

**Department of Sociology**  
**Sociology 2111 WA**  
**Perspectives in Social Thought**  
**Jan-April 2015**  
**Wednesday & Friday 2:30-4pm**

**Dr. Barbara Parker**  
[barbara.parker@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:barbara.parker@lakeheadu.ca)  
**Phone: 343-8792**  
**Office: RB 2043**  
**Office Hours: Tuesday 1-2pm**

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**Welcome to SOC 2111 Perspectives in Social Thought.** In this course, we will begin to explore social theory and its usefulness as a tool to analyze and explain the complexity of ‘everyday’ life. Sociological theory is concerned with power at both the macro and micro levels of social life and the questions of agency versus structure. Macro sociological theory focuses on social structures, which can shape the social actions of individuals (for example: capitalism, labour, bureaucracy, migration, education, gender, etc.) whereas micro sociological theory focuses on individual and interpersonal actions and experiences or behaviours. Significantly, we will contextualize our understanding of these theoretical positions through the lens of culture and begin from the position that individuals are shaped and constrained by social structures. Through this course, you will be introduced to classical and contemporary sociological theory and important social theorists, who have shaped the discipline of Sociology.

First, we will begin with classical social theory and investigate the macro theories of functional theorists Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Talcott Parsons. This will follow with a close examination of some of the contemporary key micro sociological theories including symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and ethnomethodology. We will cover the influential ideas of George Herbert Mead, Herbert Blumer and Erving Goffman, all of whom were concerned with social meanings and social behaviours. Finally, we will examine the contemporary feminist sociological theories of Dorothy Smith and Patricia Hill Collins and introduce an important critique of modernity: postmodernism.

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Formulate an understanding of foundational sociological theory;
- Explore the development of Sociology as an Academic Discipline and Social Science;
- Develop a critical understanding of key macro and micro social theories;
- Recognize and use social theory to explain everyday life; and
- Expand and develop university-level analytical and writing skills

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

*Introduction to Sociological Theory: Theorists, Concepts and their Applicability to the Twenty-First Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (2014) by Michele Dillon

\* Available in the Bookstore: [bookstore.lakeheadu.ca](http://bookstore.lakeheadu.ca)

## HOW THE COURSE IS ORGANIZED

This course is offered twice a week on Wednesday & Friday, and requires a total of 3 hours class time per week. Course material will scaffold each week and it is highly recommended you attend each lecture and do not miss class. You are required to independently complete the weekly readings **prior** to the weekly lectures and be prepared to discuss what you have read.

If you have questions, at any time during this course, please visit me in my Office Hours (as listed above) or contact me through email at: [barbara.parker@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:barbara.parker@lakeheadu.ca)

**Please note:** I will only respond to emails sent from a Lakehead university email account and it is imperative that you put SOC 2111 WA in the email Subject Heading otherwise it may be missed. Please recognize that I will do my best to reply to your emails within 24 hours.

**LEARNING ACCOMODATIONS:** If you have a learning accommodation or special need regarding the format or the due dates for the assignments, you must inform me. The appropriate form can be obtained from the Student Accessibility Services:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-services/accessibility/node/14081>

## PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

From the Course Calendar,

<http://navigator.lakeheadu.ca/~Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?htmlink=true&pageid=viewcatalog&catalogid=19&topicgroupid=9352>

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.

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.

## **COURSE EVALUATION**

Participation.....	10% (On-going)
Mid-term Exam.....	20% (Friday February 13 <sup>th</sup> )
Response Papers (4 x 10%).....	40% (Due: Can be handed in on 4 weeks of your choice)
Final Exam.....	30% (Date set by Registrar)

**Please Note:** All assignments must be typed double-spaced using 12 font with 2.54 cm margins. Please include a title page with the title of the assignment, your name, the due date, and my name. All written work will be evaluated based on organization, presentation, grammar and clarity as well as content. For your own protection, keep a hard copy of all work submitted for this course.

## **EVALUATION INFORMATION**

All assignments and tests will be discussed in class and you will have the opportunity to ask questions about expectations.

### **1. Participation - 10% (on-going)**

Your participation mark will reflect your attendance, in addition to your level of engagement and willingness to talk about the course materials. Therefore, it is imperative you come to class having done the readings and be prepared to discuss key ideas, your reflections and any questions you may have arising from the readings.

### **2. Mid-term Exam - 20% - Friday, February 13<sup>th</sup> IN-CLASS**

The Mid-term exam will cover all Readings, lectures and course material covered Week 1 through Week 5. Details will be covered in-class before the exam.

