SOCIOLOGY 4405g/9192b
Seminar in Sociological Theory: Pierre Bourdieu
Winter 2021
Dr Scott Schaffer
Course Meetings: Weds 130pm to 430pm ET (UTC -5), Teams

Office Hours: Thurs 3pm to 4pm (on OWL), or by Skype appointment
Email: scott.schaffer@uwo.ca
Skype: prof_schaffer

COURSE MEETING DETAILS

This course will be a synchronous course, meaning that our class sessions will be live. We will meet on Microsoft Teams for this course in order to ensure that all class members are able to be viewed. You should ensure that you have downloaded the latest version of Teams, and that you have stable, high-bandwidth internet access.

As this is a workshop course that thrives on your active participation and engagement, you are kindly requested to make yourself visible during the class session. Blurred backgrounds, as well as substitute backgrounds that are available from a number of web sites, are more than acceptable. A good site for instructions on how to replace your background on Teams, as well as links to some fairly cool (and free!) downloadable backgrounds can be found at https://nerdschalk.com/microsoft-teams-backgrounds-free-download/.

COURSE INFORMATION

Prerequisite(s): Sociology 3404F/G and enrolment in fourth year of an Honours Specialization offered through the Department of Sociology.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) is one of the most widely influential sociologists of the late 20th century -- and one of the most under-read, and possibly the least understood. His work spans the widest ranges of the discipline, moving from dense theoretical examinations of the corporeal nature of social life to impassioned public intellectual statements, from ethnographic research to rigorous quantitative and statistical analysis, and from photographic exhibitions to empathetic interviews about the suffering of private individuals. Bourdieu was the child of a postal worker, a best-selling author, a public celebrity, and one of the best examples of the critical sociologist our discipline has produced. His work influences sociologists doing research on inequality and stratification, education, culture, health, language, politics, and on sociology itself. And all of this is done by way of maintaining an
exacting reflexivity with regard to his own position as the Chair of Sociology of the Collège de France, a public intellectual, and a working-class child of Béarn.

**THE BASICS: HOW MUCH, MENTORING, HOW TO DO IT**

Our goal in this course is to develop a deep understanding of the key conceptual foundations of Bourdieu's work. We will do this following two tracks. **The first track** — required for all students, graduate and undergraduate — will be a close examination of the first two volumes of Bourdieu's lectures on general sociology at the Collège de France (and part of the third volume, if I can get my hands on it in English before it's published...). This will start with approximately 50 pages per week of reading, and as your proficiency in reading Bourdieu's work improves, increasing to 80 pages per week. **The second track** — optional for undergraduates, very highly recommended for MA students, and required for PhD students — will bring in associated readings to deepen our examination of not only the theoretical underpinnings of Bourdieu's work, but also the ways in which Bourdieu **empirically** deployed this framework in his research on everything from education to culture to television.

So, the secret has been revealed: This is a joint undergraduate/graduate seminar. **Do not be intimidated by this** — even the most experienced person in the room will be reading new material (yep — I'm using this as an excuse to read). My plan, with your consent, is to pair undergraduates and graduates up in a mentoring relationship so that (a) people have a partner with whom they can discuss these works before the class session and memos come in, and (b) graduate students can pass on “tricks of the trade.”

Your success in this course will depend entirely on your willingness to do four simple things. First, you need to **read** the assigned readings in their entirety and read them closely. But do not read them all in a single sitting — your brain will melt. Mine even melts. Instead, break each week's readings down into smaller chunks — say, two or three sections of a lecture — and focus on one chunk each day. Second, you need to **think** carefully, deeply, and critically about the readings and the course issues. Third, you need to **discuss** the readings; your understanding of the material (or even your questions about it) may very well be the key to someone else's understanding of it. Finally, you need to **write** about the readings, both in the papers assigned in the course and in the OWL discussion forums. If you do these four things and work on improving them over time, you will be just fine here.

