

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI



VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES

Te Kura Mahinga Tangata

Sociology and Social Policy

SOSC 211

Interpreting Society

Course Outline

CRN 1627 : 22 POINTS : TRIM 1, 2008

COURSE COORDINATOR: DR DAVID PEARSON

Room 1020, Murphy Building

Tel: (04) 463 6748

Email: david.pearson@vuw.ac.nz

LECTURES: MONDAY & WEDNESDAY 11AM – 12NOON: HMLT002

SOSC 211: INTERPRETING SOCIETY -2008

COURSE COORDINATOR:

David Pearson
Murphy Building, MY1020
Tel: 04 463 6748
E-mail: David.Pearson@vuw.ac.nz
Office Hours: tba

LECTURERS:

Chamsy el-Ojeili (CEO), MY 1016,
Phone 463-6740, E-mail: Chamsy.el-Ojeili@vuw.ac.nz
Office hours: Thursday 2 – 4pm

Mike Lloyd (ML), MY 1015,
Tel 463-5678, E-mail: Mike.Lloyd@vuw.ac.nz
Office hours: Wednesday 1 – 3pm

David Pearson (DP), MY 1020,
Phone 463-6748, E-mail: David.Pearson@vuw.ac.nz
Office hours: tba

COURSE LECTURES:

Monday, 11:00-11:50, HMLT 002
Wednesday, 11:00-11:50, HMLT 002

Tutorial times and locations to be announced

SCHOOL LOCATION:

Sociology staff are on level 10 of Murphy Building.
Information, which may be of interest to you, is
posted on the notice boards on levels 9 and 10.

SCHOOL CONTACTS:

Head of School:

Assoc. Professor Jenny Neale, MY1013
Tel: 463 5827 E-m: jenny.neale@vuw.ac.nz

International Student Liaison:

Dr Hal Levine MY1023
Tel: 463 6132 E-m: hal.levine@vuw.ac.nz

Maori and Pacific Student Liaison

Dr David Pearson, MY1020
Tel: 463 6748 E-m: david.pearson@vuw.ac.nz

Students with Disabilities Liaison: Dr Russil Durrant, MY1120
Tel: 463 9980 E-m: russil.durrant@vuw.ac.nz
School Manager: Carol Hogan, MY918
Tel: 463 6546 E-m: carol.hogan@vuw.ac.nz
School Administrators: Monica Lichti, Adam Meers, MY921
Tel: 463 5317, 463 5258 E-m: sacs@vuw.ac.nz

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

This course is about the concept of 'society'. Early in the history of the discipline, sociologists put a lot of effort into establishing society as the key object of sociological inquiry. However, from the beginning there was much debate about this move and questions were raised about exactly what society is, what it could be said to do, and how one could study it. This debate is ongoing in contemporary sociology. The aim of the course is to introduce students to the main currents of thought about these issues - what we call the problem of 'Interpreting Society'. Questions considered include: Is society the same as the 'nation-state'? Is it a collection of individuals or a 'social system'? What role do material objects play in society? Is the concept of society still relevant in today's world of globalisation? Wherever possible lectures will utilise empirical research and refer to topical examples to ground abstract theoretical debates. The main objective of the course is for students to acquire an understanding of sociological theory about society. Secondly, students should be able to use these theoretical positions to think about social phenomena in the contemporary world.

LECTURE PLAN

February

- 25 Introduction (DP)
- 27 Setting the scene - classical conceptions of society (DP)

March

- 3 Marx: From alienation to the science of history (CeO)
- 5 Durkheim: Society as a social fact (DP)
- 10 Weber: Social action and society (DP)
- 12 Functionalism and society (DP)
- 17 The state, power and change (DP)
- 19 Simmel on social forms (ML)
- 26 The interaction order I: Goffman (ML)

31 The interaction order II: Garfinkel (ML)

April

2 Psychoanalysis: Society and psyche (CeO)

7 Changing the scene (DP)

9 New social movements and society (DP)

9 *Assignment One due*

Mid trimester break: April 14 - 27

28 Marxism: From orthodoxy to Western Marxism (CEO)

30 Foucault (CeO)

May

5 Post-Marxism (CeO)

7 Habits and action (ML)

12 Lifeworlds and bodies (ML)

14 Actor-network theory (ML)

19 The network society - Castells (DP)

21 World-systems theory (CeO)

21 *Assignment Two due*

26 Globalization (CeO)

Hand out of Take home test

28 No lecture

29 *Assignment Three Due*

SET TEXT

A book of student notes will be available from Student Notes Distribution Centre, Student Union building for approx. \$15.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

There is a large literature relating to this course in the library, in books and the key sociology journals. Here are just a few general books to get you started, but please browse beyond them; especially in the extensive primary and secondary literature relating to theorists discussed in the course. Additional reading pertaining to particular

parts of the course will be given out in lectures. Titles marked with * are on 3 day loan.

