

## **CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY**

SOC 201H1 Fall 2019 LEC5101

Location: LM162, Lash Miller – 80 St. George Street  
Instructor: Joseph M. Bryant  
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*It is impossible to demonstrate anything accurately, without starting from the appropriate first principles and sustaining a connected argument until the conclusions are reached.* Aristotle, *Topics*

*The historical investigation of the development of a science is most needful, lest the principles treasured up in it become a system of half-understood precepts, or worse, a system of prejudices. Historical investigation not only promotes the understanding of that which now is, but also brings new possibilities before us by showing that what now exists is in great measure conventional and accidental.* Ernst Mach, *The Science of Mechanics*

\*\* The prerequisite to take SOC201H is completion of SOC101Y1, or SOC102H1, SOC103H1, SOC100H1, or SOC150H1

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Introduction to the history, nature, and role of sociological theory, through an examination of the works of key classical theorists such as Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Georg Simmel, George Herbert Mead, Karl Mannheim, and others.

**COURSE SYNOPSIS:** The main focus of this course will be directed towards exploring and understanding the development of Sociological Theories in the so-called “Classical” Phase, when the foundations of the emerging discipline of Sociology were initially established—in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Knowledge of those theoretical “points of departure” is essential for comprehending subsequent developments in Sociology, for the “classics” not only continue to provide many of the orienting assumptions for sociological research, but also much of the conceptual terminology presently being utilized in explicating contemporary social worlds and the major transformations in world history, past as well as trending. We shall also attempt to establish that all forms of theoretical knowledge are in varying degrees “conditioned” by the social and historical contexts in which they originated, as well as “informed” by the inherited thought-traditions to which they respond, constructively and critically. Sociological Theory, in short, has a History, ... and that history is also sociological.

**TEXTS:** Selected Readings to be placed on Quercus

### **REQUIREMENTS and GRADING:**

- one short Research Essay, approximately 1200 to 1500 words in length (30%);
- two In-class Tests, to be scheduled (60%);
- one short Critical Reflection Commentary (10%)
- & Class Participation (for outstanding contributions, bonus maximum 3%)

**Academic Integrity** is fundamental to learning at UofT. Familiarize yourself with the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*, at (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) . It is the University rule book for academic behaviour, and you are expected to know the rules.

**Plagiarism Policy:** 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 possible plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such papers. You are advised to consult the Rules and Regulations section of the UofT Annual Calendar regarding this matter. Assignments not submitted through *Turnitin* will receive a grade of zero (0 %) **unless a student instead provides, along with their position paper**, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the 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.

**Email policy:** Owing to the large number of suspect/junk mailings I receive, I do not favor using this medium for class communication, other than for emergencies. My email address and home phone number are in the public domain, but my preference is for you to contact me in class for all course-related matters. *NOTE:* The TAs should be contacted first regarding all routine course matters.

**Missed Tests:** Owing to the large enrolment, no “make-up” tests will be offered. For students with officially legitimate reasons and documentable proof for absences on test days, the policy will be to apply the score on the following test for the one legitimately missed.

**Policy on Extension Requests:** Extensions for completing course assignments can only be given in accordance with university rules, which are limited to medical situations or family emergencies. Documentation will be required to establish compliance. *NOTE:* Late papers without such documentation will not be accepted, and scored as ‘0’ pts.

### **DOCUMENTATION FROM YOUR PHYSICIAN OR COLLEGE REGISTRAR**

If you miss a test or a paper deadline, **do not** contact the instructor or a TA prior to completing the steps described here. 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)). *While a doctor’s note is acceptable, it must contain the start and anticipated end date of the illness.* **The form must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work** at class or to your TA during their 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 to your TA during their office hours.

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

### **WRITING ASSISTANCE**

Students can find information about college writing centres at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science>. It is recommended that you **book appointments well in advance**, as the Writing Centres are commonly very busy. See also the website Writing at the University of Toronto at [www.writing.utoronto.ca](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca). For numerous practical advice files, see [www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice).

