

University of Toronto - Sociology
SOC251H1F - Fall 2018
“Contemporary Sociological Theory”

Thursdays 4:10pm - 6:00pm
Location: RW140

Instructor Information:

Instructor: Melissa Godbout
Office: Room 335, Department of Sociology, 725 Spadina Ave
Email: melissa.godbout@mail.utoronto.ca
Office Hours: Thursday 2:30-3:30pm, by appointment

Teaching Assistant: TBA

Course Description

This course aims to provide students with a selective introduction to major contemporary thinkers and approaches whose ideas have achieved wide influence, as well as on-going inquiry into the nature of sociological analysis.

Course Objectives

This is a reading intensive course. Because of this, it is important that students do the weekly readings and attend every class. Students are encouraged to approach issues discussed in a way that examines underlying assumptions, evaluates evidence, and interprets conclusions. To help us along the way we will be having in-class discussions through which students will be able to actively participate in developing their comprehension of the material. Doing so will also build tools students can use to strengthen their writing and reading.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Evaluate and discuss a number of approaches central to contemporary sociological theory.
- Identify and assess key theoretical concepts and arguments.
- Write analytically and critically about contemporary theory.
- Posit an academic argument and support this argument through the use of evidence, both in discussion and in writing.
- Draw connections between contemporary theory and current events.

Prerequisite:

The prerequisite for this course is SOC201H1 or SOC203H1. Students without this prerequisite may be removed from the class list at any time.

Readings:

All course readings will be available on Quercus.

Evaluation:

Reading Responses (ongoing).....	20%
Test 1 (date: October 11).....	25%
Current Event Paper (due: November 22).....	30%
Test 2 (date: November 29).....	25%
Total.....	100% (final grade)

Accessibility Needs

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

WEEKLY TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS
--

Students should bring the readings and their reading notes to every class.

Thursday, September 6: Introduction to the Course

- Mills, C.W. and *The Sociological Imagination*.

Thursday, September 13: Structural Functionalism

- Talcott Parsons
- Robert Merton

Thursday, September 20: Micro-Sociological Approaches

- Herbert Blumer
- Erving Goffman
- Harold Garfinkel

Thursday, September 27: Individualism and Rational Choice

- George Homans
- Peter Blau
- Mancur Olson

Thursday, October 4: Networks & Social Capital

- Mark Granovetter
- Ronald Burt
- Robert Putnam

Thursday, October 11: * TEST 1 *****

Thursday, October 18: *Power & Inequality*

- Antonio Gramsci
- Anthony Giddens
- C. Wright Mills

Thursday, October 25: *Michel Foucault*

- Discipline and Punish
- The History of Sexuality

Thursday, November 1: *Pierre Bourdieu*

- Structures, Habitus, Practices
- The Field of Cultural Production

Thursday, November 8: FALL READING WEEK, NO CLASSES

Thursday, November 15: *Theories of Race and Gender*

- Dorothy Smith
- Patricia Hill Collins
- Frantz Fanon

Thursday, November 22: *Future Directions of Sociological Theory & Review of the Course*

***** CURRENT EVENT PAPER DUE *****

Thursday, November 29 * TEST 2*****

DESCRIPTION OF EVALUATION COMPONENTS

Reading Responses: 20% (10 x 2% each)

DUE: Wednesdays by 11:59pm

Submitted electronically to Quercus

Reading responses allow students the opportunity to evaluate ideas from the readings, assessing the value and limitations of key arguments offered by the thinkers we will be covering this term. Students are required to submit a total of **ten** reading responses throughout the term (2% each), beginning September 13. Students are permitted to submit up to a maximum of **two** responses each week, with the exception of the weeks of October 25 (Foucault) and November 1 (Bourdieu) in which only one response may be submitted for each. Students are required to use the “Reading Response” template available on Quercus, details of which will be discussed in lecture.

Responses must be uploaded to Quercus on Wednesdays, no later than 11:59p.m. In .doc or .docx format (.pdf, pages, .odt, etc will not be accepted). Responses must be submitted the Wednesday *before* the readings are discussed in lecture and cannot be backdated.

