

# SOC251H1 S

## Contemporary Sociological Theory

### Summer 2024 Syllabus

#### Course Meetings

##### SOC251H1 S

Section	Day & Time	Delivery Mode & Location
LEC5101	Tuesday, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM	Online Synchronous
	Thursday, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM	Online Synchronous

Refer to ACORN for the most up-to-date information about the location of the course meetings.

#### Course Contacts

**Instructor:** Sebastien Parker

**Email:** [sebastien.parker@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:sebastien.parker@mail.utoronto.ca)

**Office Hours and Location:** By appointment, please refer to Quercus calendar

**Teaching Assistant:** Hammad Khan

**Email:** [hammad.khan@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:hammad.khan@mail.utoronto.ca)

**Office Hours and Location:** By appointment, please refer to Quercus calendar

**Teaching Assistant:** Brody Trottier

**Email:** [brody.trottier@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:brody.trottier@mail.utoronto.ca)

**Office Hours and Location:** By appointment, please refer to Quercus calendar

#### Course Overview

A selective introduction to major contemporary thinkers and approaches whose ideas have achieved wide influence, as well as an on-going inquiry into the nature and role of sociological analysis. Restricted to sociology majors and specialists.

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#### Course Learning Outcomes

There are 5 learning objectives in this course:

1) Critically read and assess contemporary sociological theorists

- 2) Critically write about the nature and role of sociological analysis
- 3) Draw connections between contemporary theory and current phenomena
- 4) Consider ongoing theoretical debates in the field of sociology and provide your own perspective in peer discussion
- 5) Evaluate implications of different theoretical approaches and reflect on them

**Prerequisites:** SOC201H1 or SOC203H1

**Corequisites:** None

**Exclusions:** SOC376H1; SOC232H5

**Recommended Preparation:** SOC150H1

**Credit Value:** 0.5

## Course Materials

All course materials will be provided on the course website.

## Marking Scheme

Assessment	Percent	Details	Due Date
<b>First Reflection</b>	20%	Twice (2) during the term, students will have to write reflections based on assigned readings, which will be discussed during tutorials. The first reflection will be in response to Jan Fuhse's 'How can theories represent social phenomena?'; while the second reflection will ask to engage with Prasad's piece 'Pragmatism as problem solving'. Content for both articles will be discussed during tutorials. For each reflection, students must write 2-pages single-space, in accordance with the general guidelines and expectations communicated during tutorials and in assignment documents on Quercus.	2024-07-16

Assessment	Percent	Details	Due Date
<b>Second Reflection</b>	20%	Twice (2) during the term, students will have to write reflections based on assigned readings, which will be discussed during tutorials. The first reflection will be in response to Jan Fuhse's 'How can theories represent social phenomena?'; while the second reflection will ask to engage with Prasad's piece 'Pragmatism as problem solving'. Content for both articles will be discussed during tutorials. For each reflection, students must write 2-pages single-space, in accordance with the general guidelines and expectations communicated during tutorials and in assignment documents on Quercus.	2024-08-01
<b>First Test</b>	25%	Twice (2) during the term, students will have to have to respond to test questions (worth 25% each). The first take-home assesses comprehension for the first part of the course, while the second take-home assesses comprehension for material covered in the second part. Students will receive the test document, outlining the expectations and test questions, 48 hours before the due date. For both tests, students will have to answer one essay-type question (2 pages, single-spaced) and two short-answer questions (1 page, single-spaced, each)	2024-07-23

Assessment	Percent	Details	Due Date
<b>Second Test</b>	25%	Twice (2) during the term, students will have to have to respond to test questions (worth 25% each). The first take-home assesses comprehension for the first part of the course, while the second take-home assesses comprehension for material covered in the second part. Students will receive the test document, outlining the expectations and test questions, 48 hours before the due date. For both tests, students will have to answer one essay-type question (2 pages, single-spaced) and two short-answer questions (1 page, single-spaced, each)	2024-08-08
<b>Participation</b>	10%	Throughout the term, students are expected to maintain active engagement in the course. Various methods of showcasing participation will be available, with all contributing to a comprehensive assessment. Examples include contributing to discussion boards when prompted, actively participating in online lectures and tutorials, attending office hours, and sharing resources with peers on the course website.	No Specific Date

**Late Assessment Submissions Policy**

A penalty of 10% per day will be applied, to a maximum of 7 days (including weekends).

**Course Schedule**

Session 1 (July 2)

Outline of course and expectations

PART 1.

