

Fall, 2017

Contemporary Advanced Sociological Theory: Sociology 3P03

Wed 11:30pm to 1:20pm

HSC 1A4

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Dr. McLaughlin

Office hours: 2:30pm to 3:30pm on Tuesdays during classes beginning Sept 13 and ending Dec 5 (by appointment when classes are not in session, including Oct. 18 when there will not be an office hour).

### **Political Sociology**

This class will provide an introduction to major contemporary sociological theory, with a focus on selected thinkers and a biographical/sociology of ideas engagement with their theories in historical context. We will address several key themes, particularly the science/interpretive sociology debates, the tensions between political/public engagement and scholarship, the micro-meso-macro level of analysis issue, and the question of excluded/marginalized/optimal marginal creative thinkers.

### **Class Objectives**

Read and understand original writings of major sociological theorists.

Place major theorists in biography and historical context, learn their basic ideas, be exposed to the major criticisms of each theorist and explore some applications today.

Explore a synthetic approach to theorizing.

Explore and engage 4 major themes in sociological theory:

- The science question in sociology.
- The tensions between political and public engagement and scholarship.
- The micro, macro and meso levels of analysis.
- The sociological roots of sociological creativity: marginality and exclusion in social theory.

## Grades:

Tutorial: up to 20%. The TA will post a schedule of meetings on Avenue to Learn during the first week of classes and the tutorial will start the second week. The TA will be responsible for an attendance based, active learning based and small assignment based grading system for the 20% tutorial grade. I highly recommend the tutorials, and I will use them to conduct reviews for exams but they are NOT required. Basically, after the class, I will compile the final grade you have for the class based on the 80% of the grade and adjust your final grade upwards if your tutorial grade is higher than your grades on the exams or just give you your exam grade if you either skip the tutorials or your grade on that is lower than your exam grade. The tutorial grades are intended to be easier than the exams, thus providing a boost for your grades. And the instructor and the TA will be doing things in tutorial that will be designed to help you learn and apply the material, so I highly recommend the tutorials. But they are not required.

Midterm Exam Oct 25: 40%

Final Exam: 40%: organized by the university on a date they set.

Both exams will consist of 15 multiple-choice questions (2 % each for a total of 30%), 6 out of a choice of 7 short answer questions (9% each for a total of 54%) and 1 out of a choice of 2 essay questions (for a total of 16%). A short and general grading rubric for short answers and essays will be placed on Avenue to Learn to guide your studying, something that will also be discussed in tutorial.

Questions will be mostly from the lectures, but there will be a significant number of questions on the exams that CAN ONLY be answered if you have done the readings. The tutorials will help you learn how to read peer-reviewed articles of theory (which is much harder than reading the textbooks you often read in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> year) and to apply what you have read, and review lectures. But the tutorials will NOT replace doing the readings.

## Readings:

Links to all readings are uploaded on Avenue to Learn and clearly marked for the lectures.

I highly recommend reading the required readings before and then after class. If you miss class, I would be happy to answer questions in office hours about what you missed, after you read the required readings and posted Powerpoint slides.

Class schedule:

Wed Sept 6: Intro

Wed Sept 13: Sociology and Merton

Wed Sept 20: Merton

Wed Sept 27: Mills

Wed Oct 4: The Cosers and Simmel

Wed Oct 11: Goffman

Wed Oct 25: Exam 1

Wed Nov 1: Fromm/Weber and Marx Review

Wed Nov 8: Fromm and Hochschild, Emotions and Gender

Wed Nov 15: Hochschild and Trump/ Du Bois

Wed Nov 22: Du Bois and Race/ Homans

Wed Nov 29: Exchange Theory, Granovetter and Network Theory

Thursday Dec 6: Vaughn and public sociological theory

### **General Class Rules:**

#### **Course Rules**

1. The best way to use email is to send me a note asking for clarification of a point in the lectures or in the readings. I will not directly answer emails to individual students about specific questions (that would be a full-time job itself!), but if you email questions I will have an answer prepared for the next class. You can raise general questions at the beginning of each class. For something that relates to you but not to the whole class, it is best to talk to me in person after class, or in my office hours. **Please go to my office hours for complex matters regarding your grade or success in the class or special accommodations – right before the lecture I am concentrating on the lecture and CANNOT address specific questions relating to your performance in the class, days you have or will miss, or issues such as this. Come to my office hours, or talk to me after lecture when I am less focused on lecturing.** E-mail and my voice mail are much more efficient than contacting the staff. A note left for me at the office might stay there unread for

several days. I usually check my voice mail at least once a week (but even this CANNOT be counted on!) and my e-mail regularly. The sociology office will not take faxes and I will not read faxed essays, doctor's notes, etc. Do not e-mail me regarding questions that can be answered by this course outline or about material covered when you missed class. But **do** email me to set up a time to talk in person about matters that are not covered in the course description. Please outline in your email the general purpose of our discussion, and we will set up a time to talk that works for both of us.