**COURSE TEXTS**

There are two books that are required for the course. These can be purchased through Amazon.ca, Chapters/Indigo, or other online booksellers, and will be available through the UWO Bookstore.


There are a number of additional readings, both required and optional, on OWL. Finally, as a group we will decide upon topics and readings for the last two weeks of the course.
ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly Reading Memos 25% of course mark

Each week, you are required to submit a *maximum* two-page (double-spaced) 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. These memos will be distributed to the class as a whole before our class session; the expectation is that you will read through them to identify key themes, issues, challenges, or problems with the readings and refer to them during our discussions. Memos are due to the email address posted on OWL by Sunday 1155pm Eastern Time (UTC -5) each week. These are marked on a completion basis — full marks for a thoughtful response; half credit for a half-thought-out memo or reaction essay; and no credit for no submission.

Class Discussion and Engagement 25% 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.

*Note: Undergraduate students are required to attend 80% of seminar meetings in order to pass a 4000-level seminar.*

Course Paper 50% of course mark

The course paper is intended to give you the space to explore the ideas, theoretical positions, and topics dealt with in this course in a deeper manner, as well as to bring those in line with your own interests. For undergraduate students, it is an integrative paper that is designed for you to pull together the course readings, as well as *no more than 100 additional pages of outside reading*, in an effort to develop an argument-based analysis of Bourdieu's works.

For graduate students, the expectation is that this course paper assignment will provide you with the opportunity to write your “theory chapter” for your thesis or dissertation, or at least a first draft of it.

For everyone, a paper proposal is due to me on Weds Feb 24/2021, and will be worth 10% of your course mark. The remaining 40% will go to your paper; a due date for this will be announced once I've negotiated things with the Powers That Be.
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. “Timely” has taken on a different meaning in PY1; if you are going to be late with the submission of your paper proposal or your course paper, please let me know in advance so that we can decide on timelines, whether official accommodation is required, and so on.

Late reading memos will not be accepted for credit. If accommodation is sought, the weighting of the total number of memos required of you will be adjusted accordingly.

The Department of Sociology mandates a particular undergraduate course mark distribution. As much as possible, the mark you earn in this course will be the mark you will receive. For 4000-level courses, the course mean should be between 78% and 82%. There is no similar requirement for graduate courses.

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.

PRINCIPLES FOR WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS AND PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS; OR, HOW TO MORE PRODUCTIVELY BE A SCHOLAR

The idea behind the workshop model for the course is a simple one: To turn our examination of classical sociology and the philosophy of social science into a collective and collaborative learning endeavour. However, this simple idea, as past experience has shown, requires that a few basic principles be made explicit.

1. Readings. There is often a tendency in seminars to turn every seminar into a general “bull session” where people talk off the top of their head about what they think the texts are about. This is not acceptable in this course. The focus of our work is the readings and your interrogations of them, as well as bringing these to the point of my pedagogical agenda. This is not to say that general discussions of the readings or other materials or issues cannot be brought to bear on our discussions. It is to say that we will constantly be moving back to the texts, so you need to be prepared for that move, so bring your notes.

2. Listen. Good discussions pick up trains of thought in the room; unsatisfying discussions are collections of things people want to say without reference to anything else said in the class. Be
less concerned with figuring out what your brilliant comment will be, and focus more on the collaborative aspect of our learning environment.

3. **Brevity.** Keep your interventions focussed on the issues and texts at hand. Long, meandering, overblown speeches rarely contribute as much as one thinks.

4. **Equity and Respect.** I acknowledge that some members of our workshop will have different personalities and different degrees of exposure to the material, and that these will lead to different levels of active participation. This is especially the case in a split undergraduate/graduate course. However, individually and as a group, we should be aware of these factors and work to ensure as equitable participation as possible and to work to create a classroom environment where all members feel enabled to participate. Course participants need to be attentive to this and to curtail speeches by people who have dominated the discussion if need be. It should also be the case that those with more knowledge about or exposure to this material should take the time to fully explain their insights to those with less exposure.

