THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

SOCIOLOGY 3404F (002)
Modern Sociological Theory
Course Outline Fall 2017
Monday, 9:30-12:30pm

COURSE MEETINGS: Monday, 9:30am-12:30pm; SSC 3006

INSTRUCTOR: R. NONOMURA
EMAIL: rnonomur@uwo.ca
OFFICE: SSC 5415
OFFICE HOURS: Mondays 12:30-1:30pm (by appt.); Wednesdays 9:30-11:30am

Course Description:
This course is designed to refine your understanding of key theoretical ideas, problems, and debates within contemporary sociology. In addition to developing a more in-depth understanding of the theories of influential social researchers, we will explore the ways that sociological thinking can help us engage more incisively with the “big” social and political issues of our time. Tensions between theory and practice, power and knowledge, structure and agency, oppression and resistance, will be recurring topics we’ll explore throughout the semester, as will the emphasis on cultivating a “reflexive” understanding of sociological inquiry itself.

Please note that open student-led class discussion will comprise a significant portion of our weekly meetings. Consistent preparation, focus, and participation will therefore be crucial to your success throughout the semester, and to the effectiveness of the course itself. Class time will generally be divided into a segment of direct instruction by me, a presentation led by a designated team of “discussants” for the week, and a recap session where we will address key takeaways from the readings and draw broader connections to course themes.

Antirequisites: Sociology 4404F/G

Prerequisites: Sociology 2240E or both Sociology 2270A/B and 2271A/B and enrolment in third year of Honours Specialization or Honours Double Major in Sociology or Criminology.

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 BREAKDOWN

Seminar Presentation 24%
Final Paper 40%
Term Paper Proposal 10%
Notes 11%
Participation 15%

**Seminar Presentation:**
24% of course mark
You will be expected to give one oral presentation in which you will not only summarize the key ideas from the readings but also engage the class in discussion about the works’ theoretical, societal, and sociological significance.

A written “Critical Reflection” of the week’s assigned material, written as a follow-up to the ideas you addressed in the presentation, will be due one week after the presentation is given (1500 words, 5-6 pages, double spaced). Points and analyses should be developed in relation to primary texts as much as possible. Specific expectations for this assignment will be discussed in class, and a full set of instructions and grading rubric will be posted on OWL.

**Final Paper:**
40% of course mark
The major assignment for this course will be a term paper of 3000 words (12 pages) on a theoretical topic of your choice, due no later than Dec. 5, 11:59pm. Students seeking written feedback on their essays must submit a hard copy (in addition to an identical Turnitin submission) in class on Dec. 4. Further details about this assignment will be provided in class, and a grading rubric will be posted on OWL.

**Term Paper Proposal:**
10% of course mark
You must submit an outline of the proposed term paper, of minimum two pages, worth 10% of the grade, to OWL by Nov. 8, 11:59pm. The outline of the proposed paper may be in point form, but the assignment should include a tentative thesis statement and at least two paragraphs stipulating the main issues and ideas you intend to address. The proposal should also include a bibliography listing at least six publications you intend to use in the essay. I am happy to help you devise a viable essay topic and/or to assist in identifying appropriate research materials.

**Notes:**
11% of course mark
It is expected that you will complete all weekly readings prior to class, and arrive prepared with either:

(a) a full set of notes (typed or handwritten, including page #’s)
(b) a short written summary of each of the week’s assigned readings (2-3 pages total), or
(c) a thoughtful written response to two of the weekly discussion questions posed in the document “Course Schedule and Weekly Themes” on OWL (1.5-2 page total).

These notes/summaries/responses, each worth 1% of your overall mark for a total of 11%, will be collected at the end of class each week for grading, and will be available to you for pickup in office hours or at the start of class the following week.

**Participation**
15% of course mark
Because this course is seminar-based, your active, consistent participation (and preparation) throughout the semester is a key determinant of how well things go. Please note that **quantity** in
this area does not equal quality, and that while making connections to information/ideas from outside the course curriculum is encouraged, it is no substitute for also engaging the material assigned in this course. Generally speaking, your participation grade will be based on how well your contributions: (a) demonstrate your comprehension of, and critical engagement with, the course materials, and/or (b) stimulate interaction toward the development of such comprehension/critical engagement. A “Midterm Participation Grade Update” will be released on OWL by Nov. 2.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The course is geared toward achieving the following learning outcomes. These may be taken as both a reference point for “where we’re headed” with the material in the course, as well as a rubric for the knowledge, understanding, and ability I expect of students in a “3000-level” course.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

• Articulate the role that theory plays in social scientific inquiry, and compare the relative strengths and weaknesses of various theoretical perspectives for particular kinds of sociological research.

• Understand key theoretical concepts (e.g. reflexivity, criticism, structure/agency, power/knowledge, intersectionality) in contemporary social theory.

