

SOCI333 – CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY – WINTER 2016

Lecture Location: Science A Building, Room 245
Schedule: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00am-12:15pm
Instructor: Dr. Michael Adorjan
Email: madorjan@ucalgary.ca
Office: SS 952
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

This course surveys major developments in sociological theory following the second World War. The major theoretical paradigms include functionalism, conflict theory, critical theory, symbolic interactionism, and feminism.

Some recurring questions, concepts and issues will be reinforced across the varying theoretical perspectives, including debates centered on freedom and structure, meaning and interpretation, discourse and reality, and self and society.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students will be expected to:

- Demonstrate a strong grasp of contemporary developments in sociological theory since World War 2
- Critically reflect upon both strengths and weaknesses of these theories
- Apply knowledge of theories to news events, popular culture and daily life

Course Assessment

- ONE (1) mid-term examination: 30% HELD IN CLASS ON THURSDAY FEBRUARY 11TH
- ONE (1) critical reflection: 30% DUE ON FRIDAY MARCH 11TH AT 11:50pm (on D2L)
- ONE (1) final take-home examination: 40% DUE TUESDAY MARCH 19TH AT 11:50pm (on D2L)

MID-TERM EXAM

One mid-term examination will be held in class on Thursday February 11th, before the reading week break. The full 75 minutes of class time will be available. The first exam will cover all material (i.e. readings and lecture discussions) from functionalism through conflict theory (Hobbes, Parsons, Merton and Mills), though the finalized content will be announced closer to the midterm date. The midterm will be a written examination, not multiple choice.

CRITICAL REFLECTION

Critical reflection writing in sociology is different from a 'regular' essay in several ways (adapted from MacDonald, 2011):

- Links experience to knowledge (especially, for this course, theoretical knowledge)
- Engages both reason and emotion
- Situates individual experiences within a broader social and cultural context
- Helps to understand and challenge one's values, beliefs and biases, in order to determine their impact on our ideas and actions
- Question unexamined assumptions related to personal identity and knowledge of society
- Helps to imagine alternative ways to think and act

Unlike traditional academic essays, critical reflective writing:

- Makes use of the first person
- Considers the self an object of inquiry
- Incorporates experiences as a form of evidence
- BUT STILL uses formal English and follows proper referencing and citation guidelines

The critical reflection you will write is geared to be a structured piece of sociological analysis, rather than other varieties of reflective writing such as simply a journal or self-assessment. You will be evaluated on your level of engagement and knowledge with theory *through* your reflection upon theory. You will be required to choose ONE theoretical *paradigm* covered in the course (and focus further on a particular *version* of that theory – see below), though you are welcome to address more than one theory and/or theorist within a theoretical paradigm (though be careful given the space requirements needed to demonstrate your knowledge of theory as well as your reflection on that theory).

Be careful that in your selection of a particular paradigm and its application you pay heed to the differences among theorists within that paradigm and select a particular version of the theory that you find most amenable. So for example if materialism is your chosen paradigm avoid discussing 'materialism' generally and be mindful of the (wide) differences between Gramsci, Althusser, Sartre and Bourdieu. You needn't address all of these theorists, but you should refer to the *theorist* whose theory is most salient for your reflection. You are free to select any theory from the beginning to end of the course.

Required Tasks

There are two main required sources to focus your reflection on:

1 – A contemporary news event OR popular culture phenomena (e.g. movie, television series, online video, etc.)

AND

2 – A particular personal OR professional experience [the details of what you reveal in your reflection will remain confidentially kept between you and the instructor]

You are then tasked to address all of the following related to both #1 and #2:

- *Describe* the central tenets and assumptions of the theoretical paradigm you've selected
- *Succinctly summarize* the topics selected/personal experiences [include links to news clips or online videos where possible]
- *Justify* why you selected the theory in relation to the topics discussed, and reveal the connections between them
- Unpack in more detail *both the strengths and weaknesses* of your chosen theory in explaining and understanding the topics discussed
- Despite the weaknesses you identify, justify *why the theory is still useful*

You are free to address more than one experience and/or event, though again please bear in mind the page limit of the assignment and leave enough space for a reasonable explication of the material. If #1 directly relates to #2 that is fine, though not required. Secondary sources are *not* required, though they may help to analyze and apply nuances of your chosen theory not illuminated through the general textbook. Proper referencing for all sources is required, including the textbook, or references to lectures.

There is flexibility regarding what counts as 'contemporary' events, though within the last 10 years is preferred, and you are encouraged to seek feedback on what you wish to write about early on. News events can be local to Calgary or international.

Formatting and Style

All reflections *must use proper referencing*, including in-text citations and bibliographic references to original sources (e.g. a scanned copy of a news article or URL link) as well as required course readings.

