

# SOCI-2111-FDE: Perspectives in Social Thought

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**Course duration:** September 8-December 7, 2020

**Location:** <https://lakeheadu.desire2learn.com>

**Instructor:** Dr. Dalibor Mišina

**email:** Desire2Learn email environment  
(for more details, please see General Policies, Email section, below)

**on-line office hours:** Monday & Wednesday, 10:00 AM-11:00 AM, through D2L Chat, or by appointment  
(for more details, please see General Policies, Office Hours section, below)

**Course TA:** Sheena Allard

**email:** Desire2Learn email environment  
(for more details, please see General Policies, Email section, below)

**on-line office hours:** Tuesday & Thursday, 2:00 PM-3:00 PM, through D2L Chat, or by appointment  
(for more details, please see General Policies, Office Hours section, below)

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## 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 is covered 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 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.

**Please note:** As this is an online course delivered *asynchronously*, *no on-line lectures are offered*, and the primary method of learning is self-initiative and individual study. Instructor's and TA's role is to monitor an on-line learning environment and provide necessary resources for facilitating students' independent mastering of the course material. By signing up for the course, you are committing yourself to following the course schedule and the pace of required work, as well as to keeping up with all course deadlines. There will be no extensions given (other than for exceptional reasons supported by proper official documentation), and you will not be able to hand in your work past the specified time/date.

## 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

The following is a required SOCI 2111 textbook:

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

All other course materials, information and resources will be posted on our **Desire2Learn** course website.

## STUDYING & LEARNING STRATEGY

In addition to your textbook, the on-line course environment contains several aids to help you master the course material and get the most out of your learning experience. You should embrace the following as your studying and learning strategy:

### I

- On **Week 1**, you should take time to thoroughly familiarize yourself with the course outline, the Desire2Learn course website, and the course textbook. To ease into the course material, you should also do all Week 1 readings indicated in the Course Schedule section (please see below). In addition, you should do a mock Reflective Commentary based on the introductory readings. You will not be handing in this Commentary, but it will be a good practice that will prepare you for doing the 'real' Commentaries.

### II

- On **non-exam weeks**, you should start by reading through the chapter's **Reading Notes**. The Notes contain four sections: Chapter Summary, Learning Objectives, Study Questions, Research Aids.
  - Read Chapter Summary and Learning Objectives first, before you start with the actual textbook chapter. They will help you get a sense of the chapter's material and what you should be focusing on while reading it. Proceed with reading the textbook chapter, keeping in mind Chapter Summary and Learning Objectives.
  - When you are done, test your comprehension of the material by thinking through (and, if you wish, answering) the questions in the Study Questions section of the Reading Notes. If you can imagine yourself providing a 10-15 min. oral answer for each question, you have mastered the core ideas/themes from the chapter and are ready to write the commentary.

- If you run into difficulties with the textbook material, you have several tools to help you deal with this: **Research Aids** section of Reading Notes, on-line **Discussion Forum**, and **email**.
  - **Research Aids** contains a list of books and websites you can consult for additional and/or background information on the ideas/themes explored in the chapter. Consult these to clarify broader context for what the chapter is focusing on.
  - If you are unclear about specific points and/or particular ideas the chapter is discussing, use the on-line **Discussion Forum** to seek help from your classmates. Start a thread in the relevant Topic-Specific Course Issues section of the Forum, and you will most likely get a clarification from another student (**please note**: Do not expect others to provide you with full answers to all of your questions and do your homework for you. Use the Forum after you have made a genuine attempt to understand the material on your own, in consultation with Reading Notes). *Think of the Discussion Forum as an on-line substitute for in-class discussions and use it accordingly.* The Forum will be semi-monitored, and I will make occasional posts when/if I see it fit.
  - Finally, if all else fails, you can **email** me or our TA with your specific questions. Please send your emails through Desire2Learn emailing environment, as all other messages will be ignored. Restrict your questions to specific issues/concerns for which you cannot get help through the Forum. If you have general course questions, post them on the Forum, under General Course Issues, and the replies will be provided there. **Please note**: Do not expect immediate response to your email inquiries. Treat emailing as an on-line equivalent to in-office consultations. If you need urgent response, post your question on the Forum and discuss it with your classmates first.
- Once you are comfortable with the chapter's themes and ideas, proceed with writing your Reflective Commentary (for Commentary details, please see Method of Evaluation section below). Think of the Commentary as a 'proof' that you understand the course material, and that you can engage with it on your own terms through critical reflections and by way of handling reflection questions. You can also think of it as a self-assessment tool, helping you evaluate your material comprehension. Finally, you should think of the Commentary as your daily 'building blocks' for getting ready for the exams.

