalization; Whither Social Theory?</b>

## Recommended Supplementary Texts

### For Marx and Weber

- Ian Craib (1997) *Classical Social Theory: An Introduction to the Thought of Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Simmel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Derek Sayer (1991) *Capitalism and Modernity: an Excursus on Marx and Weber*. New York: Routledge.

### For Foucault

- Barry Smart (1985) *Foucault*. Tavistock.
- G. Gutting (2005) *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- P. Dews (1987) *Logics of Disintegration*. London: Verso.
- H.L. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow (1983) *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

### For Bourdieu

- Swartz, David, (1997) *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- R. Jenkins (1992) *Pierre Bourdieu*. London: Routledge.
- C. Calhoun, E. LiPuma, and M. Postone (1993) *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

### For Critical Theory

- Held, David (1980) *Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas*. Cambridge: Polity.
  - T. Bottomore (1989) *The Frankfurt School*. London: Routledge.
  - M. Horkheimer (2013) *Eclipse of Reason*. London: Bloomsbury.
  - S. Benhabib (1994) "The Critique of Instrumental Reason" in S. Zizek ed. *Mapping Ideology*. London: Verso.
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## **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?

### **A Paper**

The paper will be very good in all these dimensions.

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### **B Paper**

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

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### **C Paper**

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

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### **D Paper**

The paper is poor on many of these dimensions.

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### **F Paper**

The paper will be inadequate on several of these dimensions.

## **Criteria for Presentations**

Presentation skills are extremely important to develop. Presenting in the context of a university amongst supportive peers can make an essential contribution to developing these skills. The following are some criteria for the marking of presentations. The greater degree to which each question can be answered positively to a high level, the better the presentation.

### **Presentation Style**

Is the presentation style engaging?

Is the language clear and can the presenter be heard clearly?

Does the presenter look at the audience and speak to the audience, rather than just reading his or her notes?

### **Organization**

Is the aim of the presentation clear?

Is the presentation well-organized and does it flow well, rather than feeling disjointed or confusing?

Is the presentation on time, rather than being too short or too long?

### **Understanding**

Does the presentation clearly display knowledge and understanding of the material involved?

Does it move beyond simply summarizing the reading to provide an analysis of the reading?

Is there a critical engagement with the key arguments of the material?

Does the presenter help the audience to better understand the reading or to better understand the issues related to the topic of the presentation?

Is the presenter's question engaging and clear?

Is the presenter able to integrate other knowledge into this specific reading or issue? (Note: this is not compulsory, but can be beneficial)

Does the presenter manifest a certain level of creativity in understanding and applying the content of the presentation?

In particular, does it highlight some of the key ideas and arguments of the reading (picking out some of the key points rather than only summarizing the reading)?

### **Grade Level**

**A:** The presentation will be very good in all these four dimensions.

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**B:** The presentation will be good on all of these four dimensions, or satisfactory on some dimensions and very good on other dimensions.

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

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**D:** The presentation is poor on many of these dimensions.

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**F:** The presentation will be inadequate on several of these dimensions.