McMaster University  
Department of Sociology  

SOCIOL 2LL3- Introduction to Contemporary Sociological Theory  
SECTION: C02-LEC (15154)

Winter, 2019  
Day and Time of Classes: Tuesdays, 7-9 p.m.  
Class Location: MDCL 1110

Instructor: REZA BARMAKI  
Ext.: 27346  
Office: KTH-643  
Office Hours:  
Email Address:

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Creation of a 'free' society in which human beings lived an autonomous and dignified existence was one of the main goals of theorizing in the classical age of sociology. Marx, Weber, and Durkheim's work were exemplary in this regard. A great deal of contemporary social theory has been a critical engagement with this particular concern of classical thought under new and rapidly-changing socioeconomic conditions. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to this critical engagement. Among others, we will study contributions by Functionalist, Phenomenological, Critical, Neo-Marxist, Feminist, Post-structural, Communicative, and Postmodernist schools of thoughts. We will discuss the intricate and subtle ways in which social factors such as power, class, culture, race, law and gender, have been thought of as inhibiting the emergence of a 'free' society. A main objective of the course is to connect theoretical ideas with empirical research.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course addresses three University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (see http://cll.mcmaster.ca/COU/degree/undergraduate.html). First, sociological theories are diverse in their claims and in their focus. Gaining knowledge of these diverse theories, will expand the student’s depth and breadth of knowledge. Second, there is no single sociological theory accepted as the final or best approach. As such, this course requires that students consider and critically evaluate competing theoretical approaches. In so doing, students will gain an awareness of limits of knowledge. Finally, this course will encourage students to discuss theoretical issues in class and grading is based on essay exams. In each case, the student’s communication skills will be challenged and enhanced.

COURSE FORMAT

Lectures, Class Discussions, Occasional Videos

TEXTBOOK & OTHER READING MATERIALS

- Online journal articles assigned for lectures. All McMaster students have free access to these articles through University's library website. Please contact the library for learning how to access online journals and search for articles.
EVALUATION COMPONENTS

- Tutorial  15%
- Pop Quizzes  10%
- Test 1  15%  (February 5)
- Test 2  15%  (March 12)
- Term paper  25%  (March 26, 7 p.m., both hard & electronic copies)
- Final Exam  20%  (TBA by Registrar Office)

NOTE: the course instructor reserves the right to change the evaluation scheme based on enrolment and/or other departmental or academic concerns.

TUTORIAL

Regular tutorial attendance is fundamental to students’ success in this course. The tutorial grade is mainly for informed participation in class discussions. Therefore, students should attend each tutorial having read the assigned readings. Although attendance will be taken, the TA has the discretion in determining students’ degree and quality of participation, and their tutorial grades.

LECTURES

Regular lecture attendance (for the whole duration of class) is fundamental to students’ success in this course. In addition to other course material, lecture discussions may be included in tests and the final exam.

POP QUIZZES

The purpose of pop quizzes is to induce students to read the assigned readings (excluding lecture notes). There will be several of them (all together they compose 10% of your grade in the course). They will be composed of multiple-choice and/or essay questions requiring short answers. Students will be given 10-15 minutes to complete each quiz. They will be given throughout the course. They may be apportioned the same or different percentages. They may be given at any lecture or tutorial, and any point during the lecture or tutorial (beginning, middle, or end). The first quiz will include questions that test students’ knowledge of this syllabus.

MIDTERM TEST & FINAL EXAM

Tests will contain essay & multiple-choice questions. More information will be provided in class or posted on the course website. The questions will cover the readings, lecture notes and other lecture materials (e.g. films shown in class, matters discussed in lectures or tutorials). The questions will test your conceptual knowledge. Tests are NOT cumulative.