Current Event Paper: 30%

DUE: November 22 4:10pm

5-7 pages *firm limit (excluding title and references)

Double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12pt Font, 1 inch margins

ASA or APA citation format

For the final paper, students will evaluate a current event using theories learned about in class. The goal of this paper is to demonstrate a strong grasp of course material by *using* it to **make an argument, not to summarize the readings**. Students are required to develop an evaluative framework using at least two thinkers covered in the course. The selected thinkers must be from different weeks.

Keep in mind, that to simply identify and describe points of similarity or difference between two thinkers is not an argument; an argument will make a clear and original claim that will be supported through analysis and evaluation of the current event using the theories. It is always important to be clear, concise, and develop all claims in depth as opposed to keeping the discussion very broad.

Students will select a current event from a list provided in class.

Papers must be submitted **twice** by the due date/time: (1) one electronic copy uploaded to Quercus by the beginning of class (12:10pm), and (2) one electronic copy uploaded to Turnitin. Students' submission must be in .doc or .docx format (.pdf, pages, .odt, etc will not be accepted).

In-Class Tests:

Test 1: October 11 - 25%

Test 2: November 29 - 25%

*No aids allowed

There will be two in class-tests over the term. Tests may cover material from both readings and lectures. The goal will be to assess students' comprehension of material, not their capability to memorize. Material across tests may be cumulative. More details will be provided in class closer to the test dates.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance:

Responsibility for being aware of what the Instructor or Teaching Assistant says in lectures/tutorials (including administrative announcements) rests solely with the students. If a student is unable to attend a class, they are responsible for obtaining the information presented and should not contact the Instructor or Teaching Assistant for this information. For this reason, it is strongly encouraged students have a 'buddy' in the class who is willing to share lecture notes.

Assignment Submission Policy:

The Current Event paper is due at the beginning of class (4:10pm) on the due date and must be submitted twice: (1) one electronic copy uploaded to Quercus, and (2) one electronic submission at <http://turnitin.com> (see below statement on Turnitin).

Weekly response papers must be submitted to Quercus every Wednesday (for the upcoming readings covered in lecture on Thursday) no later than 11:59pm.

Turnitin Submission Policy:

“Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin for review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com website.”

Assignments not submitted through Turnitin will receive a grade of zero (0%) unless a student instead provides, along with their paper, sufficient secondary material (e.g. reading notes, outlines of paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own. The alternative (not submitting via Turnitin) is in place because, strictly speaking, using Turnitin is voluntary for students at the University of Toronto.

Late Assignments/Missed Tests:

Students are expected to submit their work on time. Work is due at the start of class (4:10pm) on the due date or, in the case of Reading Responses by 11:59p.m on the Wednesday before lecture. Late work will never be accepted with appropriate documentation from a student's physician, college registrar, or Accessibility Services (see below). As such, there are no per day penalties for late work. Assignments must be submitted on time, or appropriate documentation provided for acceptance of late submission. Failure to submit work on time without providing required documentation will result in a student receiving zero (0%) on the assignment. Similarly, students are expected to write tests on the required dates. If, for reasons beyond their control, students are unable to write a test, appropriate documentation must be provided as outlined below.

You are expected to keep back-up copies of your work in case it is lost. Email drafts of your work to yourself regularly in case of computer malfunction. Technical difficulties or lost work are insufficient reasons for submitting work late.

If you do miss a deadline, **do not contact the Instructor or Teaching Assistant** unless you have followed the steps described here *within 3 days of the due date/test*.

In case of **illness**, you must supply a duly completed Verification of Student Illness Form (available at www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca). A doctor's note is also acceptable and while it does not need to specify the illness, it **MUST** state the start and anticipated end date of the illness. The Verification of Student Illness form or doctor's note **MUST** also state that you were ill on the due date of the assignment for a one day extension. For a longer extension, you must prove you were sick during a longer period.

If a **personal or family crisis** prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must obtain 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). This letter must specify the length of the extension that is justified under the circumstances.

If you are registered with **Accessibility Services**, your counselor will send an email to the Instructor on

your behalf if you ask them to (with a one week extension the norm).

