



The University of Western Ontario  
**SOCIOLOGY 2240E-650**  
**Classical & Contemporary Sociological Theory**  
**Summer 2016 Year**  
**Distance Studies**

**Instructor:** Dr. Amanda Zavitz

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**Course Description:**

This course examines a wide-range of classical sociological theorists. The main task will be to make sociological theory relevant to an understanding and appreciation of human society. More specifically, the primary goal is to help students to develop a way of looking at past and contemporary issues “sociologically”, and from a structural rather than individual standpoint. In doing so, we will discuss theory as a tool for organizing existing knowledge and as a means of generating “new” knowledge. We will attempt to understand each theorist within their own time so that we can appreciate the specific social and historical contexts, which gave rise to their particular forms of theorizing. A constant theme that will be developed in the course is that of the complex relationships among ideology, social order, and social change. How are these themes reflected in various schools of thought? What are the origin of theories and ideas as they relate to the changing conditions of humanity?

**Prerequisite(s):** At least 60% in 1.0 from: [Sociology 1020](#), [1021E](#), [1025A/B](#), [1026F/G](#), [1027A/B](#).

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**Antirequisite(s):** [Sociology 2270A/B](#) and [Sociology 2271A/B](#) or the former Sociology 230.

**Learning Outcomes:**

If you attend to your responsibilities in this course, you can expect by the end of the course you will be able to do the following:

- Understand the classical sociological theorists and how they have influenced the discipline of sociology.
- Understand some key contemporary sociological theorists, how they connect to classical sociological theory and the contribution they are making to sociological thought today.

- Be able to apply classical and contemporary sociological theories to develop clear, analytical and sophisticated responses to questions about society.
- Display fluency with core sociological concepts and be able to utilize them in the development of your written arguments.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the ways that theory is constructed, how the various theories relate to one another and how they can be understood in terms of sociological research.
- Understand the difference between an individualistic and social structural argument and be able to move beyond description of a social issue to analysis.

**Required Text(s): Ritzer, George. 2014. Sociological Theory, 9th edition. NY: McGraw Hill.**

ISBN: 9780078027017

**Please NOTE-** an OLDER version of this textbook that is used or new is acceptable as well

**Method of Evaluation:**

**Online discussions/participation:** 20%

**Essay:** 20%

**Midterm Exam:** 30%

**Final Exam:** 30%

**NB:** All make-up tests are essay format and are considerably more demanding than the regularly scheduled tests, which will comprise a combination of multiple choice, short answers, and essays. In the latter two I insist on crisp arguments. While descriptions are fine, they are not enough. I expect you to analyze and explain.

***Evaluation Breakdown:***

**Assignment(s) Online Discussion/Participation:** each week students will be asked to answer an online discussion question. A total of *fourteen* online discussion questions will be given throughout the term. Students will be given a grade out of five for each of the discussion questions. Students can DROP their two lowest discussion question grades. The discussion questions will help to ensure that students understand the material presented, I encourage students to complete all of the questions.

**Midterm Exam: Saturday June 18, 2016** (specific location to be announced). Students must write their midterm examination on campus (UWO) or at a remote scheduled location (if you live too far away from campus). The midterm exam will consist of multiple choice questions, definitions, fill in the blanks, short answer/essay questions.

**Final Exam:** Specific date/time and location to be announced. Students must write their final examination on campus (UWO) or at a remote scheduled location (if you live too far away from campus). The final exam is not cumulative and will consist of multiple choice, definitions, fill in the blanks, short answer/essay questions.

**Essay:** This is an essay course. Thus, you are required to write a formal academic essay in this course. Your essay is **DUE: Wednesday July 6, 2016**. You MUST submit a copy of your essay to the drop box

by midnight on this date. All late papers will be penalized 10 percent per day. Essay topics will be posted.

**How to Contact Me:** [azavitzg@uwo.ca](mailto:azavitzg@uwo.ca)

**How to get important information:**

- a) The course information sheet
- b) The assignment due dates sheet
- c) The course calendar

**Important Policies**

***Policies for Assignment Deadlines:***

All assignments must be submitted on the due dates assigned. If your assignment is not submitted on the due date, you must have a documentable illness or death in order to submit the assignment.

***A Note on Plagiarism:***

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed in the Western Academic Calendar).

***Plagiarism Checking:***

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com ([www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)).

