

MCMASTER UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY SOCIOLOGY 2S06S-C01

Course Instructor: Dr. Jasmin Hristov
Summer 2017

Course Time and Location: Mon and Wed 1-4pm, DSB AB103

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Office Hours: Mon and Wed 12-1pm **Office:** KTH 643

Course Description

This course introduces students to a wide range of theoretical perspectives from classical and contemporary sociology, revolving around key themes such as social structure, social change, social inequalities, social interaction, sexuality, culture and globalization.

Course Learning Objectives

This course's learning objectives are in accordance with the Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations. Each objective below is linked to one of the degree expectations.

- ❖ By gaining knowledge of the objectives, main concepts, and arguments of each theory covered in the course students will expand their breadth and depth of knowledge in the field of sociological theory.
- ❖ By identifying the ways in which the different theories help us to grasp the connections between small-scale (micro) issues and larger structural (macro) social processes, local and global phenomena, different forms of social inequality, and structure and agency, students will develop their critical thinking and analytical skills inside and outside the discipline.
- ❖ By applying key concepts and theoretical claims to explain present day social phenomena, as part of the essay assignment, students will practice the application of academic knowledge to concrete present issues in our world.
- ❖ By assessing and comparing the explanatory potential and limitations of the different theories for explaining issues in the fields of social structure, social inequalities, social interaction, social change, and globalization, students will develop an awareness of the limits of knowledge.
- ❖ The critical commentaries, discussion questions, and essay will help to improve students' critical thinking and analytical skills as well as their written and oral communication skills.

For a complete list of McMaster's Undergraduate Level Degree Expectations please see:

<http://cll.mcmaster.ca/COU/pdf/Undergraduate%20Degree%20Level%20Expectations.pdf>

Course Format

Lecture

The lecture will consist of an interactive presentation by the instructor, at times accompanied by a video documentary. The first 10-15 minutes of lecture will be devoted to a brief review of the previous lecture as well as clarification questions. Students are expected to engage seriously with the assigned readings before attending class. Feel free to ask questions during lecture. Most questions posed by students contribute to the collective learning process, thus you are highly encouraged to do so.

Tutorials – Mon and Wed 3-4pm

The pedagogical approach of this course rests on the idea that learning is a collective process and thus, the classroom should be a community of learners. Tutorials are offered with the purpose of enriching your learning experience and facilitating the understanding of readings and lecture content by offering a space for discussion. During tutorial time students will be answering in groups discussion questions presented by several class members.

Required Texts

- ❖ Dillon, M. (2014). *Introduction to Sociological Theory: Theorists, Concepts and their Applicability to the Twenty-First Century*. 2nd Ed. Wiley-Blackwell.
- ❖ Course Pack
- ❖ ONLINE readings (posted on Avenue-to-Learn)

Video Documentaries

Documentaries shown in class form an integral part of the course material and students are expected to incorporate the knowledge gained from these into the assignments and the final exam.

Attendance

Regular attendance at lectures and tutorials is required in order for you to do well in the course. Lectures explain **as well as supplement** the readings. One does not substitute for the other. If you need to miss a lecture, you will not be penalized, however you should ensure that you know someone in the class from whom you can borrow lecture notes. Lecture **power-points** will be posted on Avenue-to-Learn. Keep in mind that these **do not contain all lecture content or explanations** but rather constitute an outline/point-form organization of the content, including some key definitions.

E-mail /Online Communication

E-mail communication is for providing short answers to any clarification questions regarding the course content and/or organization. You can expect to receive a response usually within two days. If you require help with course material, please arrange to meet with your professor during office hours. Please check Avenue regularly for course announcements. Do not use e-mail through Avenue-to-Learn.

Use of Electronic Devices in Class

The use of electronic devices for purposes other than note-taking / course-related work is not allowed. It inhibits learning and is also disruptive and disrespectful.

Talking during Lecture

Talking to your classmates during lecture (even if you are whispering) is disturbing. Please refrain from talking unless you have been invited to do so by the professor. If you are unclear about something that was said by the professor, please put up your hand instead of asking your classmates. This will ensure that you or your classmates do not miss anything important and do not fall behind.

Taping / Recording / Photographing Lectures

Lectures and course materials prepared by the instructor are the instructor's intellectual property covered by the Canadian Copyright Act. Students wishing to record lecture or other course material in any way are required to ask the instructor's explicit permission and may not do so unless permission is granted. This includes tape recording, filming, photographing PowerPoint slides and material posted online. Once obtained, such permission is only for that individual student's own study purposes and does not include permission to "publish" them in any way.

