

SOCI-2111-FB: Perspectives in Social Thought

Classes (days/times): September 9, 2013 – December 2, 2013; Wednesday & Friday 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Location: RB-1002

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Course website: <http://misina.ca/sociology> (file password: sociology)

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, therefore, 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.

COURSE READINGS

We will be using the following required text:

The Making of Social Theory: Order, Reason, and Desire (2nd ed.), by Anthony Thompson. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Additionally, there is also a recommended research and writing handbook:

Making Sense in the Social Sciences: A Student's Guide to Research and Writing (5th ed), by Margot Northey *et al.* Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2012.

All other course materials/information will be posted on our course website: <http://misina.ca/sociology>.

To get the most out of the course, you should have your weekly readings done *before* our Wednesday classes. This will make you more prepared for the lectures and give you more time to think through the ideas you will be dealing with in your reflective commentaries.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

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

Midterm Exam (35%): October 25, 2013

Final Exam (40%): TBA

Reflective Commentaries (25%)

Both **exams** will be a combination of definitions and essay answers. Please note that *there will not be any multiple choice or true/false questions*. There will be some choice regarding the range of possible answers. 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 test.

Reflective commentaries are written reflections *on the weekly textbook readings*. Only five of these reflections will be submitted for marks. Submission dates will be selected randomly and students will not know before-hand which week a commentary will be due. The commentaries will be collected at the **beginning of randomly selected Friday class** (this is **not negotiable**). **Late submissions will not be accepted**. It is therefore in your best interest to prepare your commentary for each week and to bring it with you to a Friday class, just in case it is due. Absolutely no make-up commentaries will be allowed. If you anticipate missing a class, you may wish to ask a fellow student to bring in a hard copy of your reflection for potential submission. Under extraordinary circumstances (for which you need to provide appropriate documentation), you can make *prior* arrangement for emailing the commentary before the lecture.

The purpose of the commentary is not to summarize the weekly readings. Rather, it is (1) to offer your own thoughts about the principal theoretical ideas presented in the textbook readings, and (2) to discuss two (out of three) Reflection Questions provided at the end of the chapter you are commenting on. Thus,

your commentary is to consist of two parts: Part I, where you demonstrate your ability to distill and critically reflect on the main theoretical ideas discussed in the chapter; Part II, where you engage in a focused discussion of the issues the Reflection Questions are inviting you to think about in a more in-depth fashion. The best commentaries are usually those that are more analytical than descriptive and that raise some interesting points and questions that can potentially be discussed in class. **Please note:** each chapter offers three Reflection Questions. You are free to choose whichever two questions you wish to discuss in your commentary.

The length of each commentary should not exceed two pages of typed text, using 1.5 line spacing and 12 pt Times New Roman font. Please corner-staple your assignments and do not use paper clips, plastic covers or binders. In the interest of environmental responsibility, avoid using a cover page for your assignments and put your name and your student ID number in the top left corner of page 1.

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, grade 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 2013-2014 Academic Calendar*, section University Regulations (V Standing).

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

Academic Statement: Each student is asked to submit a brief statement about his or her academic background as it relates to the Sociology program in general and this course in particular. The statement should be accompanied by either your recent photograph or a photocopy of your Lakehead University student ID card.

Email: Emailing 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).

Notebooks/portables: Use of notebook computers and/or 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. 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 (September 9-13)	<p><i>COURSE INTRODUCTION & SYLLABUS WALKTHROUGH</i></p> <p>READINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preface • Conclusion • Introduction: The Unmaking of Traditional Society <p><i>THEME I: FROM REASON TO REVOLUTION</i></p> <p>BACKGROUND READINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1: Enlightenment and Revolution: Rousseau and Wollstonecraft
Week 2 (September 16-20)	<p>READINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 2: The Conservative Reaction and Romanticism
Week 3 (September 23-27)	<p>READINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3: Democracy and Social Liberalism
Week 4 (September 30-October 4)	<p><i>THEME II: FROM SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY TO SOCIAL SCIENCE</i></p> <p>READINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4: French Positivism and German Idealism
Week 5 (October 7-11)	<p>READINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 5: Karl Marx • Chapter 11: Early Twentieth-Century Marxism: The Russian Revolution and Gramsci (optional)
Week 6 (October 14-18)	<p>READINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 6: Fin de Siècle Social Thought: Feminism, Decadence, and Nietzsche
Week 7 (October 21-25)	<p>PRE-EXAM REVIEW</p> <p>MIDTERM EXAM</p>
Week 8 (October 28-November 1)	<p>READINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 7: Émile Durkheim
Week 9 (November 4-8)	<p>READINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 8: Max Weber

Week 10 (November 11-15)	<i>THEME III: FROM CERTAINTY TO DOUBT</i> READINGS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chapter 9: Emancipation and Pragmatism: Du Bois, Dewey, and Mead
Week 11 (November 18-22)	READINGS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chapter 10: The Individual and Society: Simmel and Freud
Week 12 (November 25-29)	READINGS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chapter 12: Elites and Social Democracy: From Pareto to Mannheim