

**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: SA147

Instructor: Dr. Dean Curran

Office: SS 918

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Phone: 403-220-6520

Office Hours: Monday 2:00pm–3:10pm, 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

- Rob Stones (ed.) (2007) *Key Sociological Thinkers: Second Edition*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- G. Gutting (2005) *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Course Reader. It is available from the University of Calgary Bookstore. Readings in the Course Reader will have '(CR)' beside them

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).
- 1 Theory Paper (Due Monday April 4th, 2016)
- 2 x 50 minute tests (March 21 & 23, 2015)
- 1 Final Exam (To be scheduled in the exam period)

Course Assessment

Participation: 5%

Tests: 25% (higher scoring test is worth 15%, the other 10%)

Theory Paper : 35% Due Monday April 4th

Final Exam: 35%

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. This paper should be 2000 words with 10% (i.e. 200 words allowance) on either side. The paper is due on Week 12. Essay Questions will be handed out in week 8.

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).

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). This is important for all writing in the course and failure to properly reference can significantly affect marks in papers and summaries.

Submission and Late Policy

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). Late notice 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 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.

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

Plagiarism

Academic misconduct in general is discussed below. Plagiarism is a particularly significant form of academic misconduct. The University of Calgary Calendar indicates that “Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work as if it were the student’s own work when it is not. Any ideas or materials taken from another source written, electronic, or oral must be fully and formally acknowledged.” <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html>. **All cases of plagiarism must be forwarded to the university administration and the penalties for plagiarism can be very severe.** <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-2.html>

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.

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.

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. Research with human subjects should not be undertaken in this theory course.

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>

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:

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).

Student Representation

The 2015-16 Students' Union VP Academic is Stephan Guscott: email: suvpaca@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>

Emergency Evacuations

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom, please proceed to the assembly point at ICT Food Court. Please check these assembly point locations for all of your classes at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

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

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_0.pdf

Course Schedule: Topics

1. The Precursors to Contemporary Social Theory
2. Merton: Functionalism
3. Goffman
4. Garfinkel: Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology
5. Adorno: Critical Theory
6. Structuralism
7. Foucault
8. Postmodernism
9. Dorothy Smith
10. Habermas
11. Bourdieu
12. Giddens

Course Readings

Week 1: Precursors to Contemporary Social Theory

January 11, 13, & 15, 2015

- B. Jessop ‘**Karl Marx**’ in R. Stones (ed.) (2007) *Key Sociological Thinkers: Second Edition*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. **49-62**.
- L.A. Scaff ‘**Max Weber**’ in R. Stones (ed.) (2007) *Key Sociological Thinkers: Second Edition*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. **76-89**.
- W. Pope ‘**Emile Durkheim**’ in R. Stones (ed.) (2007) *Key Sociological Thinkers: Second Edition*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. **90-105**.

PART ONE: FUNCTIONALISM

Week 2 Merton: Functionalism

January 18, 20, & 22, 2015

- A. Sica “**Robert Merton**” in R. Stones (ed.) (2007) *Key Sociological Thinkers: Second Edition*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. **151-167**.
- R. Merton, “Manifest and Latent Functions” in Calhoun et al. (eds) (2012) *Classical Sociological Theory*, 3rd Edition, pp. **523-530. (CR)**
- R. Merton, “On Sociological Theories of the Middle Range” in Calhoun et al. (eds) (2012) *Classical Sociological Theory*, 3rd Edition, pp. **531-542. (CR)**

PART TWO: INTERACTIONISM

Week 3 Goffman

January 25, 27, & 29, 2015

- R. Williams ‘**E. Goffman**’ in R. Stones (ed.) (2007) *Key Sociological Thinkers: Second Edition*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. **197-208**.
- **E. Goffman** ‘Introduction’ *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, pp. **13-27. (CR)**
- **E. Goffman (1961)** *Asylums*, Aldine Publishing Company, pp. **4-7, 14-15, 20-25, 304-311, 318-320. (CR)**

Week 4 Garfinkel: Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology

Feb 1, 3, & 5, 2015

- J. Heritage ‘**Harold Garfinkel**’ in R. Stones (ed.) (2007) *Key Sociological Thinkers: Second Edition*. Palgrave Macmillan, **pp. 209-223**.
- J. Alexander ‘Lecture 14-15: Ethnomethodology 1-2’ in *Twenty Lectures: Sociological Theory since World War II*. Columbia University Press, **pp. 238-280. (CR)**

PART THREE(A): (1ST GENERATION) CRITICAL THEORY

Week 5 Adorno: Critical Theory

Feb 8, 10, & 12, 2015

- M. O’Neill ‘Theodor **Adorno**’ in R. Stones (ed.) (2007) *Key Sociological Thinkers: Second Edition*. Palgrave Macmillan, **pp. 120-135**.
- **T. Adorno** ‘Culture Industry Reconsidered’ in T. Adorno *The Culture Industry*, **pp. 98-106. (CR)**
- **H. Marcuse**, (1964) “New Forms of Control.” In *One-Dimensional Man*. Boston: Beacon, **pp. 1-18. (CR)**

Reading Week Feb 14-21 No Class

PART FOUR STRUCTURALISM AND POST-STRUCTURALISM

Week 6 Structuralism and Foucault

Feb 22, 24, and 26, 2015.