5. **Types of interventions.** Not every contribution in class needs to be a brilliant insight. No intervention should be regarded as "too simple" as long as it reflects an attempt to seriously engage with the material and a preparation to do so. It is appropriate to ask for clarifications of readings or previous comments, as well as to make substantive points on the topics at hand. *Sometimes, the best contribution is a question* — a WTF moment can be the most important moment of a session. And it is perfectly acceptable to ask for a brief pause or a slow-down in order to catch up.

6. **Discussion tone.** The workshop model is one that has its heart a notion of what I would call *cooperative, collaborative conflict.* That is, it is perfectly acceptable to have disagreements about the materials or course issues, as they can often highlight differences in interpretation that can productively lead to theoretical advances and improvements in our understanding. Those differences, as well as the ways in which they are stated, should be oriented to this goal at all times. Participants should be attentive to the ways in which discussions are conducted in order to ensure that the discussion is not marked by aggressiveness, competitiveness, or other tricks in what Erik Olin Wright calls "the repertoire of male verbal domination" or Pierre Bourdieu calls "linguistic violence."

7. **Preparation for discussions.** Good seminars depend on serious preparation by students. This means the following:

   a. Doing the readings carefully -- not reading every word necessarily, but studying the readings.
   b. Reading the memos written by other students, as well as writing down any reactions to any you find interesting. This kind of "virtual dialogue" can be very productive for our collective workshop.
   c. Try to discuss the material with at least one other student before each class session, whether in person or online.
8. Professionalism. Graduate school is very often the first step in the development of your professional lives and personas (and a fourth-year course is not far behind that). My expectation is that you will by now be aware of the professional norms of academia and the UWO Department of Sociology and will act accordingly. If not, please ask me.

This includes the following:

a. working to meet the expectations and requirements of the course and the instructor;

b. pursuing your own work following the principles of academic honesty and that your work will reflect your best effort;

c. conducting yourself professionally both in the department and outside of it; and,

d. remembering that graduate study involves a significant amount of training in areas that students may not see at the time are important to your professional development, but that those with expertise in the field recognise as being important for one’s intellectual development.

The full UWO Student Code of Conduct can be found at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf; I would advise everyone to be aware of it.

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.

As I suggested earlier in this course outline, your best approach to doing the reading for this course is to divide it into daily chunks — do not attempt to read it all in one sitting — and to take notes on those readings as you go along. This will enable you to integrate, process, question, etc., these works as you move through them.

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 as we move through the term, the class session will be divided roughly into thirds: the first third, a discussion of the thematics that come out of the memos and your readings of these texts; the second, a more hands-on workshop about the techniques of grappling with Bourdieu; and the third, further discussion in light of the workshopping of the texts. 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, as well as the structure of the class sessions. 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.

Readings that are marked with an asterisk (*) are available on OWL.

**Week 1: W Jan 13. Introduction to the course and the voice of Bourdieu.**

Bourdieu and Chartrier, selection from *The Sociologist and the Historian*
Champagne and Duval, “Situating the Course in General Sociology,” pp. 134-154 in *Classification Struggles*

**Week 2: W Jan 20. The three dimensions of Bourdieu: Reflexivity, the theory of symbolic domination, and public sociology.**

*Reading Memos begin*

Bourdieu, “Structures, Habitus, Practices,” pp. 52-65 in *The Logic of Practice*

**Week 3: W Jan 27. Classification and categories.**

**Track 1 readings**

Bourdieu, Lectures of 28 April, 5 May, and 12 May 1982, pp. 1-47 in *Classification Struggles*

**Track 2 readings**


**Week 4: W Feb 3. Capital and classification.**

**Track 1 readings**

Bourdieu, Lectures of 19 May, 26 May, and 2 June 1982, pp. 48-100 in *Classification Struggles.*

**Track 2 readings**

Bourdieu, “The New Capital” and “Social Space and Field of Power,” pp. 19-34 in *Practical Reason*
Week 5: W Feb 10. Symbolic capital, truth, and sociologizing.

