

## **SOC203H1- Classical Sociological Theory**

**Spring 2015**

**Location: MB128**

**Time: Monday 6-8**

### **CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY II – INEQUALITY AUTHORITY (SOC203H1)**

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### **OFFICIAL COURSE CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION**

Introduction to the paired concepts of inequality/solidarity and authority/illegitimacy in the works of key classical theorists such as Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Tocqueville, and Simmel. Enrolment is restricted to sociology majors and specialists.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Sociology, as a discipline and profession, would be lost without theory. Even with the most expansive and sophisticated empirical studies on social behaviour, without theory, we would be unable to make sense of this data. Modern sociological theories including structural functionalism, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and field theory are indispensable tools for studying a wide array of social phenomena such as crime, families, social networks, mental health, culture, immigration, politics, law, and education. These leading sociological theories, as contemporary and cutting edge as they are, can be *directly* traced to the writings of the founders of sociology. Furthermore, these theories can be best understood and used in modern sociology when one has a strong understanding of the classic works from which they are derived. Hence, this course introduces students to the theoretical writings of the “founders” of sociology: Alexis de Toqueville, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and Georg Simmel.

These theorists noted above are connected to each other due to the fact that they all lived during two great crises of modernity: the Industrial Revolution and the Democratic Revolution. As a result of the historical context within which they grew up and worked, each of the theorists became deeply interested and concerned about issues surrounding social inequality, social solidarity, and authority (both legitimate and illegitimate). These subjects have gone on to form the bedrock of sociological theory and research today. In this course we will read those primary texts (written by the classical thinkers listed above) which directly engaged these topics. We will critically scrutinise the assumptions, concepts and arguments found within these classic texts, and place them within the historical context in which these thinkers lived and worked. We will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of theories by comparing and contrasting them, thereby paying attention to their inconsistencies and blind spots. The goal of this task will be to gain familiarity and comfort with classical theory texts, but also, and more importantly, to hone our skills in critically analysing sophisticated theoretical arguments.

Secondly, in this course we will cover the key concepts (pertaining to social inequality, social solidarity, and authority) introduced by sociology’s founders. We will question how they are related to each other, as well as consider their role in the development of contemporary sociological theories which are relevant today. We will also explore how these classical concepts and theories can be useful for making sense of the increasingly globalised social world within which we live in today. The objective of this exercise will be to provide students with a toolkit for work in upper year sociology courses, as well professional work outside of academia which requires analysis of social phenomena, and in particular, social problems.

## **COURSE INSTRUCTOR'S GENERAL EXPECTATIONS**

1. I expect students to attend every lecture (class) in full (and to be on time) in order to take detailed notes on lecture material.
2. I strongly encourage, however, do not expect students to participate in lecture. The payoff for participating is that it will most certainly assist you in better comprehending the course material and how it can be applied to new contexts. Class discussion and debate will also allow for a more stimulating class experience for everyone enrolled in the course.
3. I expect students to be routinely keeping up with current events in the news and considering how the material that we cover in class can be applied to the context of these events.
4. I expect students to be keeping up with assigned readings on a week to week basis.
5. I expect students to sit for the midterm and final examination (and to be on time), to be familiar with examination policies and procedures, and to follow the instructor's instructions explicitly.
6. I expect students to submit class or tutorial assignments on time, and I expect students to take responsibility to ensure that absolutely no portion of their written work is in any way plagiarised.

## **TEACHING METHODS**

My teaching philosophy is reflected by the three main learning goals I have for students in this course: grasping classical theory; career preparation; and communication mastery.

### **Mastery of Classical Sociological Theory: Connecting Ideas, Concepts, and Problems**

The most basic learning goal that I have for students is to come away at the end of the semester with a sound grasp of the key concepts, theories, and ideas formulated by the founders of sociology. While this will form an important part of your weekly readings, this learning goal will be largely achieved through lectures. As such, it is important to point out and emphasize here, that **although lecture and reading content will be interrelated, they will typically NOT overlap**. We will routinely, but not always, cover concepts and theories in lecture that are NOT found in the readings, and the readings will introduce ideas not explicitly covered in lectures. However, the material covered in lecture and reading will all relate to the concepts of social inequality, social solidarity, and authority. You will be encouraged to think independently about how lecture and reading material relate to one another, and relate to the abovementioned problems, and you will be responsible for drawing such connections in both writing assignments and examinations.

### **Career Preparation**

I am a strong believer that an undergraduate university education in sociology should serve as a strong preparation for paid employment both outside and inside academia. This means that the goals of this course are more than simply preparation for upper year sociology courses, graduate training in the social sciences, or careers in research and academia (though these are all wonderful and very rewarding pursuits). This also means that the goals of this course must transcend equipping students with transferrable skills such as critical thinking and written communication (even though these are extremely valuable highly sought out talents). As such, I will spend a great deal of time in lecture discussing how classical theory can be used to make sense of social

problems unfolding around the world today. It is highly likely that most of you will enter professions in which you will be required to critically analyze social problems impacting the world today, whether it be mental illness, cyber bullying, terrorism, sexual harassment, racism, and/or addiction. Proper analysis of these problems requires a firm grounding in social theory, and a strong grasp of classical theory is crucial to this task.

