**SOCY901 SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY**  
**FALL 2020 REMOTE**

Course delivered via OnQ and MS Teams

**Tuesdays 10.30am - 1.30pm**

**Instructor**

Dr. Martin Hand

handm@queensu.ca

M/C D529

**MS Teams Drop-In Office Hours: Tuesdays 3.00pm – 4.00pm, or email for an appointment**

**INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY AND CLASS ENGAGEMENT**

This is a remote class that combines asynchronous and synchronous elements.

**Asynchronous:** recorded micro lectures for each week available in OnQ the **Monday before class**.

**Synchronous:** small group work discussing themes in the week’s readings: **Tuesdays 11.30-12.25pm**.

**Synchronous:** live instructor-led, group-wide MS Teams discussion: **Tuesdays 12.35-1.30pm**.

There will drop-in MS Teams office hours on **Tuesdays 3.00 – 4.00pm** or by appointment on a platform of your choice.
**Calendar Description**

This course critically examines the main tenets of contemporary sociological theory. Key sociological concepts are studied in a variety of contexts spanning from the micro to macro levels of social action. Although heavily reliant on the main historical developments in sociology (Marx, Weber and Durkheim), emphasis is placed on post-war developments in sociological theory.

**Aims**

This course enables students to critically engage with some of the core positions and debates within contemporary sociological theory. It aims to provide an advanced forum for the examination and discussion of several varieties of theorizing in Sociology, the philosophical issues and problems intrinsic to the social sciences, the continued salience of classical traditions and the plurality of responses to them. Students will be encouraged to situate their own work within these positions, and most importantly be open to exploring the very different ways in which theory conceptualizes the social world and the possibilities of inquiry.

**Organization**

The course does not claim to be comprehensive. It will place broad theoretical approaches into some context (e.g. ‘what problem or puzzle is this theorist/tradition seeking to understand, and why?’), examine a combination of primary and secondary texts, and concentrate on critically examining these in terms of their internal coherence and relationship to the social world. To do this, each session will begin with the instructor providing a recorded overview of the essential background and development of key ideas. We will then concentrate on discussing the texts and the questions that arise in small groups and then the large synchronous group format. The emphasis in this course is with theoretical interventions that have been relatively transformative at a broad level, as opposed to those directed toward very specific phenomena.

**Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this course students should be able to do the following:

- Understand some of the key directions in sociological thought in the post-war period.
- Identify significant ontological and epistemological differences in sociological theorizing.
- Clearly articulate and discuss core sociological concepts verbally and in written form.
- Develop clearly expressed, critical questions about how different theories are constructed.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how theoretical orientations relate to objects of social research.
**ASSESSMENT**

The assessment for the course is as follows:

- **Synchronous Participation** (knowledge of reading and clarity of communication): **20%**
- **Reading Reflections** (3-page reflections, weekly, submitted each Monday by 11.55pm): **30%**
- **Final Paper** (15-page comparative essay): **50%** Due December 11\(^{th}\)

More detail on these assessments will be provided in the first session.

**GRADING**

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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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>50-52</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>49 and below</td>
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SUBMISSION

Assignments are to be submitted in OnQ. **There will be a penalty of 5% per day on all late assignments, where the following do not apply:**

EXTENSIONS

The Senate Policy for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities was approved at Senate in November 2017 [https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.uslcwww/files/files/policies/senateandtrustees/Academic%20Considerations%20for%20Extenuating%20Circumstances%20Policy%20Final.pdf](https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.uslcwww/files/files/policies/senateandtrustees/Academic%20Considerations%20for%20Extenuating%20Circumstances%20Policy%20Final.pdf). Graduate students can request special consideration for extenuating circumstances that will have or have had an impact on an academic requirement or requirements.

Graduate students request short term academic accommodation by **completing one of two forms** (pdf 163KB) and submitting the form and any required additional documentation to the Graduate Coordinator (or delegate).

- For consideration for a brief absence of up to 48 hours, the student shall complete and submit the **Self-Declaration of Brief Absence (up to 48 hours)** form.
- For academic consideration (for up to 3 months) for extenuating circumstances the student shall complete and submit the **Request for Academic Consideration for Extenuating Circumstances** form. The student shall submit additional documentation if/as requested by the Graduate Coordinator.

