

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
COURSE OUTLINE (DRAFT ONLY)
SOCIOLOGY 9005B 001 (CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL THEORY)

TERM:	Fall Term 2019
INSTRUCTOR	Dr. Michael E. Gardiner
OFFICE:	SSC 5424 (661-2111, ex. 85139; e-mail: megardin@uwo.ca)
CLASS TIME & LOCATION	Mon 1:30-4:30 (SSC 5230)
OFFICE HOURS:	By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The main theme of this course is the transformation that has occurred in social theory during the post-war era in Europe and North America. This period has been marked by the disintegration of such predominant institutionalized paradigms in social theory as functionalism and positivism, and their replacement by a plurality of alternative approaches, particularly those inspired by what has come to be known as postmodernism. The result of this transformation has been a shift away from the scientific and functionalist analysis of social structure or institutions towards the interpretive exploration of such phenomena as language and cultural forms, gender oppression and the body, ethics and 'micro-politics'. The merits of this 'postmodern turn', and the prospects for future social theory, will constitute the central focus of this course.

COURSE OUTCOMES

*If you attend to your responsibilities in this course, you will be able to do the following:

*Understand some of the key theoretical texts in sociology and how they influence the sociological work we do.

*Develop clear, well-thought, and increasingly sophisticated responses to questions posed about contemporary society.

*Display facility in and fluency with core sociological concepts and utilize them in the development of oral and written arguments.

*Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which theory is constructed and the role it plays in the research process.

*Understand the important distinction to be made between statements of fact ('is' statements) and statements of value ('ought' statements) when comprehending and evaluating the relationship between individuals and the social worlds which they live.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Steven Seidman, *Contested Knowledge: Social Theory Today*, 6th Ed., Wiley-Blackwell, 2017 (hereafter CK).

Custom Course Package (available from the UWO bookstore)

METHODS OF EVALUATION

This course is seminar-based, and hence reading and writing intensive. The required readings are intended to give students as broad a comprehension of the key debates and issues in each area of social theory as possible. Each student will be expected to give one oral presentation based on class readings (whenever possible on primary texts), and submit in written form a week after the presentation (2000-2200 words; 8-10 pages, double-spaced, 12-scale font), worth 25% of the final grade. Students will also be expected to write one term paper (20-25 pages, 5-6000 words, double-spaced, 12-scale font), worth 60% of the total grade, which will be due Monday April 15th by 12 noon. Students are advised to develop a term paper outline by around mid-term and discuss it with the instructor. The remaining 15% is awarded for class participation. (Students missing more than three seminars without legitimate and documentable reason run the risk of failing the course outright.) All papers submitted may 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 licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>). (The only acceptable excuses for missed deadlines will be for documented medical reasons or family bereavement/illness; late papers will otherwise be docked 5% per day.)

EVALUATION BREAKDOWN:

Oral presentation:	25%
Participation:	15%
Final paper:	60%

Total: 100%

Course Schedule and Readings

Jan. 7th - Orientation

Jan. 14th - The Legacy of Classical Theory

CK, 'Preface'; 'Introduction'; Chaps. 1-4 (vii-ix; 1-63)

Jan. 21st - Rethinking the Classical Tradition

CK, Chaps. 5-7 (67-114); C. W. Mills, 'The Promise' (CCP, 1-12).

Jan. 28th - Critical theory I: Habermas & Hall

CK, Chaps. 8-9 (117-39); Habermas, 'The Tasks of a Critical Theory of Society' (CCP, 13-26); Hall, 'Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies' (CCP, 27-44).

Feb. 4th - Critical Theory II: Giddens & Bourdieu

CK, Chap. 10 (140-53); Giddens, 'The Emergence of Life-Politics', (CCP, 45-59); Bourdieu, 'The Practice of Reflexive Sociology' (CCP, 61-82).

Feb. 11th - Poststructuralism: Lyotard & Foucault

CK, Chaps. 11-12 (157-87); Lyotard, 'The Postmodern Condition' (CCP, 83-93); Foucault, 'Truth and Power' (CCP, 95-107).

Feb. 18th – Winter Reading Break (no classes)

Feb. 25th - The Sociology of Postmodernism: Bauman

CK, Chap. 13 (188-99); Bauman, 'Is There a Postmodern Sociology?' (CCP, 109-119); Bauman, 'Sociology, Postmodernity and Exile: An Interview with Zygmunt Bauman' (CCP, 121-33).

March. 4th - Identity Theory I: Feminism

CK, Chaps. 14 & 23 (203-25; 331-40); Fraser & Nicholson, 'Social Criticism without Philosophy: An Encounter between Feminism and Postmodernism' (CCP, 135-46); Smith, 'Exploring the Social Relations of Discourse: Sociological Theory and the Dialogic of Sociology' (CCP, 147-55).

March. 11th – Identity Theory II: Multiculturalism & Queer theory

CK, Chaps. 15-16 (226-53); West, 'The New Cultural Politics of Difference' (CCP, 157-67); Seidman, 'Deconstructing Queer Theory or the Under-Theorization of the Social' (CCP, 169-81).