Secondly, I will strive to illustrate how the classical theory toolkit can be used in the sub-disciplines of sociology, including crime and deviance, political sociology, global sociology, and the sociology of health and mental illness. I feel this is important as many, if not most of you, are taking upper year courses in topics which you feel will help prepare you for the professions that you are planning to enter, be it social work, law, politics, policy, teaching, business, mental health, or journalism.

Thirdly, I encourage students to approach this course and the material we cover from the perspective of their career/professional aspirations. This includes class discussions and written reflections. Along with engaging the material with the goal of discovery, it is equally important to engage the material and question how it can be usefully *applied* in practical settings. We will also regularly discuss the professional and policy applications/implications of the concepts and theories we discuss in class.

Finally, bearing in mind that many of you are seeking to enter research professions both within and outside the ivory towers (i.e. professorships, associate researchers, policy analysts, government researchers, and statisticians), a key aim of this course will be to aid in the development of strong analytical skills. Along with the goals and strategies discussed above, this will be accomplished through a strong focus on **rigorous** exposure to primary texts.

### **Communication Mastery**

An integral part of professional training is the **mastery** of reading and writing skills with respect to complex, challenging material. In particular, the skills focused on will be free writing (through personal reflections and examinations), public forum discussion (in class participation), oral argumentation (in class participation), and scholarly reading and writing (weekly readings term paper). It is for this reason that I strongly encourage, though do not expect, students to participate in in-class discussions.

### **PREREQUISITES**

The prerequisite for this course is SOC101Y1 or SOC102H1 & SOC103H1. Students without this prerequisite will be removed from the class list at any time.

### **READINGS**

The **Course reader** is available at the U of T Bookstore. It includes:

1. Two comment and mark sheets (one for each position paper to be submitted)
2. "Some Tools for Better Writing"
3. "Writing as Communication"
4. "Glossary of Concepts" (by Ken Morrison)
5. Weekly readings for this course

## COMMUNICATION

You can feel free to contact me by email at [steven.hayle@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:steven.hayle@mail.utoronto.ca) at any time if you have any course-related questions. I will do my absolute best to answer all e-mails within 48 hours unless explicitly stated otherwise. Students cannot submit their work by fax, email or to the receptionist at the Department of Sociology.

## EVALUATION SCHEME

### Weekly Reflection Pieces – Due at the end of every class [10%, 1% each]

Students will submit a brief written reflection (no longer than a lengthy paragraph) on cue cards or lined paper in which they do the following: a) Connect what they have learned in the lecture to something covered in a previous lecture; b) Connect what they have learned in the lecture to current events; c) Connect what they have learned in the lecture to something covered in their readings; and d) Connect what they have learned in the lecture to something they have learned in another **sociology** class.

### Position Paper- Due Monday February 9, 2015 at the beginning of class [20%]

Students will select ONE assigned primary reading and provide a critical evaluation of the reading drawing on secondary literature. Detailed assignment instructions will be provided on the first day of class.

### Midterm Test- Monday, February 23, 2015 (2 hours) [20%]

The midterm test will cover material from BOTH lectures and readings introduced right up to the lecture preceding the midterm. Students can expect a mix of matching, definition, short answer and application questions. There will be NO true or false or multiple choice questions. No aids are permitted. **The test will be written in the lecture hall during class time.** It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with examination rules and procedures.

### Current Events Paper - Due Monday, March 23, 2015 [20%]

Students will select a current specific event which pertains to social inequality, social solidarity, and/or authority. They will analyze this event drawing on one of the above conceptual frameworks. Specifically, they will explore the work of one classical thinker which they believe can be used to analyze their current event. Detailed assignment instructions will be provided on the first day of class.

### Final Examination- Scheduled by the Registrar's Office (3 hours) [30%]

The final examination will be CUMULATIVE and will cover material from BOTH lectures and readings introduced throughout the entire course. Although weight will be placed on content introduced after the midterm examination, students will be expected to demonstrate a mastery of ALL course content, themes, theories, and concepts. The examination will consist of three parts: a) brief responses (including matching and/or definition); b) short answers; and c) ONE essay question. Students will have choice on the essay question. No aids are permitted. Location and time to be determined by the registrar's office. The final examination schedule will run from April 8 to April 30.

NOTE: Midterm and assignment grades will be posted on Blackboard no later than three (3) full weeks after

midterm date or assignment due date (excluding holidays and Reading Week).

## MAKEUP ASSIGNMENTS AND DEADLINE EXTENSION

### Documentation from your Physician or College Registrar

If you miss a test or a paper deadline, **do not** contact the instructor or a TA unless you have followed the steps described here. Telling the professor or TA why you missed a deadline or a test will not be considered.

In case of **illness**, you must supply a duly completed **Verification of Student Illness** or Injury form (available at [www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca](http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca)). A doctor's note is not acceptable. **The form must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work** at class or during my office hours.

If a **personal or family crisis** prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must get a letter from your college registrar (it is a good idea anyway to advise your college registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies). **The letter must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work** at class or during my office hours.

