

Department of Sociology
Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies
AP/SOCI SOCI 2040E 6.0Y: Sociological Theory
Course Director: Craig Fortier
Fall/Winter 2014-15

Course Information:

Course Director: Craig Fortier
Meeting Time: Thursdays 4:30pm – 6:30pm
Lecture Location: TEL 006
Office Hours: Thursdays, 2:30pm – 4:00pm
Office: 636 Atkinson College
Email: cfortier@yorku.ca
TAs: Alex Felipe & Domenico Cerisano



Course Description:

An introduction to major sociological themes and theorists, in the historical context of their times and places. This course deals with classical, modern and contemporary trends in sociological theory.

Course Readings:

Text: Appelrouth, Scott A. and Laura Desfor Edles (2012). Classical and Contemporary Sociological Theory: Text and Readings, 2nd Edition. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

SOCI 2040E Course Reader Available at York Bookstore

Other readings are linked to our Moodle site, the library's e-journals site, jstor or they are googleable.

I have sought to make the course readings as cheap and as accessible as possible. The success of this class relies on each of our commitment to keeping up with the readings and engaging fully with them in the classroom. If cost constraints are an issue for you being able to access the readings, please approach me after class or during office hours.

Course Objectives:

1. To create a space where we can talk about and analyze the possibilities and challenges posed by sociological theory.
2. To be able to identify and grapple with some of the key concepts in classical and contemporary sociological thought.
3. To be able to historically situate theory and theorists within the historical context in which they emerge.
4. To understand our own connection as individuals and communities to sociological theory and it's practice in everyday life.

Course Format:

I seek to develop a culture of respect in the classroom. This means that I seek to maintain respect for you as individuals, the TAs as academic workers, and all of us as a class. I understand that you all live in differing life circumstances and that our goal of imparting useful knowledge to you in this course is reliant on being able to accommodate your learning experience to the best of our abilities. Similarly, I expect that each student come to class with the same respect for other students, your TAs and for me. This includes being accountable to each other around the times we set for class and for working collective and when submitting assignments. This does not mean you can't be late or leave early, but that you negotiate this in a respectful way with me, your TA and other students as needed. The course will involve discussions, in-class exercises, and lectures. I believe in interactive teaching and that means that I expect each student to take responsibility for their own learning – including keeping up with the lectures, tutorials, actively listening to your peers and engaging deeply with the course material.

Course Evaluation:

- First exam 30%
- Second exam 30%
- Third exam 30%
- Tutorial participation (including weekly journal entries) 10%

Tutorial Participation

Students must bring all required weekly readings to the tutorials, are expected to have completed them, and be prepared to discuss them with the help of their weekly journal entries.

Students are expected to attend all tutorials. Regular tutorial attendance is required to receive a passing participation grade. However, participation entails not only attending the tutorials but actively and regularly contributing to them. Participation includes *both* listening and speaking. Students will receive a grade for class participation for comments that reflect careful listening to and consideration of others' points of view, that are thoughtful and in-depth, that demonstrate a willingness and ability to rethink one's own ideas, that are pertinent to the course material and issues being discussed, and that reflect critical thinking and humility.

Participation involves collectively creating a supportive learning environment. A supportive learning environment requires all of us to act on an awareness of our responsibilities to others in the class, our social locations, and of the dynamics of group discussion (i.e., only one person speaks at a time, interrupting another speaker most often makes respectful discussion difficult, silence and reflection are necessary parts of learning and as important as speaking, all students should have somewhat equal "air time," students have different styles of communication, etc.).

Understanding of the weekly assigned readings and lectures, as well as clarity, accuracy and originality of the thoughts expressed during the tutorials, will form the basis for evaluation.

Weekly Journal Entries

At the beginning of each tutorial, students must submit a brief (1-2 pages), typed journal entry about the week's readings. The journal entry must include the following components:

- Main concepts and arguments of the readings
- At least one significant quotation from each of the readings
- At least one question from tutorial discussions

It is expected that all the weekly assigned readings will be covered in the journal entries. The journal entries can be written in standard prose or point form.

Late journal entries will not be accepted; they are to be completed by the beginning of the relevant week's tutorial.

Journal entries will be used to assess participation, yet will not be individually graded. Moreover, they will be kept by the tutorial leader. Students should therefore retain copies of them, which will be of great assistance for the tutorials and exams.

Exams

The exams will adopt a take-home format. Students may only consult their lecture and tutorial notes, weekly journal entries, and required readings for the exams. No other material will be allowed.

Exams will be graded on the basis of the following criteria:

- Clarity and focus (including structure and organization)
- Quality of argument (support and evidence for claims using course material)
- Accuracy of argument and claims
- Spelling, grammar and style

Unless accompanied by a valid medical certificate, late exams will be penalized 10% of their value per day.