### III

- On **exam weeks**, you should start by rereading your study notes and reviewing your Reflective Commentaries. This will get you ready for writing the exam. After the exam is made available on-line, you should read it carefully to make sure that you understand what you are being asked to discuss. You can answer the questions in any order you wish, for as long as you indicate clearly what definition or essay you are answering. A good strategy is to first answer what you feel most comfortable with and then work your way through more challenging questions. You should approach the exam as if you were writing it in-class: do all of your preparation work beforehand and, when you start working on it, focus on the exam without getting distracted by doing/thinking about something else. **Please note**: You will have limited time to complete the exam, so make sure to pace yourself appropriately. Exam submission is time-sensitive, and you will not be allowed to hand in your work past the deadline: *failing to make a timely submission is equivalent to missing an in-class exam.*

## METHOD OF EVALUATION

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

**Midterm Exam** (30%): Friday, October 23, by 11PM

**Final Exam** (30%): Friday, December 11, by 11PM

**Reflective Commentaries** (40%): due Weekly every Friday, by 10PM

(*except Week 1, Week 6, Week 7, Week 14*)

Both **exams** will be a combination of definitions and essay answers. 'Definitions' are paragraph-long explanations of the key theoretical concepts, while 'essays' are longer-form discussions of the main ideas and/or themes from the course readings (equivalent to up to three pages per essay, using 1.5 line spacing and 12 pt Times New Roman font). **Please note:** *There will not be any multiple choice or true/false questions.* There will be some choice regarding the range of possible answers. The material for the exams will be sourced from the course textbook. Exam questions will be made available on the day the exam is due. You will have an assigned length of time (120 min.) to work on and submit your answers through our Desire2Learn course website. The final exam is non-cumulative. **Exam submissions are time sensitive and late submissions will not be accepted.**

**Reflective commentaries** are written reflections *on the daily textbook readings*. The commentaries are due daily (*except* Week 1, Week 6, Week 7, and Week 14, when you do not have to hand them in). All commentaries are to be submitted *via* Dropbox, through our Desire2Learn course website, as either Word or PDF files. **All submissions are time sensitive and late submissions will not be accepted.** Absolutely no make-up commentaries will be allowed. Under extraordinary circumstances (for which you need to provide appropriate documentation), you can make a *prior* arrangement for submitting the commentary before the due date.

**The purpose of the commentary is not to summarize the weekly readings.** Rather, it is to (1) offer your own thoughts about the principal theoretical ideas presented in the textbook readings, and (2) 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 spark a good discussion/debate. **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. Do not use a cover page for your assignments: 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. This 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 2020-2021 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 mark* has been posted.

**A Note on Plagiarism:** Lakehead University defines plagiarism as follows:

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 end noting.
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 end noting 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 end noting is given.

According to Lakehead University's "Code of Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures", penalties for plagiarism are strictly enforced and are as follows:

1. 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
2. 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.

For more details, see your Lakehead *University 2020-2021 Academic Calendar*, section University Regulations (IX Academic Misconduct). Also, see the "Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures", which can be obtained from the Office of the Registrar.