*You must submit both forms within three days of the missed test or assignment.* You are not entitled to write a make-up test if you wrote the regularly scheduled test. All requests will be screened and students eligible to write a make-up will be informed by e-mail.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

Cheating and misrepresentation will not be tolerated. Students who commit an academic offence will serious penalties. Prevent plagiarism by ensuring that all work is properly cited. Please see below for a list (not exhaustive) of academic offences. If you require more information, please visit the Code of Behaviours on Academic Matters at <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>.

**“It shall be an offence for a student knowingly: (a) to forge or in any other way alter or falsify any document or evidence required by the University, or to utter, circulate or make use of any such forged, altered or falsified document, whether the record be in print or electronic form; (b) to use or possess an unauthorized aid or aids or obtain unauthorized assistance in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work; (c) to personate another person, or to have another person personate, at any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work; (d) to represent as one's own any idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work, i.e. to commit plagiarism (for a more detailed account of plagiarism, see Appendix "A") ; (e) to submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere; (f) to submit any academic work containing a purported statement of fact or reference to a**

Each paper (the position paper and the social problems paper) **must be submitted twice:**

- (1) as hard copy, at the start of class on the due date;
- (2) online at <http://www.turnitin.com>, by the start of class on the due date.

**Assignments not submitted through *Turnitin* will receive a grade of zero (0 %).**

Go to <http://www.turnitin.com> to submit your paper online. For access, enter the **class ID** and **enrolment password** (you will receive these before your first position paper is due). Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to *Turnitin.com* for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the *Turnitin.com* reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. The terms that apply to the University's use of the *Turnitin.com* service are described on the *Turnitin.com* web site.

If you cannot submit your paper in class, go to room 225 at 725 Spadina Avenue by 5 p.m. on the due date, put a date/time stamp on the top page of your paper, put it into the drop box for 200-level courses, **then notify your TA that your paper is there.**

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

## **TENTATIVE LECTURE TOPICS AND READINGS**

**Please note that the lecture topics and readings are subject to change at any time throughout the semester. Advanced notice will be provided and changes will be reflected assignment and examination expectations. Any readings assigned that are not in the reader will be made available to you via black board.**

### **Week One: January 5 – Welcome to Classical Theory!**

TOPICS: Introduction to the Course.

READINGS: None.

### **Week Two: January 12- Ontology**

TOPICS: Major Sociological Paradigms

### **Week Three: January 19- Epistemology**

TOPICS: How Theory Informs the Methods We Use

### **Week Four: January 26- Alexis de Toqueville, The Visiting Professor**

TOPICS: Alexis de Toqueville on Aristocratic and Democratic Societies

READINGS: *Democracy in America* pgs. pp. 561-580 (chapters 1 to 5 on social mores in aristocratic and democratic societies) and pp. 690-95 (on despotism in mass democracy).

### **Week Five: February 2- Karl Marx, The Philosopher**

TOPIC: The Philosophical Writings of Karl Marx

READINGS: Excerpt from *The German Ideology*

### **Week Six: February 9- Karl Marx, The Economist...and The Communist**

TOPIC: The Economic and Political Writings of Karl Marx

READINGS: Part I of *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (“Bourgeois and Proletarians”) “The British Rule in India” and “The Future Results of British Rule in India”

### **Week Seven: February 16- READING WEEK, NO CLASS**

**Week Eight: February 23- MIDTERM EXAMINATION**

**Week Nine: March 2- Max Weber, The Historian**

TOPIC: The Historical Sociology of Max Weber

READINGS: Excerpt from “Class, Status, Party”

**Week Ten: March 9- Max Weber, The Methodologist**

TOPIC: Max Weber’s Advancements of the Sociological Enterprise

READINGS: Excerpt from “Politics as a Vocation”

**Week Eleven: March 16- Emile Durkheim, The Structuralist**

TOPIC: Durkheim’s Structuralism

READINGS: “Anomic Suicide” (from *Suicide*)

**Week Twelve: March 23- Emile Durkheim, The Individualist**

TOPIC: Durkheim’s Individualism

READINGS: Excerpt from *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*

**Week Thirteen: March 30- Georg Simmel, The Stranger**

TOPIC: Simmel on Life in the City

READINGS: Introduction to “Superordination and Subordination” and “The Metropolis and Mental Life”

## **SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING**

Ashley, David, and David Michael Orenstein. *Sociological Theory: Classical Statements*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (Boston: Pearson, 2005).

Bendix, Reinhard. *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962).

Coser, Lewis A. *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Sociological Context*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Fort Worth, Texas: Harcourt Brace, 1977).

Giddens, Anthony. *Capitalism and modern social theory: An analysis of the writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

Hughes, H. Stuart. *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought 1890-1930* (New York: Vintage, 1977).

Lichtheim, George. *Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961).

Lukes, Stephen M. *Emile Durkheim: His Life and Work* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

Sydie, R.A. *Natural Women, Cultured Men: A Feminist Perspective on Sociological Theory* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1994).

Zeitlin, Irving M. *Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 2001).

Also: *Journal of Classical Sociology*.