**Track 1 readings**
Bourdieu, Lectures of 9 June and 16 June 1982, pp. 101-133 in *Classification Struggles*
Bourdieu, Lecture of 5 October 1982, pp. 1-22 in *Habitus and Field*

**Track 2 readings**

Reading Week: W Feb 17. No class.

*Paper proposal due at the start of class.*

**Track 1 readings**
Bourdieu, Lectures of 12 October and 19 October 1982, pp. 23-70 in *Habitus and Field*.

**Track 2 readings**
Bourdieu, “The Objective Limits of Objectivism, Section I: Analyses,” and “Structures, Habitus, Power: Basis for a Theory of Symbolic Power,” pp. 1-29 and 159-197 in *Outline of a Theory of Practice*


**Track 1 readings**
Bourdieu, Lectures of 2 November, 9, November, and 16 November 1982, pp. 71-151 in *Habitus and Field*.

**Track 2 readings**
Bourdieu, “Class tastes and life-styles,” pp. 257-396 in *Distinction* — choose one class to read

Week 8: W Mar 10. Structures and liberties.

**Track 1 readings**

**Track 2 readings**
Bourdieu, “The social space and its transformations,” pp. 97-168 in *Distinction*
Week 9: W Mar 17 (sorry). Fields and structures.

**Track 1 readings**


**Track 2 readings**


**Track 1 readings**


**Track 2 readings**

Bourdieu, “Journalism and Politics,” and “Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market,” pp. 3-10, 171-244 in *Sociology is a Martial Art*.


Readings TBD.


No reading memo due

Readings TBD.

Date to be announced: Course paper due at 1155pm Eastern Time (UTC -4).

**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 Undergraduate Students (or 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_undergrad.pdf.

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.

Attendance and Accommodation for Medical Illness. Your attendance in class sessions is expected and constitutes part of your mark. All synchronous (live) sessions will be recorded and posted on OWL, and it is your responsibility to catch up with that material.

Undergraduate students need to attend 80% of class sessions in order to pass the course.

Communications: Email is my preferred method of contact. Write your emails to me as you would want any letter of recommendation I might write on your behalf written for you.

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.

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 sociological manner with the key concepts, theoretical and ethico-political positions, and arguments of a theorist developed over the course and in the context of their lifetime;
- 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”;
- Prepare your own thoughtful and theoretical engagements with problems deriving from the œuvre of a thinker and its usefulness for sociological theorising and research;
- And understand and discuss the continuing relevance of sociological theory for the future of Canadian society.
### SHORT READING SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Track 1 (required for all)</th>
<th>Track 2 (required for grad; optional for UG)</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 13</td>
<td>Bourdieu &amp; Chartrier (OWL)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Champagne &amp; Duval, CS 134-154</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feb  3</td>
<td>CS pp. 48-100</td>
<td>“The New Capital” and “Social Space and Field of Power” (OWL)</td>
<td>Memo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>CS pp. 101-133</td>
<td>“On Symbolic Power” (OWL)</td>
<td>Memo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>H&amp;F pp. 1-22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RW</td>
<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>No class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mar  3</td>
<td>H&amp;F pp. 71-151</td>
<td>“Class tastes and life-styles” (OWL) — choose one class</td>
<td>Memo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mar 10</td>
<td>H&amp;F pp. 152-232</td>
<td>“The social space and its transformations” (OWL)</td>
<td>Memo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mar 24</td>
<td>H&amp;F pp. 315-343</td>
<td>“Journalism and Politics” and “Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market” (OWL)</td>
<td>Memo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mar 31</td>
<td>Topical readings to be chosen by class</td>
<td></td>
<td>Memo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Apr  7</td>
<td>Topical readings to be chosen by class</td>
<td></td>
<td>No memo due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>