***Policies on Examinations***

No electronic devices will be permitted during examinations.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

### ***Policy on Laptops and other Electronics/Phones in Class:***

Laptops are permitted in class but if it is observed that students are on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, they will be told to close the lid and they will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cell phones are turned off at the beginning of class.

### ***Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness***

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at [www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation:

[http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical\\_accommodation.html](http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html)

### ***Accessibility Options:***

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:

[www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated\\_exams.html](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html)

### ***Scholastic Offences***

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site:

[www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### ***Mental Health***

Students who are in **emotional/mental distress** should refer to Mental Health@Western ([http://uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/index.html](http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html)) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

## Course Schedule and Readings:

### **WEEK 1 (MAY 9-15) INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY**

What is Social Theory? How and where do we begin to study social theory?

#### THINKING SOCIOLOGICALLY

Readings: Mills, The Sociological Imagination Chp 1 (online)

#### AGENCY VERSUS STRUCTURE

Readings: Steven Rose, 1979. "It's only human nature" (online reading).

**Assignment-** Online discussion question (Introduce yourself) and complete discussion 1

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### **WEEK 2 (MAY 16-22) ENLIGHTENMENT PHILOSOPHY**

Montesquieu and Rousseau; what is the Enlightenment?

Readings: Ritzer, Chp 1

#### ROMANTIC CONSERVATISM - A REACTION TO THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Kant, Hagel, Louis De Bonald and Joseph De Maistre

Readings: Ritzer, Chp 1

THE BIRTH OF SOCIOLOGY: Positivism, Evolutionary Theory Comte, St Simon, Spencer, and Social Darwinism

Readings: Ritzer, Chp 1

**Assignment:** Online discussion question 2

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### **WEEK 3 (MAY 23-29) DURKHEIM**

Social facts, religion, and suicide Division of Labour and Social Solidarity

Readings: Ritzer, Chp 3

**Assignment:** Online discussion question 3

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### **WEEK 4 (MAY 30- JUNE 5) MARX: Class and Exploitation**

Readings: Ritzer, Chp 2

**Assignment:** Online discussion question 4

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### **WEEK 5 (JUNE 6-12) WEBER: Power, Authority, and Leadership**

Readings: Ritzer, Chp 4

**Assignment:** Online discussion question 5

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**WEEK 6 (JUNE 13-19) EARLY WOMEN SOCIOLOGISTS- Charlotte Perkins Gilman**

**MIDTERM EXAM-** June 18, 2016 Location to be announced.

Readings: TBA

**Assignment:** Online discussion question 6, study for midterm exam (answer disc Q 7)

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**WEEK 7 (JUNE 20-26)**

CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Readings: Ritzer, Chp 6

STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM

Readings: Ritzer, Chp 7

**Assignment:** Online discussion question 8

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**WEEK 8 (JUNE 27- JULY 3) CRITICAL THEORY: What is Critical Theory?**

Readings: Ritzer, Chp 8

EXCHANGE, NETWORK AND RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY

Readings: Ritzer, Chp 11

Assignments: Online discussion question 9

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**WEEK 9 (JULY 4-10) SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM; Mead, Goffman, Hochschild**

Readings: Ritzer, Chp 9

ETHNOMETHODOLOGY AND PHENOMENOLOGY

Readings: Ritzer, Chp 10

**Assignment:** Online discussion question 10

**Essay DUE: Wednesday July 6, 2016**

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**WEEK 10 (JULY 11-17) FEMINIST THEORY**

Readings: Ritzer, Chp 12

INTEGRATIVE SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Readings: Ritzer, Chp 13 & 14

**Assignment:** Online discussion question 11

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**WEEK 11 (JULY 18-24) GLOBAL SOCIETY**

APPLIED CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY Why Isn't the Whole World Developed?

Readings: Ritzer, Chp 15

**Assignment:** Online discussion question 12

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**WEEK 12 (JULY 25-AUGUST 1) POSTSTRUCTURAL AND POSTMODERN THEORIES**

Readings: Ritzer, Chp 16 & 17

**Assignment:** Online discussion question 13, study for FINAL EXAM (disc Q 14)

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**FINAL EXAM-** in the final examination period- August 2-5, 2016.

**Thanks for a great course! Enjoy the rest of your summer!**