

## **Sociology 3411: Contemporary Sociological Theory**

Pre-requisites: Soc 1100, Soc 2111, Soc 3410

Class Location: Ryan Building 3046

Class Time: Tue-Thurs, 8:30-10:30 am

3-0; or 3-0

Sociology web-page address: <http://sociology.lakeheadu.ca>

Instructor: Dr. T. Puddephatt

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Office Hours: Monday 8:30-10:30 am

### **Goals of the Course**

The goals of the course can be broken into three major emphases: (1) to gain a strong familiarity with contemporary sociological ideas by reading the arguments in their original form; (2) to learn how to analyze, compare, and critically evaluate abstract theoretical ideas, and (3) develop strong writing skills in so doing. The course is designed in a way that you will be given plenty of feedback, such that you stand to improve as we progress through the term.

With these goals in mind, you will be evaluated on the following:

(1) Daily Summaries	(25%)
(2) In-Class Group Assignments	(20%)
(3) Participation	(10%)
(3) Midterm Test	(20%)
(4) Final Essay Assignment	<u>(25%)</u>
Final = (100%)	

### **Required readings:**

- *Contemporary Sociological Theory, Third Edition* (Edited by Craig Calhoun, Joseph Gerteis, James Moody, Steven Pfaff, and Indermohan Virk). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing. 2012.
- Package of Readings (on reserve at circulation desk, Paterson Library)

### **Explanation of Evaluation:**

1. **Weekly Summaries:** The ability to summarize the key ideas of arguments and present them in a clear, coherent, and well organized way is a vital skill in sociological theory. These daily summaries of the assigned readings are designed to help with these skills, keep you honest in doing the readings consistently, and rewarding you for this on a consistent basis. You will also find these summaries to be very helpful as references when it comes time to do the final essay assignment. Since there are 22 days of assigned readings, I will count the best 10 summaries toward your grade. These are to be no longer than one page, double spaced, and are due at the beginning of each class.
2. **In class Group Assignments:** These will be announced on the day they are happening, so it pays to attend class regularly. On these days, I expect you to work in small groups to answer an analytical question related to the readings from the course. Thus, in an effort to be a help rather than a hindrance to your group, be sure to have the readings done, preferably with some notes to draw on, before class. The exact number and frequency of these assignments will be determined as the course proceeds.

3. Participation: This grade is intended to reflect quality, more than the quantity, of student's participation in class. "Negative participation" (e.g., distracting, rude, counter-productive behaviour) is reflected in penalties to this grade.
4. Midterm Test: This test is a simple multiple-choice, true/false, and short answer format that covers the material from the first half of the term.
5. Final Essay Assignment: The final essay assignment will be determined as the course progresses. Typically, there is some choice available, and you will not be required to do an extra reading outside of class to answer the question(s) posed. It must be written using ASA format (see department website), double-spaced, 12 point times new roman font. The marking criterion will be discussed, with more detailed expectations, when I hand the assignments out as we approach the end of term.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

January 8 – Introduction to Course

January 10 – Talcott Parsons "The Position of Sociological Theory" (1948) & "Structural Components of the Social System" (1951) (on reserve)

January 15 – Robert K Merton "On Sociological Theories of the Middle Range" (1949) (on reserve)

January 17 – G.H. Mead "The Self" (1934) (on reserve)

January 22 – Herbert Blumer "Symbolic Interactionism" (1969)

January 24 – Puddephatt, A. 2009. "The Search for Meaning: Revisiting Herbert Blumer's Interpretation of George Herbert Mead," *The American Sociologist*, 40(1): 89-105.

January 29 – Guest Lecture: David Nock: Mead and Blumer through the eyes of James S. House.

January 31 – Bergesen, Albert. 2004. "Chomsky vs. Mead," *Sociological Theory*, 22(3): 357-370.

February 5 – Puddephatt, Antony. 2011. "Language and Mind in the Thought of G.H. Mead: Challenges from Chomsky's Linguistics," *Studies in Symbolic Interaction*. 36: 75-106. (on reserve)

February 7 – Erving Goffman "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life" (1959)

February 12 - Randall Collins "Interaction Ritual Chains" (2004)

February 14 – Midterm Test

### ***February 18-23 Reading Week***

February 26 – George C. Homans "Social Behaviour as Exchange" (1958)

February 28 – Peter Blau “Exchange and Power in Social Life” (1964)

March 5 – James S. Coleman “Human Capital and Social Capital” (1990) (on reserve)

March 7 –Karen S. Cook, Russell Hardin, and Margaret Levi “Cooperation without Law or Trust” (2005)

March 12 – Mark Granovetter “Economic Embeddedness” (1985)

March 14 – Ronald Burt “Structural Holes” (1992)

March 19 – Norbert Elias “The Social Constraint toward Self-Constraint” (1937)

March 21 – Daniel Liechty. 1998. “Reaction to Mortality: An Interdisciplinary Organizing Principle for the Human Sciences,” *Zygon*, 33(1): 45-58.

March 26 – Michel Foucault “Discipline and Punish” (1975)

March 28 – Dorothy Smith “The Conceptual Practices of Power” (1990)

April 2 – Anthony Giddens “The Consequences of Modernity” (1990)

April 4 – Bruno Latour “We Have Never been Modern” (1993)

April 9 - review

# Lakehead University Regulations:

## IX Academic Dishonesty

The University takes a most serious view of offences against academic honesty such as plagiarism, cheating and impersonation. Penalties for dealing with such offences will be strictly enforced.

A copy of the "Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures" including sections on plagiarism and other forms of misconduct may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar.

The following rules shall govern the treatment of candidates who have been found guilty of attempting to obtain academic credit dishonestly.

- (a) The minimum penalty for a candidate found guilty of plagiarism, or of cheating on any part of a course will be a zero for the work concerned.
- (b) A candidate found guilty of cheating on a formal examination or a test, or of serious or repeated plagiarism, or of unofficially obtaining a copy of an examination paper before the examination is scheduled to be written, will receive zero for the course and may be expelled from the University.

Students disciplined under the Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures may appeal their case through the Judicial Panel.

Note: "Plagiarism" shall be deemed to include:

1. Plagiarism of ideas as where an idea of an author or speaker is incorporated into the body of an assignment as though it were the writer's idea, i.e. no credit is given the person through referencing or footnoting or endnoting.
2. Plagiarism of words occurs when phrases, sentences, tables or illustrations of an author or speaker are incorporated into the body of a writer's own, i.e. no quotations or indentations (depending on the format followed) are present but referencing or footnoting or endnoting is given.
3. Plagiarism of ideas and words as where words and an idea(s) of an author or speaker are incorporated into the body of a written assignment as though they were the writer's own words and ideas, i.e. no quotations or indentations (depending on format followed) are present and no referencing or footnoting or endnoting is given.