

## **SOCI-2111-WAO: Perspectives in Social Thought**

**Classes (days/times):** January 7, 2015 – April 7, 2015; Wednesdays 7 PM – 10 PM

**Class Location:** OA 2018 (2<sup>nd</sup> floor – 500 University Avenue)

**Instructor:** Kevin D. Willison, B.A. (Hon.), M.A., Ph.D.

**E-mail:** [kdwillis@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:kdwillis@lakeheadu.ca)

**Office area:** third floor (cubical area), 500 University Avenue (Orillia Campus)

**Office hours:** By appointment (via e-mail), and/or by chance.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION/OBJECTIVES**

SOCI 2111 is designed to provide an introductory survey of foundational perspectives in social thought as they pertain to the discipline of sociology. Given its introductory nature, the course presumes that students taking it have not had previous exposure to sociological theory beyond what was considered in SOCI 1100. Nevertheless, the basic competency in all major sociological perspectives and their philosophical/theoretical foundations is assumed.

**SOCI 2111 is a required course for Sociology majors. Students registered in this class should have SOCI 1100 successfully completed.**

The overall aim of SOCI 2111 is to offer the sociology of knowledge approach to the foundational perspectives in social thought. Its guiding premise is an assumption that social thought and sociological theorizing do not arise in a vacuum but are intellectual responses to specific historical conditions and societal realities.

The best way to understand why particular forms of social thought are the way they are is to examine them in the context of times and age of their making. An additional guiding premise of the course is a notion that the history of social thought and sociological theorizing is a continuous and ever-evolving dialogue between different streams and forms of thinking and theorizing. Thus, the best way to understand their character is to situate them within this dialogue and examine their contributions to dealing with specific issues, problems and/or themes the dialogue generates and invites. In exploring the foundational perspectives in social thought, SOCI 2111 covers three general themes: (1) from reason to revolution; (2) from social philosophy to social science; (3) from certainty to doubt.

Theme I focuses on the pre-Enlightenment period, a transition to the era of Enlightenment philosophy, and a reaction to the ‘promise of the Enlightenment’. Theme II considers the principal proto-sociological and sociological streams of Enlightenment-based theorizing about the modern Western society. Theme III explores the responses and reactions to Enlightenment-based social theories, and the precursors to post-Enlightenment and post-modern forms of thought.

The primary methods of instruction in SOCI 2111 will be formal lectures and ‘dialogical encounters’ between instructor and students. The primary purpose of class lectures is to offer a necessary historical, philosophical and conceptual background for situating and

understanding particular streams of social thought, while the main objective of ‘dialogical encounters’ is to explore, through discussion and/or debate the actual theoretical ideas/questions you will be reflecting on in your commentaries. Although a significant portion of our class time will be devoted to formal lectures, your willingness to read, think and talk is indispensable for the overall success of the course and for how much you get out of it.

### **COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

The objective of the course is to provide students with a comprehensive survey understanding of the foundational perspectives in social thought as they pertain to the discipline of sociology. By the end of the course, the diligent student will possess a competence in assessing, comparing and evaluating a broad range of pre-sociological, proto-sociological and sociological forms of theorizing, and be fully prepared to take up the more advanced explorations of specific theoretical issues, problems and debates.

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:**

***The Making of Social Theory: Order, Reason, and Desire (2nd Edition),*  
by Anthony Thompson. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2010.  
ISBN: 13-978-0195-430301**

All other course materials/information will be posted on our course website (Desire2Learn – D2L). This information is potentially testable material as well.

**To get the most out of the course, you should have your weekly readings done *before* classes. Doing so will help you be more prepared for the lectures / class discussions.**

### **METHOD OF EVALUATION**

Your performance in the course will be evaluated on the basis of the following:

- [1] Test One (15%): Wednesday January 28, 2015**
- [2] Test Two (25%): Wednesday February 25, 2015**
- [3] Test Three (20%): Wednesday March 25, 2015**
- [4] Final (April) Exam (40%): Scheduled by the Registrar (stay tuned for day and time).**

### **FORMAT of TESTS and EXAM**

The tests and exams will be a combination of multiple choice, definitions and point-form answered essay answers. Please note that there will not be any true/false questions.

You will be responsible for course readings, lecture materials, and anything else presented during our class time. There will be a pre-exam review session with the purpose of clarifying difficulties and problems encountered during your preparation for the mid-term and final exams.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following grading scale will be applied in evaluating your course work:

### **90-100% (A+)**

*Outstanding Performance:* superb mastery of the principles and materials treated in the course; exceptional fluency in communicating that mastery and a high degree of originality and independence in applying material and principles.

### **80-89% (A)**

*Excellent Performance:* comprehensive in-depth knowledge of the principles and materials treated in the course; fluency in communicating that knowledge and originality and independence in applying material and principles.

### **70-79% (B)**

*Good Performance:* thorough understanding of the breadth of materials and principles treated in the course and ability to apply and communicate that understanding effectively.

### **60-69% (C)**

*Satisfactory Performance:* basic understanding of the breadth of principles and material treated in the course and an ability to apply and communicate that understanding competently.

### **50-59% (D)**

*Marginal Performance:* adequate understanding of most principles and material treated in the course, but significant weakness in some areas and in the ability to apply and communicate that understanding.

### **40-49% (E)**

*Failure:* inadequate or fragmentary knowledge of the principles and material treated in the in the course, or failure to complete the work required in the course.

