

Sociology 3411: Contemporary Sociological Theory

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

Class Location: ATAC 5041 / OA 2020

Class Time: Wed & Fri, 8:30-10:00 am
3-0; or 3-0

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

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Office Hours: Monday 2:30-4:30pm

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 mostly 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) ASA Citation Assignment	(15%)
(2) In-Class Group Assignments	(25%)
(3) Take Home Midterm Essay Test	(30%)
(4) Take Home Final Essay Test	(30%)
	Final = (100%)

Required readings:

All readings will be provided on the D2L website, or will be available through the LU library.

Explanation of Evaluation:

1. **ASA Citation Assignment:** You can choose any article you like, from any year/volume/issue, from one of the following journals: *Sociological Theory*, *Theory & Society*, or *Theory, Culture & Society*. You are to read it and then provide a concise, critical review of the article (maximum 3 pages double-spaced not including references), while abiding strictly to the ASA citation format. The assignment will be due by the end of the day on January 25.
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. You can elect a secretary from your group to type up the responses on a laptop; that person will be responsible for emailing the assignment over to me by the end of the work day (4:30pm).
3. **Midterm Essay Test:** This will be set up to assess your command of the readings up to this point in the class, as well as your analytical ability, and how well you structure, write and present the key ideas. You will not be required to do an extra reading outside of class to answer the questions posed. It must be written using ASA format (see department website), double-spaced, 12 point times new roman font. The details of the test will be discussed as the due date draws closer (which is March 1).

4. Final Essay Test: The final essay assignment will require you to answer some comparative analytic questions regarding the readings from the second half of the term. Again, you will not be required to do an extra reading outside of class to answer the questions 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. Due date: April 16.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Theoretical warmup

January 11 – Introduction to Course

January 13 – Chrisoula Andreou “Understanding Procrastination,” *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 37(2): 183-193. (available online through *sociological abstracts*).

Structural Functionalism

January 18 – Talcott Parsons “The Position of Sociological Theory” (1948) & “Structural Components of the Social System” (1951)

January 20 – Robert K Merton “On Sociological Theories of the Middle Range” (1949)

Symbolic Interactionism

January 25 – G.H. Mead “The Self” (1934)
[ASA CITATION ASSIGNMENT DUE]

January 27 – Herbert Blumer “Symbolic Interactionism” (1969)

February 1 – Bergesen, Albert. 2004. “Chomsky vs. Mead,” *Sociological Theory*, 22(3): 357-370.

February 3 – 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.

Rational Choice, Social Exchange and Networks

February 8 – Peter Blau “Exchange and Power in Social Life” (1964)

February 10 – James S. Coleman “Human Capital and Social Capital” (1990)

February 15 - Karen S. Cook, Russell Hardin, and Margaret Levi “Cooperation without Law or Trust” (2005)

February 17 – Mark Granovetter “Economic Embeddedness” (1985)

February 20-24 Reading Week

Psychoanalysis, Emotions and Society

March 1 – Sigmund Freud “Civilization and its Discontents” (1929)
[MIDTERM ESSAY TEST DUE]

March 3 – Norbert Elias “The Social Constraint toward Self-Constraint” (1937)

March 8 – Daniel Liechty. 1998. “Reaction to Mortality: An Interdisciplinary Organizing Principle for the Human Sciences,” *Zygon*, 33(1): 45-58.

March 10 – Jonathon Turner. “The Emotional Repertoire of Humans” (2000)

March 15 - Arlie Hochschild. “Working on Feeling” (2003)

Critical Theory and Modernity

March 17 – Max Horkheimer “Eclipse of Reason” (1947) & Theodor Adorno “The Culture Industry Reconsidered” (1975)

March 22 – Dorothy Smith “The Conceptual Practices of Power” (1990)

March 24 – Anthony Giddens “The Consequences of Modernity” (1990)

March 29 – Ulrich Beck “Living in the World Risk Society,” *Economy and Society*, 35(3): 329-345.

March 31 – Immanuel Wallerstein “The Modern World System in Crisis” (2004)

April 5 – Zygmunt Bauman “On Living in a Liquid Modern World” (2005)

April 7 – Michael Gardiner. 2014. “The Multitude Strikes Back? Boredom in an Age of Semiocapitalism” *New Formations*, 82(2): 31-48.

April 9 - review

April 16 – [FINAL ESSAY TEST DUE]

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.