

University of Manitoba, Department of Sociology
Soc 4560 (CRN 56123), 3 credit hours

Advanced Sociological Theory

Winter 2018 (Jan 4-April 6)

14.30-17.15 PM Tuesdays, Tier 309

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Office hours: Thursdays TBD

Holiday/Break: Feb 19-23, March 30

Voluntary Withdrawal Deadline: March 16, 2018

SYLLABUS

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This Advanced Sociological Theory course will be focused on sociological work clarifying our historical, trans- societal context, illuminating a sample of the main macro- and meso-sociological approaches as they encounter institutional and dispositional reform and societal change in the ongoing restoration of patrimonial capitalist inequality. The majority of the course material will contribute distinctive sociological perspectives to our course project of examining neoliberalization as the conservativization of liberalism. We will enhance our social-theory fluency by examining how contrasting and contesting, socially-embedded theoretical approaches not only illuminate but reflect and fuel social change in our time. While lecture and discussion will contribute to building our literacy in social theory, course material will review the foundations and inner architecture of contemporary conservativized-liberal (neoliberal) social theory, reconstructing and interlocked with dominant institutions, orienting our social relations and dispositions, and articulated in social opposition to post-cartesian dialectical historical-materialist theories emerging from Western classical and Enlightenment movements and ideas.

Collectively, as we use comparison and sociological theory to apprehend and grapple conceptually with our era of social change, we will build our capacity to discern, theorize—to apprehend via provisional, communicable classification, to make informed judgments on ways communities and societies make and know, and to participate knowledgably in our social world, as members of the community of learners and scholars.

- * Expected Pre-masters study load in a theory course is about 60-80 pages of rigorous reading per week, with study notes encompassing the 4 Seminar Questions, contributing to both reporting and analysis. Please commit time accordingly. At the university, “you should expect to spend two hours studying or working (on assigned papers) outside of class for every one hour in lecture or discussion...(A)n average 15-unit” schedule, “(3-4 courses) thus will require about 45 hours per week (only 15 hours of which may be class

time--by the way, a full-time job is typically 40 hours per week).”—Stanford University Undergraduate Guide. The readings will be challenging in order to propel comprehension development. As social theorist Mary Wollstonecraft as well as John Dewey and more recently Wirth & Perkins have maintained, people poised for lifelong development and democratic participation and leadership need a more rigorous education, so that they can develop *a methodological approach to knowledge, learn to generalize and analyze causation, compare their own observations with theory, and pursue a branch of learning with the discipline necessary to develop mental faculties and improve judgment*. If we will agree to approach the class in good faith as a collective intellectual adventure, the class will provide your support in this university-based intellectual growth period.

Questions this term’s Advanced Sociology Theory course engages address knowledge production in social context, and include:

- Why do we **distinguish social science** as the collective pursuit of knowledge—description and explanation—via reflexive scientific method, including the role of normative, organizing theoretical communities?
- Given human constraints (eg. non-omniscience, obstruction of information due to social stratification) and capacities (eg. for observing our world, for agency, for communication and coordination), how is social science designed to enable knowledge development? Why does this scientific epistemology propel sociology to encompass **multiple paradigms**, and compel sociologists to lay bare and judge normative **paradigm foundations and theoretical assumptions**, to choose their scholarly subcommunity contribution?
- Using our sociological scientific approach, including historical comparison, what are the **social, institutional, and dispositional preconditions** of social science and sociology? How do they relate to social science **epistemology** and sociological **voice**?
- What distinguishes **sociological** craft, including and focusing on the role of theory in sociological inquiry?
- By identifying **constitutive assumptions and implications**, how can we recognize and interpret, and address with potency, impactful social theories, from those reasserting elitist abstraction to those forwarding sociological imagination and craft, from those critical of anti-democratic institutions to cooperative and accommodating strategies?
- How are **sociological and theoretical craft traditions** particularly built for reasserting the power of the **sociological imagination**? What roles do theory and method, including comparative and particularly comparative historical method, play in sociological craft?
- How do scholarly **theory** communities, including their **assumptions**, mutually determine **methods** and **research questions**, producing specific scholarly subcommunity projects or contributions?

- How and why have anti-sociological forms of social theory, in their philosophical attachment to radical abstraction, comparatively contributed to the contemporary conservative-liberal **institutionalization of and our habituation to inequitable** resource and crisis **distribution**?
- How does “pragmatism” (a social scientific subcommunity adjusted to social power) work through the discipline of Sociology under different social conditions, and at what costs to knowledge and transhistorical and transnational sociological scholarly integrity?

