

SOCIOLOGY 3404G-001
Modern Sociological Theory

Winter 2021

Wednesdays, 4:30–7:20, Sommerville House 3307

(Meetings will be held online if required by MLHU or Provincial Health guidelines)

Instructor: Dr. Robert Nonomura

Office Hours: TBA

Department of Sociology, Office: SSC 5209

Email: rnonomur@uwo.ca

Course Description:

This course will survey major trends in modern sociological theory.

The course is designed to refine your understanding of key theoretical ideas, problems, and debates within contemporary sociology. In addition to developing a more in-depth understanding of the theories of influential social researchers, we will explore the ways that sociological thinking can help us engage more incisively with the “big” social and political issues of our time. Tensions between theory and practice, power and knowledge, structure and agency, oppression and resistance, will be recurring topics we’ll explore throughout the semester, as will the emphasis on cultivating a “reflexive” understanding of sociological inquiry itself.

Please note that open student-led class discussion will comprise a significant portion of our weekly meetings. Consistent preparation, focus, and participation will therefore be crucial to your success throughout the semester, and to the effectiveness of the course itself. Class time will generally be divided between presentations led by a designated team of “discussants” for the week, and a segment of direct instruction by me. Through our collective efforts, we will synthesize key insights from the readings and draw broader connections to the course, the discipline, and society at large.

Prerequisite(s): Soc 2240E OR both Soc 2270A/B and 2271A/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 4404F/G

Learning Outcomes:

The course is geared toward achieving the following learning outcomes. You may interpret these as both a reference point for “where we’re headed” with the material in the course, as well as a broad rubric for the knowledge, understanding, and ability I expect of students in a “3000-level” course. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Articulate the role that theory plays in social scientific inquiry and compare the relative strengths and weaknesses of various theoretical perspectives for particular kinds of sociological research.
- Understand key theoretical concepts (e.g. reflexivity, criticism, structure/agency, power/knowledge, intersectionality) in contemporary social theory.
- Identify a sociological topic of interest, and use scholarly sources to develop an essay-length theoretical examination of this topic.
- Apply social-theoretical ideas and concepts in verbal discussions about current social issues and problems.
- Critically discuss key theoretical contributions made by influential figures in modern sociological thought.
- Lead a class discussion that generates scholarly conversation about the work of a particular theorist or theoretical tradition in sociology.

Required Text(s):

3404G-001 Custom Course Pack

Feminism for the 99% by Cinzia Arruzza, Nancy Fraser, & Tithi Bhattacharya

Method of Evaluation:

Essay Proposal (10%) — February 11

Essay (40%) — March 21

Online Quiz 1 (5%) — Opens February 9 – Due February 16

Online Quiz 2 (5%) — Opens March 16 – Due March 23

Seminar Presentation/Discussion Facilitation (15%) — Sign-up in class on January 19

Participation (25% — 15% class meetings, 10% online forum contribution) — Ongoing

Evaluation Breakdown:

Essay Proposal — 10%

Essay proposals will be uploaded to Assignments page on OWL.

Full instructions and rubric are available on OWL: Resources>Assignments

Essay — 40%

Essays will be uploaded to Assignments page on OWL.

Full instructions and rubric are available on OWL: Resources>Assignments

Quizzes — 10% (2 x 5% each)

Quizzes will be conducted online. They may consist of a variety of question formats, such as Multiple Choice, Short Answer, Concept Definitions, Matching, etc.

Quiz 1 opens February 9, 5:00pm and closes February 16, 4:10pm. It covers weeks 1–5.

Quiz 2 opens March 16, 5:00pm and closes March 23, 4:10pm. It covers weeks 6–9.

See the Tests & Quizzes page on our OWL portal for full details

Seminar Presentation/Discussion Facilitator — 15%

Date and group selection takes place in class by random draw on January 19 (Week 2). Facilitators will also post their discussion questions to the class's OWL Forum within two days of their presentation date.

Full instructions and rubric available on OWL: Resources>Assignments

Participation — 25% (15% class meetings; 10% online forum contribution)

Participation in class meetings is assessed cumulatively throughout the term. Evaluation for this mark comprises all forms of interaction and communication (in class and in office hours) that contribute to the accomplishment of our course objectives and that also uphold the class code of ethics.

Online forum participation comprises written responses to discussion questions posed in the Forum section on OWL. Responses should be approximately 1-2 paragraph in length. It is expected that students will contribute in at least seven (7) of the weekly topics in the course.

Discussion forums for each week's topic open on Thursday before the topic is covered in class (except for the first week of classes). They close on Monday night after the class has taken place. The week's Discussion Facilitators will upload a selection of their own discussion questions within two days of their presentation.

Participation rubric available on OWL: Resources>Assignments

How to Contact Me:

I am available by email at rmonomur@uwo.ca.

How to get important information:

Important notifications will be posted to the Announcements section of OWL. Please ensure that you have your OWL settings arranged so that you receive these messages.

Please do not reply direction to the OWL Announcements you receive in your email—I do not always receive them, and therefore may be unable to reply.

Important Policies

Policies for Assignment Deadlines:

Generally, your work will be submitted via the Assignments tool on OWL. Specific details regarding deadlines, extensions, and late penalties for each assignment will be provided in the assignment instructions.

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).

Policies on Examinations

Our Quizzes will be conducted online via OWL. Some sections of these tests will be computer-marked.

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.

Further information regarding examination policies can be found on page 2 of the academic handbook under outlines https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/courseoutlines.pdf

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.

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation: counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/academic_consideration.html.

Academic Consideration for Missed Work

Students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester may submit a *Self-Reported Absence (SRA)* form online provided that the absence is **48 hours or less** and the other conditions specified in the [Senate policy](#) are met. Two important exceptions to this rule: SRAs will NOT be allowed for

final examinations or assessments worth more than 30% of a given course. Students whose absences are expected to last **longer than 48 hours**, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used 2 self-reported absences, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a [Student Medical Certificate](#) (for illness) or other appropriate documentation (for compassionate grounds) to your Home Faculty Academic Counselling office.

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.

www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf

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/academics/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

Mental Health

Students who are in **emotional/mental distress** should refer to Mental Health@Western (www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

Course delivery with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic

Although the intent is for this course to be delivered in-person, the changing COVID-19 landscape may necessitate some or all of the course to be delivered online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

When deemed necessary, tests and examinations in this course will be conducted using a remote proctoring service. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide personal information (including some biometric data) and the session will be recorded. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including

technical requirements, is available on Western's Remote Proctoring website at:
<https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.