

SOCIOLOGY 9002a

DRAFT as of Jun 6/2016

Classical Sociological Theory

Fall 2016

Dr Scott Schaffer

Course Meetings: Mon 130pm to 430pm, SSC 5220

Office Hours: Mon 445pm to 6pm, Tues 1245pm to 2pm, or by Skype appointment

Office: Social Science Centre 5411

Email: scott.schaffer@uwo.ca

Skype: prof_schaffer

COURSE DESCRIPTION

It is important for any graduate student in any discipline to have a solid understanding of the conceptual and historical foundations of that discipline. That is no truer for any discipline than sociology, where the history of our endeavour *is* predicated on the basis of theoretical responses to what appears on its face to be a simple question: namely, *what exactly is the social?* The canonical thinkers of the discipline all worked to develop clear conceptions of what actually counted as the subject matter of sociological study (as opposed to political, economic, cultural, psychological, and biological, among other things), and understanding those theoretical conceptions of what makes what we do different from what is done on other floors in SSC is crucial to learning to do good sociological research.

As well, the things we all come here to study -- inequality, crime, health, education, social change, work, social changes across the life course, and so on -- are not immediate or unmediated things that we can observe in the world, like cells, chemical reactions, or voting behaviour. How we go about identifying, observing, measuring, and understanding the things we study in sociology depends completely upon how it is that we conceptualise them -- or, to put it another way, how we construct the sociological "objects" that we then bring to the social world to study. Good sociology, the kind you will learn how to produce during your graduate career here at UWO, does not simply take someone else's object wholesale; it should examine its components, its construction, its contours, to see if it is put together properly and appropriately, and to rethink its construction if need be, before deploying it in the process of a study. That takes theory.

The goal of this course is to enable you to link these two seemingly disparate elements of the discipline -- the abstract, almost philosophical part with the "dirty fingernails" side of measurement and analysis -- in what is the process of *theorizing*, or what could also be called "writing your theory chapter first". Our task will be to figure out how the classical sociological thinkers conceived of the social, and how we can utilise those conceptions in the pursuit of our own research. And much like "arts and crafts" days back in school, that will involve playing with the ideas and texts, poking them to see where they stretch, recolouring them, and putting them together in new ways. Through the workshops in this course, you will learn the skills you

will need in order to build better sociological objects and gain a deeper understanding of the social world you came here to study.

COURSE TEXTS

There are two books that are required for the course. Most, if not all, can be purchased through Amazon.ca, Chapters/Indigo, or other online booksellers, and will be available through the UWO Bookstore.

Richard Swedberg, *The Art of Social Theory*.
Émile Durkheim, *Rules of Sociological Method*.

There is also a required course packet available in the campus bookstore. Please be sure to bring print copies of the readings with you to class each week.

Finally, every participant in the course should have a good sociological dictionary and a good sociology writer's manual. If you are in need of either of these, or of identifying secondary examinations of the theorists we're reading this term, please ask and I can provide you a list.

ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly Reading Memos

15% of course mark

Each week (save for the week in which you serve as workshop leader), you are required to submit a two-page memo engaging with the course readings. These memos are designed to provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the key theoretical and substantial issues dealt with in the course readings, as well as to pose questions that you believe are important for gaining a deeper comprehension of the materials and their place in the course as a whole. Memos are due to me by the start of class.

Workshop

15% of course mark

In the three weeks in which we read research articles using the classical thinkers as a theoretical framework (weeks 6, 9, and 12), you and fellow group members will lead a workshop detailing the ways in which the researchers whose articles you have read have utilized the classical thinkers' works. More details and signups will be given in the first class session.

Midterm Examination

15% of course mark

There will be a take-home examination due in Week 6 of the course. This examination will ask you to write a number of short essays in response to questions derived from our workshops and discussions in the course. It will be due to Turnitin (via OWL) on Sat Oct 29/2016 at 12noon.