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:

**Instructor/Coordinator Name: Dr. Martin Hand**
**Instructor/Coordinator email address: handm@queensu.ca**

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic Integrity is constituted by the six core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage (see [www.academicintegrity.org](http://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 [http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senate/report-principles-and-priorities](http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senate/report-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 [http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/regulations/academic-regulations/regulation-1](http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/regulations/academic-regulations/regulation-1), on the
Arts and Science website (see [http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/undergraduate/academic-integrity](http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/undergraduate/academic-integrity)), 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.

**Reading**

*The required readings are in OnQ. It is essential that you are completely familiar with them prior to each session.*

*I would encourage you – as graduate students – to read widely and use every resource at your disposal. This might be by using secondary texts or similar resources to familiarize yourself with concepts, theoretical approaches, ideas, that might be completely unfamiliar and just plain difficult!*

*The material on the website is copyrighted and is for the sole use of students registered in SOCY901. The material on this website may be downloaded for a registered student’s personal use, but shall not be distributed or disseminated to anyone other than students registered in SOC901. Failure to abide by these conditions is a breach of copyright, and may also constitute a breach of academic integrity under the University Senate’s Academic Integrity Policy Statement.*
### COURSE STRUCTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</table>
| September 8th | Orientation: expectations, structure, assessments | **Micro Lecture:** What is the course about and how will it work?  
**Live Discussion:** Introduce yourself!  
No Readings |
| September 15th | Varieties of Theorizing     | **Micro Lecture:** What are we doing when ‘theorizing’?  
**Group Activity:** Which approach to theory do I find most convincing, or familiar, and why?  
**Live Discussion:** What are the most significant problems for ‘theory’?  
| September 22nd | Contemporary Critical Theory | **Micro Lecture:** What is ‘critical’ about critical theory?  
**Group Activity:** Should theory be concerned with ‘justice’?  
**Live Discussion:** Reflections on the readings  
**Background:** Joas, Hans & Knobl, Wolfgang (2009) *Social Theory: twenty introductory lectures*. Cambridge: CUP. Chapter X. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>September 29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th><strong>Structure, Routine, Reflexivity</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Micro Lecture:</strong></td>
<td><em>Macro social change and personal life</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group Activity:</strong></td>
<td><em>Is ‘reflexivity’ now an imperative?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Live Discussion:</strong></td>
<td><em>Reflections on the readings</em></td>
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<tr>
<th>October 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th><strong>Structuralism and Poststructuralism</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Micro Lecture:</strong></td>
<td><em>Power, bodies, language</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Group Activity:</strong></td>
<td><em>What is a ‘subject’?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Live Discussion:</strong></td>
<td><em>Reflections on the readings</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background:</strong></td>
<td>Joas, Hans &amp; Knobl, Wolfgang (2009) <em>Social Theory: twenty introductory lectures</em>. Cambridge: CUP. Chapter XIV.</td>
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### October 13th
**Anti-Structuralism and Contemporary Pragmatism**

**Micro Lecture:** Interpretive sociology and Neo-pragmatism

**Group Activity:** How does capitalism survive?

**Live Discussion:** Reflections on the readings

**Readings:**

### October 20th
**Interactionism and Emotions**

**Micro Lecture:** The social production of the self

**Group Activity:** Are people’s feelings genuine?

**Live Discussion:** Reflections on the readings

**Readings:**
- Hochschild, Arlie (2012 [1985]) *The Managed Heart*. Berkeley: CUP. Ch. 6 & Appendix A.

### October 27th
**No Class**
**November 3**\(^{rd}\)  Phenomenological Sociology

**Micro Lecture:**  The primacy of experience

**Group Activity:**  What does ‘socially constructed’ really mean?

**Live Discussion:**  Reflections on the readings


**Background:**  Joas, Hans & Knobl, Wolfgang (2009) *Social Theory: twenty introductory lectures*. Cambridge: CUP. Chapter VII.

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**November 10**\(^{th}\)  Standpoints and Experiences

**Micro Lecture:**  Developments in feminist theorizing

**Group Activity:**  What is a ‘standpoint’ and how can we recognize it?

**Live Discussion:**  Reflections on the readings


November 17th  Post-Colonialism and Global Sociology

**Micro Lecture:** Reorienting social theory

**Group Activity:** What are the relations between sociological theories and colonialism?

**Live Discussion:** Reflections on the readings

**Readings:**

November 24th  Rethinking Modernities and Disciplinarity

**Micro Lecture:** Theories of post-traditional societies

**Group Activity:** What should we retain in sociological theory?

**Live Discussion:** Reflections on the readings

**Readings:**