



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES

SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL POLICY

SOSC 211

INTERPRETING SOCIETY

20 POINTS

TRIMESTER 1 2016

Key dates

Trimester dates: 29 February to 29 June 2016

Teaching dates: 29 February to 5 June 2016

Easter break: 24–30 March 2016

Mid-trimester break: 25 April to 1 May 2016

Study period: 6–9 June 2016

Examination/Assessment Period: 10–29 June 2016

Note: students who enrol in courses with examinations must be able to attend an examination at the University at any time during the scheduled examination period.

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds.

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test in the last three weeks of teaching, or an examination, it may instead be possible to apply for an aegrotat (refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats).

Class times and locations

Lectures: Friday 10:00am-11:50am in KKLT301

Tutorials: There will be 9 tutorials for this course. Tutorials meet weekly beginning in week two of the trimester. Tutorial times and names of tutors will be posted on Blackboard.

Names and contact details

Dr el-Ojeili is the Course Coordinator responsible for SOSC 211. You should direct all queries about the course to him, see below.

Dr Chamsy el-Ojeili

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Communication of additional information

Any additional course information will be posted 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 forward messages received 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

SOSC 211 examines the major shifts in social theory from the classical period to today. Beginning with the origins of social theory and the foundational analyses of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, the course then moves to cover a range of major sociological theories – structural functionalism, symbolic interaction, Marxism, post-structuralism, actor-network theory, globalisation theory, and more. The course also aims to encourage students to understand these theories in their context and against one another, and to move towards critical evaluation of the major currents of sociological thought in their assessment work. An outline of lectures, along with recommended readings is available on Blackboard.

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course should be able to

1. display their grasp of a number of the major sociological approaches to the study of the social world, and to show that they can begin thinking about applying these to analysis of substantive issues in contemporary society
2. draw together and consolidate their knowledge of the substantive content of the course.

Teaching format

Teaching consists of one two-hour lecture per week, as well as tutorials. Tutorials will begin in the second week of trimester. More information will be given in lectures about tutorial times and rooms.

Workload

The expectations are that students will work 10 hours per point, therefore a 20-point course equates to 200 hours over the trimester. This includes scheduled contact time, individual or group study, and work on assessment tasks.

The approximate workload for study towards essays and the exam is 40 hours each.

Assessment

Assessment items and workload per item	%	CLO(s)	Due date
1 Essay One (2500 words)	25%	1,2	15 April
2 Essay Two (2500 words)	25%	1,2	13 May
3 Exam (two hours long)	50%	1,2	10 June to 29 June 2016

Essay 1

Weighting 25%

2500 words

Due: 15 April

1. There is no consensus among classical sociologists about approaching this thing 'society'. Discuss, drawing on at least two theorists.
2. Discuss the major features and major criticisms of structural functionalism.
3. Contrast and compare different approaches to society within structural functionalism and structuration theory.
4. Micro-sociology consists of discussion of trivialities and amounts to nothing more than subjectivism. Discuss.
5. Discuss the major features of, and debates around, the Marxist approach to society.
6. Describe the major features and major criticisms of structuralism as an approach to the social world.
7. Discuss the distinctive way in which Foucault approaches the social.
8. Create your own essay topic, in consultation with the lecturer.

Essay 2

Weighting 25%

2500 words

Due: 13 May

1. Describe Giddens's structuration theory and some of the major criticisms made of it.
2. Bourdieu successfully transcends the structure-agency debate. Critically discuss.
3. Discuss the major features of the movement from structuralism to post-structuralism.
4. The "global" should be our preferred starting point in sociological analysis. Discuss.
5. Discuss the challenges presented to sociological theory by the post-modern turn.
6. Discuss the major challenges presented to social theory by feminist thought.
7. *Create your own essay topic, in consultation with the lecturer.*

Exam

Weighting: 50%

Due: 10 June to 29 June 2016

Duration: the final exam is two hours long.

More details regarding date and structure of exam will follow closer to the scheduled date, available after mid-trimester break.

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 two-weeks of the due date. Marked assignments not collected in lectures or tutorials can be collected at the Murphy 9th floor reception desk, between **11.00 am and 3.00 pm only** from Monday to Friday.

You are advised to always keep a copy of any work you submit for assessment.

Extensions and penalties

Extensions

Assignments are due on the dates stated. If for some serious reason you don't think you can get an essay in on time, see your supervisor **prior** to the due date and discuss the problem. Extensions of time are not permitted except for illness, or bereavements.

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.

Set texts

The course text is Harrington, A. (ed.) *Modern Social Theory* (Oxford University Press). It will be available from Vic Books.

Students are able to order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz

Recommended reading

The following texts are useful works in the field of social theory:

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. &	<i>The Uses of Sociology</i>
Thompson, K. (ed)	
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>

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.

Student feedback

The course was completely revamped and taught in its current way for the first time in 2015.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at

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/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)

- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Special passes: refer to the *Assessment Handbook*, at www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Terms and conditions: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz

School Contact Information

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Students with Disabilities Liaison:	Dr Sarah Wright, MY1115 Phone: 463 5874, Email: sarah.wright@vuw.ac.nz
School Manager:	La'Chelle Pretorius, MY918 Phone: 463 6546, Email: lachelle.pretorius@vuw.ac.nz
School Administrators:	Suzanne Weaver, Heather Day, Gill Blomgren, MY921, Phone: 463 5317; 463 5258; 463 5677, Email: sacs@vuw.ac.nz
School of Social and Cultural Studies:	www.victoria.ac.nz/sacs