March. 18th - Colonialism, Empire, Nation

CK, Chaps. 17-20 (254-301); Said, 'Edward Said Talks to Jacqueline Rose', *Critical Quarterly* (PDF); Hardt and Negri, 'The Global Coliseum: On Empire' (PDF).

March 25th – Ethnography, Dialogism, Textuality

Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Allegory' (CCP, 183-94); Frank, 'What Is Dialogical Research, and Why Should We Do It?' (PDF); Agger, 'Books Author Authors, But Reading Writes: A Social Theory of the Text' (CCP, 195-207).

April. 1st - The Future of Social Theory

Matthewman and Hoey, 'What Happened to Postmodernism?' (PDF); Therborn, 'At the Birth of Second Century Sociology' (PDF); John Urry, 'Mobile Sociology' (PDF)

April 8th – Term paper workshop

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

CCP:

1. C. W. Mills, 'The Promise', *The Sociological Imagination*, New York: Grove Press, 1961, 3-24.
2. Jürgen Habermas, 'The Tasks of a Critical Theory of Society', *Jürgen Habermas on Politics and Society*, edited by Steven Seidman, Boston: Beacon Press, 1989, 77-103.
3. Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies', *Cultural Studies*, edited by Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler, London: Routledge, 1992, 277-294.
4. Anthony Giddens, 'The Emergence of Life-Politics', *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990, 10-34.
5. Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Practice of Reflexive Sociology', *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J. D. Wacquant, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992, 218-260.
6. Jean-François Lyotard, selections from *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984, 1-23.
7. Michel Foucault, 'Two Lectures', *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, New York: Pantheon, 1980, 109-133.
8. Zygmunt Bauman, 'Is There a Postmodern Sociology?', *Intimations of Postmodernity*, London: Routledge, 1992, 93-113.
9. Zygmunt Bauman, 'Sociology, Postmodernity and Exile: An Interview with Zygmunt Bauman', *Intimations of Postmodernity*, London: Routledge, 1992, 205-228.
10. Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson, 'Social Criticism without Philosophy: An Encounter between Feminism and Postmodernism', *Universal Abandon: The Politics of Postmodernism*, Andrew Ross (ed.), Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1989, 83-104.

11. Dorothy E. Smith, 'Exploring the Social Relations of Discourse: Sociological Theory and the Dialogic of Sociology', *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory and Investigations*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999, 133-146.
12. Cornel West, 'The New Cultural Politics of Difference', *The Cornel West Reader*, New York: Basic Civitas Books, 1999, 119-139.
13. Steven Seidman, 'Deconstructing Queer Theory or the Under-Theorization of the Social', *Social Postmodernism: Beyond Identity Politics*, edited by Linda Nicholson and Steven Seidman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 116-141.
14. James Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Allegory', *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, James Clifford and George E. Marcus (eds), Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1986, 98-121.
15. Ben Agger, 'Books Author Authors, But Reading Writes: A Social Theory of the Text', *Current Perspectives in Social Theory*, 20, 2000, 3-26.

PDFs (OWL CT):

1. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, 'The Global Coliseum: On Empire' (Interview with Hardt and Negri), *Cultural Studies*, 16(2), 2002, 177-192.
2. Edward Said, 'Edward Said Talks to Jacqueline Rose', *Critical Quarterly*, 40(1), 1998, 72-89.
3. Arthur W. Frank, 'What Is Dialogical Research, and Why Should We Do It?', *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(7), September 2005, 964-974.
4. Steve Matthewman and Douglas Hoey, 'What Happened to Postmodernism?', *Sociology*, 40(3), 2006, 529-547.
5. Göran Therborn, 'At the Birth of Second Century Sociology: Times of Reflexivity, Spaces of Identity, and Nodes of Knowledge', *British Journal of Sociology*, 51(1), January/March, 2000, 37-57.
6. John Urry, 'Mobile Sociology', *British Journal of Sociology*, 51(1), January/March, 2000, 185-203.

IMPORTANT POLICIES

Laptop Policy

The use of laptops and similar devices (tablet computers, smart phones) is not allowed, and must be switched off and stored under the table during the seminar.

A Note on Plagiarism

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea 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 scholastic offence. See Scholastic Offences (below) for the link to Scholastic Discipline regulations.

Plagiarism Checking

All required papers may 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 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 The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com: <http://www.turnitin.com>

Scholastic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Accommodation

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.

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

Mental Health

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Health and Wellness Western for a complete list of options to obtain help: http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Health and Wellness

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, 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 program director (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> Western'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

Western 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 [Western's 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/>.

Standards of Professional Behaviour

It is the responsibility of all members of the Department of Sociology to adhere to and promote standards of professional behaviour that support an effective learning environment. These include:

- respect for others both in and out of the classroom through words and actions (be professional, fair, and respectful in interactions with people on-line and in-person; understand and respect differences among classmates and colleagues; avoid disrupting the learning environment; respect others' expectations of confidentiality and privacy)
- active engagement in learning and commitment to quality (being prepared for classes; participating and listening actively to other; using technology and social media appropriately, striving to do your best)
- personal integrity (following through on commitments; doing own work)

Students should also be aware of the UWO Student Code of Conduct found at <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>