

SOC251H1S
Contemporary Sociological Theory
University of Toronto
Class hours: Wednesdays 14:10 — 17:00 (on-line)

Instructor: Sébastien Parker

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Office Hours: Thursdays 14:00 to 15:00 (online, via BB collaborate)

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Office Hours: Posted periodically on Quercus

Course Description

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.

Prerequisites

The prerequisite to take SOC251H1S is SOC201H. Students without the prerequisite can be removed at any time discovered, and without notice.

Learning Objectives

There are 5 learning objectives in this course:

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

Evaluation Components

Type	Due Dates	Weight
First reflection piece	January 27	5%
First application paper	February 10	25%
First test	February 24	20%
Second reflection piece	March 17	5%
Second application paper	March 31	25%
Second test	April 7	20%

Grading Description

Reflection pieces

Twice (2) during the term, students will have to answer a reflection question based on the week's readings (worth 5% each, 1 page, double-spaced). Prompts will be assigned during the lecture before the stated due date.

Application papers

Twice (2) during the term, students will have to write application papers (worth 25% each, 2-3 pages, double-spaced). The paper will have to apply a core concept forwarded by a thinker (see underlined in Course Schedule) to a contemporary case, event, or phenomenon. More detailed guidelines will be provided on Quercus.

Take-home tests

Twice (2) during the term, students will have to have to respond to test questions (worth 20% 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 prompt during the lecture before the stated due date. For both tests, students will have to answer two (2) questions (each answered in 2 pages, double-spaced, for a total of 4 pages).

Late and Missed Test Policies

Handing in assignments

All assignments must be submitted electronically via Quercus. The instructor and TA will not accept electronic copies of assignments via email.

Deadlines

The assignments are due online via Quercus by 14:00 EST (2:00 p.m. EST) for the stated date. Please refer to the due dates stated on page 1 of the Syllabus and the Course Schedule.

Missed tests

Students cannot make-up tests unless they missed the original date for reasons beyond their control (such as, illness, accidents, funerals). If a student miss tests or submit assignments later for medical reasons, the student must contact me (not the TA) within 2 days of the missed test and declare their absence on the system (ACORN). For other reasons, such as family emergencies or personal reasons, they must have the college registrar email me. Students who have been approved to take the make-up tests will have one week to complete the test. However, the questions for the make-up test may be different from those on the original date. There will be no make-up for make-up tests.

Missed assignments

Students cannot make-up for assignments or submit late papers unless they missed the original date for reasons beyond their control (such as, illness, accidents, funerals). If a student miss tests or submit assignments later for medical reasons, the student must contact me (not the TA) within

2 days of the missed assignment and declare their absence on the system (ACORN). For other reasons, such as family emergencies or personal reasons, they must have the college registrar email me. Students who have been approved to submit a late paper must do so before the end of the approved extension (one week being the norm). Please note: I will not consider requests for extensions unless the situation is sudden, an emergency, or extraordinarily beyond control. There will be no make-up for make-up assignments.

Accessibility

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

Student Responsibilities and Expectations

Email Policy

I will respond to your email within two business days (48 hours, except weekends and holidays). In an email exchanges, you must use your official University of Toronto email. Please also include the course code (e.g. SOC251) in the subject line and your full name and student number in your message. Please do not send a repeat email (e.g., “did you get my email?”).

In general, please treat emails as you would any other professional communication. You should be respectful in the way you address the instructor and the TA. Email is most suitable for questions that are clear, concise, and easily answerable. If you need help on course material, I strongly encourage you to attend office hours or make an appointment. For all general inquiries, please refer to the course syllabus.

Help from your Teaching Assistant

Your T.A. will hold scheduled office hours and respond to your emails. Please be judicious in your use of email. Use it only for questions that are brief and specific. Before sending a question by email, be sure to check the course outline to see if an answer is already available. Emails should not be seen as an alternative to doing the assigned reading or attending lectures. Expect to receive a response from your T.A. within two working days. For more in-depth discussions of the lectures, readings, tests and position papers, take advantage of your T.A.’s office hours.

Grade Appeals

The instructor and teaching assistants do their best to mark work fairly, consistently, and accurately. Nevertheless, one of us may unintentionally err in our marking duties. For basic mathematical errors, simply alert the TA of the error. In the case of more substantive appeals, you must wait at least 24 hours after receiving your mark. If you wish to appeal, please submit a thorough written explanation to your Instructor of why you think your mark should be altered. If your appeal is deemed appropriate, the entirety of your test/assignment will be re-graded. Please note that upon re-grade your mark may go down, stay the same, or go up. You have 7 days after receiving a mark to appeal it.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures

that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules.

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the Code. The consequences for academic misconduct can be severe, including a failure in the course and a notation on your transcript. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, seek out additional information from me, or from other available campus resources like the [U of T Writing Website](#). If you are experiencing personal challenges that are having an impact on your academic work, please speak to me or seek the advice of your college registrar.

Course Schedule

Readings

All course readings will be available on the course website. Students are solely responsible for obtaining and reading all required materials before class. Please give yourself enough time to come to class prepared to discuss the materials.

Week 1 (January 13)

Outline of course and expectations

Part 1. Continuity and Change

Week 2 (January 20)

Karl Mannheim on Generations

Week 3 (January 27)

First reflection piece due at 14:00

Pierre Bourdieu on Habitus and Fields

Week 4 (February 3)

Ann Swidler on Unsettled Culture

James Jasper on Players

Week 5 (February 10)

First application paper due at 14:00

Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan on Cleavage

Week 6 (February 17)

Reading Week

Week 7 (February 24)

First take-home test due at 14:00

Part 2. Integration and Differentiation

Week 8 (March 3)

Peter Blau on Differentiation

Week 9 (March 10)

Patricia Hill Collins on Intersectionality

Margaret Somers on Narrative

Week 10 (March 17)

Second reflection piece due at 14:00

Mark Granovetter on Embeddedness

Week 11 (March 24)

Jürgen Habermas and Nancy Fraser on the Public Sphere

Week 12 (March 31)

Second application paper due at 14:00

Robert Putnam on Social Capital

Week 13 (April 7)

Second take-home test due at 14:00