Evaluation

Type of Assignment	Weighting	Due Date
MID-TERM EXAM	20%	JUNE 7
ESSAY	25%	JULY 17
WEEKLY CRITICAL COMMENTARIES ON THE ASSIGNED READINGS	15% (9% submission +6% quality)	Every Wednesday (where "CC due" is noted on the syllabus)
PRESENTATION OF 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	5%	Date is assigned for each student at the beginning of the term
FINAL EXAM	30%	AUG 2
PARTICIPATION	5%	ongoing

Weekly Critical Commentaries (CCs)

Students are required to submit at the beginning of every* tutorial which falls on a Wednesday, a critical commentary (around 1p single-space) on any two (or more) of the assigned readings for that week (including the Monday and Wednesday readings). For example on May 10th, you would be handing in a commentary on any two or more of the readings listed under May 8 and May 10. The commentary should provide: i) an overview of the key issues raised in the readings; ii) a personal argument about / opinion of those. The latter part of the commentary may focus on a single issue or reading, while the overview should cover all two or more readings.

**Please note that there are several Wednesdays on which no CC is due. Please check the Schedule of Required Readings and Course Work for the dates on which CCs are due.*

Each commentary will serve as a record of your attendance and participation in class and is worth 1% of your final grade. Commentaries must be typed and can only be submitted in person in class. You will be submitting 9 commentaries for the entire course. The total weekly submission of commentaries is worth 9%. The content quality

of these will be evaluated cumulatively at the end of the course and is worth an additional 6% (for a total of 15% of the final grade). Only first commentary will be returned to students with feedback.

Discussion Questions (DQs)

Each student will be randomly assigned a tutorial date on which she/he will be responsible for distributing 2 discussion questions based on the readings assigned for that day. **A hard copy of the questions with the student's name on the paper should be distributed to each class member and the professor at the beginning of tutorial.** Each question should be preceded by a brief (one-two sentences) background (preamble) that situates us in terms of the topic on which it is based. **It should not have a right or wrong answer, not ask for clarification or factual information, but instead should invite us to think critically and creatively.** There may be 1-3 presenters on any given day. The class will be organized in groups and each DQ will be answered by one or more groups. **The presenter must respond to / comment on each group's answer.** The DQs will be evaluated in terms of their clarity, creativity, the amount of interest/discussion they generate, and the presenter's response to the class' answers and comments.

Essay – Due July 17

Students will be required to apply the theories learned in the course to analyze the main issues raised in an article that will be provided by the professor. The essay should be approximately 7 pages (12 point font Times New Roman, 1 inch margin all around, double-spaced). A detailed description of the assignment will be provided few weeks in advance of the deadline and three essay-writing workshops will be held prior to the deadline.

Participation

The participation grade is based on the student's weekly involvement in group discussions during tutorial time. Attendance will be taken each class.

Policy on Late Submissions

Critical Commentaries

Not submitting a commentary will lead to losing one percent. However, students have the right to miss up to two classes (sick days) without a medical note and not be penalized, *provided that they e-mail their commentary on or before the day of class.* If you must miss more than one class (or are unable to submit commentary on time) you may use MSAF once.

Essays

Late papers will receive 5% penalty per day and any work over 10 days late will not be accepted. Late essays must be submitted as BOTH an attached Word file in an email to your professor and a paper copy.

PROCEDURES FOR MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

- The MSAF (McMaster Student Absence Form) is a self-reporting tool for students to report absences due to minor medical situations that last up to 3 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work. The MSAF cannot be used during any final examination period.

- You may submit a maximum of ONE (MSAF) request per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately (normally within 2 working days) to discuss possible consideration.

“When Can I Use The Online MSAF?” – MSAF Checklist:

If you can answer **YES** to **ALL** of the following criteria, you **CAN** use the MSAF online:

- ✓ You have been absent for 3 days or less
 - ✓ Your absence was due to minor illness or injury only
 - ✓ The course work you have missed is worth 24% or less of your grade
 - ✓ You have not previously submitted an MSAF during the current term
- You can access the McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) located in the MOSAIC Student Center or at this site: <https://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>

It is every student’s responsibility to:

- Follow the MSAF instructions carefully and completely.
- Ensure that their McMaster email account is set up to send and receive messages.
- Ensure that the correct email address is used to notify instructors.
- Refer to the course outline to confirm the value of missed work.
- Contact their instructor immediately (within 2 working days) to discuss possible consideration.

