Theorizing Contemporary Society

SOCY 227
Winter 2020
Mondays, 3:30-5:30 pm, Ellis Auditorium
Tutorials TBD

Instructor: Thomas Abrams
Instructor thomas.abrams@queensu.ca
Office Hours: Thursdays 11:30 - 1:00 pm, or by appointment; Mackintosh-Corry D421

TAs:
TBD1
TBD2
TBD3
TBD4

Tutorials begin after class 2.

TA Office Hours: Each TA will set their office hours, TBD

Please email your Teaching Assistant first for general questions about the course material.
I will respond to emails during business hours, Monday-Friday 9am to 5 pm.
I am, of course, happy to meet with students in my office hours.

Course Outline

Building on the concepts presented in SOCY 226, this course uses more recent social and sociological theory as a lens to interrogate contemporary social life. With new social problems come new social theories; students will see how the conceptual debates within sociology have changed alongside Western social and political climates. Students will be assessed via successive assignments leading to an essay, in-tutorial participation, and a take-home final exam, spanning the entirety of the class’ content.

Intended Student Learning Outcomes

Students who actively engage the course material and assignments will leave the class with:
- a critical perspective on the debates that shape sociological thought
- an ability to link classical debates in social theory with contemporary social theory
- the capacity to apply contemporary sociological theory to current social issues
- an understanding of contemporary challenges to the sociological canon

Textbooks/Readings

As in SOCY 226, I have designed the course to be a close reading of primary texts in sociological theory, supplemented somewhat by secondary sources when necessary. In each case, the course readings are available via OnQ. While there is no physical textbook for class, students are encouraged to bring the readings to the lectures and their tutorials. Please come to your tutorial prepared to discuss the readings from the previous lecture. I have also included accompanying literature that you might want to look at for your final essay (hint, hint).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Required Readings</th>
<th>Notes, and Suggested Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – January 6th</td>
<td>Course Introduction—No tutorials this week.</td>
<td>Read the syllabus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Paper outline due.** |
<p>| 7 – February 17th  | No Class – Family Day                                                   | None—But you should probably read Durkheim for fun.                  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Annotated bibliography due.**

**Term paper due.**
13 – March 30th


*Take home final available after final class.*

**Tutorial Schedule and Locations:**

See “Course home” on OnQ for TA sections and locations, once they have been set up.

**Grading Scheme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Outline</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Due Feb 10th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Due March 2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Due March 23rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take-Home Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Due April 10th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assignments**

**Tutorial Attendance and Participation:**

At the end of each tutorial, the TA will pose a question to the present students, written on the board, to be replied to in written form. Each written submission is worth two marks. Emailed submissions will be accepted, if written and received during the tutorial time. With one exception: **no more than twice per semester** student can contact their TA via email to receive the question on the day of that week’s tutorial. Past this, all submissions must be received by the TA (physically or electronically) before the end of the tutorial, in the tutorial. Students can thus miss two tutorial classes without a grade penalty.

These small submissions are **not** graded extensively, but are intended to reward tutorial attendance. The aim is to get students to think through an individual concept per-week, in 2-3 sentences, and give their TA an understanding of their familiarity with the material.

*This is the same system as that for SOCY 226.*

**Paper outline:**

Intended to get students thinking about the papers early, I have assigned a paper outline assignment. It is not difficult. Please provide an argument, point-form outline, and three preliminary sources for your paper, drawing from one, but no more than one, reading presented on this course syllabus. I will provide a tentative list of paper topics—not arguments, but topics—after class, week four. We will discuss more
about the paper outline in lecture, and with your TA in tutorials. The paper outline is worth 5% of your final grade—but more importantly, will help frame your term paper.

**Annotated Bibliography:**

In this assignment, and as you learned in SOCY 122, you will outline the main arguments of three sources that you will use in your final paper. As with the outline, one of these sources should be a course reading. Please also include a sentence on how you will use the source in your argument, and provide references for the three sources in ASA format. These sources must be peer-reviewed articles or books—rather than textbook chapter or encyclopedia entries. Ask your TA if you do not know whether a source qualifies as such. The bibliography assignment is worth 15% of your final grade, and will be discussed further in the class.

**Relevant Journals, from which to locate sources:**

- *Canadian Journal of Sociology*
- *American Journal of Sociology*
- *Theory, Culture & Society*
- *European Journal of Social Theory*
- *Sociological Theory*
- *Theory & Society*
- *British Journal of Sociology*
- *Economy & Society*
- *Acta Sociologica*
- *Sociology*
- *Sociological Review*
- *Media, Culture & Society*
- *Body & Society*
- *Cultural Sociology*
- *Disability Studies Quarterly*
- *Disability & Society*
- *Gender & Society*
- *Feminist Theory*
- *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*

**Term paper**

The term paper assignment is your opportunity to theorize any aspect of contemporary society, so long as you incorporate one of the course readings. I will provide a list of tentative topics before the paper outline is due, but it is your job to come up with a sociological argument that you will pursue in the paper. The paper should be 8 pages, not including a cover page, double spaced, in 12-point font (your TAs can tell the difference). Due March 26th, the term paper is worth 30% of your final grade. Given that this is in addition to your introduction and bibliography assignments, it should be your top priority in this class. That means: **start early, email your TAs or instructor with questions, and proofread your paper.**

**Take-Home Final Exam**
In lieu of a hand-written exam, students will write a take-home final examination. The exam will cover the readings for the entire course. A complete exam will consist of one six-page, double spaced response to one question, from a predetermined list. Students will not need to use sources outside of those appearing on this syllabus, or Ritzer’s shorter encyclopedia of sociology, used in SOCY 122 and 226. I will make the exam available to students following the final class, April 17th, 2019. Do not work in groups on the take-home. This assignment accounts for 25% of your final grade.

Grading Method

All components of this course will receive numerical percentage marks. The final grade you receive for the course will be derived by converting your numerical course average to a letter grade according to Queen’s Official Grade Conversion Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Course Average (Range)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>63-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>57-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>53-56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>50-52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>49 and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Late Policy

Late assignments will receive a penalty of 5% per day after the submission time.

Location and Timing of Final Examinations

There is no sit-down final examination for this course.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is constituted by the six core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage (see www.academicintegrity.org). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of
inquiry and exchange of ideas” essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities).

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Arts and Science Calendar (see Academic Regulation 1), on the Arts and Science website, and from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

Accommodations for Disabilities

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for people with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. The Senate Policy for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities was approved at Senate in November 2016. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need academic accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the QSAS website at: http://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services/

Academic Consideration for Students with Extenuating Circumstances

Queen’s University is committed to providing academic consideration to students experiencing extenuating circumstances that are beyond their control and are interfering with their ability to complete academic requirements related to a course for a short period of time, not to exceed three months. Students receiving academic consideration must meet all essential requirements of a course. The Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances was approved at Senate in April, 2017. Each Faculty has developed a protocol to provide a consistent and equitable approach in dealing with requests for academic consideration for students facing extenuating circumstances. Arts and Science undergraduate students can find the Faculty of Arts and Science protocol and the portal where a request can be submitted at: http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/accommodations. Students in other Faculties and Schools who are enrolled in this course should refer to the protocol for their home Faculty.

If you need to request academic consideration for this course, you will be required to provide the name and email address of the instructor/coordinator. Please use the following:

Thomas Abrams,