Required readings

- Required book (available at the Bookstore):
 - **Bourdieu, Pierre.** 2005. *The social structure of the economy.* Cambridge: Polity.
 - **Granovetter, Mark.** 2017. *Society & Economy.* Belknap.
 - **Peck, Jamie.** 2010. *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason.* Oxford.
 - **Therborn, Goran.** 2017. *Cities of Power.* Verso.

Required additional readings (syllabus, chapters, articles, excerpts) *will be available to copy in the mailroom, or posted in D2L:*

- **This syllabus.** You are expected to read and consult this syllabus.

Assignments:

- **4 Reports on 4 different readings, including:**
 - **2 written Secretariat Reports on the assigned reading(s).** The first written Secretariat Report will be worth 20 points, the second 25. *The S-Report assignment format is designed to help you approach theory correctly, by prioritizing rigorous reading and reporting, as well as analysis, and a collegial, scholarly ethos; the amount of work is equivalent to a paper.* There will be a late penalty of 2 points per day, including days on weekends, applied to all reports that are handed in after the specified deadlines. Failure to turn in a report will result in a grade of 0.
 - You may choose your written S-report readings.
 - **Stapled, final-edited hardcopies are due to the professor in class on the day which the reading is assigned.**
 - Specifications and an example for writing a S-Report will be provided. You will be required to methodically map out and provide a logically-related **report on and analysis** of the week’s assigned reading argument in the S-Report format,

including answering the 4 Arts Seminar reading comprehension questions **What does the text say? What does it mean? What is at stake for the community of scholars? What is at stake for society?** As we go along in the course, synthetic analysis of course material is recommended.

- Assignment grades will be available to the student in D2L two weeks after the professor receives the completed assignment.
- **2 Orally-presented Reports** on the assigned reading(s). Choose which readings you will present on orally. A sign-up sheet will be passed around. The oral reports must be on different readings from your written S-reports. The first oral Secretariat Report will be worth 20 points, the second 25. Oral reports should be about 20 mn in length. In addition to the oral presentation, the student should submit to the professor a Powerpoint or detailed outline of that presentation. Failure to present will result in a grade of 0.
- **Course Scholarly Engagement & Participation.** 10 points. This is a small seminar; it can provide a terrific university experience, but that does require you to take great responsibility, reliably attending to (studying) the course material outside of class and engaging collegially, orally in the course material in class.

Composition specs

See S-Report example. Otherwise, generally, for submitted written material: use ASA style guidelines. Generally: 12 pt font, 1 inch margins, 1 or 1.5 spacing, paginated, with your name on top. Use subheadings to switch topics when you can't compose a smooth transition.

1. The Letter Grade System

Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	
A+	4.5	Exceptional
A	4.0	Excellent
B+	3.5	Very Good
B	3.0	Good
C+	2.5	Satisfactory
C	2.0	Adequate
D	1.0	Marginal
F	0	Failure

Schedule: Assignment due dates

UNIT 1

Neoliberalism, the Conservatization of Liberalism

WEEK 2: Jan 9

THEORIZING NEOLIBERALISM

Reading assignment: This syllabus

What's the function of a Secretariat Analysis? The 4 Seminar Questions, from reporting to analyzing.

Round-table discussion: Your research, your theory.

Lecture: *Foucauldian philosophy and sociological craft describe and explain the conservative restoration*

WEEK 3: Jan 16

Theorizing Neoliberalism from a Foucauldian-social science perspective

Peck, Preface, Chapters 1 & 2, Pp. xi-81.

WEEK 4: Jan 23

Theorizing Neoliberalism from a Foucauldian-social science perspective

Peck, Chapters 3 & 4, Pp. 82-191.

WEEK 5: Jan 30

UNDERSTANDING NEOLIBERALISM THROUGH SOCIOLOGICAL CRAFT

Bourdieu explains how the French housing market was neoliberalized. Using Bourdieu's study of neoliberal institutionalization in the French housing market, what contributions can sociological craft—inclusive of theory--offer to understanding social change as a social production, and delineating what is at stake?

Begin to consider: How is sociology distinguished from marketing and political mobilization? How is sociology distinguished from conservative economics? How is sociological theory distinguished from philosophy?

Bourdieu pp. 1-17 and Chapter 2, "The State and the Construction of the Market," 89-125.

How was the state reformed to reconstruct the market? Examined with sociological craft—Correspondence Analysis both describing and explaining, how were people cohered to the neoliberal project? How did they resist? Were HLM state actors like Robert Lion unstrategic or weak—or weaker than market actors? How so? Consider the young engineers: What is freedom—who is free, and how so—with neoliberal reform? Reflect between Bourdieu and Peck to explain why, and what was at stake.

Feat. Possible In-class Video: Ewald & Becker on Foucault's legacy at U Chicago.

WEEK 6: Feb 6

Bourdieu Chapter 4 "A Contract under Duress" pp. 148-181 and "Conclusion: The foundations of petite-bourgeois suffering," 189-192.