• Identify a sociological topic of interest, and use scholarly sources to develop an essay length theoretical examination of this topic.

• Apply social-theoretical ideas and concepts in verbal discussions about current social issues and problems.

• Critically discuss key theoretical contributions made by several influential figures in modern sociological thought.

• Lead a class discussion that generates scholarly conversation about the work of a particular theorist or theoretical tradition in sociology.

COURSE TEXT

The following two course texts (one textbook and a course pack) will serve us throughout the full year. Both are available at the UWO Bookstore.


Custom Course Pack, available for purchase at the Book Store (Marked with an * below)

[Note: Be sure to buy the Nonomura 3404F-002 course pack, as other sections of 3404 may use different readings]

All other articles, links, and sources will be posted to OWL under Resources>Readings.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Below is a tentative outline of the course schedule for 3404F-002. Due to the discussion-centred nature of our course, this schedule may be subject to minor changes throughout the semester. Any changes to the course outline will be announced on OWL and a revised and dated course outline reflecting these changes will be posted.

Week 1: Sept. 11
Introduction to the Course (31 p.)
CST “Introduction” (3 p.)
* Erich Fromm “The Moral Problem of Today” Man for Himself (6 p.)

Week 2: Sept. 18
Sociological Thinking in an Age of Uncertainty I: Foundational Concepts (50 p.)
* C. Wright Mills “Mass Society and Liberal Education” The Politics of Truth: Selected Writings of C. Wright Mills (pp. 107-124) (17 p.)
* Anthony Giddens “What do Sociologists Do?” Social Theory and Modern Sociology (pp. 1-21) (21 p.)
* Charles Taylor “Three Malaises” The Ethics of Authenticity (pp. 1-12) (12 p.)

Week 3: Sept. 25
Sociological Thinking in an Age of Uncertainty II: Modernity in Crisis (47 p.)
* C. Wright Mills “On Reason and Freedom,” The Sociological Imagination (pp. 165-176) (11 p.)
* Theodor Adorno et. al “Introduction,” The Authoritarian Personality (pp. 1-11) (11 p.)
* Alain Badiou “True Communism is the Foreignness of Tomorrow” (11 p.)
* Henry Giroux “Donald Trump and the Plague of Atomization in a Neoliberal Age” (3 p.)

Week 4: Oct. 2
Perspectives in Symbolic Interaction and Ethnomethodology (49 p.)
CST Ch. 7: Herbert Blumer, “Society as Symbolic Interaction”
CST Ch. 8: Erving Goffman, “Introduction to The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life”
* Michael Atkinson, “Subculture or Figuration?” Tattooed: The Sociogenesis of a Body Art (pp. 91-109) (19 p) [The rest of the chapter is optional]
[Optional Reading] CST Ch. 9: Howard Becker, “Becoming a Marihuana User”

No Class: Oct. 9
Fall Reading Week

Week 5: Oct. 16
Theorizing Capitalist Hegemony in an Era of Consumerism: The Frankfurt School (45 p.)
* Ben Agger Critical Social Theories (pp. 78-93) (15 p.)
* Erich Fromm “Introduction,” To Have or To Be? (pp. xxii-xxxiv) (12 p.)
* Theodor Adorno “The Culture Industry Reconsidered” (pp. 98-106) (8 p.)
CST Ch. 12: Herbert Marcuse, “The New Forms of Control” (10 p.)
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[Optional Reading] James Gordon Finlayson “Habermas and Frankfurt School Critical Theory” (pp. 1-8) (8 p.) [Posted on OWL]

Week 6: Oct. 23
Anthony Giddens on Structure and Agency in Late Modernity (47 p.)
* Steven Seidman “The Critical Sociology of Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu” (pp. 136-147) (11 p.)
CST Ch. 25: Anthony Giddens, “The Emergence of Life Politics” (10 p.)
* Anthony Giddens, “Interview Three: Structuration Theory” (pp. 75-93) (18 p.)

Week 7: Oct. 30
Pierre Bourdieu on Theorizing Cultural Reproduction, Conflict, and Resistance (49 p.)
CST Ch. 14: Pierre Bourdieu, “The Dynamics of Fields” (10 p.)
* Tim May, “Habitus, Capital and Field: Society in Social Relations,” Situating Social Theory (p. 120-135) (16 p.)
* Pierre Bourdieu “Social Space and Symbolic Power” in In Other Words: Essays Toward a Reflexive Sociology (pp. 123-139) (17 p.)
* Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Simon “Intellectuals and Social Struggle” in Political Interventions (pp. 64-69) (6 p.)

