

Soci 731, **Doctoral Seminar in Social Theory**, Fall 2017
Sociology Department Website: www.soci.ucalgary.ca
Wednesdays, 10:00 – 12:45 p.m., SS921

Instructor: **Dr. Ariel Ducey**

Office hours: Thursdays 1:00 – 2:30 and by appointment, SS938, aducey@ucalgary.ca, 220-5054

Course Overview

This course considers the evolution of Western social theory as it transitions away from perspectives born in an era of apparent post-war prosperity and stability toward those that might capture an era of new and reconfigured forms of inequality, marginalization, and resistance. We will attend to where contemporary social theorists stand in relation to traditional classifications of social theory and philosophy, but also to the ways in which these theorists challenge existing classifications and divisions of social theory. The course is divided into four sections, each of which is anchored in the views of a major theorist or oft-recognized school of thought, but which also brings in the voices of those who critique and extend those views -- often in light of experiences and realities that tend to be marginalized or are less likely to register in dominant, western, white, androcentric narratives.

Course Objectives

- Become familiar with selected, major schools of contemporary social theory.
- Recognize how major sociological concepts are differently defined and deployed in contemporary social theory, such as: culture, structure, class, the social, and emotion
- Recognize traditional ways of classifying and distinguishing social theories (agency vs. structure; macro vs. micro; practice vs. perception; idealism vs. materialism; objectivity vs. subjectivity) and whether they map onto the theories under consideration
- Critically consider such classifications, in terms of their theoretical and practical consequences
- Recognize the research approaches that tend to follow from specific types of social theory
- Assist students to make provisional decisions about where their dissertation research will be situated theoretically
- Assist students to make provisional decisions about how they will use or contribute to social theory in their dissertation research

Course Requirements

Reading

As a graduate seminar, this class requires extensive reading, usually between 100-200 pages a week. I may add, omit, or change a few readings, depending on the progress of the course. I will notify you in class of any changes to the class schedule. Because this is a seminar, you are expected to do the assigned reading prior to class and to bring the day's reading/text with you to class.

Assignments and Evaluation

Individual participation: 10%

Group presentation: 10% each (group graded as a whole)

Literature reviews: 15% each

Final paper: 40%

Participation Guidelines

This is a small seminar, and in-class participation is expected. The instructor will lecture or provide overviews as necessary, but the major portion of the seminar is discussion-based. Therefore, students must come to class having done the readings, identified important themes within and between them, and with questions or concerns in mind. Students must also be prepared to participate when classmates are giving their presentations; we should aim to produce an atmosphere of mutual support that allows for critical (but still constructive) feedback and exchange.

I will provide seminar members with their in-progress participation grade at approximately midterm, so that anyone not doing well can get feedback from me and have a chance to improve.

On occasion, ungraded writing activities and thought exercises will be included in class and will be counted as part of participation.

Literature reviews & group presentations

The course has been divided into four sections. Each student will have to contribute to a written literature review and in-class presentation for two sections.

Step one: Each student will identify a body of research/writing which is indebted to the theoretical tradition under consideration. The body of research/writing need not be exclusively sociological and might be organized around theoretical questions or empirical topics of study. Each student will carry out a literature search and identify a cluster of related works (usually one or two of these works will be foundational, or often-cited), skim them, and compile the citations and abstracts.

Step two: The group will meet and compile and discuss the bodies of research identified. During this meeting, students prepare for their presentation and writing their individual literature reviews.

Three: Each individual student writes a brief summary of the literature they found (providing citations), using the following questions as guides. These summaries should be no more than 800 words and are due one week after the group presentation.

- What is the scope of this body of research? What is the common thread of these works?
- How do the works in this body of literature describe the advantages and disadvantages of the social theory being used?
- What aspects of the social theory under consideration are taken up in this literature?
- What aspects of the social theory under consideration are not taken up in this literature?
- What seem to be the strengths and limitations of this literature in terms of its engagement with the social theory?

Four: On the last day of class for the course section, the groups will have one hour to present their literature reviews. In addition to presenting the information from the individual literature reviews, it is expected that the group will explain what can be learned about the use of the selected social theory from the literature reviews considered together.

Final literature reviews and the bibliography will be shared for the entire class on d21.

Final paper

In the final paper, seminar members will assess and compare the implications of differing social theories for their dissertation projects. Each student will summarize their current plans for their project and assess and compare at least two theoretical traditions from class in relation to it. Plan to discuss how the theoretical traditions might impact: 1) the formulation of research questions; 2) the kinds of evidence required to answer the research questions; 3) the way in which the evidence would be analyzed; and 4) decisions about how to write and present the research results. Not all the readings and perspectives presented in class need to be included, rather students should choose several distinct theoretical approaches or theorists that are, for reasons provided, most illuminating. Students must compare the theoretical approaches or theorists. I.e., students will need to show understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of each theoretical approach in relation to one another and in relation to the dissertation project, and perhaps make a provisional argument about the better or more compelling theoretical approach.

The final paper should be no less than 6,000 words. There are no restrictions on length, but all elements of the paper should have a reason for being included and the paper should cohere as a whole.