Final Exam will contain multiple-choice questions and/or essay questions. Exam questions will cover the readings, lecture notes and other lecture materials (e.g. films shown in class). The questions will test your conceptual knowledge. It should be noted, however, that the format of the final grade may change according to the department's due-date for submission of final grade. The final exam is NOT cumulative.
TERM PAPER FORMAT

- The term paper must be connected to one of the topics covered in the course (the instructor will provide several topics that you may choose one from).
- 7 pages long (5 pages main-text, 1 page cover page, and 1 page bibliography).
- Double-spaced, Font 12, Times New Roman.
- Pages must be numbered.
- Cover page must indicate your name, student number, and the course code, and the title of your paper.
- Only use in-text referencing. Do not provide footnotes or endnotes. Use APA style.
- It must follow formal essay format (have a title, an introduction, a body, and a conclusion).
- It must be stapled. Do not use paper clips or binders.
- You have to refer to at least 5 sources. They may include books, chapters in edited books, or academic journal articles (either in print or online). You can use as many readings as you want from the course readings. In addition to these 5 sources, you can have up to 3 “Internet” sources. By “Internet source” I do not mean online academic journals or governmental publications or data, but something of relevance to your essay that you may find while surfing the Internet. This could be anything: an interesting political or economic development in Canada or some other country, news about organized crime, an interesting criminal case, and so on. In such case website address must be provided.
- 5% penalty will be applied for each day of lateness (including weekends and holidays). The lateness penalty applies equally to Saturdays and Sundays. This penalty is strictly enforced unless proper documentation is provided. Reasons such as excessive course-load, exam conflicts, helping friends, computer damage, employment-related matters, or participation in social events (accept those approved by McMaster), do not constitute sufficient grounds for extensions to be given.
- Submit both a hard copy (in class) and an electronic copy (uploaded onto the course website). The due-date for both methods of submission are the same. Late-ness penalty will be applied if students do not submit both versions on the due-date.
- Keep a hard copy and an electronic version for yourself. Lost or damaged laptops or other electronic devices are unacceptable excuses for missing due dates.
- Do not put submissions under the office doors of the course instructor, Teaching Assistants, or the department's administrators. The instructor, teaching assistants, and the department, are not responsible for assignments submitted in such ways. Such assignments will be discarded. Students must always keep hard and electronic copies of their assignments.

HOW TO WRITE YOUR PAPER: SOME GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- Students are encouraged to start their research early in the course so as to avoid missing the due-date.
- Although occasional instructions will be provided by the instructor and the TA (either in the lecture hall, in tutorial, or posted on the course website), it is primarily students’ responsibility to learn how to write an academic paper.
- Furthermore, such instructions will be general. This means that, depending on your research questions, you may need to learn additional techniques of writing a paper. Again, it is primarily your responsibility to do so. However, the instructor and the TA are available for consultations.
(1) Generally a paper should have:

- A title
- An introduction (about half-page). It should definitely contain your argument or research question
- A body (composed of several sections of comparable lengths separated by sub-titles if needed)
- A conclusion (about half-page)

(2) As a researcher, you should:

- Find out what information should be included in your paper.
- Learn how to find and present your information
- Learn the difference between a research question, an argument, and a hypothesis (although they are all ultimately related).

MAKE-UP TESTS

Students who miss a test must inform the instructor within 3 days of missing the test and provide proper documentations to the Faculty of Social Sciences. In case of illness, the only forms and/or documents accepted will be those belonging to, or approved by, the university. Additional documents may be required. It is your responsibility to obtain the proper forms and approvals. Excessive course-load, exam conflicts, employment-related reasons, and other such reasons, do not constitute sufficient grounds for a make-up test to be given. THIS RULE WILL BE STRICTLY APPLIED.

If you miss the FINAL EXAM: There is no make-up test for the final exam. Contact the sociology department, or your own department, and inquire about writing a deferred exam.

