

Course Outline – Survey of Contemporary Theory

School of Behavioural and Social Sciences

General Information

Course #: Sociology 2271B

Section #: 530

Term: Winter

Year: 2020

Course Day and Time: Tue. 11:30 am-1: 30 pm; Thu. 11:30 am-12: 30 pm

Course Location: BR- 136

Instructor Information

Name: Dr. Lina Sunseri

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Office hours for students: Mondays 10:00 am-11:00 am

Office location: BR 301A

Course Description

Continuities in Sociological thinking will be stressed by building upon the insights of the discipline's founding thinkers, while simultaneously exposing students to the rich variety that characterizes contemporary theorizing. Among other approaches, structural functionalism, symbolic interactionism, Marxism, critical theory, feminist theory, and post-modernism will be discussed.

Antirequisite(s): Sociology 2240E

Prerequisite(s): Sociology 2270 A/B

Required Course Materials

1. George Ritzer and Jeffrey Stepnisky. *Contemporary Sociological Theory and Its Classical Roots*. 2019. 5th edition. [RTZ]. Available at Western Bookstore.
2. Peter Kivisto. *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*. 2013. 5th edition. [PK]. Available at Western Bookstore.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

- Identify the basic theoretical perspectives of major contemporary social theorists like Parsons, Merton, Marcuse, Goffman, and Foucault.
- Describe how the major contemporary social theorists strove to explain the social changes happening in late modernity and in our current social world.
- Compare critical perspectives on modernity, to more conservative approaches, such as structural functionalism.
- Evaluate and apply contemporary social theorists to understanding contemporary social phenomena.
- Demonstrate competency in written communication skills.

Students may vary in their competency levels on these outcomes. They can expect to achieve these outcomes if they honor course policies, attend classes regularly, complete all assigned work in good faith and on time, and meet all other course expectations of them as students. (Linda Nilson, Teaching at its Best, 2010: 37).

Brescia Competencies

1.Communication includes the articulation of one's ideas, developing informative and persuasive arguments in all forms of communication, understanding the communication context. Students will also develop interpersonal communication skills including working with others in groups, sharing opinions, resolving conflicts, offering ideas, listening to others, asking questions, and demonstrating effective nonverbal behaviours. (Level 3)

2.Inquiry and Analysis involves the methodical practice of exploring issues and posing questions to seek information, knowledge, or clarity in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of what is true. Inquiry and analysis begins with the collecting of information, the examination of the knowledge, and then converting the material into valuable new knowns. Knowledge is therefore discovered over time because investigation is continual, as is the testing of new knowledge. Once the evidence has been organized and synthesized, conclusions about the question or problem are developed that logically follow from the inquiry process. (Level 3)

3.Critical Thinking involves reasoning, a process where we create arguments by connecting thoughts together so that some thoughts (premises) provide support for other thoughts (conclusions). There are three basic skills involved in critical thinking: interpretation, verification and reasoning. The first skill comprises understanding how words express or fail to express thoughts, expressing clearly what we mean, and discerning an argument's structure. The second skill involves determining whether premises are acceptable. And the third skill encompasses evaluating whether premises make it reasonable accept the conclusion. (Level 3)

4.Social Awareness and Engagement involves the “the ability to understand and respond to the needs of others” (Daniel Goleman). To do so, students need to develop an understanding of the interrelationship between individual and society. They come to see how their actions influence, and are influenced by, other people, social institutions, and social structure. They appreciate the diverse standpoints and cultural experiences of others, and attempt to see things from different perspectives. Socially aware and engaged students demonstrate knowledge of contemporary social problems, and propose solutions for dealing with these issues. They have the ability to reflect on the impact they have on others. They are able to work with a diverse group of people in intercultural contexts to develop and implement social justice initiatives and enact positive social change. (Level 3)

The above competencies will be achieved through written examinations that will contain both multiple choice questions and essay questions wherein students will demonstrate their critical and analytical skills, communicate their comprehension of the course material, and apply the theories to their own life. A brief written assignment will allow students to apply contemporary social theories to own life experiences.

Teaching Methodology and Expectations of Students

The format of this course is 3 hours lecture per week. The students are encouraged to participate in class discussions, ask clarifying questions, and apply the material to their everyday lives. The instructor uses various media (such as documentaries, music videos, popular movies, social media) during the lectures to illustrate the sociological concepts covered throughout the term. Students are expected to read the assigned readings before coming to class, pay close attention to the lecture and do not distract themselves and others by chatting with classmates or surfing the net/mobile phones. A written assignment will allow students to apply sociological concepts covered throughout the course to their own life experiences.

Below is more pertinent information about the course and expectations of students; please read carefully:

- 1. In case Brescia University College might close due to hazardous weather conditions or other emergency circumstances and classes are not held:** examinations scheduled for the day or evening of a closing are cancelled and rescheduled. Deadlines for assignments and other submissions originally scheduled on the day of closure are postponed until the same hour on the next weekday (Monday through Friday) on which Brescia is not closed. Assignments and other submissions will be made in person to the instructor, unless other arrangements have been agreed upon with instructor.