Calhoun, C. et al (eds)	<u>Contemporary Sociological Theory; Sage Handbook of Sociology</u>
Callinicos, A.	<u>Social Theory: A Historical Introduction</u>
*Clark, S.	<u>From Enlightenment To Risk: Social Theory and Contemporary Society</u>
Collins, R.	<u>The Three Traditions</u>
*Collins, R & Makowsky, M.	<u>The Discovery of Society</u>
Craib, I.	<u>Classical Social Theory, Modern Social Theory</u>
Crow, G.	<u>Art of Sociological Argument</u>
Elliott, A. & Ray, L. (eds)	<u>Key Contemporary Social Theorists</u>
*Frisby, D. & Sayer, D.	<u>Society</u>
Hughes, J. <i>et al</i>	<u>Understanding Classical Sociology</u>
Hamilton, P. & Thompson, K. (ed)	<u>The Uses of Sociology</u>
Layder, D.	<u>Understanding Social Theory</u>
Lemert, C. (ed)	<u>Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classical Readings</u>
Mennell, S.	<u>Sociological Theory: Uses and Unities</u>
*O'Donnell, M.	<u>Classical and Contemporary Sociology</u>
Outhwaite, W.	<u>The Future of Society</u>
Ray, L.	<u>Theorizing Classical Sociology</u>
Scott, J. (ed)	<u>Fifty Key Sociologists</u>
Seidman, S.	<u>Contested Knowledge: Social Theory in the Postmodern Era</u>
Swingewood, A.	<u>A Short History of Sociological Thought</u>
Sydie, R.A.	<u>Natural Women, Cultured Men: A Feminist Perspective on Sociological Theory.</u>
Tucker, K.	<u>Classical Social Theory</u>
Turner, B. (ed)	<u>Blackwell Companion to Social Theory</u>
*Urry, J.	<u>Sociology Beyond Societies</u>

TUTORIALS AND READINGS

Tutorials commence in the third week of the trimester, i.e., the week beginning March 10. Tutorial groups, times and room allocations will be arranged in the first week of lectures. Once assigned a tutorial you should always attend the same one. If for some reason you have difficulties with this please discuss the problem with the course co-ordinator.

The tutorial programme is designed to complement the lecture series and is an opportunity for student discussion and questions. You are expected to have read the assigned reading before the tutorial and be prepared to discuss the reading as guided by your tutor.

Tutorial dates (week beginning) and readings:

March 10	Reading 1 – Marx; Reading 2 – Durkheim; Reading 3 – Frisby and Sayer
March 17	Reading 4 – Parsons; Reading 5 - Giddens
March 24	Reading 6 – Goffman; Reading 7 – Sacks
March 31	Assignment 1 guidance
April 7	Reading 8 – Lemert (2001); Reading 9 – Lemert (1995)
April 28	Reading 10 – Gottlieb; Reading 11 – Laclau and Mouffe
May 5	Assignment 2 and Test guidance
May 12	Reading 12 – Callon and Latour; Reading 13 – Latour
May 19	Reading 14 – Castells; Reading 15 – Walby

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is internal and involves the following three items:

Assessment 1

Essay 1 Due Date: Wednesday, April 9, 4pm - 30% Word Limit: 2500

Assessment 2

Essay 2 Due Date: Wednesday, May 21, 4pm – 40% Word Limit: 3000

Assessment 3

**Test Take home test - 30%, Word Limit: 2500.
Test will be handed out in last lecture on Monday May 26 and
must be placed into Assignment box no later than
Thursday May 29 by 4pm.**

In terms of the relationship between the course objectives and assessment:

- the essay topics are designed to give students the opportunity to display their grasp of sociological approaches to the study of society, and to show that they can begin thinking about applying these to analysis of substantive issues in contemporary society.
- the test encourages students to overview the whole course and to consolidate their knowledge of the sociological and substantive content of the course.

Students should follow the guidelines for essay writing that have been presented in stage one sociology courses. If you are unfamiliar with these a copy may be obtained from your tutor. Guidance on assignments will be discussed in tutorials at appropriate places.

ESSAY TOPICS

Essay 1

'In everyday life the term society is used as if it referred in an unproblematic way to something that exists 'out there' and beyond the individual subject' (Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, 1998, p. 625). Critically discuss how, past or present, sociologists have viewed this assumption.

Essay 2

For this essay you may either work up your own essay topic, or you can choose from the list of questions below. If you choose the former it is important that you consult with your tutor before proceeding with your essay.

1. The relationship between social structure and human agency has been a central question for sociologists interpreting society. Discuss, drawing on any theorist(s) covered in the course.
2. Critically discuss how the 'new social movements' of the post 1950s era altered the way sociologists' interpreted society.
3. Discuss the post-Marxist critique of, and alternative to, the concept 'society'.
4. Discuss the psychoanalytic contribution to the examination of society.
5. ' Society does not hold things together, it is what is *held* together' (Latour). Discuss.
6. 'When one turns to the problems that ethnomethodology tries to illuminate one is struck, for the most part, by their embarrassing triviality. ...It amounts to an orgy of subjectivism' (Coser, American Sociological Review, 1975: 698). Discuss.