*Any consideration that may be provided for missed work is the decision of the instructor. Failure to follow these instructions may result in no consideration given for missed work.

When you cannot use MSAF

If you can answer YES to ANY of the following criteria, you CANNOT use the MSAF online and must visit the Faculty office with appropriate documentation:

- ✓ You have been absent longer than 3 days
- ✓ You missed course work valued at 25% or more of your grade
- ✓ You have already submitted one MSAF during this term
- ✓ Your absence was not due to minor illness or injury

You must then do the following:

- A *Notification of Absence Form* (available in the Faculty office, KTH 129) must be completed and submitted to the Office of the Associate Dean within **2 business days** of the end of your illness.
- *Supporting documentation.* If the absence was for medical reasons, the documentation should be a McMaster Student Health Certificate form completed by an appropriate physician. This form is available in the Faculty office or on the website. The physician must indicate on this form specific start and end dates of the illness for it to be deemed complete. For non-medical absences, please submit supporting documentation as appropriate. You may be required to meet with an academic adviser to discuss your circumstances surrounding your missed work. PLEASE NOTE: Documentation for travel arrangements will no longer be accepted by the Faculty.
- Following verification of the documentation and approval by an academic adviser (if appropriate), the Faculty office will email the instructor and ‘cc’ the student. YOU must follow up directly (within 2 working days) with your instructor to discuss possible consideration for missed work.

- It is every student's responsibility to:
 - Follow all instructions carefully and completely.
 - Ensure that their McMaster email account is set up to send and receive messages.
 - Ensure that the correct email address is used to notify instructors.
 - Refer to the course outline to confirm the value of missed work.

Contact their instructor promptly (within 2 working days) to discuss consideration.

Policy on Disputing Exam Grade

If you disagree with the grade you were given on the exam, you must contact your professor within one week after the exam was returned, to schedule a meeting. At the meeting you must present your argument in writing (i.e. letter). Your letter must take into consideration the comments made by the professor in class as well as the written comments you received on the essay, and must explain why despite these, you are still convinced that your grade should have been higher.

Accessibility and Accommodations

McMaster University is committed to respecting, supporting, and celebrating the diversity of the broad range of people within the university community. For more information visit the Student Accessibility Services office at: <http://sas.mcmaster.ca/> or contact 1-905-525-9140 x 28652.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

Do NOT fax assignments. Please see your instructor for the most appropriate way to submit assignments.

The Sociology staff do NOT date-stamp assignments, nor do they monitor the submission or return of papers.

The McMaster Student Absence Form (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>) is a self-reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report absences that last up to 3 lectures and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work. Please note, this tool cannot be used during any final examination period.

You may submit a maximum of 1 Academic Work Missed request per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation.

If you are absent more than 3 lectures or exceed 1 request per term, or are absent for a reason other than medical, you MUST visit your Associate Dean's Office (Faculty Office). You may be required to provide supporting documentation.

This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence.

Students should check the web, the white board and the Undergraduate Bulletin board outside the Sociology office (KTH-627) for notices pertaining to Sociology classes or departmental business (eg. class scheduling information, location of mailboxes and offices, tutorial information, class cancellations, TA job postings, etc.).

Computer use in the classroom is intended to facilitate learning in that particular lecture or tutorial. At the discretion of the instructor, students using a computer for any other purpose may be required to turn the computer off for the remainder of the lecture or tutorial.

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

It is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND COURSE WORK

MAY 1 Introduction to Course Organization and Expectations

- No tutorials held

MAY 3 Relational Analytical Framework

- Wright Mills, C. The Sociological Imagination: The Promise [ONLINE]
- Tutorials begin

MAY 8 The Origins of Sociology

- Dillon, M. (2014). Introduction, pp.12-26.
- DQ presentations assigned in tutorials (*if you are away, speak to professor the following class and ask to be assigned a presentation date)

MAY 10 Karl Marx: the Centrality of Production in Social Life

- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch. 1: pp.31-43
- Marx, K. (1887). Ch. 26: The Secret of Primitive Accumulation; Ch. 27: Expropriation of the Agricultural Population from the Land; Ch. 28: Bloody Legislation against the Expropriated. *Capital Vol. I* (pp.500-520). [ONLINE]
- **CC due**

