This course will deal with the foundations of social theory, starting with the French and Scottish Enlightenments and the beginnings of a specifically sociological worldview. We will then move on to Durkheim’s organic view of society, to Marx’s dialectical materialism, finishing with Weber’s Verstehen sociology and ideal types of authority. We’ll try to understand their theories not just as historical relics, but as living sets of ideas relevant to contemporary social issues. Class attendance and participation will be strongly encouraged, as will a critical engagement with the ideas presented in the class.

Texts

Workload
Quizzes (6% each, best 4 out of 5): 24%
Mini-Report (with a Participation option): 10%
Seminars (see below for details): 26%
Final Exam (covers the entire course): 40%

Schedule
We’ll follow this order of topics. Some of the later material may be condensed or omitted, while seminar material may be skipped during lecture to save time. Courseware readings indicated by a happy face 😊.

Part I: The Origins of Social Theory
1. The Basic Concepts of Social Theory and the Enlightenment Origins of Sociology

2. Historical Progress in Early French Social Theory: Condorcet and Comte [long lecture]

3. The Scottish Enlightenment on Property and Social Structure [long lecture]
   Notes on the Scottish Enlightenment in courseware. 😊
Part II: Durkheim

4. Durkheim on Social Facts and Suicide
Reading: Craib Chapters 2 and 3, pp. 11-34.

5. Durkheim on Solidarity, Religion and Politics
Reading: Craib Chapter 7, pp. 63-85 and Chapter 11, pp. 187-203.

Part III: Marx

6. Marx’s Historical Materialism
Reading: Karl Marx, Theses on Feuerbach, Simon 98-101.
Karl Marx, Preface to a Contribution to a Critique, Simon 209-213.
Karl Marx, Afterword to Capital, Second German Edition.
Frederick Engels, Letters to Bloch and Mehring.
Craib Chapter 4, pp. 35-42.

7. Marx on Alienation and the Economics of Capitalism (heavy readings!)
Reading: Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 on alienation, Simon 54-55, 58-68.
Karl Marx, Capital Volume I, Chapters 1, 6, 7 (on commodities, fetishism of commodities, the buying and selling of labour power, the labour process and surplus value), Simon 220-243, 264-291.
Karl Marx, Capital Volume I, Chapter 25, on the industrial reserve army.
Craib Chapter 8, pp. 86-104.

8. Marx on Ideology and the Family
Craib Chapter 8, pp. 105-118.

9. Marx on the Stages of History
Karl Marx, Capital Volume III Chapters 48.3, 52 (on necessity and freedom, classes).
Craib Chapter 12, pp. 201-231.

Part IV: Weber

10. Weber’s Verstehen Methodology [short lecture]
Reading: Craib Chapter 5, pp. 43-52.

11. Weber on Classes, Groups, Legitimacy and Authority
Reading: Craib Chapter 9, pp. 119-145.

12. Weber on Religion [this might be cut for time reasons]

Seminars
A key component of this course will be the seminars, to be lead by the TAs. Each meeting will discuss a distinct Big Question by focusing on a unique topic and reading. The specific theorist, reading and question for each week will be posted online. Here’s the breakdown of the seminar mark:
6% for Attendance: For each seminar, you’ll get 0.5% just for showing up! However, you must attend the full seminar. You lose this grade if you use your laptop, tablet or cell phone for any purpose: the seminars will be conducted as digital detox events to encourage your maximum attention, engagement and participation (presenters may use Power Point). There are no “makeups” for missed seminars.

10% for Participation: Each seminar the TA will sign everyone in and use this sheet to make a note of who participates, assigning values from 0-3 to each student (= silence, minimal, significant and super-engaged levels of participation). He or she will total up these values at the end of term, rank order everyone, and then assign participation grades based on the breakdown listed earlier in this outline. We will assume that all students come to seminar having already read the assigned reading and Theory Blog for that week, which will be posted on Owl. We will especially value students who apply a critical understanding to both the assigned texts and to the views of their fellow students. The digital detox penalty also applies to participation: if you text or surf or Facebook or play games, you’re mentally absent, and will be given a zero for that class.

10% for Theory Blog: Once per term, all students must write a 3-page Theory Blog that answers the Big Question for that day (11-12 point font, double-spaced, covers and bibliographies don’t count as pages). You’re encouraged to do this in pairs, though you may fly solo (members of a pair get identical grades, so chose your partner wisely). Topics will be assigned in the first seminar meeting if you haven’t chosen one beforehand (the topics list will be posted on Owl). Only one presentation (solo or team) per week until all topics are covered. The first two blogs will be treated more leniently.

The blogs should be written as formal essays, posted on Owl on the course Blog Board at least two full days before they’re due (penalty=10% if late, with midnight as the cutoff), and then printed off and brought to class, where you’ll have about 15 minutes to present your findings to the class to kick off the seminar. Save them either as PDFs or as Word documents. Your blog should include a thesis, a short review of what the theorist in question thinks on the issue, and your own (well informed) answer to the Big Question of the day. Spend at most one page summarizing the theorist, the rest your reaction to that theorist. Since your student colleagues already have access to your blog on Owl, try to be creative in how you present it. Do not use more than one very short film clip (2-3 minutes max). Use Power Point or an equivalent (bring a USB stick, and make sure you have a backup ready in case of technical difficulties). Have some questions for the class.

