

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Sociology 731

Seminar in Social Theory/Fall 2010

Instructor: Leslie Miller
Class: Thursdays 12:30-3:20
SS 921

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my office: SS 910

This course emphasizes contemporary social theory. The choices below represent a personal selection of authors and issues that have influenced the shape of sociological discussion over recent decades in North America and Europe. Some are by now considered classics (the social constructionist approach to social problems), others are not-so-well-known contributions by well-known theorists (Foucault's "governmentality" work), and still others have only very recently entered the sociological conversation (Appadurai). I have also paid some attention, especially in the first three weeks, to themes that have originated with classical theorists, and have been taken up and reworked by contemporary scholars.

The success of the seminar will depend on your preparedness to discuss weekly readings. During the first few weeks, I shall lecture for a part of the class. Along the way, I will ask you to prepare some of the material for presentation to the seminar.

Assignments. The sole requirement -- in addition to your weekly participation -- will be a paper, due after the final class (exact date TBA). The content of the paper is to be discussed with me, and my intention is that you will choose to write on a theorist or an issue that will prove useful to you in your eventual dissertation research. Participation in the class will not be graded per se, but I will use my discretion in awarding the final mark; strong, consistently prepared participation (or not) can tilt your grade by a little.

Books and articles

1. *The New Social Theory Reader*, 2nd edition. S. Seidman and J. C. Alexander, eds. 2008. Routledge. NOTE: PLEASE DO NOT PURCHASE THIS BOOK UNTIL AFTER THE FIRST CLASS.
2. *The Corrosion of Character*. Richard Sennett. 1998. Norton.
3. *Modernity at Large: cultural dimensions of globalization*. Arjun Appadurai. 1996. University of Minnesota Press.
4. Online articles *, and articles distributed in class. Readings designated as "recommended" are additional materials you may want to consult when doing your paper.

- Recommended - M. Dean, *The Constitution of Poverty*
 - *Economy and Society* 2005 (special issue on governmentality)
 - *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, Burchell, Gordon and Miller (eds.) 1991.

Week 7
 Oct. 28

The constructionist approach to social problems

- G. Miller and J. Holstein. Introduction to *Social Problems in Everyday Life*.
- L. Miller, "Safe Home Dangerous Street: remapping social reality in the early modern era". In G. Miller and J. Holstein, *Social Problems in Everyday Life*.
- G. Miller and J. Holstein, "Rethinking Victimization: an interactional approach to victimology". *Symbolic Interaction* 13, Spring: 101-120.

Recommended - M. Spector and J. Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems*. 1977.

Week 8 & 10
 Nov. 4 & Nov. 18

R. Sennett *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*, 1998.

NOTE Week 9

Nov. 11 Reading Days NO CLASS

Week 11 & 12
 Nov. 25 & Dec. 2

- A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Nov. Dimensions of Globalization*
- M. Castells, "A New Society", Chapter 31 in Reader.
- excerpt from Pico Iyer, *Video Night in Katmandu*.

Week 13
 Dec. 9

- Symposium, * J. Butler. "Sexual Politics, torture, and secular time". *British Journal of Sociology* 2008 59(1): 1-23; and see also comments on Butler's paper in the same issue.
- J. Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination", Chapter 15 in reader.

N.B. All references above to "Reader" refer to the second edition, unless indicated.

* indicates articles available online.

ALSO PLEASE NOTE:

Emergency evacuations:

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom/lab, please proceed to the assembly point by *[check link to find assembly point for your building:*

[http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/node/75\]](http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/node/75)

Deferrals:

If at all possible you must provide *advance* notice to the instructor if you are unable to take a test or pass in an assignment or essay 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 physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus 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 Sociology Department.

Please note that requests to defer a final examination or to defer term work past the end of a term go through the Undergraduate Programs Office (UPO) and must be processed by the deadlines that are established in the U of C Calendar. You can find the forms you need online:

Deferred Final Exam Application:

http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/APP%20FOR%20DF%20EXAM_0.pdf

Deferred Term Work Form:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/defTW.pdf>

You must submit these deferral forms to the Faculty of Arts Associate Dean (Students) through the UPO office: Undergraduate Programs Office, 4th Floor, MacEwan Student Centre. Only the Associate Dean approves requests for deferrals which extend beyond the

end of a term. Instructors are not involved in such decisions. To make an appointment with the Associate Dean, phone (403) 220-8155.

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 Departmental 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.

Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism, cheating and other academic misconduct are regarded as serious academic offences. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor's office or the Department main office. Written assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor's office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

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 with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, phone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. **It is a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.**

Handing in papers outside of class, return of final papers, and release of final grades:

1. When students are unable to submit papers in class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant. Papers will not be accepted in the main Sociology Department office.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the main Sociology Department office. The Freedom of Information and Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place (i.e. outside an instructor's office, the department office etc.) Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will be available for pick-up only during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or at the beginning of the next term.

3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are available only online.