



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES  
*Te Kura Mahinga Tangata*

## Sociology and Social Policy

# SOSC 211

## Interpreting Society

20 POINTS

TRIMESTER 2 2013

### Important dates

**Trimester dates:** 15 July to 17 November 2013

**Teaching dates:** 15 July to 18 October 2013

**Mid-trimester break:** 26 August to 8 September 2013

**Last assessment item due:** 18 October 2013

**Withdrawal dates:** Refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds)

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination (aegrotats), refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat)

## Class times and locations

Lectures: Monday, 2.10-3.00 pm, Wednesday 2.10-4.00 pm HULT220

## Names and contact details

### Course Coordinator

Mike Lloyd  
Murphy Building, MY 1015  
Tel: 04 463 5678  
E-mail: mike.lloyd@vuw.ac.nz  
Office Hours: to be advised

## Communication of additional information

Additional information related to the course will be made available on BlackBoard. You will automatically receive all Blackboard announcements as an email sent to your @myvuw.ac.nz email address. If you are not going to use this Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

## Prescription

This course introduces students to major sociological theories. Emphasis is on understanding theoretical ideas and how they relate to the construction and analysis of social issues.

## Course content

July	15	Introduction (Mike Lloyd)
	17	Marx and sociology (Carol Harrington)
	22	World systems theory (Josh Barton)
	24	Durkheim (Dylan Taylor)
	29	Weber (DT)
	31	Durkheim versus Tarde (ML)
Aug	5	Simmel (ML)
	7	Outside the canon (CH)
	12	Interaction Order I: Goffman (ML)
	14	Ann Oakley (CH)
	19	Interaction Order II: Garfinkel (ML)
	21	Bourdieu I (CH)
<b>Mid trimester break Aug 26 – Sep 8</b>		
Sep	9	Background for assignment 2 (ML)
	11	Bourdieu II (CH)
	16	Reassembling the social: Latour (ML)
	18	Foucault I (CH)
	23	Social theory and technology I (DT)
	25	Foucault II (CH)
	30	Social theory and technology II (DT)
Oct	2	Said on Orientalism (CH)
	7	Mobilities (ML)
	9	Critical discourse analysis I (CH)
	14	Critical discourse analysis II (CH)
	16	Social history and documentary analysis (CH)

## Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course should be able to:

1. Understand a range of sociological theories about society
2. Critically reflect on the multiple perspectives that sociology offers
3. Begin thinking about the application of sociological theory to substantive issues in contemporary society.

## Teaching format

Lectures and tutorials.

While attendance at lectures and tutorials is not compulsory, students are expected to regularly attend them, and will be advantaged if they do so.

There are five tutorials for this course. They will take place in the second half of the Wednesday teaching slot on:

July 31

August 14, 21

September 18

October 2

Readings for the tutorials will be notified on the course Blackboard.

## Mandatory course requirements

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

- Submit essay 1 and essay 2

## Workload

University guidelines stipulate that a 20-point course should require 13 hours per week, including class time, of student work.

## Assessment

This course is 100% internally assessed and requires two pieces of work.

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	3000 word essay	40	1, 2	23 August
2	4000 word essay	60	1,2, 3	18 October

### Essay 1

**Due: 23 August**

**Weighting: 40%**

Choose one of the following questions to answer:

1. There is no consensus among classical sociologists about 'society' as a concept. Discuss, drawing on at least two theorists.
2. Discuss the challenges posed by world systems theory to 'society' as a starting point for sociological analysis.
3. Critically discuss Karl Marx's theory of social conflict and its influence on twentieth century theories of social oppression and resistance.

4. Critically discuss feminist scholars' critique of the 'sociological canon' and notions of 'male-centred' sociology.
5. Critically discuss Ann Oakley's classic 1974 study on the sociology of housework, paying attention to the strengths and shortcomings of this piece of research.
6. Was Goffman a 'micro-sociologist'?
7. Garfinkel is listed as a major figure in most histories of social theory. Why then does ethnomethodology occupy such a troubled space in contemporary sociology?

## Essay2

**Due: 18 October**

**Weighting: 60%**

30 years ago students were often taught the basics of sociology using C Wright Mills' book *The Sociological Imagination* (1959). According to him a key aspect of the sociological imagination is the capacity to shift between perspectives, to range '... from the most impersonal and remote transformation to the most intimate features of the human self – and to see the relations between the two ... The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. That is its task and its promise'.

Over 40 years later, the *British Journal of Sociology* invited 9 sociologists to give their views on 'Sociology facing the Millennium' and published these in the first journal issue of 2000 along with an editorial introduction (see the list below).

