THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

COURSE OUTLINE
SOCIOLOGY 9002a 001
CLASSICAL SOCIAL THEORY

TERM: Fall Term 2020
INSTRUCTOR: Howard Ramos
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CLASS TIME: Tue 17h30-20h30
LOCATION: Zoom (link to be provided via email and OWL site)
OFFICE HOURS: W 16h00-17h00

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar will examine original classical social theory, with a focus on key works that have contributed to shaping the development of sociology and social science. The main goal of the seminar will be to map key arguments made by theorists, understand the social and historical context that theories were developed in, identify genres of argumentation and thought, and to explore critiques of classical works. The seminar will also see how classical theory offers insights, if any, for societies today. The approach of the seminar is dialogic, which means that it will stress informed and critical discussion and debate to unpack concepts and material.

COURSE MATERIALS

PDFs and web links available on course OWL site

EVALUATION BREAKDOWN

Seminar lead 30%
Weekly ORAQ and article pairing 20%
Paper proposal 20%
Final paper 30%
DETAILS ON THE METHODS OF EVALUATION

Seminar Lead

Each student will be required to lead a seminar. This can be done independently or with another person depending on how people choose to work on the slots available for leading a seminar during the course of the term. The goal of advanced seminar courses is to play with ideas, talk them out, identify arguments and theories as well as assess cases and evidence.

Strong seminars are ones that have lots of discussion and engagement of ideas and evidence. They do not have lecture, they do not have power points, and they work to flesh out the structure of arguments and deconstruct them. Leading a strong seminar includes:

- Identifying the core arguments and elements of arguments made by the assigned reading
- Identifying key terms and ideas used in the reading
- Assessing the evidence used to support claims made in the assigned reading
- Linking arguments and evidence of assigned reading to a broader area of work in the field
- Identifying how the assigned reading fits into the broader collection of work by the author(s)
- Showing how the assigned reading fits or differs from other readings in the course or other readings in the field more generally
- Generating discussion on a set of questions that aim to engage all of the above.
- Critique should only come once the above is done and should be done through deconstructing the arguments of the reading, not working outside them.

In preparation for leading a seminar the student(s) leading is/are required to write a one-page outline, or map, of what they will discuss and present it to the professor as of 9h on the Monday before the seminar meeting. They will receive feedback on it within the same day. The student(s) is/are also required to meet with the professor 30 mins before the seminar to discuss the outline and how they will work together in the seminar discussion. The outline will not be marked, but rather will be marked in terms of how it is executed in leading a seminar.

To be more specific, leading a seminar will be worth 30% of your mark for the course. A corresponding numeric proportion to letter grades will be assigned to your performance. Strong performance in leading a seminar in class will include: accurately portraying the arguments and material of the assigned reading; identifying core terms and mechanisms; situating the material of the reading into broader debates, literature, and readings; and, stimulating informed and engaged discussion in the seminar.

Weekly ORAQ and article pairing

Every week, students are expected to contribute an Original, Response, And Question (ORAQ) posting on the OWL. As part of the ORAQ students are required to also pair the week’s assigned classical theory reading with another reading that the student finds on their own. The paired reading will offer critique of the assigned reading for the week or the tradition derived from the work and/or the paired reading may extend or build upon the work. All paired readings should be published within the last 10 years and will be used to assess how the classical theory of the week is used in contemporary social science.

Generally ORAQS are about a paragraph or less. Think of them as an informed reaction to the reading of the week and introduction of the paired reading. The purpose is to help prepare for the seminar and offer insight into the assigned reading. ORAQS may includ:
- Questions about the reading
- Response or reaction to the reading
- Identifying inconsistency or ambiguity in the reading
- Extending the argument or evidence of the reading
- Situating questions and responses in relation to other theoretical or academic work
- Linking the reading to other theoretical or academic work
- Linking the reading to evidence, examples or cases that help elucidate the arguments
- Linking the reading to evidence, examples or cases that help show weaknesses in the arguments
- Being ‘original’ or expressing your views and opinions as they relate to any or all of the above

How will ORAQs be graded? Each ORAQ is worth 2% for a total of 20% over the course of the term. ORAQs that make an original contribution and that link arguments, observations, or reactions to the reading and outside material will get a full 2%, those that do not will get less. ORAQs correspond to the 10 weeks with assigned readings starting in Week 2 and ending in Week 12.

**Paper proposal**

One of the goal’s of the class is to develop an original theoretical paper. To offer guidance on its development and assure that it is not left to the last minute, this assignment asks for a short pitch and map of the work you will develop. In no more than five double spaced pages, identify the classical theoretical work you will engage as well as the issue or set of issues you explore with it in the final essay. In your proposal identify how at least one of the assigned readings can be used to engage your issue. Also provide a full-length bibliography of other work that will be used and that offers comprehensive referencing for your final essay. Your proposal should justify the theory and problem that you will engage in your full-length paper and will outline the sketch of the argument or positions that you will take. We will also take time to discuss this assignment in class or during office hours. This assignment is with 20% of your mark.

**Final paper**

This assignment builds from the comments received on the proposal to write an original sociological paper. It should critically examine the same theory and set of issues as outlined in the proposal assignment, highlighting your own observations, and situating them in a dominant literature. The paper should be based in a body of academic literature and debate and should summarize key issues. It should also offer an analysis of that literature and debate and offer critique or extension of key arguments in the tradition. The paper should be based on one of the seminar’s assigned readings and offer original insights. The paper should be between 7,000 to 8,000 words and students are asked to identify an academic journal where the paper potentially could be submitted. We will also take time to discuss this assignment in class or during office hours. This assignment is with 30% of your mark.

**SEMINAR SCHEDULE AND READINGS**

**Sept. 15th - Week 1 – What is social theory and the role of classic works?**

**Sept. 22nd - Week 2 – Materialism**

Marx, Karl. 1842. Debates on the Law on Thefts of Wood, in the Supplement to the Rheinische Zeitung, Nos. 298, 300, 303, 305 [Translated by Clemens Dutt].

**Sept. 29th - Week 3 – Collective spirit**


**Oct. 6th - Week 4 – Sources of Power**


**Oct. 13th - Week 5 - Thanksgiving (no classes)**

**Oct. 20th - Week 6 – Social forms**


**Oct. 27th - Week 7 – Double consciousness**


**Nov. 3rd- Week 8 –Fall Reading week (no class)**

**Nov. 10th - Week 9 – Authoritarianism**

Nov. 17th - Week 10 – Identity and Resistance


Nov. 24th - Week 11 - Gender


Dec. 1st - Week 12 - Knowledge


Dec. 8th - Week 13 - Wrapping up or just beginning?
IMPORTANT POLICIES

Policies for Assignment Deadlines

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/appeals_discipline/index.html

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/.