Class Discussion and Engagement

20% of course mark

This course is a workshop course — a version of a seminar — meaning that the course will rely primarily on your participation and your contributions to the discussion, as well as your responses to questions and challenges posed to you by me and your colleagues. As well, discussion forums will be created on OWL, enabling you to continue the discussions with your colleagues even outside of class time, and your contributions to these discussion forums will also factor into your participation mark. You should note that merely being physically present in class for every class session is only worth about 50% of the participation mark (“showing up is half the job”); and talking off the top of your head without being prepared or engaging with the texts is not regarded as “discussion.” You should come prepared with notes, highlights, thoughts, insights, and questions, and be ready to share them with others. Even “I don't understand...” is a valuable starting point for our discussions.

Final Examination

35% of course mark

There will be a final examination for this course. The format for it will be decided collectively in Week 7 of the course.

GRADING POLICIES

In order to pass this course, you must submit *all* assigned work in a timely manner and in accordance with commonly accepted university guidelines. Except in the case of a severe, catastrophic, and well-documented misfortune that befalls you, no late work will be accepted except with academic accommodation as issued by the Sociology Graduate Chair. You should understand that academic accommodations will not be granted automatically on request. If, due to medical illness, you cannot submit an assignment by the due date, it is your responsibility to follow the University's “Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness,” accessible at <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>. I also request that you inform me as soon as possible via email that you are seeking accommodation. This policy also applies to accommodations sought for compassionate circumstances.

Under no circumstances will late reading memos be accepted for credit. If accommodation is sought, the weighting of the total number of memos required of you will be adjusted accordingly.

Evaluation guidelines for written work are listed in the Course FAQ handout, which is available on OWL. You should read them thoroughly, both at the start of the term and prior to submitting assignments as they will provide you with a comprehensive checklist for your work.

I do my best to ensure that the evaluation of your work is as impartial as possible and reflects the quality of what you submit at the due date and time as measured against the evaluation guidelines. If you have issues with that evaluation, you may submit to me a one-page statement of how it is that you think your work as submitted was wrongly evaluated *no sooner than 24 hours after I return the work to you*. We will then meet to discuss the issue. Please

note that I reserve the right to elevate your mark, maintain the mark as applied, or to lower the mark depending on that re-evaluation.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Below is the preliminary schedule of readings and workshops for the course. Generally speaking, we will endeavour to hold to this schedule, so you should plan your time accordingly.

You will note, I'm sure, that there is a great deal of reading at various points during the term. My expectation is that you will do your best to get through all of it — and in general, if you read about 20 pages a day, five days a week, you will get through it all with ease. (Note that the standard expectation for a fourth-year seminar is that you will spend 3-4 hours outside of class for every hour of class time; thus, 9-12 hours per week is to be expected.) The good thing: You do not have a research paper for this course, so there is no outside reading to do, save what is necessary for you to fill in any gaps from your undergraduate education. On average, you have about 85 pages of required reading to read each week.

As you are reading, be sure that you do not attempt to simply turn pages or skim to get through the texts as quickly as possible. “The answers” are “not there”; they require careful reading, careful thinking, note-taking, idea-jotting, mind-mapping, doodles, and any other number of possible ways for you to sort out your ideas about them. They are here to provoke you, to get inside your head and rattle around until they mesh together with some other thing to create A New Idea. Let that happen.

In general, you can expect that after the first few weeks of the term (when the workshop leader assignments begin), class sessions will be split roughly into thirds, with the first third being driven by the assigned workshop leader, the second being driven by me, and the third dedicated to broader class discussion. We will move from efforts to broadly sketch out that week's sociological object, to a deeper examination of the texts and a fleshing-out of the mechanics of that object, to a broader discussion of the ramifications of that set of insights. Being prepared for all of it will require work and workshopping on your own. It'll be a lot of work, but it will rock your world.

Please note that the workshop model will result in some flexibility in the readings as they are listed below. Some readings may be moved from optional to required and vice versa. Some may be left on the “cutting room” floor. Depending on current events, other readings may be introduced. What is listed below is the map of the course as it stands at the start of the term, and you should prepare for it as such. I will always let you know a week in advance if our readings for a class session will change. Please make sure that you have the readings and your notes on them with you in class. Hard copies are preferred.