2. The staff will not date stamp assignments!

3. All written work (exams, etc.) is expected to meet the standards of university work. Grades will be based on mechanics, style, clarity and diction, in addition to ideas. This is a sociology class, so the major focus will be on learning sociological ideas. But clear thinking is related to clear writing, and the grading will reflect this. In addition, sociology is part of a general liberal arts education and well-developed writing skills are one important selling point for liberal arts graduates on the contemporary job market. So writing matters, and will be graded accordingly! I am, however, happy to help you improve and have set up time in class to do so.

4. Students are expected to attend all lectures and are responsible for all material in lectures and in course readings. I will be happy to discuss the class material with students during office hours or other arranged times but will not review material for students when they miss classes or do not do the readings. You should ask another student for notes for classes that you miss. Reading assignments should be completed before the class in which the reading material is discussed.

5. The McMaster Student Absence Form (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>) is a self reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report absences that last up to 3 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work. Please note, this tool cannot be used during any final examination period.

You may submit a maximum of 1 Academic Work Missed request per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation.

If you are absent more than 3 days, exceed 1 request per term, or are absent for a reason other than medical, you MUST visit your Associate Dean's Office (Faculty Office). You may be required to provide supporting documentation.

This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence.

6. Students should check the web, the white board and the Undergraduate Bulletin board outside the Sociology office (KTH-627) for notices pertaining to Sociology classes or departmental business (eg. class scheduling information, location of mailboxes and offices, tutorial information, class cancellations, TA job postings, etc.).

7. 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. Make sure you check the announcements in the Avenue to Learn, for the class. I use this function frequently.

8. 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.

9. Factors outside the control of the instructor may necessitate changes in this course outline. Students should especially note the attached document entitled, "The Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty During Work Stoppages by Other Groups at McMaster University" (below). Preamble: This statement is complementary to, and not a substitute for, the statement of "Duties and Responsibilities of Faculty Members" in the Code of Conduct for Faculty. Additional responsibilities of faculty members who also hold administrative positions are described in the terms of reference for these positions.

1. A faculty member has the right to respect the efforts of other employees to secure a collective agreement.<sup>2</sup>

2. A faculty member is under no obligation to carry out the duties of any University employee engaged in a work stoppage (either a strike or a lockout) nor shall he/she be subject to disciplinary action for failing to do so.

3. A faculty member who chooses to assist employees on a work stoppage by, for example, joining the picket lines or speaking on behalf of the striking or locked out employees shall not be sanctioned for this behaviour.

4. A faculty member has a right not to cross a picket line of striking or locked out employees. In instances where the faculty member elects to exercise this right, and has normal scheduled duties, including the teaching of courses, that would be affected by declining to cross a picket line, either (a) the faculty member has made other arrangements for carrying out the scheduled duties, and these arrangements have been approved by the appropriate Chair/Director; or (b) the faculty member has a responsibility to advise the appropriate Chair/Director as early as reasonably possible that he/she will not be available for the scheduled duties, it being

understood that, for each day on which this occurs, the member will be deemed to have sought and been granted a one-day leave without pay, but with fringe benefits.

5. Circumstances beyond the faculty member's control may prevent him/her from fulfilling scheduled duties during a work stoppage. In such circumstances, 4(a) and 4(b) above do not apply.

10. This is a difficult and demanding class. Comparisons to other classes in this program or to other programs in the university that may be or be perceived to be less demanding will not help you focus on the task at hand. Coming to class and doing the reading is a basic requirement. But I would also HIGHLY recommend a serious study program, where you go over your notes before and after classes – the essays will require serious engagement with the material.

11. The outline of readings and the dates for topics below is approximate, and may change as the class progresses. Announcements of changes and revisions will be made in class and posted on Avenue to Learn. Please check the announcements on Avenue to Learn regularly, as well as your email on Avenue to Learn.

12. There is a significant amount of material to be covered for the course, and it all should be discussed on the assignments. Serious engagement with both the lectures and the readings is essential. ☒

13. Please do not walk into class late, except under extraordinary circumstances. This is distracting to the both the instructor and the students, and is not fair to people who come to class on-time. ☒ Please sit at the back of the class, if you have to exit early because of an unavoidable scheduling conflict.

## **POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and 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 kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at [http://www.mcmaster.ca/senate/academic/ac\\_integrity.htm](http://www.mcmaster.ca/senate/academic/ac_integrity.htm).

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