York University Policies

Important Course information for students: All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information available on the Senate Committee on Curriculum and Academic Standards webpage (see Reports, Initiatives, Documents):

http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate_cte_main_pages/ccas.htm

1. York's Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures/ Academic Integrity website
2. Course requirement accommodation for students with disabilities, including physical, medical, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities
3. Student Conduct Standards
4. Religious Observance Accommodation

Access/Disability: Students who feel that there are extenuating circumstances which may interfere with their ability to successfully complete the course requirements are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Course Director as soon as possible. Students

with physical, learning or psychiatric disabilities who require reasonable accommodations in teaching style or evaluation methods should discuss this with the Course Director early in the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Timetable

Fall Term

Week 1 – Introduction: Themes and Context of Course	11 September
Week 2 – Sociological Theory: Theory & Practice	18 September
Week 3 – A Critical Look at Sociological Theory	25 September
Week 4 – Marx: Historical Materialism	02 October
Week 5 – Marx: Capital & Primitive Accumulation.....	09 October
Week 6 – Weber: The Protestant Ethic and Rationalization.....	16 October
Week 7 – Weber: Power and Bureaucracy.....	23 October
Week 8 – Co-Curricular Week	30 October
Week 9 – Durkheim: Social Facts & Solidarity	06 November
Week 10 – Durkheim: Crime, Suicide, and Religion	13 November
Week 11 – Wallerstein: World Systems Theory	20 November
Week 12 – Colonialism	27 November
Week 13 – Post-Colonialism.....	04 December

Winter Term

Week 14 – Simpson: Decolonization & Resurgence	08 January
Week 15 – Smith: The Three Pillars of White Supremacy.....	15 January
Week 16 – Butler: Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire	22 January
Week 17 – Foucault: Discipline & Punishment, Sexuality & Biopower	29 January
Week 18 – Collins: Black Feminist Thought & Intersectionality.....	05 February
Week 19 – Young: Justice and the Politics of Difference	12 February
Week 20 – Reading Week	19 February
Week 21 – Fanon: Blackness & Identity	26 February
Week 22 – Walia: Border Imperialism	05 March
Week 23 – Goffman: Symbolic Interactionism.....	12 March
Week 24 – Critical Theory	19 March
Week 25 – Collective Liberation, Resistance, and Social Change	26 March
Week 26 – Sociological Theory in Practice: A Conclusion	02 April

Assessment

First Exam.....	Distributed on 23 October; due 13 November
Second Exam	Distributed on 29 January; due 12 February
Third Exam	Distributed on 26 March; due 09 April

Please note that it is the students' responsibility to keep informed of any changes to this outline (due dates, lecture topics, reading material, etc.) as well as of any information about exams that will be announced in the lectures or tutorials.

[Fall Term 2014]

Week 1 –September 11th – Course Introduction & Expectations

Summary:

The first week of the course will be an introduction to the study of sociological theory, a review of the course syllabus, course policies, and expectations.

Readings: There are no readings for this class.

Week 2 – September 18th – Sociological Theory: Theory & Practice

Summary:

During this week we will begin to explore the ideas that are foundational to sociological theory and the relationship between theory and practice.

Required Readings:

Appelrouth and Edles (2012) – “Introduction” pp.1-6, “How can we navigate sociological theory” pp.10-16.

Kurashige, Scott (2010). “Radical Visions, Possible Worlds: A Panel Discussion with Grace Lee Boggs and Immanuel Wallerstein”, accessible online here: http://reimaginepe.org/files/Kurashige.Boggs_.Wallerstein.17-2.pdf

Week 3 – September 25th – A Critical Look at Sociological Theory

Summary:

After establishing our understanding of the foundations of sociology, we dig a little deeper to understand the sociological context in which the theory takes hold during the rise of capitalism and the onset of colonialism.

Required Readings:

Course Reader:

Go, Julian (2014). “Sociology’s Imperial Unconscious: The Emergence of American Sociology in the Context of Empire” in Steinmetz, George (ed). *Sociology and Empire: The Imperial Entanglements of a Discipline*. Raleigh: Duke University Press.

Week 4 – October 2nd – Marx: Historical Materialism

Summary:

We now turn our focus to some of the core thinkers within classical sociological theory with an initial focus on Karl Marx. This week's lecture draws from *The German Ideology* and explores Marx's methodological approach to the study of society, economics, and history (often called historical materialism).

Required Readings:

Appelrouth and Edles (2012) – “Karl Marx” pp.20-25, “The German Ideology” pp.32-41.

Week 5 – October 9th – Marx: Capital & Primitive Accumulation

Summary:

During this week's class we continue to study Marx's theory focusing specifically on his understanding of the origins of capital and their relationship to the process of “primitive accumulation”. We will discuss how these processes relate to our world today.