### **1-39% (F)**

*Failure:* inadequate or fragmentary knowledge of the principles and material treated in the in the course, or failure to complete the work required in the course.

### **0% (F)**

*Academic Dishonesty:* demonstrable violation of the academic rules of conduct as defined by Lakehead University academic standards.

Your grade is a reflection of your performance in the course, which is the only criterion for your final course mark. *There will be no rescaling of grades at the end of the course* and no adjustments except for legitimate clerical errors. Please take note of that. According to Lakehead University defined standards, a grade of 0-49% constitutes unsatisfactory academic performance and means failing the course; 50-59% is a minimally accepted level of performance for passing the course, while 90-100%

constitutes outstanding performance. For details on evaluation and grading see your Lakehead *University Academic Calendar*, section University Regulations. If you wish to review your course work you can do so within *one week from the day your marks* have been posted.

### **GENERAL POLICIES**

**Email:** E-mailing is to be regarded as an official form of communication. Only emails sent through Lakehead University account will be read and replied to. All other email messages will be ignored.

**Cell phones:** Cell phones are to be turned off during lectures (except under exceptional circumstances in which approval has been granted by the instructor). Avoid texting. Failure to follow this course policy *may* result in a loss of marks.

\* Use of portable devices during lectures is **not allowed** (except under exceptional circumstances in which approval has been granted by the instructor).

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Class attendance is not mandatory but is highly recommended. As a university-level course attendance is not taken nor is it necessary to e-mail the Instructor if you will not be attending. If you decide to attend, you are expected to arrive on time and be respectful to other students in class. Disruptive and otherwise inappropriate behaviour in the classroom will not be tolerated. Students engaged in such behaviour will be dealt with accordingly.

**Disclaimer:** The information in this Course Outline is subject to change; any changes will be announced in class.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE** (subject to change; any changes will be announced in class)

#### **Week 1** - (January 7)

#### *COURSE INTRODUCTION & SYLLABUS WALKTHROUGH*

#### **READINGS**

- Preface
- Conclusion
- Introduction: The Unmaking of Traditional Society

#### **Week 2** - (January 14)

#### *THEME I: FROM REASON TO REVOLUTION*

#### **BACKGROUND READING**

- Chapter 1: Enlightenment and Revolution: Rousseau and Wollstonecraft

#### **Week 3** - (January 21)

#### **READING**

- Chapter 2: The Conservative Reaction and Romanticism

**Week 4** - (January 28)

**Test One (15%): Wednesday January 28, 2015 (7 – 8:20 PM)**

+ **READING**

- Chapter 3: Democracy and Social Liberalism (8:30 – 10 PM)

**Week 5** - (February 4)

*THEME II: FROM SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY TO SOCIAL SCIENCE*

**READING**

- Chapter 4: French Positivism and German Idealism

**Week 6** - (February 11)

**READING**

- Chapter 5: Karl Marx

**Week 7** - (February 16-20)

**STUDY WEEK: NO CLASS**

**Week 8** - (February 25)

**Test Two (25%): Wednesday February 25, 2015**

- + Part two of class will consider D2L posted material (not on test two).

**Week 9** - (March 4)

**READING**

- Chapter 6: Fin de Siècle Social Thought: Feminism, Decadence, and Nietzsche

**Week 10** - (March 11)

**READING**

- Chapter 7: Émile Durkheim

**Week 11** - (March 18)

**READING**

- Chapter 8: Max Weber
- \* plus posted article: Life Chances (see course D2L)

**Week 12** - (March 25)

**Test Three (20%): Wednesday March 25, 2015**

+ **READING** - *THEME III: FROM CERTAINTY TO DOUBT*

- Chapter 9: Emancipation and Pragmatism: Du Bois, Dewey, and Mead

**Week 13** - (April 1) – Partial Term review [all classes end Tuesday April 07]

+ **READING**

- Chapter 10: The Individual and Society: Simmel and Freud

- **Final Exam in April of 2015 is scheduled by Registrar. Day and Time to be announced.**
- **Value of final exam equals 40 percent of course grade.**

**Missed Tests and/or Exams:**

Make-up examinations will only be given with written (and original) documentation from a healthcare practitioner, using the official Student Health Certificate, available at:

<http://registrar.lakeheadu.ca/uploads/docs/F.HealthCertificate.pdf> .

**Religious Observance Policy:** If you require religious accommodation(s), you must make your request to the instructor preferably within the first two weeks of class.

**Special Needs:** Dr. Willison has received specialized training in AODA (the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Training Act). As there may be a need to provide information in accessible formats to persons with disabilities, students with special needs who require accommodations should speak with their Instructor privately at the very start of the course. Appropriate documentation must be provided to Student Services. If needed, refer to <http://policies.lakeheadu.ca/> for further information.

**Course Concerns?** Students are encouraged to speak with their Instructor should there be a problem or concern regarding the course which you feel needs to be raised.

**Emergency? Know the Number to Call**

Lakehead Security reminds everyone to **call 3911** (Orillia) if you require emergency service. Paramedics, firefighters and police officers do not always know where to find certain buildings or locations on our campuses. By calling 3911 (Orillia), Lakehead Security will quickly dispatch a security guard to your location and contact 911 services. Lakehead Security will then meet and escort emergency services to your location to save valuable time.