Information about the English Language Learning program (ELL) is available at <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>. There is also Reading eWriting, an online program that helps students engage course readings more effectively.

## FALL TERM

1. Sept.5      ***Introduction: From Social Philosophy to Sociological Theory***

Readings: Francis Bacon, “Idola Mentis” (7 pgs);  
J.M. Bryant, “Sociological Theory, Part One: Getting One’s Bearings” (10 pgs)

2. Sept.12     ***What is Theory?***

Readings: Vilfredo Pareto, “What is Sociology?,” from *The Mind and Society* (1 pg);  
J.M. Bryant, “Sociological Theory, Part Two: Theories of Structure and Agency” (27 pgs)

3. Sept.19     ***Karl Marx and the Materialist Conception of History***

Readings: Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (excerpts, 5 pgs);  
*The Communist Manifesto*, Chapter I (10 pgs)

4. Sept.26     ***Karl Marx and the Materialist Conception of History (cont.)***

Reading: Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume One*: Part VIII: Primitive Accumulation (abridged, 16 pgs)  
Tutorial Session (after lecture): Review in Preparation of Test # 1

5. Oct.3        ***Karl Marx and the Materialist Conception of History (cont.)***

Reading: Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume One*: Part VIII: Primitive Accumulation (abridged)  
\*\*\* **Test # 1** \*\*\* [ covering readings & lectures from weeks 1-4, excluding Primitive Accum. ]

6. Oct.10      ***Max Weber: Historical-Comparative Sociology: States and Economies***

Readings: Max Weber, On Method, Power, Bureaucracy, Rationalization (excerpts, 9 pgs);  
\*\* **Essay Assignment provided** \*\*

7. Oct.17      ***Max Weber: Historical-Comparative Sociology: Religions***

Reading: Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*  
(abridged & annotated, 18 pages)

8. Oct.24 ***Emile Durkheim: On Sociological Method, as illustrated by Suicide***

Readings: Emile Durkheim, Selected Excerpts

9. Oct.31 ***Emile Durkheim: Division of Labour & Sociology of Religion  
[ with a brief appearance by Georg Simmel ]***

Readings: Emile Durkheim, On Religion (excerpts, 4 pgs); Simmel, “The Stranger” (3 pgs)  
Tutorial Session (after lecture): Review in Preparation of Test # 2

\*\*\* Nov. 4-8 \*\*\*

**READING WEEK**

*But all science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided.*  
Karl Marx, *Capital* Vol. III

10. Nov.14 ***George Herbert Mead: Minds, Selves, and Societies***

Readings: Bryant, “Theory, Part Two: Theories of Structure and Agency” (concluding 14 pgs)  
\*\*\* **Test # 2** \*\*\* [ covering readings and lectures from weeks 5-9 ]

11. Nov.21 ***George Herbert Mead: Minds, Selves, and Societies (cont.)***

Readings: Mead, Selected Excerpts from *Mind, Self, and Society* (9 pgs)

\*\*\* **ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DUE** \*\*\*

12. Nov.28 ***Karl Mannheim and the Sociology of Knowledge***

Reading: Mannheim, Excerpts from *Ideology and Utopia* and *Conservative Thought* (4 pgs)

\*\*\* **Critical Reflection Commentary** \*\*\* [Quercus submission due in 48 hrs]

*Theory is only one moment of elucidation, and always lacunary and fragmentary.*  
Cornelius Castoriadis, *Crossroads in the Labyrinth*

*Everything that can be thought at all can be thought clearly. Everything that can be  
said can be said clearly.*  
Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*

Octavio Paz, *Nocturno de San Ildefonso* (1976)

*Nos arrastra  
el viento del pensamiento,  
el viento verbal,  
el viento que juega con espejos,  
señor de reflejos,  
constructor de ciudades de aire,  
geometrías  
suspendidas del hilo de la razón.*

The wind of thought  
carried us away,  
the verbal wind.  
the wind that plays with mirrors,  
master of reflections,  
builder of cities of air,  
geometries  
hung from the thread of reason.

Eliot Weinberger trans.