

Department of Sociology  
University of Calgary

SOCI 631  
Classical Sociological Theory  
Fall 2015

**Course Times:** Wednesday 9:00am –11:45am  
**Course Location:** SS 921

**Instructor:** Dean Curran  
**Office:** SS 918  
**Email:** [dcurran@ucalgary.ca](mailto:dcurran@ucalgary.ca)  
**Phone:** 403-220-6520  
**Office Hours:** Wednesday 1:30pm-3:30pm, or by appointment

### **Course Overview**

This is a required course for Master's and doctoral students in Sociology. This course is intended as an advanced introduction to classical sociological theory and its contemporary ramifications. 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 social theory of the development of capitalism, modernity, industrialism, and individualism. These themes will be developed by the reading of primary source sociological 'classics' by Marx, Durkheim, and Weber, and a modern classic, that speaks to many of the themes of classical social theory through the prism of contemporary social conditions, David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity*.

### **Aims and Objectives**

At the end of this course, students should have knowledge and understanding of:

- The dominant theoretical approaches in classical 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 classical 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.

---

### **Required Texts**

- Karl Marx (1983) *Portable Karl Marx* (ed. E. Kamenka). London: Penguin.
- Emile Durkheim (2014) *The Division of Labour in Society* (ed. S. Lukes). New York: Free Press [the pager numbers are for this edition, but any edition is OK for this course].
- Max Weber (2002) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. London: Penguin. [the pager numbers are for this edition, but any edition is OK for this course].
- David Harvey (1990) *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Alex Callinicos (2007) *Social Theory: A Historical Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity.

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.

---

### **SOCI 631 Information**

#### **Teaching and Learning**

Format of the Course

- 12 seminars, which will involve presentations and extensive discussion of the text
- 5 critical reading summaries (Due at the beginning of the seminar)
- 1 presentation by each student
- 1 Term Paper (Due Thursday December 17<sup>th</sup> by 4:30pm)

#### **Course Assessment**

Participation: 15%

5 (best) two-page critical reading summaries: 20% (600-750 words)

Presentation: 20%

Abstract of Term Paper: 5% (Due: **Monday December 7, 2015 by 4:30pm**)

Term Paper: 40% (6500 words) (Due **Thursday December 17, 2015 by 4:30pm**)

---

### **SOCI 731 Information**

#### **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
- 1 critical book review (Due Wednesday November 18, 2015 by 4:30pm)

- 1 Term Paper (Due Thursday December 17, 2015 by 4:30pm)

### **Course Assessment**

Participation: 15%

4 (best) two-page critical reading summaries: 10% (600-750 words)

Presentation: 15%

Critical Book Review: 15% (2000 words) (Due **Wednesday November 18, 2015 by 4:30pm**)

Abstract of Term Paper: 5% (Due: **Monday December 7, 2015 by 4:30pm**)

Term Paper: 40% (6500 words) (Due **Thursday December 17, 2015 by 4:30pm**)

---

### **For Both SOCI 631 and SOCI 731**

#### **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.

#### **5 Critical Reading Summaries ([631: 5] [731: 4])**

These summaries will be marked based on the level of critical engagement with the texts. They are expected to be between 600 and 750 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 Wednesday class. To hand in the reading summaries it is necessary to attend the class. It is particularly important that students cite specific page numbers multiple times in their reading summaries (i.e. Foucault 2010: 367). Students cannot complete a critical reading summary on the week that they present. Course summaries can be on one reading, but the reading must be longer than 25 pages.

#### **1 Presentation**

Given that this is a graduate course, with capped enrollment, student participation and contribution will be fundamental to this course. Each student will be expected to present once over the course. The presentations will run from week 3 to week 13. Since the schedule of the presentations will depend on enrollment, more information will be provided on presentations in week two. Presentations should be 20-30 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.

#### **Abstract of Term Paper**

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 should be submitted as an attached word document. 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 (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 classical social theory and its contemporary ramifications. 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 be between 6500 words (no less than 6000 words, no more than 8000).