Required Readings

Appelrouth and Edles (2012) – “Introduction to Capital” pp.63-66, “Capital (1867)” pp.76

Marx, Karl (1867) – “The Secret of Primitive Accumulation”, *Capital Volume 1, Chapter 26*. Reading available online:

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch26.htm>

Week 6 – October 16th – Weber: The Protestant Ethic & Rationalization

Summary:

This week's class focuses on the theory of Max Weber and his study of capitalism and religion in the *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

Required Readings

Appelrouth and Edles (2012) – “Max Weber” pp.125-133, “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism” pp.137-150

Week 7 – October 23rd – Weber: Power & Bureaucracy

Summary:

In this week's class we continue exploring Weber's theory by focusing now on his understanding of power and the process of bureaucracy.

Required Readings:

Appelrouth and Edles (2012) – "The Distribution of Power Within the Political Community: Class, Status, Party" pp.159-168, "Bureaucracy" pp.175-184.

Week 8 – October 30th (Co-Curricular Week)

No lecture or readings for this week.

Week 9 – November 6th – Durkheim: Social Facts & Solidarity

Summary:

This week's class focuses on the last of the big three classical sociological theorists: Emile Durkheim. We introduce Durkheim, discuss his theories of social facts and social solidarity and compare and contrast him to Marx and Weber.

Required Readings:

Appelrouth and Edles (2012) – "Emile Durkheim" pp.77-84, "The Rules of the Sociological Method" pp.86-92, "The Division of Labor in Society" pp.94-100.

Week 10 – November 13th – Durkheim: Crime, Suicide, and Religion.

Summary:

We continue studying Durkheim's sociological theory this week with a closer look at his major studies on suicide and the elementary forms of religious life.

Required Readings:

Appelrouth and Edles (2012) – "Suicide" pp.100-115, "Elementary Forms of Religious Life" pp.116-124.

Deadline: EXAM #1 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF TUTORIALS

Week 11 – November 20th- Wallerstein: World Systems Theory

Summary:

Today's class shifts towards more contemporary applications of sociological theory. We look at Wallerstein's interpretation of Marxist theory and his development of a World Systems approach to understanding macro power struggles within the capitalist system.

Required Readings:

Appelrouth and Edles (2012) – "Immanuel Wallerstein" pp.756-765, "The Modern World-System as a Capitalist World-Economy: Production, Surplus, Value, and Polarization" pp.765-774.

Week 12 – November 27th – Colonialism

Summary:

Building on our understanding of the emergence of capitalism and of world systems theory – we start to look at the ways in which these processes emerge in conjunction with colonialism. We will also analyze the ways in which colonialism establishes itself and its primary effects.

Required Readings:

Course Reader:

Alfred, Gerald Taiaiake (2009). "Colonialism and State Dependency" *Journal of Aboriginal Health* 45(2): 42-60.

Week 13 – December 4th – Post-Colonialism

Summary:

The final class of the term will begin an exploration of the emergence of post-colonial theories that seek to analyze, explain, and respond to the cultural legacies of colonialism and imperialism, to the human consequences of controlling a country and establishing settlers for the economic exploitation of the native people and their land.

Required Readings:

Appelrouth and Edles (2012) – "Edward Said" pp.790-801, "Orientalism" pp.801-811.

[WINTER TERM 2015]

Week 14 – January 8th – Simpson: Decolonization & Resurgence

Summary:

We begin the second term by building on our discussions of colonialism and post-colonialism from the end of the first term. In this week's class we discuss the concepts of decolonization, resurgence and settler colonialism.

Required Readings:

Course Reader:

Simpson, Leanne (2008). "Our Elder Brothers: The Lifeblood of Resurgence" in Simpson, Leanne (ed.) *Lighting the Eighth Fire: The Liberation, Resurgence, and Protection of Indigenous Nations*, pp.73-87.

Coulthard, Glen (2008). "Beyond Recognition: Indigenous Self-Determination as Prefigurative Practice" in Simpson, Leanne (ed.) *Lighting the Eighth Fire: The Liberation, Resurgence, and Protection of Indigenous Nations*, pp.187-201.

Week 15 – January 15th – Smith: Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy

Summary:

Building on last week's lecture, we focus on Andrea Smith's foundational text linking the conditions of heteropatriarchy and white supremacy. We will build on our discussion of the sociological underpinnings of theories of anti-oppression and decolonization.

Required Readings:

Course Reader:

Smith, Andrea (2006). "Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy" in *Incite! Women of Color Against Violence* (ed.) *Color of Violence: the Incite! Anthology*. Cambridge: South End Press.