**Instructions:** Read chapter 1 of Mills' *The Sociological Imagination*, then using **at least 1** of the articles in the *BJS* collection discuss whether C Wright Mills' specification of the sociological imagination is still useful. Has the task of sociology significantly changed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? (NB: there will be a background lecture on this assignment on September 9)

*British Journal of Sociology*, 2000, vol 51, no. 1

John Urry, 'Editor's introduction: Sociology facing the Millennium'

Manuel Castells, 'Materials for an explanatory theory of the network society'

Immanuel Wallerstein, 'From sociology to historical social science: prospects and obstacles'

Goran Therborn, 'At the birth of the second century sociology: times of reflexivity, spaces of identity, and nodes of knowledge'

Gosta Esping-Anderson, 'Two societies, one sociology, and no theory'

Ulrich Beck, 'The cosmopolitan perspective: sociology of the second age of modernity'

Bruno Latour, 'When things strike back: a possible contribution of 'science studies' to the social sciences'

Barbara Adam, 'The temporal gaze: the challenge for social theory in the context of GM food'

Saskia Sassen, 'New frontiers facing urban sociology at the Millennium'

Mike Featherstone, 'Archiving cultures'

## Submission and return of work

Assignments must be placed in the assignment box on level 9, Murphy Building, to the side of the lifts. The Assignment Box is cleared at 4pm on the due date, all work is date-stamped, its receipt recorded, and then handed on to the appropriate markers. Every effort will be made to return marked assignments within three weeks of the due date. Marked assignments not collected in lectures or tutorials can be collected at the Murphy 9<sup>th</sup> floor reception desk, between **2.00 and 4.00 pm only** from Monday to Friday.

## Penalties

Late submissions for student assignments in all Sociology and Social Policy 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. 1 mark will be deducted each day for an assignment worth 20% of the total course mark.

*Note: assessment work will not be accepted for marking more than 7 days after the due date or 7 days after an approved extension date. Work must still, however, be submitted to meet the mandatory course requirements.*

## **Practicum/placement/field trip/internship arrangements**

There are no other arrangements for this course.

## **Set texts**

There is no set text for this course.

## **Recommended reading**

Allen, K.	<i>The Social Lens</i>
Allen, K.	<i>Contemporary Social and Sociological Theory</i>
Calhoun, C. et al (eds)	<i>Contemporary Sociological Theory; Sage Handbook of Sociology</i>
Callinicos, A.	<i>Social Theory: A Historical Introduction</i>
Clark, S.	<i>From Enlightenment to Risk: Social Theory and Contemporary Society</i>
Collins, R.	<i>The Three Traditions, and others</i>
Collins, R & Makowsky, M.	<i>The Discovery of Society</i>
Craib, I.	<i>Classical Social Theory; Modern Social Theory</i>
Crow, G.	<i>Art of Sociological Argument</i>
Elliott, A.	<i>Contemporary Social Theory: An Introduction</i>
Elliott, A. & Ray, L. (eds)	<i>Key Contemporary Social Theorists</i>
Frisby, D. & Sayer, D.	<i>Society</i>
Garner, R. (ed.)	<i>Social Theory (Two Volumes)</i>
Hughes, J. et al	<i>Understanding Classical Sociology</i>
Hamilton, P. & Thompson, K. (ed)	<i>The Uses of Sociology</i>
Joseph, J.	<i>Marxism and Social Theory</i>
Latour, B.	<i>Reassembling the Social</i>
Layder, D.	<i>Understanding Social Theory</i>
Lemert, C. (ed)	<i>Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classical Readings</i>
McLennan, G.	<i>Story of Sociology</i>
Mennell, S.	<i>Sociological Theory: Uses and Unities</i>
O'Donnell, M.	<i>Classical and Contemporary Sociology</i>
Outhwaite, W.	<i>The Future of Society</i>
Ray, L.	<i>Theorizing Classical Sociology</i>
Ritzer, G.	<i>Sociological Theory</i>
Ritzer, G. (ed)	<i>Encyclopaedia of Social Theory</i>
Ritzer, G. & Smart, B. (eds)	<i>Handbook of Social Theory; see others</i>
Ritzer, G. and Stepnisky, J (eds)	<i>Major Social Theorists, Vols I and II</i>
Roberts. B.	<i>Micro Social Theory</i>
Scott, J.	<i>Social Theory</i>
Scott, J. (ed)	<i>Fifty Key Sociologists</i>

Seidman, S.	<i>Contested Knowledge: Social Theory in the Postmodern Era</i>
Stones, R. (ed)	<i>Key Sociological Thinkers</i>
Swingewood, A.	<i>A Short History of Sociological Thought</i>
Sydie, R.A.	<i>Natural Women, Cultured Men: A Feminist Perspective on Sociological Theory</i>
Tucker, K.	<i>Classical Social Theory</i>
Turner, B. (ed)	<i>Blackwell Companion to Social Theory</i>
Urry, J.	<i>Sociology Beyond Societies; Mobilities</i>

**Note that an extensive list of readings related to the course and assignments will be available on blackboard**

## Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:
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## Student feedback

New lectures have been introduced in response to student feedback.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\\_display.php](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php).

## Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism)
- Aegrotats: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat)
- Academic Progress: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress) (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/dates](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/dates)
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: [www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin)
- Grades: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/grades](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/grades)
- Resolving academic issues: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#grievances](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#grievances)
- Special passes: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#specialpass](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#specialpass)
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy)
- Student support: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/viclife/student-service](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/viclife/student-service)
- Students with disabilities: [www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/disability](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability)
- Student Charter: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/viclife/student-charter](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/viclife/student-charter)
- Student Contract: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/enrol/studentcontract](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/enrol/studentcontract)
- Turnitin: [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin)
- University structure: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about)
- VUWSA: [www.vuwsa.org.nz](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz)

## **School Contact Information**

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