

**751 Contemporary Theory
Fall 2020**

Professor N. McLaughlin
Office: KTH 620
Phone: 525-9140, ext 23611
Email: nmclaugh@mcmaster.ca

CLASS MEETS FROM 11:30AM TO 2:20PM Mondays

Office Hours: During class time when in session and not during the fall break: Other times by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This graduate seminar on contemporary theory will explore in detail debates about canons, the theory-method connection and the work of Mann, Vaughn, critical theory, Burawoy, Bourdieu and Fanon. We will learn to do a concept map for a paper on canons, a short paper in your area of interest using the Alford method for thinking about theory-method, an essay on public sociology and a concept map for a larger paper in your area of interest (just the concept map, not the paper).

REQUIREMENTS

Response to readings: 10 best out of 12 = 20%
Concept Map on Canons: 10%
Alford Paper: 25%
Public Sociology Essay: 15%
Final Concept Map and Annotated Bibliography: 30%

There will be a 2% a day late penalty on all assignments, including the responses to the readings.

The response questions will be posted on Avenue to Learn, well in advance of the class. The first three weeks are posted as of July 11, 2020.

The details for each assignment are posted on Avenue to Learn, under the headline "Details for assignments." The response should be under one single space page, and as detailed as possible while staying on the topic of the question asked.

Week 1 Monday Sept 14: Predecessor Selection

Camic, Charles. "Reputation and predecessor selection: Parsons and the institutionalists." *American Sociological Review* (1992): 421-445.

Camic, Charles. "Alexander's antisociology." *Sociological Theory* 14, no. 2 (1996): 172-186.

Alexander, J.C. and Sciortino, G., 1996. On choosing one's intellectual predecessors: The reductionism of Camic's treatment of Parsons and the Institutionalists. *Sociological Theory*, 14(2), pp.154-171.

Week 2: Monday Sept 21:

Lamont, M. (1987). How to become a dominant French philosopher: The case of Jacques Derrida. *American Journal of Sociology*, 584-622.

Connell, RW. "Why is classical theory classical?." *American journal of sociology* 102, no. 6 (1997): 1511-1557.

Collins, Randall (1997). "A Sociological Guilt Trip: Comment on Connell," *American journal of sociology* 102: 6: 1558-1564.

Neil McLaughlin review of Randall Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies* JHBS

Week 3: Cosers and Du Bois Monday Sept 28

Rose Laub Coser, (1966) "Role Distance, Sociological Ambivalence, and Transitional Status Systems," *American Journal of Sociology*, 72:2: 173-187.

Lewis Coser, (1975). "Two Methods in Search of a Substance," *American Sociological Review*, 40: 6: 691-700.

Mathew Hughley and Devon Gross, (2018). "With Whom no White Scholar can Compare": Academic Interpretations of the Relationship between W.E.B. Du Bois and Max Weber," *The American Sociologist* 49: 181-217.

Aldon Morris and Amin Ghaziani, (2005). "DuBoisian Sociology: A Watershed of Professional and Public Sociology," *Souls* 7:3-4: 47-54.

Week 4: Types of Theory and the sociology of Ideas Monday Oct 5

Charles Camic and Neil Gross, (1998). "Contemporary Developments in Sociological Theory: Current Projects and Conditions," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24:453-476.

Glenn Jacobs, (2009). "Influence and Canonical Supremacy: An Analysis of How George Herbert Mead Demoted Charles Horton Cooley in the Sociological Canon," *JHBS*. 45:2: 117-144.

Week 5: Robert Alford's The Logic of Inquiry: Monday Monday Oct 19

Robert Alford, *The Craft of Inquiry: Theories, Methods and Evidence* (1998)

Chapters 1 to 6:

Week 6: Examples of Three Logics Monday October 26

Mark Granovetter, (1983) "The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited," *Sociological Theory* 1: 201-233.

Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, (1980) "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22:2: 174-197.

Erving Goffman (1983). "The Interaction Order," *American Sociological Review* 48-1: 1-17.

Week 7: Vaughan's ethnographic theorizing: Monday Nov 2

Diane Vaughan, (2006). "NASA Revisited: Theory, Analogy, and Public Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology*, 112:2: 353-393.

Diane Vaughan (2004). "Theorizing Disaster: Analogy, Historical Ethnography, and the Challenger accident," *Ethnography* 5(3): 315-347.

George Simmel, (1906). "The Sociology of Secrecy and of Secret," *The American Journal of Sociology*, XI: 4: 441-498.

Week 8: Mann's Weberian Sociology: Monday Nov 9

Michael Mann, (1986). "A history of power from the beginning to AD 1760," in *The Sources of Social Power*, 1-33.

Michael Mann, (2000), "Were the Perpetrators of Genocide "Ordinary Men," or "Real Nazis"? Results from Fifteen Hundred Biographic," *Holocaust and Genocide* 14:3: 331-366.

Jack Goldstone (2005) "A historical, comparative, method: breakthroughs and limitations in the theory and methodology of Michael Mann's analysis of power," 263-282.

Week 9: Critical Theory? Monday Nov 16

Axel van den Berg (1980) "Critical Theory: Is There Still Hope?" *The American Journal of Sociology* 86:3: 449-478.

Neil McLaughlin (1999), "Origins Myths in the Social Sciences: Fromm, the Frankfurt School and the Emergence of Critical Theory," *The Canadian Journal of Sociology* 24:1: 109-139.

Neil Smelser (1998). "The Rational and the Ambivalent in the Social Sciences," *American Sociological Review*, 63:1: 1-16.

Week 10: Theorizing Public Sociology, Monday Nov 23

Swartz, David L. (2003). From Critical Sociology to Public Intellectual: Pierre Bourdieu and Politics. *Theory and Society*, 32: 791-823.

Burawoy, M., 2005. For public sociology. *American sociological review*, 70(1), pp.4-28.

Week 11: Bourdieu and the Psychosocial, Monday Nov 30

Leonidas Cheliotis, (2011). "For a Freudo-Marxist critique of social domination: Rediscovering Erich Fromm through the mirror of Pierre Bourdieu," *Journal of Classical Sociology*, 11:4: 438-461.

Glen Coulhard (2006). Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Recognition," 1-22.

Franz Fanon, (1965). "This is the Voice of Algeria," *In Dying Colonialism* 1-15.

Week 12: Zelizer Monday Dec 7.

Viviana Zelizer (2000). "The Purchase of Intimacy," American Bar Foundation, 1-32.

Viviana Zelizer (2012). “How I Became a Relational Economic Sociologist and What Does That Mean,” *Politics and Society* 40:2: 145-174.

Mark Granovetter “The Strength of Weak Ties” *AJS*

Fanon, F., 1965. This is the Voice of Algeria. *A Dying Colonialism*. *New York: Monthly Review*, pp.69-98.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour 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 types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty

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

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a [RISO](#) accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online. It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, 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.

Course Modification

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.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be

communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-89	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