---

### **For only SOCI 731**

#### **Critical Book Review (2000 words)**

PhD students taking the class are required to complete a critical review of one of the following classic texts that pursue a comparison of two or more of the theorists in this course: Anthony Giddens (1971) *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of the writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber*, Derek Sayer (1990) *Capitalism and Modernity: An Excursus on Marx and Weber*, or Karl Lowith (1982) *Marx and Weber*. This critical review is intended to focus on explaining some of the key relations between two of these thinkers highlighted in the text and then to provide a critical evaluation of this account of the thinkers. This assignment is due on Wednesday November 18, 2015, but if PhD a student has a presentation on that date, they can have a one-week extension and hand in the critical review on November 25<sup>th</sup>. The critical review is expected to be 2000 words (10% allowance either way).

---

### **Important Details Written by the Instructor**

#### **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 Wednesday 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 Class Etiquette

Use of cell phones or internet on laptops are disruptive to the seminar discussions and are not permitted.

#### 5 General Referencing Guidelines

1. 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)

6 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

---

#### 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.
2. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.
3. **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>
4. **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."
5. **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 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. Research with human subjects should not be undertaken in this theory course.
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:

[http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/Sp\\_Su\\_DFE\\_App.pdf](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).

## 7. Student Representation

The 2015-16 Students’ Union VP Academic is Stephan Guscott: email:

[suvpaca@ucalgary.ca](mailto: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](mailto:arts1@ucalgary.ca), [arts2@ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts2@ucalgary.ca), [arts3@ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts3@ucalgary.ca), and [arts4@ucalgary.ca](mailto: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>

8. **Emergency Evacuation:** 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 your other classes at:  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>
9. **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.
10. 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/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).
11. 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](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf)

# Course Readings

## **Week 1: The context to the development of Social theory: the Enlightenment and Hegel**

Sept 9, 2015

Callinicos, *Social Theory* chapter 1 (Enlightenment) and chapter 2 (Hegel), **pp. 10-56.**

## **Week 2: Marx I: Early Marx**

Sept 16, 2015

Marx, *Portable Marx*, **pp 87-155**

Callinicos chapter 4, section 1, **pp.78-84.**

## **Week 3: Marx II: Historical Materialism**

Sept 23, 2015

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

Callinicos *Social Theory* 4.2 and 4.3, **pp.84-99.**

## **Week 4: Marx III: Marx's Politics and Economics**

Sept 30, 2015

Marx, *Portable Marx*, **pp. 394-432, 461-465, 490-493, 189-195, 533-556.**

## **Week 5: Durkheim I**

Oct 7, 2015

Callinicos, *Social Theory* chapter 6, section 1, **pp. 123-133**

Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society*, prefaces, introduction, and book I, chapters I-III, **pp. 3-105.**

## **Week 6: Durkheim II**

Oct 14, 2015

Callinicos chapter 6, section 2 and 3, pp. 133-145.

Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society*, book I chapter V-VII, and book II, chapter I **pp. 116-201**

## **Week 7: Durkheim III**

Oct 21, 2015

Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society*, book II, chapters II, V, book III, chapters I-III, and conclusion **pp. 201-239, 258-319.**

## **Week 8: Weber I**

Oct 28, 2015

Callinicos, *Social Theory* chapter 5, section 3, **pp. 115-122,**

Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, Part I

## **Week 9: Weber II**

Nov 4, 2015

Weber *Protestant Ethic*, Part II

Callinicos, *Social Theory* ch7, pp. 146-178

**Week 10: Week off**

Nov 11, 2015

No readings: Work on papers

**Week 11: Harvey I: Modernity and Postmodernity**

Nov 18, 2015

Harvey *Condition of Postmodernity*, Part I, pp.3-118.

**Week 12: Harvey II: Political Economic Transformations and Debating Global Capitalism**

Nov 25, 2015

Harvey *Condition of Postmodernity*, Part II, pp. 121-188.

Callinicos, *Social Theory* chapter 12-13, pp. 299-352

**Week 13: Harvey III: Living in our Time**

Dec 2, 2015

Harvey *Condition of Postmodernity*, ch 12-15, 17-18 part vi, pp. 201- 259, 284-307, 327-359.