The final papers will be due on Thursday, December 21st, 2017.

Additional Course Notes:

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.
3. 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>
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. 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.
6. 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

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. The 2017-18 Students' Union VP Academic is Tina Miller (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>
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: The student accommodation policy can be found at: 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.

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

Course Schedule

Sept 13

Introduction to the course

Section 1: Marxism faces the 20th century

Sept 20

- Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm> [Orig. published in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Monthly Review Press, 1971.]
- Marcuse, Herbert. "The New Forms of Social Control" and "The Closing of the Universe of Discourse", Chs. 1 & 4, pp. 1-18, 84-120, in *The One-Dimensional Man*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1981 [1964].

Sept 27

- Accompanying film: "Life and Debt"
- Harvey, David. 1990. "The political-economic transformation of late twentieth century capitalism," Part II of *The Condition of Postmodernity*. London: Blackwell.
- Jameson, Frederic. "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review* I/146, 1984, pp. 53-92

Oct 4

- Benjamin, Walter. (1936) "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," <https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm> [Orig. published in English in *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968; orig. published in Germany 1955.]
- Aronowitz, Stanley, Dawn Esposito, William DiFazio, Margaret Yard. "The post-work manifesto," Ch. 1 in *Post-Work*. Routledge, 1997.

Section 2: Foucault past and present

Oct 11

Accompanying media resource: Foucault vs. Chomsky debate

- Foucault, Michel. "The Order of Discourse," pp. 48-78 in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, Robert Young, ed. Routledge, 1981.

9/14/17

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- Michel Foucault. *Discipline & Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan, NY: Random House, 1995. [Orig. published in English 1977, French 1975] [selections]
- Foucault, Michel. "Nietzsche, genealogy, history," pp. 76-100 in *The Foucault Reader*, P. Rabinow, ed. New York: Pantheon, 1984. [appeared in French, 1971]

Oct 18

- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. Vintage Books, 1990.

Oct 25

- Bartky, Sandra L. 1997. "Foucault, Feminism and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power" in K. Conboy, N. Medina and S. Stanbury, eds., *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Pitts-Taylor, Victoria. 2009. "Becoming/Being a Cosmetic Surgery Patient: Semantic Instability and the Intersubjective Self," *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 10(3): 119-128.
- Mbembe, Achille. "Necropolitics," *Public Culture* 15(1): 11-40, 2003.

Section 3: Pierre Bourdieu

Nov 1

Accompanying film: *Sociology as a Martial Art*

- Bourdieu, Pierre. "Outline of a Sociological Theory of Art Perception," *International Social Science Journal*, 20, 1968, 598-612. [Orig. published in French, 1968]
- Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Habitus and the Space of Life-Styles," Ch. 3, pp. 169-225, in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Harvard University Press, 1984.

Nov 8

- Wacquant, Loic. 1989. "Towards a Reflexive Sociology: A Workshop with Pierre Bourdieu." *Sociological Theory* 7(1): 26-63.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. "Structures, Habitus, Power: Basis for a Theory of Symbolic Power," Ch. 4 in *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge University Press, 1977. [orig. published in French, 1972]
- Lamont, Michèle. *Money, Morals and Manners: The Culture of the French and American Upper-Middle Class*. University of Chicago Press, 1992. [Chapter 7]

Section 4: Interactionism and the Structuring of the Personal

Nov 15

- Goffman, Erving. "On Face Work: An Analysis of Ritual Elements in Social Interaction," in *Interaction Ritual*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1967. Pp 5-45
- Goffman, E. 1983. "Felicity's Condition," *American Journal of Sociology* 89 (1): 1-53.

Nov 22

- Fanon, Frantz. Chs. 1, 5, and 8 (pp.17-40, 109-140, 223-232) from *Black Skin, White Masks*. Grove Press, 1967.
- Hochschild, Arlie. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. University of California Press, 1983.

Nov 29

- Harding, Sandra. "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is 'Strong Objectivity'"
- Collins, Patricia Hill. "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought," *Social Problems* 33(6): S14-S32, 1986.
- Mies, Maria and Vandana Shiva. 2004. "The Subsistence Perspective," Ch. 26 in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader*. Sandra Harding, ed. New York: Routledge.
- Smith, Dorothy. "Women's Experience as a Radical Critique of Sociology," Ch. 1 in *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge*. University of Toronto Press, 1990.

Dec 6

- Terranova, Tiziana. 2000. "Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy," *Social Text*, 18 (2): 33-58.
- Lazzarato, Maurizio. 1996. "Immaterial Labor," pp. 133-147 in Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt, eds. *Radical Thought in Italy*. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press.
- Ducey, Ariel. "More Than a Job: Meaning, Affect, and Training Health Care Workers," Pp. 187-208 in *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*, Patricia Clough and Jean Halley, eds., Duke University Press, 2007.
- Ahmed, Sara. 2004. "Affective Economies," *Social Text* 22(2): 117-39.
- Clough, Patricia. 2008. "The Affective Turn: Political Economy, Biomedicine, and Bodies," *Theory, Culture and Society* 25(1): 1-22.