Week 16 – January 22nd – Butler: Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire

Summary:

We shift a bit this week towards a study of gender, sex, sexuality, and desire focusing primarily on the work of Judith Butler and other queer/trans* and genderqueer scholars and theorists.

Required Readings:

Appelrouth and Edles (2012) – “Judith Butler” pp.598-601, “Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire” pp.601-605.

Course Reader:

Puar, Jasbir K. (2007). “Queer times, terrorist assemblages” in *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in queer times*. Raleigh: Duke University Press, pp.204-227.

Week 17 – January 29th – Foucault: Discipline & Punish/Sexuality & Biopower

Summary:

Building on the last week’s lecture, we introduce some of the post-structuralist work of Michel Foucault, including his theories on discipline, punishment, sexuality, and biopower.

Required Readings:

Appelrouth and Edles (2012) – “Michel Foucault” pp.616-622, “Discipline & Punish” pp.622-636.

Recommended Readings:

Course Reader:

Foucault, Michel (1978). “The Deployment of Sexuality” in *The History of Sexuality, Vol 1*. New York: Vintage, pp.77-91.

Week 18 – February 6th – Collins: Black Feminist Thought & Intersectionality

Summary:

During this week, we forge deeper into the concepts of intersectionality and interlocking oppressions by exploring the work of Patricia Hill Collins and the field of Black Feminist Theory.

Required Readings:

Appelrouth and Edles (2012) – “Patricia Hill Collins” pp.573-577, “Black Feminist Thought” pp.577-586.

Course Reader:

Collins, Patricia Hill (2000). “Black Women as Agents of Knowledge” in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge, pp. 266-271.

Collins, Patricia Hill (2000). "Towards a Politics of Empowerment" in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge, pp. 273-277.

Week 19 – February 13th – Young: Justice & The Politics of Difference

Summary:

Using the work of Iris Marion Young we analyze how some theorists have used post-structuralist theory in relation to social movement struggles and strategies.

Required Readings:

Course Reader:

Young, Iris Marion (1990). "Social Movements and the Politics of Difference" in *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp.156-191.

Deadline: EXAM #2 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF TUTORIALS

Week 20 – February 20th – Reading Week

Required Readings:

There are no lectures, tutorials or readings this week.

Week 21 – February 27th – Fanon: Blackness & Identity

Summary:

This week's class returns us to discussions on identity, race, white supremacy, and colonialism. We focus, however, on the work of Franz Fanon and other critical race theorists to bridge some of the gaps left in our earlier analysis.

Required Readings:

Course Reader:

Fanon, Franz (1952). "The Fact of Blackness" in *Black Skin, White Masks*. London: Pluto Press, pp.82-108

Week 22 – March 5th – Walia: Border Imperialism

Summary:

We build on the critical race analysis introduced in the last week's class to analyze the concept of borders and their role in global processes of capital accumulation and imperialism.

Required Readings:

Course Reader:

Walia, Harsha (2013). "What is Border Imperialism?" in *Undoing Border Imperialism*. Oakland: AK Press, pp.37-78.

Week 23 – March 12th – Goffman: Symbolic Interactionism

Summary:

We make one final shift in the course direction this week by introducing some contemporary sociological theories that focus on the individual like this week's symbolic interactionism and on the individual's relationship to culture and media (see next week's topic).

Required Readings:

Appelrouth and Edles (2012) – "Symbolic Interactionism" pp.464-467, "Erving Goffman" pp.467-479, "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life" pp.479-492.

Week 24 – March 19th – Critical Theory

Summary:

We explore the Frankfurt school of neo-Marxist theorists this week with a focus on culture, media, and Adorno's analysis of the culture industry.

Readings:

Appelrouth and Edles (2012) – "Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse" pp.376-393, "The Culture Industry Reconsidered" pp.400-404.

Week 25 – March 26th – Collective Liberation, Resistance, Social Change

Summary:

In our final lecture of the term we return to the question of theory and practice and explore the idea of how social movements both create and advance theory and how in the process they confront their theories in practice.

Readings:

Course Reader:

hooks, bell (1994). "Love as the Practice of Freedom" in *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations*. New York: Routledge. pp.243-248.

Bevington, Doug and Chris Dixon (2005). "Movement-relevant Theory: Rethinking Social Movement Scholarship and Activism," *Social Movement Studies: Journal of Social, Cultural and Political Protest* 4(3): 185-208.

Week 26 – April 2nd – Sociological Theory in Practice

Summary:

During this final lecture we will hold a class discussion on sociological theory, it's applications, and how the course positions us to better incorporate theory into our day-to-day decisions and understandings of the world.

Readings:

There are no readings this week.

Deadline: EXAM #3 DUE APRIL 10th 6:00PM