No makeups for blogs: if you don’t present one on your appointed day, you get zero for both the blog and for your attendance and participation marks. Please turn on the grammar and spellchecking functions of your word processor! See http://publish.uwo.ca/~dmann/good_papers_soc.htm

Mini-Report
At least four times during the term I will post a mini-report topic on Owl linked to recent lectures. There will be at least one for each of Parts I-IV of the course. You may write ONE report, on a topic of your choice. Each topic will cover a distinct issue in social theory and have a deadline that expires in 7-10 days. The actual topics, formats and due dates for each mini-report will be announced online. Generally speaking they will be short 3-4 page essays due one week after announced. They should be written and formatted like formal essays and include a bibliography. They will assume knowledge of all relevant course texts and literacy in English.

They must be printed out, not emailed. Late penalty = 20% per day.

If you do not write a report, I will assume that you have chosen to exercise your Participation Option. A third choice you may make is to write a report that replaces your most recent (and presumably disappointing) quiz grade, then use your Participation Option at the end of term. Write or type on the cover what the report is for: your regular Report grade, or a quiz replacement. Note that these are not “free marks”: if written poorly or not well researched, your grade will reflect that. They must be printed out, not emailed. Late penalty = 20% per day.
Participation Option and Digital Addictions

I’ll hand out your participation grades according to the following schema:

- 0: You never speak OR you text/talk on your cell phone, read the newspaper, play video games, or check Facebook during lecture. If you are addicted to your cell phone or Facebook and can’t resist using them during lecture, please don’t come to class.
- 1-2: You make brief relevant comments in one or two classes.
- 3-4: You make brief relevant comments in three or four classes.
- 5-6: You make brief relevant comments in at least half the classes.
- 7: You make relevant comments at least two-thirds of the classes and know the texts.
- 8: You participate in all but one or two classes, often in depth, and know the texts.
- 9-10: You make interesting comments informed by the class readings in every class, challenge your classmates when appropriate, and miss no classes.

The Digital Zombie Apocalypse: To encourage students to pay attention, take their studies seriously and show respect to the lecturer, there will be an automatic 1% penalty assessed on your participation grade each time you are seen using your cell phone, social networking, playing video games or reading a newspaper during lecture. No warning or notification will be given of this penalty, and it is irretrievable. This penalty will be applied to your report grade if you chose that option instead. Moral of the story: please turn your gadgets off for 45 minutes during lecture. Don’t be a digital zombie! Brains are for thinking, not eating!

If you have a very important phone call to make or take, just quietly leave the lecture for a few minutes and do it in the hallway. A piece of advice: most of my best former students came to class with just pens, paper and the courseware or textbooks, leaving their computers at home and their cells in their bags. Students who sit at the back to text or Facebook tend to get Cs, Ds, and Fs since they don’t pay attention, don’t participate and thus don’t understand the course content. See my analysis of how to get good (and bad) marks on my web page.

Quizzes

There will be 5 quizzes in the course, with 4 counting. The purpose of the extra quiz is to cover ALL reasons for missing a class, including a brief illness, travel, social events, work, tornadoes, earthquakes, alien abductions and zombie attacks. IF you do write all 5 quizzes, I’ll count your top 4 marks. Each quiz will consist of a mixture of multiple-choice and/or short answer questions on basic issues in the readings and lectures, and will be announced one class in advance. They will take place at the end of class so I don’t have to rush students or wait for late people. Their purpose is to encourage you to pay attention in class and to do the readings. There are no rewrites for any reason.

Class Attendance and Notes

All announcements having to do with work in the course will be given during class. You’ll be tested on the lecture materials and class discussions, along with the readings. It’s up to you to make sure you keep up to date on such things by attending class. I will post Power Point notes online (there’s some in the reader), but these are NOT a textbook, just headings of what I will talk about in class: don’t expect to pass the class if you skip the lectures and readings and study just from these. Please keep the background chatter down during lectures out of respect for both me and for those of your classmates who wish to listen to the lecture or participate in class discussions. Cell phone use during lecture and seminar is absolutely banned: if you need a texting fix, just pop out for a few minutes.
E-Mails
I would like to conduct as much of class business as possible in person to avoid misunderstandings and the ever-worsening problem of e-mail congestion. Please don’t email me complex questions about your essays or assignments - it’s far more efficient for both of us if you come to speak to me in person about this sort of thing during class breaks or by appointment outside of class. I don’t mind brief friendly exchanges on course content or related issues, but don’t expect replies to questions or complaints concerning grades - once again, present these in person! E-mailed requests for extensions will magically disappear – whoosh! The same standards of civility apply to electronic communication as apply to personal conversations. If I receive a rude or impolite e-mail I will block your e-mail address. Personal dialogue is far superior! Kind words are, of course, always welcome.

For all written assignments, make sure you look at my web page “How to Write a Good Social Theory Paper” at http://publish.uwo.ca/~dmann/good_papers_soc.htm

Standard Departmental Warnings
Prerequisite(s): At least 60% in Sociology 1020 or Sociology 1021E.

Antirequisite(s): The former Sociology 230 or the current Sociology 2240E.
NOTE: Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Grade Averages
As per Sociology department policies, average grades in second-year classes must fall in the 66-70% range, with more Bs than As. Your grades during the term will be assigned with this goal in mind, to avoid using a bell curve at the end of the course.

Plagiarism
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 Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

[Professor’s Note: If you can’t do the time, don’t do the crime!]

Missed Exams and Late Assignments
You should understand that academic accommodation will not be granted automatically on request. If, due to medical illness, you cannot write a test or exam, or submit an assignment by the due date, it is your responsibility to follow the University’s new “Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness”. This policy can be accessed at: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Compassionate Grounds
Serious Illness of a Family Member: Inform your instructor as soon as possible and submit a medical certificate from the family member’s physician to your home faculty’s Academic Counselling office.
In Case of a Death: Inform your instructor as soon as possible and submit a copy of the newspaper notice, death certificate or documentation provided by the funeral director to your home faculty’s Academic Counselling office.