Reflections must be no more than **8 pages** double spaced on 8.5"x11" ('standard') paper, with 1" margins on all sides. The page limit does NOT include space for references, which are REQUIRED. Please refer to the course syllabus for referencing style examples. You are free to choose either APA or MLA format so long as you are consistent. Students may use Times New Roman font, but are encouraged if possible to use either Cambria or Calibri (this font is Calibri). There is no minimum length requirement: it is up to the student's discretion related to covering the required components outlined above. Please include a *cover page* with a creative title, your name and student I.D.. All reflections must be **submitted to the course's D2L site** (a dropbox folder will be set up) in Microsoft Word format (either .doc or .docx, NOT .pdf – this allows me to save comments and facilitates faster feedback).

Assessment

Drawing basic theoretical connections is necessary but not sufficient for a good grade. Please refer to the rubric on reflective writing found at the end of the course syllabus. You

will be assessed both based on your ability to critically engage with theory as well as your level of application and 'sociological imagination'.

Late Submission Penalties

Late assignments will be docked 10% per day for a maximum of 3 days, after which the assigned grade will be F. If personal family or medical reasons apply, please contact the instructor as soon as possible.

FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAM

The final take-home examination will be made available on D2L on Tuesday April 12th. The exam will be due in one week, and must be submitted in .doc or .docx format to the D2L dropbox set up for the final exam. The exam MUST be received no later than 11:50pm on Tuesday April 19th. There will not be late penalties applied: exams submitted past the due date will receive an F grade.

Grading

Letter Grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

95 - 100 = A+	67 - 69 = C +
90 - 94 = A	63 - 66 = C
85 - 89 = A -	59 - 62 = C -
80 - 84 = B +	54 - 58 = D +
76 - 79 = B	50 - 53 = D
70 - 75 = B -	00 - 49 = F

In addition to this general scale, grade descriptors for reflective writing will be employed in this course (see appendix of this syllabus). Student feedback on their critical reflection will include reference to these grade descriptors.

Required Readings

The following textbook, available at the bookstore, is required for this course. Other required readings will be made available to supplement this text at various points during the term. Please see the timetable for details.

- **Douglas Mann (2011). *Understanding Society: A Survey of Modern Social Theory (Second Edition)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.**

Alternative textbooks are also recommended to help supplement the main text by Mann. Three suggestions are:

- Ruth Wallace and Alison Wolf (2006). *Contemporary Sociological Theory: Expanding the Classical Tradition* (Sixth Edition). New Jersey: Pearson.

- Richard Munch (1994). *Sociological Theory: Development Since the 1960s* (Third Edition). Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- Doyle Johnson (2008). *Contemporary Sociological Theory: An Integrated Multi-Level Approach*. (e-book available)

Lecture Schedule

The schedule indicates a loose roadmap, though it is subject to change and the exact lecture schedule will depend on classroom discussions and ongoing checks for student understanding of the material. Some lectures may be rearranged in March – details will be discussed in class. Please also stay alert to D2L for any announcements.

TOPIC	READINGS
Course Introduction	
What is Theory? What is Modernity? Paradigms of Social Theory	Mann Ch.1.
Functionalism	Mann Ch.2: Hobbes – pg.#24 Parsons – pg.#31-39
Conflict Theory	Mann Ch.2: Merton – pg.#39-41 Mills – pg.#45-51
MIDTERM THURS FEB 11	
Materialism	Mann Ch.3: Gramsci – pg.#71-73 Althusser – pg.#73-76
Materialism	Mann Ch.3: Sartre – pg.#77-81 Bourdieu – pg.#85-89
Critical Theory	Mann Ch.4: Adorno – pg.#107-113 Marcuse – pg.#113-117
Symbolic Interactionism	Mann Ch.6: Blumer – pg.#190-196 Goffman – pg.#196-206
Feminism	Mann Ch.10: Three Waves – pg.#322-329 Firestone – pg.#329-333 Smith – pg.#342-345
Exam Review	

University Policies, Protocols and Classroom Guidelines

Technology in the Classroom: Students are encouraged to bring their electronic devices to class (e.g. laptops, smartphones, tablets, etc.) to assist with note taking and learning. Students are expected NOT to distract other students by watching any videos or engaging in any video chats, answering phone calls (unless emergencies), playing video games (even those related to Star Wars), or any other activity that would distract other students either through audio or video content. All devices must be set to buzzer or silent mode during the lecture.

Email and Correspondence: Questions and comments are always welcome about all aspects of this course. While every attempt will be made to respond to emailed inquiries promptly (e.g. questions about a forthcoming assignment, specific theories and concepts, etc.). A WINDOW OF THREE (3) DAYS MAXIMUM should be anticipated for a response. Students should bear this in mind if last minute questions or issues arise, especially before any mid-terms and/or end-term examinations.

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

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>

Handing in Papers, Assignments: All assignment feedback will be posted privately through D2L. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor. Also please note that no course material will be retrievable from public places, in line with The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) legislation. Finally, please note that final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department; they are only available online.