### **3. Response Papers - 40% (10% x 4)**

\* 2-3 pages, double-spaced, 12 font

You are required to write four (4) **Response Papers** over the course of the Term. The topic you respond to will relate to the weekly readings (see the following weekly Reading Schedule). The Response Paper is due at the beginning of class on the Wednesday for the week that you are responding too. For example, if you choose to write a Response Paper to Week 3 Readings, then the paper will be due at the beginning of class on Wednesday January 21<sup>st</sup>.

#### **Expectations for your Response Papers**

In the Response Paper you will respond to the theoretical consideration under question for that particular week's readings. In one page, you can briefly synthesize the main points covered. This should follow with a critical response to the Reading by drawing on one theoretical idea and demonstrate your engagement with the author's ideas and the weekly topic under discussion by making a connection to something in your own everyday life. This may include using a direct quote, properly referenced, to anchor your ideas. Use the theory to make a connection with your life! For example, you can explain something or an issue you have heard about in the media, through friends/family and through your everyday interactions. Please remember that the point of the exercise is not to produce a summary but engage in a critical reading and analysis exercise. Finally, ensure you reference properly and cite all author's work.

### **4. Final Exam – 30% TBA**

The Final Exam will be cumulative and cover all Readings, lectures and course material, however the majority of the questions will test you on content covered after the mid-term exam. Details will be discussed in-class prior the exam.

**NOTE:** The exam will be scheduled by the Registrar and cannot be changed for your personal plans. Do NOT make assumptions about holidays, travel or departure from Thunder Bay until the exam schedule is posted.

#### **READINGS BY WEEK**

\* Please note that all readings are in the textbook unless otherwise noted

*(This schedule of readings may be amended from time to time depending on the pace of the course.)*

**Week 1 – Jan 7 & 9**

**Welcome to Sociology 2111**

**Overview of Course Syllabus**

**Week 2 - Jan 14 & 16**

**Introduction: Classical and Contemporary Social Theory with a Timeline and Introduction to Macro and Micro Sociological Theoretical Perspectives**

**Read:** *pages 1-28* Introduction: Welcome to Sociological Theory

**Week 3 - Jan 21 & 23**

**Classical Macro Sociological Theory**

**Conflict Theory: The Historical and Theoretical Works of Karl Marx**

Capitalism as Structured Inequality, Commodification of labour, Ideology and Power

**Read:** Chapter 1: *pages 31-72*

**Week 4 - Jan 28 & 30**

**Classical Macro Sociological Theory**

**Emile Durkheim and the Development of Sociology as a Modern Social Science**

What knits society together? Social Order and interdependence, Cohesion

**Read:** Chapter 2: *pages 77-112*

**Week 5 - Feb 4 & 6**

**Classical Macro Sociological Theory**

**Max Weber: Functionalism & Social Action and Interpretative Sociology**

Ideal Types, Rationalization, *Verstehen*: 'Sympathetic Understanding'

**Read:** Chapter 3: *pages 115-149*

**Week 6 - Feb 11 & 13**

**Mid-term Exam Review**

**Mid-term Exam (Friday Feb 13)**

**Week 7 - Feb 18 & 20**  
**READING WEEK – NO CLASSES**

**Week 8 - Feb 25 & 27**  
**Contemporary Macro Sociological Theory**  
**Structural Functionalism: Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton**

The problem of order in society and social action

**Read: Chapter 4: *pages 153-178***

**Week 9 - March 4 & 6**  
**Contemporary Micro Sociological Theory**  
**Symbolic Interactionism: Symbols, Language, Gestures and the Development of the Self through Social Interaction**

George Herbert Mead, Herbert Blumer, Erving Goffman

**Read: Chapter 8: *pages 257-281***

**Week 10 – March 11 & 13**  
**Contemporary Micro Sociological Theory**  
**Phenomenology & Ethnomethodology: A Case for Interpretive Sociology**

Development of human consciousness & self-awareness  
Social construction of reality

**Read: Chapter 9: *pages 285-308***

**Week 11 – March 18 & 20**  
**Feminist Sociology: the Development of Feminist Thought**

Dorothy Smith and Patricia Hill Collins on Standpoint Feminist Theory: Importance of Women's Epistemology

**Read: Chapter 10: *pages 311-345***

**Week 12 – March 25 & 27**

**Critique of Modernity: The Unleashing of Postmodernity**

Michel Foucault: Bodies & Disciplinary Power

**Read:** Chapter 14: *pages 427-248*

**Week 13 – April 1 & 3**

**Wrap Up & Exam Review**

**Good Friday – NO CLASS**