## GENERAL POLICIES

**Academic Statement:** Each student is asked to consider submitting, via our D2L website (under Assignments), 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 will help me and our TA get a better sense of you as a student. All the information provided in the academic statement will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

**Email:** Emailing is to be regarded as an official form of communication, requiring appropriate language and tone. Only emails sent through SOCI 2111 Desire2Learn email environment will be read and replied to. All other messages will be ignored. Please use the Discussion Forum to post your questions about the course in general or the course material. **Email communication is to be used for dealing with the matters that do not qualify as Forum posts.**

**Office Hours:** In addition to our regular office hours/ways of conducting them, students can set up on-line office hours appointments with either the instructor or the TA. To set up an appointment, please email us and let us know your availability and a preferred way of talking to us (D2L Chat, Zoom, or phone). We shall get back to you to confirm your appointment, once all the necessary arrangements have been made. **Please note:** A request for an on-line appointment should be made at least 24 hours in advance.

**Discussion Forum:** This is an on-line substitute for an in-class interaction, and it should be treated as such. Please use appropriate language and tone when participating on the Forum. Crude, disrespectful, inflammatory, offensive and/or confrontational Forum participation will not be tolerated and will result in the ban from the Forum.

## DISCLAIMERS

**Disclaimer I:** The information in this syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be communicated through Desire2Learn course website, in the Announcements & News section.

**Disclaimer II:** By taking SOCI 2111 you acknowledge that you have read and understood—and are in agreement with—the course contents and policies, as outlined and explained in this syllabus.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

(subject to change; any changes will be announced through D2L website)

<p><b>Week 1</b> (Sept. 8-11)</p>	<p><i>COURSE INTRODUCTION</i></p> <p><b>READINGS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preface</li> <li>• Conclusion</li> <li>• Introduction: The Unmaking of Traditional Society</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 2</b> (Sept. 14-18)</p>	<p><i>THEME I: FROM REASON TO REVOLUTION</i></p> <p><b>READING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 1: Enlightenment and Revolution: Rousseau and Wollstonecraft</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 3</b> (Sept. 21-25)</p>	<p><b>READING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 2: The Conservative Reaction and Romanticism</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 4</b> (Sept. 28-Oct. 2)</p>	<p><b>READING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 3: Democracy and Social Liberalism</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 5</b> (Oct. 5-9)</p>	<p><i>THEME II: FROM SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY TO SOCIAL SCIENCE</i></p> <p><b>READING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 4: French Positivism and German Idealism</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 6</b> (Oct. 12-16)</p>	<p><b>FALL STUDY BREAK: NO CLASSES</b></p>
<p><b>Week 7</b> (Oct. 19-23)</p>	<p><b>MIDTERM EXAM: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23</b></p>
<p><b>Week 8</b> (Oct. 26-30)</p>	<p><b>READINGS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 5: Karl Marx</li> <li>• Chapter 11: Early Twentieth-Century Marxism: The Russian Revolution and Gramsci (<b>optional</b>)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 9</b> (Nov. 2-6)</p>	<p><b>READING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 7: Émile Durkheim</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 10</b> (Nov. 9-13)</p>	<p><b>READING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 8: Max Weber</li> </ul>

<p><b>Week 11</b> (Nov. 16-20)</p>	<p><b>READING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 6: Fin de Siècle Social Thought: Feminism, Decadence, and Nietzsche</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 12</b> (Nov. 23-27)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>THEME III: FROM CERTAINTY TO DOUBT</i></p> <p><b>READING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 9: Emancipation and Pragmatism: Du Bois, Dewey, and Mead</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 13</b> (Nov. 30-Dec. 4)</p>	<p><b>READING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 10: The Individual and Society: Simmel and Freud</li> <li>• Chapter 12: Elites and Social Democracy: From Pareto to Mannheim (<b>optional</b>)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 14</b> (Dec. 7-11)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FINAL EXAM: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11</b></p>