Week 1: Mon Sep 12

93pp

Note: I will proceed on the first day of class as if you have read these works. I would strongly suggest that you endeavour to do so before class begins, as they will set out the basic themes and issues that we will deal with in the course. If you cannot get to them before the term begins, *do not fret* — you can read them after the first class session and get caught up.

Gabriel Abend, "The Meaning of 'Theory'," *Sociological Theory* 26: 2, pp. 173-199.
Richard Swedberg, *The Art of Social Theory*, Introduction, Chapter I, and Appendix (pp. 1-28, 230-248)
Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Chamboredon, and Jean-Claude Passeron, *The Craft of Sociology*, Part I (pp. 13-31)

Week 2: Mon Sep 19

116pp

Reading Memos begin

Swedberg, *The Art of Social Theory*, chapters 2-5 (pp. 29-125)
Bourdieu, *et al.*, *The Craft of Sociology*, Part II (pp. 33-52)

Week 3: Mon Sep 26

80pp

Swedberg, *The Art of Social Theory*, chapters 6, 8-10 (pp. 127-145, 169-229)

Week 4: Mon Oct 3

80pp

Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," pp. 143-145 in Robert Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*.
Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, pp. 146-202 in Robert Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*.
Karl Marx, "1859 Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*."
Friedrich Engels, "Letters on Historical Materialism," pp. 760-768 in Robert Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*.
Erich Fromm, "Marx's Historical Materialism," from Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*.

Mon Oct 10: Thanksgiving. No class.

Week 5: Mon Oct 17

73pp

Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts," pp. 66-125 in Robert Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*.
Karl Marx, "Alienation and Social Classes," pp. 133-135 in Robert Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*.
Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Chapter Two, Part I (pp. 46-56).

Week 6: Mon Oct 24

88pp

Paul Goldman and Donald R. Van Houten, "Managerial Strategies and the Worker: A Marxist Analysis of Bureaucracy," *The Sociological Quarterly* 18: 1 (Winter 1977), pp. 108-125.

James Reveley, "The Exploitative Web: Misuses of Marx in Critical Social Media Studies," *Science & Society* 77: 4 (Oct 2013), pp. 512-535.

Thomas Barnes and Damien Cahill, "Marxist Class Analysis: A Living Tradition in Australian Scholarship," *The Journal of Australian Political Economy* 70 (Summer 2012/2013), pp. 47-69.

Loris Caruso, "Between Marx and Polanyi: New labour mobilizations in the Italian crisis," *Capital & Class* 39: 2 (2015), pp. 345-367.

Sat Oct 29, 12pm EST: Midterm Examination DUE to Turnitin (via OWL)

Week 7: Mon Oct 31

91pp

Émile Durkheim, *Rules of Sociological Method*, Preface, Introduction, Chapters I-II (pp. 31-84)

Émile Durkheim, "Sociology and the Social Sciences," pp. 175-208 in Durkheim, *Rules of Sociological Method*

Émile Durkheim, "The Method of Sociology," pp. 245-247 in Durkheim, *Rules of Sociological Method*

Émile Durkheim, "Society," p. 248 in Durkheim, *Rules of Sociological Method*

Week 8: Mon Nov 7

85pp

Émile Durkheim, *Rules of Sociological Method*, Chapters IV-VI and Conclusion (pp. 108-166)

Émile Durkheim, "Marxism and Sociology: The Materialist Conception of History," pp. 167-174 in Durkheim, *Rules of Sociological Method*

Émile Durkheim, "Debate on Explanation in History and Sociology," pp. 211-228 in Durkheim, *Rules of Sociological Method*

Week 9: Mon Nov 14

77pp

- Frank van Tubergen, Manfred te Grotenhuis, and Wout Ultee, "Denomination, Religious Context, and Suicide: Neo-Durkheimian Multilevel Explanations Tested with Individual and Contextual Data," *American Journal of Sociology* 111: 3 (Nov 2005), pp. 797-823.
- Helmut Thome, "Violent Crime (and Suicide) in Imperial Germany, 1883-1902: Quantitative Analyses and a Durkheimian Interpretation," *International Criminal Justice Review* 20: 1 (Mar 2010), pp. 5-34.
- Jonathan Jackson and Jason Sunshine, "Public Confidence in Policing: A Neo-Durkheimian Perspective," *British Journal of Criminology* 47: 2 (Mar 2007), pp. 214-233.

