



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Fall 2020

FACULTY OF ARTS

Department of Sociology

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

COURSE TITLE: Seminar in Sociological Theory			
Course Number	SOC 631 & SOC 731		
Pre/Co-Requisites	SOC 631 – SOC 331 & 333 SOC 731 – Consent of the Department		
Instructor Name	Dr Dean Curran	Email	dcurran@ucalgary.ca
Instructor Email Policy	Feel free to contact me over 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. Questions about the course content and readings, concerns about grades, or any other personal issues can also be dealt with during my office hours.		
Office Location	N/A	Office Hours	Wednesday 12-2pm
Class Dates	Monday		
Class Times	9:30am-11:00am (synchronous)		
Class Location	Online		

Course Description

This is a required course for Master's (or Doctoral) 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 analyses in classical and contemporary social theory regarding positivism, functionalism, interpretivism, critical theory, intersectionality, realism, and theory change.

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.

Course Format

This Course will primarily be synchronous, meeting for a seminar on Zoom on Monday 9:30am-11:00am. The seminars will not be recorded. It will also involve some asynchronous parts of participation as discussed below.

Learning Resources

All required readings will be on D2L.

Learning Technologies and Requirements

There is a D2L site for this course which contains required readings and other relevant class resources and materials (see d2l.ucalgary.ca).

**** For online, remote or blended courses:***

In order to successfully engage in their learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students taking online, remote and blended courses are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security, and malware updates;
- A current and updated web browser;
- Webcam (built-in or external);
- Microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone;
- Current antivirus and/or firewall software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection.

Most current laptops will have a built-in webcam, speaker and microphone.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Readings will be provided on D2L

Methods of Assessment and Grading Weights

Post-seminar write-ups 10%

Discussant role x 3 times: 15%*

Reading Analyses x 5 times: 25%

Abstract of final paper (Due Dec 3, 2020 at 1pm): 5%

Final Paper (Due December 14, 2020 at 4pm): 45%

*Students who are unable to participate during real-time in the course due time zone challenges, should contact the instructor as soon as possible to arrange alternative tasks.

Post-seminar write-ups (10%)

From previous feedback from instructors, it appears that 3 hour graduate student Zoom sessions tend to be too long. Consequently, we will meet for 1 hour 30 minutes (9:30am-11:00am) on Monday. An additional part of potential participation for students will be that students can submit a 1-3 paragraph (200-400 words) relatively informal discussion of the readings *after* we have met to discuss them. This brief post-class write-up can include, for example: something students learned from the discussion; a critique of the reading that a student thought of after the seminar; a query that a student still has about the reading; or a novel extension of the readings, etc. These contributions will be due two days after the seminar (Wednesday at 12pm) on D2L. Students are not required to submit these each week. Students should aim to submit a minimum of 5 post-seminar write-ups over the course. Given their informal nature, they will not be marked each week separately, but rather can be considered as another means of participation in the course.

3 Discussant Role (15%)

Between weeks 2-11, students will be assigned the role of discussant 3 times. Student's role as discussant is not to prepare a formal presentation of the material, but rather to have done the reading and to have some comments, critical evaluation of the readings (whether this be justifying arguments of the readings or critiquing the readings), and also to have some points of question and further potential discussion for the class. The weeks that students are discussants will be assigned after the first week of class.

5 Reading Analyses (25%)

These analyses will be marked based on the level of critical engagement with the texts. They are expected to be between 500 and 650 words in length and to outline the argument of one or more of the assigned readings for that week. Students can choose which weeks they prefer to submit reading analyses. Students can submit up to 6 reading analyses (with the 5 analyses with the highest marks going towards their final mark). Analyses must be handed into D2L Dropbox before the beginning of class on Monday (the D2L Dropbox will close at 9:30am the day of class). It is particularly important that students cite specific page numbers multiple times in their reading summaries (i.e. (Foucault 2010: 367). Course analyses can focus on one reading that week, but to do so the reading must be longer than 25 pages. Reading analyses should identify

the key arguments of the reading and the evidence summoned for the reading, and then to critically or creatively appraise that argument and evidence.

Abstract of Term Paper (5%)

The abstract is intended to provide a brief outline of the key argument of the proposed theory paper. The abstract should be between 200-350 words long. Abstracts will be submitted via D2L Dropbox. Abstracts that are submitted on time will receive feedback that can help students improve their final paper. Writing an abstract is a particularly important skill for graduate students. A poorly constructed abstract can lead to the rejection of a submitted conference presentation or a paper, even if the paper as a whole is strong. An excellent way of learning how to write abstracts is to read well-written journal articles. One helpful resource is:

<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2011/06/20/essential-guide-writing-good-abstracts/>

Theory Paper (45%)

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. Students will receive some suggested essay topics in week 8. Students are heavily encouraged to plan ahead and consult with the instructor regarding their proposed essays. The paper should include a revised abstract and papers should be written so as to integrate the feedback on the submitted abstract. Recommended readings to provide further depth on the different themes of this course will be provided in the course (on D2L). For SOCI 631, the paper should be between 4500 words and 6000 words. For SOCI 731, should be between 6000 words and 8000 words (both inclusive of bibliography).