- F. Jameson (1972) *Prison House of Language*. Princeton, NJ. Princeton University Press. **Pp. 3- 39. (CR)**
- I. Craib (1984) ‘The World as a Logical Pattern: An Introduction to Structuralism’ in *Modern Social Theory: From Parsons to Habermas*. Brighton: Wheatsheaf, **pp. 105-121. (CR)**
- G. Gutting (2005) ‘The Masked Philosopher’ in *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, **ch. 6 pp. 54-67.**

Week 7 Foucault II

March 1, 3 & 5, 2015

- G. Gutting (2005) “Archaeology”, “Genealogy”, “Crime and Punishment” in *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, **ch. 2-3, 8, pp. 32-53, 79-90.**
- **M. Foucault** ‘Preface’ in *The Order of Things*. Routledge, **pp. xvi-xxvi. (CR)**
- **M. Foucault** ([1978] 1990) “Method”, *History of Sexuality*, Volume 1. New York: Vintage, Part 4, chapter 2 **pp. 92-102. (CR)**

Week 8 Foucault III and Postmodernism

March 7, 9, & 11, 2015

- **D. Harvey** (1990) “Postmodernism” in *Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell, chapter 3 **pp. 39-65. (CR)**
- **G. Gutting** (2005) “Madness”, “Modern Sex”, “Ancient Sex” in *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, **ch. 7, 9-10, pp. 68-78, 91-110.**

PART FIVE: FEMINIST THEORY AND CRITICAL THEORY

***-Week 9 Dorothy Smith and Jürgen Habermas**

March 14, 16, and 18, 2015

- K. Widerberg “**Dorothy Smith**” in R. Stones (ed.) (2007) *Key Sociological Thinkers: Second Edition*. Palgrave Macmillan, **pp. 120-135**.
- **D. E. Smith** (1990) *The Conceptual Practices of Power: a Feminist Sociology of Knowledge*, Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, chapter 1, “Women’s Experience as a Radical Critique of Sociology”, **pp. 11-28. (CR)**
- W. Outhwaite ‘**Jürgen Habermas**’ in R. Stones (ed.) (2007) *Key Sociological Thinkers: Second Edition*. Palgrave Macmillan, **pp. 251-260**.

Week 10

Test #1 March 21, 2015

Test #2 March 23, 2015

March 25, 2015 [Good Friday – no teaching]

PART FIVE: STRUCTURATION

Week 11 Bourdieu

March 28 & March 30, April 1st 2015

- L. Wacquant ‘**Pierre Bourdieu**’ in R. Stones (ed.) (2007) *Key Sociological Thinkers: Second Edition*. Palgrave Macmillan, **pp. 261-277**.
- **P. Bourdieu** (1989) ‘Social Space and Symbolic Power’, *Sociological Theory* 7(1): **14-25. (CR)**
- **P. Bourdieu** (1998) ‘The New Capital’ and ‘Appendix’ in *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*. Polity, **pp. 19-34. (CR)**

Paper Due Monday April 4th, 2016

Week 12 Giddens

April 4, 6, & 8, 2015

- I.J. Cohen ‘**Anthony Giddens**’ in R. Stones (ed.) (2007) *Key Sociological Thinkers: Second Edition*. Palgrave Macmillan, **pp. 323-37**.
- **A. Giddens** (1993 [1984]) “Social theory and the question of action” from *The Constitution of Society* in P. Cassell (ed.) *The Giddens Reader*. Palgrave Macmillan, **pp. 88-101**.
- **A. Giddens** (1979) “Theories of action versus institutional theories” and “The theory of structuration” in Chapter 2 “Agency, Structure” in *Central Problems in Social Theory*. University of California Press, **pp. 49-53, 69-73. (CR)**
- **A. Giddens** (1993 [1992]) “Love and Sexuality” from *The Transformation of Intimacy* in P. Cassell (ed.) *The Giddens Reader*. Palgrave Macmillan, **pp. 303-315. (CR)**

Week 13

April 11 Review

April 13, Review day

Criteria for Strong Papers:

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

I. 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 follow closely follow the thesis?

II. 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?

III. 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?

IV. Evidence

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

Are the reasons provided clear and persuasive and backed by proper evidence?

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 many of these dimensions.

F Paper

The paper will be inadequate on several of these dimensions.