Week 10: Mon Nov 21

94pp

- Max Weber, "Basic Sociological Concepts," pp. 311-358 in Sam Whimster (ed.), *The Essential Weber*. (48pp)
- Max Weber, "The 'objectivity' of knowledge in social science and social policy," pp. 359-404 in Sam Whimster (ed.), *The Essential Weber*. (46pp)

Week 11: Mon Nov 28

71pp

- Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Author's Introduction, Chapters 1-2 (pp. xxviii-xlii, 3-38)
- Max Weber, "Confucianism and Puritanism compared," pp. 35-54 in Sam Whimster (ed.), *The Essential Weber*.

Week 12: Mon Dec 5

87pp

No reading memo due

- Robert A. Stallings, "Weberian Political Sociology and Sociological Disaster Studies," *Sociological Forum* 17: 2 (Jun 2002), pp. 281-305.
- Jeffrey Henderson, David Hulme, Hossein Jalilian, and Richard Phillips, "Bureaucratic Effects: 'Weberian' State Agencies and Poverty Reduction," *Sociology* 41: 3 (2007), pp. 515-532.
- Erin Metz McDonnell, "Budgetary Units: A Weberian Approach to Consumption," *American Journal of Sociology* 119: 2 (Sep 2013), pp. 307-350.

COURSE POLICIES

It is crucial that you read, understand, and agree to these policies. Your continued enrolment in the course constitutes acceptance of these policies and expectations of you during the term.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: UWO promotes the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity, respect for other students, and help maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts. Violations of academic integrity will be treated very seriously.

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a **major** academic offence (see the Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar), and I take it very seriously.

All required papers *will* be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between UWO and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Students who submit work found to be substantially plagiarised (i.e., work in which plagiarism can be demonstrated in substance) will be subject to the procedures outlined in the Scholastic Discipline for Graduate Students section of the Western Academic Calendar. This referral will be done without exception. Further information can be found at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf.

Accommodations: Only in exceptional circumstances may a student be provided special accommodation in the completion of a course requirement (i.e., exams, papers). To request a one-time accommodation (brief illness, family emergency), the student should inform the professor when they are able so accommodation can be made. To request other accommodation(s), the student must first meet with the Graduate Chair to discuss options. Medical documentation, where required, will be kept on file in the Sociology graduate program office.

Attendance. Your attendance in class sessions is expected and constitutes part of your mark. The standard provisions regarding absences excused by the Social Science Counselling Centre on medical or compassionate grounds hold; however, those will be the only absences that will be excused. If you are unable to attend a class session for medical or compassionate reasons, you must inform me as soon as possible. Updates on attendance records will be provided on request.

Communications: Email is my preferred method of contact. Any professor should tell you this: **Write your emails to me as you would want any letter of recommendation I might write on your behalf written for you.** They should be professionally prepared, spell- and grammar-checked, and not written in “text message” format. Be sure to always sign them; if

your email address is “HotKitty642@aol.com” and you don’t sign it, I will presume it is spam and treat it accordingly. Please allow 24 hours for responses during the regular work week.

Completion of Course Requirements: Course requirements must be completed by the end of the term in which the course is offered (Fall: December 31; Winter: April 30, Summer: August 31). Only in exceptional circumstances may a student take additional time to complete the course requirements. In such a case, the student must first meet with the Graduate Chair to request permission to carry the incomplete. Medical documentation, where required, will be kept on file in the Sociology graduate program office. More details regarding incompletes are outlined in the Graduate Handbook: http://www.sociology.uwo.ca/graduate_handbook/course_information.html.

Health and Wellness: As part of a successful graduate experience at UWO, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their graduate chair, or other relevant administrators in their unit. The Wellness Education Centre (lower level UCC) assists students in finding mental health and other related resources best suited to their needs: <http://se.uwo.ca/wec.html>. UWO’s School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies’ Living Well website provides tips for thriving at grad school and other helpful information: http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/living_well/index.html.