Session 2 (July 4)

Readings for lecture

Blau, Peter M. (1977). A macrosociological theory of social structure. *American Journal of Sociology*.

Granovetter, Mark (1985). "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness." *American Journal of Sociology*.

Session 3\* (July 9)

Readings for lecture

Bourdieu, Pierre (1990 [1977]). *The Logic of Practice*.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*.

Readings for tutorial

Fuhse, Jan A (2022). "How Can Theories Represent Social Phenomena?" *Sociological Theory*.

Session 4\* (July 11)

Readings for lecture & tutorial

Collins, Patricia Hill (2019). *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory*.

Session 5\* (July 16)

\*First reflection due\*

Reading for lecture

Bell, Daniel (1976). *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*.

Swidler, Ann (1986). "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." *American Sociological Review*.

Session 6 (July 18)

Review Session – No additional reading

PART 2.

Session 7 (July 23)

\*First take-home test due\*

Readings for lecture

Fraser, Nancy (1990). *Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing*

*democracy*. *Social Text*.

Habermas, Jürgen (1981). *The Theory of Communicative Action*.

Session 8\* (July 25)

Reading for lecture

Emirbayer, Mustafa, and Matthew Desmond. (2015). The Racial Order.

Reading for tutorial

Prasad, Monica (2021). Pragmatism as problem solving. Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World.

Session 9\* (July 30)

Reading for lecture

Go, Julian (2016). Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory.

Latour, Bruno (1991). We Have Never Been Modern.

Session 10\* (Aug. 1)

\*Second reflection due\*

Readings for lecture

Hedström, Peter (2005). Dissecting the social: On the principles of analytical sociology.

Tilly, Charles (1998). Durable Inequality.

Session 11 (Aug. 6)

Reading for lecture

Abend, Gabriel (2008). The meaning of 'theory'. Sociological Theory.

Session 12 (Aug. 8)

\*Second take-home test due\*

## **Policies & Statements**

### **Late/Missed Assignments**

If a student misses a test or submit assignments later for medical reasons, the student must contact me (not the TA) within 1 day of the missed exam or assignment and also declare their absence on ACORN. For other reasons, such as family emergencies or personal reasons, they must have the college registrar email me.

### **Students with Disabilities or Accommodation Requirements**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an acute or ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) at the beginning of the academic year by visiting <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/>. Without registration, you will

not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will assess your situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your needs or condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

## **Academic Integrity**

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters \(https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019\)](https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019). If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, please reach out to me. Note that you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from me or from other institutional resources. For example, to learn more about how to cite and use source material appropriately and for other writing support, see the U of T writing support website at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca>. Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for a complete outline of the University's policy and expectations. For more information, please see [A&S Student Academic Integrity \(https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity\)](https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity) and the [University of Toronto Website on Academic Integrity \(https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca\)](https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca).

## **Specific Medical Circumstances**

If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. Normally, I will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. If you cannot submit a VOI due to limits on terms of use, you can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI (including dates, academic impact, practitioner's signature, phone and registration number). For more information on the VOI, please see <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

## **Accommodation for Personal Reasons**

There may be times when you are unable to complete course work on time due to non-medical reasons. If you have concerns, speak to me or to an advisor in your College Registrar's office; they can help you to decide if you want to request an extension or other forms of academic consideration. They may be able to email your instructors directly to provide a College Registrar's letter of support and connect you with other helpful resources on campus.

## **Late/Missed Assignments**

This item is listed here to remind you to include your late/missed assignment policy; if you have late penalties, you are required to publish them in your syllabus. Please see the [A&S Academic Handbook \(https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/faculty-staff/teaching/academic-handbook\)](https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/faculty-staff/teaching/academic-handbook) sections on missed term work (Section 4.7), late term work and extensions (section 4.8), and missed term tests (Section 5.3) for more information.

### **Plagiarism Detection Tool**

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a 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 tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

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### **Quercus Info (if using)**

This Course uses the University's learning management system, Quercus, to post information about the course. This includes posting readings and other materials required to complete class activities and course assignments, as well as sharing important announcements and updates. New information and resources will be posted regularly as we move through the term. To access the course website, go to the U of T Quercus log-in page at <https://q.utoronto.ca>. SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT GRADES POSTED ONLINE: Please also note that any grades posted are for your information only, so you can view and track your progress through the course. No grades are considered official, including any posted in Quercus at any point in the term, until they have been formally approved and posted on ACORN at the end of the course. Please contact me as soon as possible if you think there is an error in any grade posted on Quercus.