Test

The test is take home and will consist of essay type questions relating to the core themes of the lecture content and course readings. A guidance statement on the test will be available beforehand.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To meet the course requirements students are required to hand in two essays, complete a test, and attend a minimum of six out of nine tutorials.

WORKLOAD

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences workload guideline for a 200-level one trimester course is 14 hours a week. This includes attendance at classes, preparation for classes and assignments, and so on.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* available in hardcopy or under "about Victoria" on the Victoria homepage at:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html

Information on the following topics is available electronically under "Course Outline General Information" at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/newspubs/universitypubs.aspx#general>

- Academic Grievances
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means no cheating. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. Plagiarism is **prohibited** at Victoria.

The University defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not.

'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea, even if it is presented in your own style. It includes material from books, journals or any other printed source, the work of other students or staff, information from the Internet, software programmes and other electronic material, designs and ideas. It also includes the organisation or structuring of any such material.

Plagiarism is not worth the risk.

Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct (www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct) and may be penalised severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- suspension from class or university
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course.

Find out more about plagiarism and how to avoid it, on the University's website at: www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html.

LATE ESSAYS

It is important to note that late work will normally be accepted only in the case of illness or other unavoidable emergencies. In such cases a medical certificate or equivalent is required. In special circumstances a student may make a prior arrangement for an extension.

LATE PENALTY

Late submissions of assignments in all Sociology undergraduate courses are subject to a penalty. The exact deduction will be calculated on the basis of one half mark per day late for each 10 marks, i.e.

Mark out of maximum of	Then deduct the following marks for each day it is late
10	½
20	1
30	1 ½
40	2

Where the due date is a Friday, any written work not handed in by 4.00 p.m. will be liable to a two day penalty.

ASSESSMENT & PLAGIARISM

It is **ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE** to present another person's work as your own. This includes direct copying or paraphrasing from published works and using other students' essays. It is also unacceptable to use written work which you have submitted for another course. Plagiarism is treated extremely seriously. Extensive plagiarism will result in a zero mark for the assignment and failure to comply with the mandatory course requirements.

COVER SHEETS

All written work submitted in Sociology and Social Policy courses must have a cover sheet, see sample at end of Course Outlines.

GRADES FOR SOCIOLOGY ESSAYS/TESTS

The School follows university policy in giving letter grades for all internally assessed work instead of giving numerical marks. The following table sets out the range of marks within which each letter grade is assigned. Your final grade and marks for the course will be an aggregate of the grades you achieve during the course.

PASS		FAIL	
A+	85% or over	D	40% - 49%
A	80% – 84%	E	Below 40%
A-	75% - 79%		
B+	70% - 74%		
B	65% – 69%		
B-	60% – 64%		
C+	55% – 59%		
C	50% – 54%		

HANDING IN ESSAYS

It is the policy of the Sociology Division that all written assignments must be handed in by 4.00 p.m. on the due date.

ASSIGNMENT BOX AND ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET

Sociology Policy On Submitting All Essays

It is the policy of the Sociology and Social Policy programmes that all written assignments must be **handed in by 4 pm on the due date.**

Assignment Box

Assignments must be placed in the assignment box on level 9, Murphy Building, to the side of the lifts. They **MUST NOT** be placed in individual staff pigeonholes, or under staff office doors, or handed to lecturers or tutors.

This is to ensure that all work is properly recorded when submitted, and to avoid problems that have arisen in the past, when work has “gone missing”.

The Assignment Box is cleared at 4.00 pm on the due date, all work is date-stamped, its receipt recorded, and then handed on to the appropriate markers.

Students must keep a photocopy of every written assignment.

Unless students have followed this procedure, the staff will accept **no** responsibility for pieces of written work claimed to have been handed in.

Assignment Cover Sheets

All written work submitted for assessment in Sociology and Social Policy papers must have a School Assignment Cover sheet. A sample is to be found at the back of this Course Outline. Further copies can be located on the reception counter at the Administration Office, and on the Assignment Box, on level 9 of Murphy building. You may wish to have a front sheet of your own, but a School Cover sheet must be used. This is critical to accurate identification and recording of your work.

Office use only

Date Received:

(Date Stamp)

School of Social and Cultural Studies

Te Kura Mahinga Tangata

ANTHROPOLOGY

CRIMINOLOGY

SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL POLICY

SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

Assignment Cover Sheet

(please write legibly)

Full Name: _____

Student ID: _____ Course (eg ANTH101): _____

Tutorial Day: _____ Tutorial Time: _____

Tutor (if applicable): _____

Assignment Due Date: _____

CERTIFICATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I certify that this paper submitted for assessment is the result of my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged.

Signed: _____ Date: _____