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 - superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter
A-	85 – 89.99%	3.7	Very good performance
B+	80 – 84.99%	3.3	Good performance
B	75 – 79.99%	3.0	Satisfactory performance
B-	70 – 74.99%	2.7	Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies
C+	67 – 69.99%	2.3	All grades of "C+" or lower are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements.

Absences and Deferrals

Students who miss class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructor as soon as possible. If the reason provided for the absence is acceptable, the instructor 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.

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 requires a form to be filled out by the student and submitted, along with any supporting documentation, to the instructor. The form is available at:

<https://live-ucalgary.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/14/deferral-of-term-work-2020.pdf>

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the instructor will email the form to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (ascarts@ucalgary.ca) for approval by the Associate Dean.

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.

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.

Guidelines for Zoom Sessions

Zoom is a video conferencing program that will allow us to meet at specific times for a “live” video conference, so that we can have the opportunity to meet each other virtually and discuss relevant course topics as a learning community.

To help ensure Zoom sessions are private, do not share the Zoom link or password with others, or on any social media platforms. Zoom links and passwords are only intended for students registered in the course. Zoom recordings and materials presented in Zoom, including any teaching materials, must not be shared, distributed or published without the instructor’s permission.

The use of video conferencing programs relies on participants to act ethically, honestly and with integrity; and in accordance with the principles of fairness, good faith, and respect (as per the [Code of Conduct](#)). When entering Zoom or other video conferencing sessions (such as MS Teams), you play a role in helping create an effective, safe and respectful learning environment. Please be mindful of how your behaviour in these sessions may affect others. Participants are required to use names officially associated with their UCID (legal or preferred names listed in the Student Centre) when engaging in these activities. Instructors/moderators can remove those whose names do not appear on class rosters. Non-compliance may be investigated under relevant University of Calgary conduct policies (e.g [Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy](#)). If participants have difficulties complying with this requirement, they should email the instructor of the class explaining why, so the instructor may consider whether to grant an exception, and on what terms. For more information on how to get the most out of your zoom sessions visit: <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/guidelines-for-zoom/>.

If you are unable to attend a Zoom session, please contact your instructor to arrange an alternative activity for the missed session (e.g., to review a recorded session). Please be prepared, as best as you are able, to join class in a quiet space that will allow you to be fully present and engaged in Zoom

sessions. Students will be advised by their instructor when they are expected to turn on their webcam (for group work, presentations, etc.).

The instructor may record online Zoom class sessions for the purposes of supporting student learning in this class – such as making the recording available for review of the session or for students who miss a session. Students will be advised before the instructor initiates a recording of a Zoom session. These recordings will be used to support student learning only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

Media Recording

Please refer to the following statement on media recording of students: https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Media-Recording-in-Learning-Environments-OSP_FINAL.pdf

****Media recording for lesson capture***

The instructor may use media recordings to capture the delivery of a lecture. These recordings are intended to be used for lecture capture only and will not be used for any other purpose. Although the recording device will be fixed on the Instructor, in the event that incidental student participation is recorded, the instructor will ensure that any identifiable content (video or audio) is masked, or will seek consent to include the identifiable student content to making the content available on University approved platforms.

****Media recording for self-assessment of teaching practices***

The instructor may use media recordings as a tool for self-assessment of their teaching practices. Although the recording device will be fixed on the instructor, it is possible that student participation in the course may be inadvertently captured. These recordings will be used for instructor self-assessment only and will not be used for any other purpose.

****Media recording for the assessment of student learning***

The instructor may use media recordings as part of the assessment of students. This may include but is not limited to classroom discussions, presentations, clinical practice, or skills testing that occur during the course. These recordings will be used for student assessment purposes only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

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-policy.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.

Recording of Lectures

Note that the audio or video recording of lectures and taking screengrabs of PowerPoint slides during the lecture are not permitted without explicit authorization. The non-authorized media recording of lectures is inconsistent with the Code of Conduct and may result in discipline in accordance with the Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure. For more information click here: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/non-academic-misconduct-policy.pdf>.

Sharing of Lecture Notes and Exam Questions

Note that publicly sharing lectures notes and exam questions on 3rd party sites such as OneClass, StudyBlue, Quizlet, Course Hero, etc. is not permitted. If you wish to use these helpful studying tools, make sure you adjust your privacy settings accordingly. Any violations are subject to investigation under the UofC Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy. For more information, click here: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/non-academic-misconduct-policy.pdf>.

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>

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.

Libraries & Cultural Resources

To contact your librarian or find out about the resources and services available to sociology students go to the Sociology Library guide: <https://library.ucalgary.ca/guides/sociology>

To access the main Library website go to: <https://library.ucalgary.ca>

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 Representation

The Graduate Student Association VP Academic can be contacted at vpa.gsa@ucalgary.ca

For more information, and to contact other elected officials with the GSA, please visit this link:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/grad/current/graduate-students-association-gsa-grad.html>

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 by taking advantage of this service.

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.

B Paper

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

C Paper

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

D Paper

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

F Paper

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