Ethical 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. That said, there is no expectation that students engage in research with human subjects for this course, and are advised against doing so given the time required to retrieve ethics approval from the Faculty Ethics Committee.

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

APPENDIX

Standard citation and referencing styles include APA and MLA. So long as students are *consistent* in their referencing style, either approach is acceptable. See for example:

- Cite right: a quick guide to citation styles--MLA, APA, Chicago, the sciences, professions, and more [available as an e-book through the library]

Citations in the body of a portfolio/essay:

Deviance was conceived as a statistic aberration given a normally distributed orderly society (Best 2004, 7). Fuller and Myers (1941) defined social problems as “an actual or imagined deviation from some social norm cherished by a considerable number of persons” (p. 25).

OR

Deviance was conceived as a statistic aberration (Best 2004:7) given a normally distributed orderly society. Fuller and Myers (1941) defined social problems as “an actual or imagined deviation from some social norm cherished by a considerable number of persons” (p. 25).

Use quotations only for exact reproductions of original text and presentation. Paraphrased passages (where you write/summarize in your own words what an author wrote) do not require quotations but ***still require citation and referencing*** You do not need quotes but should cite paraphrased summations (as in the first citation for ‘Best 2004, 7’).

Please avoid androcentric (male centered) generic nouns/pronouns: Chair**man**, polic**eman**, “in general an individual in society wants to feel normal. **He** will often act in a way to complete this self perception.” Instead use chairperson, police officer, and he/she or she/he or s/he.

Referencing for a bibliography:

Journal:

Wrong, Dennis H., “The Oversocialized Conception of Man in Modern Sociology”, American Sociological Review, 26, 2, April 1961, 183-193.

Book:

Spector, Malcolm and John Kitsuse, Constructing Social Problems, Cummings Publishing Company, Menlo Park, 1977.

OR

Wrong, Dennis H. April 1961. “The Oversocialized Conception of Man in Modern Sociology.” *American Sociological Review* 26, 2:183-193.

Spector, Malcolm and John Kitsuse. 1977. *Constructing Social Problems*. Menlo Park,

Cummings Publishing Company.

Newer forms of multimedia have a variety of ways to be referenced. So long as the reader/marker can find the source if it is online, that it include the title of the online article if applicable, the author of the online article if applicable, and that you include the date you accessed the source, that will be sufficient for this course. Indenting the second line may cause interference with the URL that is listed. Indenting is thus not necessary for online sources.

Kiss, Jemima. "Should Students Be Banned from Google and Wikipedia?" http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/digitalcontent/2008/01/should_students_be_banned_from.html. Accessed on April 2 2008.

How about a movie? Same general principle – include the name of the movie, the year, and also the director. No need to list actors/actresses. www.imdb.com is a good source.

Fight Club. 2000. Directed by David Fincher.

A television show? If possible include season and episode information. www.tv.com is a useful source.

Breaking Bad. "Blood Money." Season 5, Episode 9. Directed by Bryan Cranston.

Grade Descriptors for Reflective Writing

	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D	Grade F
Addressing the Task	Identifies and addresses clearly the main tasks and the subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects coherently and lucidly.	Identifies and addresses the main tasks and most of the subsidiary, embedded or implicit aspects.	Addresses the main tasks but some only superficially.	Some of the main tasks are not addressed, with others addressed only superficially.	Lacks an understanding of what the assignment requires or responds inappropriately or tangentially to the task or topic.
Theoretical Engagement	Writings consistently demonstrate informed, thoughtful and sustained intellectual engagement with the chosen theoretical framework. Theoretical ideas are applied appropriately and insightfully. Demonstrates ability to engage with both strengths and limitations of the theory and to apply the theory to new areas in a critical and insightful way.	Writings demonstrate informed and thoughtful intellectual engagement with the chosen theoretical framework. Theoretical ideas are applied appropriately. Demonstrates ability to engage with both strengths and limitations of the theory.	Writings indicate some intellectual engagement with the chosen theoretical framework, but not always with sufficient depth, breadth or understanding. Theoretical ideas are sometimes applied inappropriately or tenuously.	Writings indicate superficial engagement with the chosen theoretical framework. The writing suffers from poor articulation and consistently vague passages.	Writings reveal an absence of intellectual engagement with a particular theoretical framework. Writings are irrelevant or superficial and arguments are seriously flawed.
Mechanics	The language contains very few, if any, errors in grammar and vocabulary. If slips are present, the meaning is still clear. Citations and referencing are consistent and accurate.	The language is generally accurate but contains a few systematic errors in complex grammar and vocabulary. Citations and referencing are consistent and accurate.	The language is mostly accurate, though errors are frequent and distract from the intended meaning. Citations and referencing are satisfactory but not consistently applied.	Frequent vague passages and typographical errors mire the intended meaning. Citations and referencing are inaccurately presented.	Errors in language and vocabulary are so frequent and distracting that the essay is largely incomprehensible. Citations and referencing are absent and the writing may constitute plagiarism of source material.

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