REQUESTS FOR REEVALUATION (“RE-MARK”)

- Initially discuss the matter with the course TA as s/he is the person who has graded your paper. If unsatisfied with the feedback/discussion, then contact me. Follow these procedures:
  - Requests for “re-marks” must be emailed to the instructor within 7 days when grades are made available and/or graded term papers or tests are returned to students. The particular day that students choose to retrieve their assignment is irrelevant (for example, 2 weeks after the grade was made available or the assignment was returned).
  - To request a re-mark, students must submit a 1 page written request explaining precisely why they believe their assignments should receive a different grade. Reasons such as “the grade is unfair because I worked hard on it”, “I had little time”, or “I had other papers to write” are not acceptable.
  - Legitimate requests will be considered. The grade after the re-mark will be the grade recorded on the assignment and posted on the course website.
E-MAIL COMMUNICATION

All students should check their McMaster e-mail account regularly as it is the official route of communication between the university and its students.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION WITH COURSE INSTRUCTOR

You must use your McMaster email when corresponding electronically with the instructor. For ethical and security reasons, emails sent by students from other email accounts (Gmail, Hotmail, etc.) will not be responded too. All email correspondence must contain students’ name (first & last) and number. Students must use their McMaster email accounts. Emails will be answered within 2-3 business days of receipt. I will consider the date/time of emails received as my criterion for providing a response (first come, first served). Indicating terms such as “urgent” or “emergency” in the subject line of your email will not influence my response time and/or priority. Please refrain from sending very long and/or hastily composed emails as they can be confusing. Come to my office-hour (email me in advance) if you have a complex issue to discuss. Usually, emails sent on Friday evenings will be responded to the following Monday.

COURSE WEBSITE

At times the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email or announcements. To that end, all students are required to have a valid McMaster email address and check the course website regularly. You are responsible for ensuring that your McMaster email address is set up and properly working. Coming to class and checking the course website (especially the announcements) are the best ways of keeping yourself informed. Consult the library staff or your department staff about the proper use of the technology.

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/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

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

In this course we will be using a software package designed to reveal plagiarism. Students will be required to submit their work electronically and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty.
DEPARTMENTAL/UNIVERSITY POLICIES

- Do NOT email assignments. Please see your instructor of TA for the most appropriate way to submit assignments.
- The Sociology staff do NOT date-stamp assignments, nor do they monitor the submission or return of papers.
- 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.
- 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.).
- Computer use in the classroom is intended to facilitate learning in that particular lecture or tutorial. At the discretion of the instructor, students using a computer for any other purpose may be required to turn the computer off for the remainder of the lecture or tutorial.
- 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.
- 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.

Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)

The University recognizes that, on occasion, the timing of a student’s religious, Indigenous, or spiritual observances and that of their academic obligations may conflict. In such cases, the University will provide reasonable academic accommodation for students that is consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code. Please review the RISO information for students in the Faculty of Social Sciences about how to request accommodation.
**Lecture Schedule**: I will do my best to keep up with the schedule. However, given that certain topics may require more attention, I may periodically fall behind the schedule. Students will be provided with further instructions regarding the tests and/or the final exam if this happens.

### Lecture Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 8</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
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<td>• Sociological Theory: Classical and Contemporary</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 15</td>
<td>Symbolic Interactionism and Dramaturgy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Course Book – Chapter 1 (“Introduction”)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Course Book – Chapter 5 (“Symbolic Interactionism and Dramaturgy”). Read pages: 174-222.</td>
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<td>January 22</td>
<td>Structural Functionalism</td>
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<td>• Course book – Chapter 2 (“Structural Functionalism”).</td>
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<td>January 29</td>
<td>Exchange and Rational Choice Theories</td>
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<td>• Course Book – Chapter 4 (“Exchange and Rational Choice Theories)</td>
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<td>February 5</td>
<td>Test 1</td>
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<td>February 12</td>
<td>Marxist and Critical Theories</td>
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<td>• Course Book – Chapter 3 (“Critical Theory”).</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 19</td>
<td>Mid-Term Recess (no lecture)</td>
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February 26        Feminist and Gender Theories

- Course Book – Chapter 7 (“Feminist and Gender Theories”).

March 5           Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology

- Course Book – Chapter 6 (“Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology”).

March 12          Test 2

March 19          Globalization and Post-Colonial Societies

- Course Book – Chapter 10

March 26          Contemporary Theoretical Synthesis

Hand in a hard copy of term paper at the beginning of the lecture (7 p.m.)
Also upload it into course website by this day/time

- Course Book – Chapter 9

April 2           Post-structural & Post-modern Theories

- Course Book – Chapters 8

April 9           Conclusion & Final Exam Review