MAY 15 Karl Marx: Capital and Wage Labour

- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch. 1: pp. 43-62.
- Marx, K. (1932). Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 (pp.3-6; 10-16) [ONLINE]
- DQ presentations begin

MAY 17 Karl Marx: Ideology, Violence and the State

- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch. 1: pp.63-70
- Marx, K. (1976). Thesis on Feuerbach [ONLINE]
- **CC due**

MAY 22 VICTORIA DAY

MAY 24 Colonialism and its Legacy: an Application of Marxist Theory

- McNally, D. (2002). The Colour of Money: Race, Gender, and the Many Oppressions of Global Capital. In *Another World is Possible*. Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, pp.96-127.
- **CC due**

MAY 29 Max Weber: Basic Concepts in Sociology; Origins of Capitalism

- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch. 3: pp.117-134
- Weber, M. (1930). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (p. 3-19; 21-23; 102-123). [ONLINE]

MAY 31 No class; Study for Mid-term

JUNE 5 Max Weber: Social Stratification

- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch.3: pp.135-147
- Weber, M. The Distribution of Power within the Political Community: Class, Status, and Party. *Economy and Society*. [ONLINE]

JUNE 7 MID-TERM EXAM HELD IN CLASS

- No tutorials held

JUNE 12 Emile Durkheim

- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch. 2
- Durkheim, E. (1982). What is a Social Fact; *The Rules of Sociological Method* (pp.50-60). [ONLINE]

JUNE 14 Functionalism and Modernity; Critical Theory; Exchange, Exchange Network and Rational Choice Theories

- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch. 4
- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch. 5
- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch. 7: pp.246-256 and pp.260-261.
- **CC due**

JUNE 19 Theories of Race and Racism

- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch. 12

JUNE 21 Dependency Theory and World Systems Approach

- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch. 6: pp. 233-240
- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch. 14: pp. 458-463
- **CC due**

JUNE 26 Globalization and Neoliberal Theory

- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch. 15: pp.451-457.
- Boneau, D. Friedrich von Hayek, the Father of Neoliberalism. [ONLINE]
- Friedman, M. Selected Quotes [ONLINE]
- Essay assignment posted on Avenue and explained in lecture

JUNE 28 Critical Globalization Theories: New Imperialism

- Hickel, J. (2012). A Short History of Neoliberalism and How We Can Fix It. [ONLINE]
- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch. 15: pp. 464-471
- Harvey, D. (2005). The Neoliberal State. In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp.64-86.
- **CC due**

JULY 3 HOLIDAY

JULY 5 Critical Globalization Theories: the Transnational State

- Robinson, W.I. (2004). The Transnational State. In *A Theory of Global Capitalism: Transnational Production, Transnational Capitalists, and the Transnational State*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp.85-101.
- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch. 15: pp. 472-478.
- **CC Due**
- Essay-writing workshop I: building the structure of your essay

JULY 10 Feminist and Intersectionality Theories

- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch. 10
- Excerpts from Bell Hooks [ONLINE]
- Excerpts from Patricia Hill Collins [ONLINE]
- Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. (2014). Progress on Women's Rights: Missing in Action – A Shadow Report on Canada's Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, pp.8-20. [ONLINE]
- Essay-writing workshop II: practice applying theories to empirical reality

JULY 12 Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Class and Culture

- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch. 13
- **No CC Due, work on essay**
- Essay-writing workshop III: editing

JULY 17 Symbolic Interactionism

- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch. 8
- **ESSAY DUE**
- No tutorial

JULY 19 Social Constructionism and the Sociology of Knowledge;

- Berger, P. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality*. London: Penguin Books, pp. 13-17; 43-46; 65-70; and 149-165. [ONLINE]
- **CC Due**

JULY 24 Michele Foucault Theory of Power, Sexuality and the Body

- Dillon, M. (2014). Ch. 11

JULY 26 Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Anti-Oppressive Research

- Absolon, K. (2010). Indigenous Wholistic Theory: a Knowledge Set for Practice. *First People Child and Family Review* 5(2): 74-87. [ONLINE]
- Absolon, K. and Willet, C. Putting Ourselves Forward: Location in Aboriginal Research. In Brown, L. and Strega, S. (Eds.). *Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous, and Anti-Oppressive Approaches*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press: pp.97-124. [ONLINE]
- **CC due**

JULY 31 EXAM REVIEW

AUG 2 FINAL EXAM HELD IN CLASS

END