Consider the impact and implications of housing policy upon humans who need shelter. How does neoliberal freedom look inside the exchange relationship, from a sociological perspective that recognizes class and power? Sociologically examined in practice, does neoliberalism produce the freedom that philosophical abstraction would expect? What is freedom—who is not free, how so—with neoliberal reform? Explain why, and what was at stake. Using Bourdieu's study of housing as an example, how does a sociological approach permit socio-political literacy in situ?

UNIT 2

Sociological Theory of the Economy

CAPITALIST FIRMS AS A CULTURALLY-EMBEDDED SOCIAL MODEL

WEEK 7: Feb 13

Granovetter, Selections from Introduction & Chapter 3, pp. 5-25, 56-90

A class-blind, historical-cultural, constructivist approach to understanding firms' cultural conditions: How do networks of patriarchal status, trust, and cultural norms infuse the market production of goods and services?

WEEK 8: Feb 20

Holiday

WEEK 9: Feb 27

Granovetter, Selections from chapters 4, 5 & 6, pp. 106-134, 140-170, 194-199, 203.
An historical-cultural constructivist approach to capitalist firm dynamics as a social model.

Granovetter relies on a combination of elite business literature, firm and economic sector histories, elite-theory political sociology and social movements literature, and cognitive psychology, to illustrate and construct his contribution, a class-blind, anti-Marxist, historical-culturalist economic sociology, portraying cultural-essence-retaining individuals in firms as adaptive consumers of the products of institutional menus. What is at stake in this project, socially, and for Granovetter's sub-community of scholars (How does he construct his knowledge opposition)? Do you think his "pragmatist" project can accommodate the short final caveat he admits about hierarchical power on p. 203?

UNIT 3

Comparative Urban & Global Sociological History & Theory

WEEK 10: March 6

Therborn, 1-69

WEEK 11: March 13

Therborn, 70-146

WEEK 12: March 20

Therborn, 147-210

WEEK 13: March 27

Therborn, 211-287

WEEK 14: April 3

Therborn, 288-357

Course and university procedures and regulations:

Your Learner Disposition: Requirements and Evaluation

This course is a senior undergraduate text-focused seminar in a university. It is understood and expected that you have and are responsible for maintaining a greater-than-average interest in the material, an enthusiastic and collegial attitude toward both study and participation, and a firm and observable respect for scholarship and scholars. The expectation is that you will attend each meeting, study the reading thoroughly and in advance, do your assignments with dedication and on time (before their due date), and participate actively in class, with collegiality consistently demonstrated for your classmates and respect consistently demonstrated for your professor both in and out of class.

It should go without saying that students should make every effort to arrive on time for class; students who arrive late miss important class material, create a culture of disrespect for learning and the community of learners, and disrupt the class. If you miss the time reserved for class, your option is to ask a classmate to catch you up. Students who have studied and attended classes are warmly welcomed to visit the professor in her office hours.

Students are always expected to be respectful to their colleagues and to the professor during class discussions and in office hours. Disruption will initially result in the student being asked to leave the classroom; any disruption after that warning will result in the student being given the choice to avail himself or herself of the Voluntary Withdrawal date or (s)he may be subject to disciplinary action such as being debarred from the class.

Academic dishonesty

Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on plagiarism, cheating, exam personation, ("**Personation at Examinations**" (**Section 5.2.9**) and "**Plagiarism and cheating**" (**Section 8.1**)) and duplicate submission by reading documentation provided at the Arts Student Resources web site at http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/student_resources/student_responsibilities_integrity.html. Ignorance of the regulations and policies regarding academic integrity is not a valid excuse for violating them.

Late penalty

No extensions will be given without medical documentation, or other documentation of comparable seriousness, that will normally be required to avoid a late penalty. Please be advised that a late penalty of 2 points per day, including days

on weekends, will be applied to all papers that are handed in after the specified deadlines.

If the student has a binding and documented reason to be absent from class on a specified date, the student must notify the professor as early as possible, so that if the reason is accepted by the professor, the student and professor can make substitute arrangements for the student to complete and submit assigned work.

Athletic championships & identity-group holidays

The university recognizes the right of all students to observe recognized holidays of their faith which fall within the academic year. If you will have to miss any classes or will require an extension for an assignment due to an athletic championship or identity-group holiday, please notify the professor at the beginning of the term or at least three weeks in advance of the relevant date.

Unclaimed term work disposal

Any term work that has not been claimed by students will be held for four (4) months from the end of the final examination period for the term in which the work was assigned. At the conclusion of this time, all unclaimed term work will become property of the Faculty of Arts and be destroyed according to FIPPA guidelines and using confidential measures for disposal.