UWO provides several on-campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in the Campus Recreation Centre: <http://www.westernmustangs.ca/index.aspx?path=ims#>. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Also we encourage you to check out the Faculty of Music web page (<http://www.music.uwo.ca>) and our own McIntosh Gallery (<http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca>).

Laptop Policy: This course is not a dictation course, and you cannot expect to learn what this course has to offer simply by taking down every word that is said (or checking your Facebook during lectures.) **Laptops are generally prohibited in this course.** However, if you believe that your academic performance will be unduly disadvantaged by not being able to use a laptop and can provide a compelling reason for this, please come discuss the matter with me. All students granted leave to use a laptop in class will be required to sit in a location arranged so as not to distract others.

Mental Health. Students who are in emotional or mental distress should refer to Mental Health @ Western (http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health) for a complete list of options for how to obtain help.

Mobile Phone Policy: All phones are to be shut off at the start of class, except if you have a dire emergency that you are having to attend to (such as an immediate family member’s illness or hospitalization, or your spouse’s/domestic partner’s impending delivery), in which case you need to let me know at the start of class. Phones that go off in class will have messages taken and delivered publicly. Text messaging is absolutely prohibited during class times.

Other Important Issues: *My Pedagogical Prime Directive is No BS.* This course outline details what I require of my students, and should you meet those requirements, you can expect an intellectually fulfilling class session and course. If you fail to meet those requirements, I reserve the right to excuse you from the class session, either individually or collectively, as I firmly believe that you cannot adequately benefit from what goes on in my classroom without having put in the necessary preparation before class and the necessary engagement in class. I also have nearly twenty years' evidence for this belief, should you need it. I hope that you will not.

I will actively work to respond to issues that come up in class, either during the term or on a daily basis. To that end, I reserve the right to change, adapt, or amend this course outline, the reading schedule, and other policy issues at any time in order to make possible the improvement of the course; *however, I will only do so with the consent of and input from the class as a whole.* Finally, any issues that you feel are impacting on your ability to do well in the course, whether they are issues inside or outside the classroom, should be brought to me as soon as possible. If the issue is not adequately resolved through the discussion with me, you need to follow the Sociology department's protocols for addressing a grievance. I take what goes on in this course very seriously and personally; I hope you will as well.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS & LEARNING OUTCOMES

As with any senior-level course, you are expected to be fully engaged in this course and able to largely direct your own learning. In order to do that, you should be prepared to meet the following expectations:

- ◆ Consistent attendance in class sessions, with you having read the materials prior to class, being prepared to discuss the materials, to pose any questions that you have, and to engage yourself and others in the learning process;
- ◆ Attendance in my office hours whenever you have a question or need help in understanding the materials or issues under discussion;
- ◆ Thoughtful reflection on the course materials and issues prior to coming to class, thoughtful discussion of these materials and issues during class sessions, and further reflection and engagement with them after class;
- ◆ The diligent pursuit of all assignments, with you committed to doing your best work on each one and dedicated to improving the quality of that "best work" throughout the term;
- ◆ And, overall, your commitment to giving us your best work in every class session and throughout the term.

If you engage with and meet these expectations, you can expect that by the end of this term, you will be able to do the following (among other things that you'll be surprised you've learned how to do and discovered about yourself):

- ◆ Engage in a thoughtful manner with the key concepts, theoretical positions, and arguments of the theorists who developed the discipline of sociology;
- ◆ Develop clear, well-thought, and increasingly sophisticated responses to questions, and the capacity to construct refined sociological questions;

- ◆ Display facility in and fluency with sociological and theoretical concepts and utilise them in the development of oral and written arguments;
- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which theory is constructed, operates as a basis for sociological analysis, is refined, and relates to the research process;
- ◆ Build the skills associated with sociological thinking and the deployment of the "sociological imagination";
- ◆ Develop and demonstrate the skills required to do advanced sociological research, both the "hard skills" of theoretical facility and fluency, a willingness to independently seek out knowledge to answer questions, and a work ethic consistent with your level of expertise, as well as the soft skills associated with professional conduct;
- ◆ And understand and discuss the continuing relevance of sociological theory for the future of Canadian sociological research and thereby Canadian society.