Supporting documentation must be provided to Melissa Godbout by email or in a sealed envelope addressed to Melissa Godbout. Supporting documentation should not be submitted to the Teaching Assistant. When your paper is ready, submit to Quercus and Turnitin by the revised due date/time. Email your Teaching Assistant right away to notify them that your paper has been submitted.

Grade Appeals

Instructors and Teaching Assistants take the marking of assignments very seriously, and will work diligently to be fair, consistent, and accurate. Nonetheless, mistakes and oversights occasionally happen. If you believe that to be the case, you must adhere to the following rules:

- If it is a mathematical error, simply alert the Teaching Assistant of the error.
- In the case of more substantive appeals, you must:
 - Wait at least 24 hours after receiving your mark.
 - Carefully re-read your assignment, all assignment guidelines, marking schemes, and the grader's comments.

If, after this, you still wish to appeal your grade, you must take the following steps:

Within one week of receiving your grade, submit a written explanation via email to your Teaching Assistant of why you think the mark should be altered. Please note that statements such as “I need a higher grade to go to X/keep my average”, “it is not fair”, or “I got a higher grade on a different assignment, so I deserve one on this assignment” are not compelling. Instead, you want to make a strong substantive case for why you perceive your grade should be changed. The Teaching Assistant will review your work and original comments and respond to you with their re-assessment.

Should you still be unsatisfied with your mark, within one week of the Teaching Assistant's re-assessment, you can submit a written explanation via email to the Instructor, including an electronic copy of your work. This copy must be identical to your original submission. Once this has been verified, the Instructor will complete a marking of your work and provide comments. Please note that upon re-grade your mark may go down, stay the same, or go up. The grade provided by the Instructor will be final.

Course Communication:

Students should email the Teaching Assistant with questions about course material or assignments. For questions that require more in-depth discussion, students should see the TA during scheduled office hours. NOTE: the Teaching Assistant has scheduled office hours on different days/time to try to accommodate variation in students' schedules. As a result, the TA will not meet with students by appointment or outside of these scheduled office hours.

For questions that are more personal (documentation, registrar, accessibility, etc), students should email the Instructor directly.

Emails will receive a response within 48 hours of receipt. Please note that emails sent on weekends or holidays may take longer to receive a response.

When communicating electronically with the Instructor or Teaching Assistant, it is important to follow

a few rules:

- All emails must include the course code (SOC251) in the subject line.
- All emails must be signed with the student's full name and student number.
- All emails must be sent from your UTORONTO email account.
- Treat emails to the Instructor or TA as you would any other professional communication.
- Assignments and course work will never be accepted via email.
- Emails which ask questions that are answered in the course syllabus will not receive a response. Before sending an email about administrative matters, always ensure you carefully read through the syllabus first.

Emails that do not follow these guidelines will not receive a response.

Classroom Etiquette & Use of Electronics

It is extremely important to foster an environment that is courteous and respectful to all in the class. Students are expected to arrive to class on time.

Videotaping, audio recording, or taking photos in class is strictly forbidden without the Instructor's approval.

The use of laptops in class is restricted to taking notes. Using laptops or electronics for other purposes will be treated as a breach of courtesy toward others. Cell phones should be stowed away during class time and ringers turned off. Texting, internet browsing, use of social media, etc. during class time will not be tolerated and students using electronics to do so may be asked to leave the classroom.

Academic Integrity & Plagiarism

Cheating and misrepresentation will not be tolerated. Students who commit an academic offense face serious penalties. Avoid plagiarism by citing properly: practices acceptable in high school may prove unacceptable in university. Students are expected to cite sources in all written work and presentations. A first rule of thumb: each time you use a sequence of three or more words written by someone else, use quotation marks and give the source. Whenever paraphrasing or discussing someone else's ideas, you must also provide appropriate citations.

You are expected to have read and understood the on-line document: "How Not to Plagiarize" (<http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>).

By enrolling in this course, students agree to abide by the University's rules regarding academic conduct, as outlined in the Calendar. You are expected to be familiar with the "Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters"

(www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behavac.htm) and the "Code of Student Conduct" (www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/studentc.htm) which spell out your rights, your duties, and provide all the details on grading regulations and academic offenses at the University of Toronto.