Week 8: Nov. 6
Beyond “Having a Conversation”: Jürgen Habermas, Dialogue, and the Public Sphere (60 p.)
James Gordon Finlayson “Habermas and Frankfurt School Critical Theory” (pp. 8-15) [Posted on OWL]
* “The Programme of Social Theory,” Habermas: A Very Short Introduction (pp. 47-61) (21 p.)
* Jürgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article” (6 p.)
* Nancy Fraser “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy” Social Text. 25/26: 56-77 (21 p.)
CST Ch. 13: Jürgen Habermas, “Modernity—An Incomplete Project” (12p.)

[TERM PAPER PROPOSAL DUE: NOV. 8, 11:59pm]

Week 9: Nov. 13
Michel Foucault and the Concept of Power (53 p.; 21 min. interview)
Philosophy Bites: “Susan James on Michel Foucault and Knowledge” (21 mins.) [Posted on OWL]
CST Ch. 24: Dany Lacombe “Reforming Foucault: A Critique of the Social Control Thesis” (13 p.)
* Michel Foucault “Truth and Power” The Foucault Reader (51-75) (15 p.)

Week 10: Nov. 20
Race, Anti-Racism, and Identity (49 p.)
* Martin Luther King Jr. “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (6 p.)
“The Results are In,” Letter from the Protesters in Ferguson (2 p.) [Posted on OWL]
* Kimberlé Crenshaw “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex,” University of Chicago Legal Forum (29 p.)

Week 11: Nov. 27
Feminism(s) and Queer Theory: Convergence and Critique (54 p.; 29 Tweets)
CST Ch. 17: Dorothy Smith “Feminism and Marxism: A Place to Begin, A Way to Go” (7 p.)
CST Ch. 18: bell hooks “The Significance of Feminism” (8 p.)
* Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, & Angie Morrill, “Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler-Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy” (22 p.)
* Steven Epstein “A Queer Encounter: Sociology and the Study of Sexuality” Queer Theory, Sociology (145-162) (17 p.)
Supergrover “This Was Never Supposed to Happen to You” (29 Tweets) [Posted on OWL]

Week 12: Dec. 4
Deconstruction (and Reconstruction?) in the (Post-?) Modern Era: Postmodernism and Its Critics (33 p.)
CST Ch. 19: David Lyon “Postmodernity: The History of an Idea” (8 p.)
CST Ch. 20: Stephen Seidman “The End of Sociological Theory: The Postmodern Hope” (11 p.)
CST Ch. 21: Marilyn Porter “Call Yourself a Sociologist—And You’ve Never Even Been Arrested?!” (13 p.)

[TERM PAPERS REQUESTING COMMENTS DUE: DEC. 4, 9:30am]
[TERM PAPER FINAL DEADLINE: DEC. 5, 11:59pm]

GRADING POLICIES

Deadlines and Late Penalties:
Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day. If, due to medical reasons, 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://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_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.

Grade Disputes:
You deserve to have your work evaluated in a competent, fair, and impartial manner. If you have questions or concerns about a grade, please come to see me and hopefully we can resolve any misunderstanding. For issues concerning written work, please submit a 1-page statement explaining why you feel your work was wrongly evaluated no sooner than 24 hours after I have returned the work to you. We can then meet to discuss these points and consider a re-evaluation. Please note that I reserve the right to elevate your mark, maintain the mark as applied, or lower the mark depending on that re-evaluation.
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 written assignments 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 (www.turnitin.com).

Students who submit work found to be substantially plagiarized (i.e., work in which plagiarism can be demonstrated in substance) will be subject to the procedures outlined in the Scholastic Discipline for Undergraduate Students section of the Western Academic Calendar. This referral will be done without exception.

Accessibility:

Please contact me if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519/661.2111 x82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar’s website: www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html.

Attendance:

It is expected that you will attend all class meetings. The standard provisions regarding absences excused by the Social Science Counselling Centre on medical or compassionate grounds hold. If you are unable to attend a class session for medical or compassionate reasons, you must inform me as soon as possible. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar’s website: www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html.

If you are unable to attend a class session due to a non-medical or non-compassionate reason, it is your responsibility to catch up on all missed notes and lecture material. I am happy to meet during Office Hours to help get you up to speed in any way I can. Updates on attendance records will be provided on request.
Communications:
In-person discussion is my preferred method for discussing any substantive course-related material. Feel free to approach me before or after class, during office hours, or if you run into me around campus.

When contacting me via email, please do so using your UWO email address (other email accounts tend to get caught in my Spam filter) and ensure that your message is expressed a respectful, professional (i.e., spell-checked) manner. Also, kindly preface all subject headings with our course code, SOC3404.

Medical Illness:
Western’s policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf. Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation: http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html

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

Policy on Laptops and other Electronics/Phones in Class:
Laptops are permitted in class but if it is observed that you are using these devices for purposes unrelated to the course, or are using them in a distracting manner, you will be asked to turn them off for the remainder of the class. All phones are to be shut off at the start of class. In dire cases where you must leave your phone on please let me know at the start of class.

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: www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf