

Department of Sociology  
University of Calgary

SOCI 631/731  
Classical Sociological Theory  
Fall 2016

**Course Times:** Thursday 12:30am–3:15pm

**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 11am–12:15pm, Thursday 3:15pm–4pm, 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 primary source sociological 'classics' by Marx, Weber, Foucault, Bourdieu, Fraser, and Honneth.

### **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**

- Karl Marx (1983) *The Portable Karl Marx*. (Ed.) E Kamenka. Penguin Classics.
- Max Weber (1994) *Sociological Writings: Max Weber*. (Ed.) W. Heydebrand. Bloomsbury
- Michel Foucault (1984) *The Foucault Reader*. (Ed.) P. Rabinow. Vintage.
- Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J. D. Wacquant (1992) *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. University Of Chicago Press.
- Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth (2004) *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*. Verso.

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
- 4 critical reading summaries (Due at the beginning of the seminar)
- 1 presentation by each student
- 2 Papers, 1 short paper and 1 term paper

### **Course Assessment**

Participation: 15%

4 (best) two-page critical reading summaries: 10% (500 words)

Presentation: 15%

1st Paper (2000 words): 20% (Due: Friday **November 1st, 2016 by 4:30pm**)

Term Paper: 40% (5000–6000 words) (Due **Friday December 16, 2016 by 4:30pm**)

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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.

#### **4 Critical Reading Summaries (10%)**

These summaries will be marked based on the level of critical engagement with the texts. They are expected to be 500–600 words in length and to outline the argument of one of the texts. They must be ready to be handed in as a print copy at the beginning of the seminar. To hand in the reading summaries in it is necessary to attend the class. It is particularly important that students cite different specific page numbers multiple times in their reading summaries (i.e. (Foucault 2010: 367) to demonstrate engagement with the text. Students cannot complete a critical reading summary on the week that they present. Course summaries can be on one reading rather than the readings as a whole, but the reading must be longer than 25 pages.

#### **1 Presentation (15%)**

Given that this is a graduate course, with capped enrollment, student participation and contribution is fundamental to this course. Each student will be expected to present once over the course. The presentations 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. Presentations should be 10–15 minutes and should analytically engage with the key aspects of the reading (not simply summarize). Students can either present by PowerPoint or with a handout. Presentations should also include two discussion questions of the text.

#### **Short Paper (20%) Due Tuesday November 1, 2016 by 4:30pm**

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 will receive some suggested essay topics in week 10. Students are heavily encouraged to plan ahead and consult with the instructor regarding their proposed essays. The paper should be between 5000 to 6000 words (references inclusive).

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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. Reading summaries must be ready to hand into the instructor as a hard copy before the beginning of the seminar and will not be accepted after this time. 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:**

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

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

##### **2. Technology Use**

Please note that the use of laptops, tablets, cell phones or other electronic devices is NOT permitted during lectures. Students who require the use of electronic devices for academic accommodation purposes are exempt from this policy, but must provide documentation from Student Accessibility Services to the instructor. Please be sure to mute your cell phone and refrain from using it during class.

##### **3. 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.

#### 4. 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.

#### 5. 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>

#### 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>

7. **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).

8. **Student Representation:** The 2016-17 Students’ Union VP Academic is Alicia Lunz (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>

## 9. Emergency Evacuations

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 all of your classes at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

## 10. 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.

## 11. Academic Accommodation

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should contact Student Accessibility Services (MC 293, phone 403-220-8237) in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities available at [http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy\\_0.pdf](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf). Please provide academic accommodation letters to the instructor as early in the semester as possible and no later than two weeks after the course begins.

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# Course Readings

### Week 1: Kantian Foundations of Social Theory

Sept 15, 2016

- A. Bowie (2003) “The Kantian Revolution” ch 1 in *Introduction to German Philosophy*. Polity, pp. 13–35 [on D2L].

### Week 2: Marx I: Early Marx

Sept 22, 2016

- K. Marx, *Portable Marx*. Penguin, pp. 87–155

### Week 3: Marx II: Historical Materialism

Sept 29, 2016

- K. Marx, *Portable Marx*. Penguin, pp. 155–183, 203–241, 432–461.

### Week 4: Weber I: Sociological Method

Oct 6, 2016

- M. Weber, *Sociological Writings*. Bloomsbury, pp. 228–304.

### Week 5: Weber II: Capitalism, Modernity, and Power

Oct 13, 2016

- M. Weber, *Sociological Writings*, Bloomsbury, pp. 1–6, 28–46, 67–80, 107–121, 161–73.

### **Week 6: Foucault I: Early Writings**

Oct 20, 2016

- M. Foucault (1969) “Preface” *Order of Things*. New York: Pantheon, pp. xv–xxiv [on D2L].
- M. Foucault (1984) “Madness and Civilization”, *The Foucault Reader*. Vintage, pp. 123–68.
- P. Rabinow (1984) “Introduction”, *The Foucault Reader*. Vintage, pp. 3–30.

### **Week 7: Foucault II**

Oct 27, 2016

- M. Foucault (1984) “Nietzsche Genealogy, History”, “Disciplines and the Sciences of the Individual”, and “We Other Victorians”, in *The Foucault Reader*. Vintage, pp. 76–100, 170–239, 292–300.

### **Week 8: Bourdieu I**

Nov 3, 2016

- P. Bourdieu and L. Wacquant (1992) “Part I” and “Part II: chapter 1” *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. University of Chicago Press, pp 1–60, 62–75.

### **Week 9: Week Off**

Nov 10, 2016

### **Week 10: Bourdieu II**

Nov 17, 2016

- P. Bourdieu and L. Wacquant (1992) “Part II: chapters 2–5” *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. University of Chicago Press, pp. 75–174.

### **Week 11: Critical Theory I**

Nov 24, 2016

- N. Fraser (2004) “Social Justice in an Age of Identity Politics” in N. Fraser and A. Honneth *Redistribution or Recognition*. Verso, pp. 1–94.

### **Week 12: Critical Theory II**

Dec 1, 2016

- A. Honneth (2004) “Redistribution as Recognition” in N. Fraser and A. Honneth *Redistribution or Recognition*. Verso, pp. 110–189.

### **Week 13:**

Dec 8, 2016

No readings scheduled

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## Recommended Supplementary Texts

### For Marx and Weber

- Anthony Giddens (1971) *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of the writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 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.

### Overviews of Contemporary Social Theory

- H. Joas and W. Knobl (2009) *Social Theory: Twenty Introductory Lectures*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ian Craib (1984) *Modern Social Theory: From Parsons to Habermas*. Brighton: Wheatsheaf.
- P. Baert, P. and F.C. da Silva (2010) *Social Theory in the Twentieth Century and Beyond*. 2nd edition. Cambridge: Polity.

## **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?

### **Materials (i.e. Handout or Power Point (PPT))**

Is the handout or Power Point clear and well-written?

Does the handout or PPT provide helpful information on the reading/theories to the audience?

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.