2. **Laptop Use:** laptops are allowed in class, **however**, they are only to be used to take notes, not for “chatting” on line or surfing the internet for non-class related information. The latter constitutes disruptive and disrespectful behaviour and is not acceptable. If instructor finds a person doing so, she will warn that student to stop such behaviour. If the student persists in that behaviour, he/she might be told to stop using the laptop or leave the class. Also, please **turn OFF** and **PUT AWAY** any cell phones, blackberry and other similar devices during class!!
3. Electronic devices WILL NOT be allowed during tests/exams.
4. Please note that grades **CANNOT** be adjusted on the basis of need. The mark in the course will be the mark that you earn. Tests, exams, or assignments cannot be re-written to obtain a higher mark. There are no supplemental or bonus assignments. Marks will not be given to students via e-mail, only in person and will be posted in the course OWL, except for final marks –these will be available only through the Office of the Registrar.
5. The instructor does **not** post lecture notes online, therefore it is your responsibility to borrow notes from a classmate if you have missed a class and to find out about other important information that you missed during your absence.
6. I will normally answer emails within 24 hours, but do not expect a reply during the weekend. If a question/comment requires a lengthy conversation, it might be best to see me in person during office hour or by appointment.

Copyright and Intellectual Property

PowerPoint lecture slides and notes, lists of readings, in-class activities, assignment guidelines, and other components of the course materials are typically the intellectual property of the instructor. Unauthorized reproduction through audio-recording, video-recording, photographing, sharing on social media, or posting on course-sharing websites is an infringement of copyright and is prohibited. Such action may be considered a Code of Conduct violation and lead to sanctions.

Evaluation

Evaluation Breakdown:

| Component | Weight | Date/ Deadline | Learning Outcome | Brescia Competencies |
|--------------------|--------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Mid-Term Exam | 40% | February 11, 2020 | All | 1; 2; 3; 4. |
| Written Assignment | 20% | March 24, 2020 | All | 1; 2; 3; 4. |
| Final Exam | 40% | TBA | All | 1; 2; 3; 4 |
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Mid-Term Exam: This is an in-class test. It will have true/false questions, multiple-choice questions and 2 essay questions.

Final Exam: This will be scheduled during the Final Examination period. It will cover course material since the mid-term exam. It will have true/false questions, multiple-choice questions and 2 essay questions.

Written Assignment Instructions:

Late submissions will be penalized 2 marks out of 100 per each day the paper is late. No papers will be accepted 10 days after the due date.

Instructions:

In this writing assignment, I am asking you to apply contemporary social theories to your own life experience. The purpose is to develop your sociological thinking, writing skills, critical thinking, and to allow you to demonstrate your understanding of contemporary social theories.

Your assignment should be approximately **3 single-spaced typed pages** in length (1 inch margins; 12 point Times New Roman font; and single spaced). It is due in class on **March 24, 2020**. Below are the pertinent instructions.

- The overall intent of the assignment is to explain how a particular contemporary social theory covered in this course can explain a concrete life experience of your own.
- Provide a detailed example of a life situation you encountered either in your own family, at work, at school, a conversation/encounter with a friend, or an interaction with a stranger at a public space.
- Select one of the contemporary social theories covered this term that best applies to your life experience. For example, structural functionalism, or symbolic interactionism. These are just two examples; you can select any other ones from our course.
- You need to clearly and directly link at least **two concepts** developed/used by the chosen theory. From within the chosen theory you can use two different theorists, if you so wish; for example, you can pick a concept by Goffman and one by Mead if you selected symbolic interactionism. Explain why you chose that particular theory and how those concepts are useful to show the underlying cause of the event/experience you encountered.
- Conclude by briefly discussing how this specific theory has overall enriched your understanding on how current social relationships/social structures work.

Write in your own voice, use first person, and avoid jargon. Focus instead on how you can use everyday language to inform your reader of the complex things you are learning in this course. Make sure to cite the reading(s) in the text of your assignment. Remember, NO direct quotes. I want your words, not theirs. Attach a Works Cited page.

You will be evaluated on the grammar, the organization, the clarity of your points, and the demonstration of properly understanding and applying the selected theory to your life experience.

Academic Accommodation

*For course components worth less than 10% of the total course grade, documentation is not required. Whenever possible students should provide notification in advance of due dates or absence. If advance notification is not possible, the course instructor should be contacted within two business days.

**For course components worth 10% or more of the total course grade, please see the Academic Policies and Regulations section at the end of this course outline or consult the Academic Calendar.

Course Content

Topics will be covered in the order listed and any dates listed are meant as a guideline.

Students: Please note that the following course outline might be subject to revision. That is, throughout the semester, circumstances may arise that will alter the ordering of topics, the pace at which we move through the material and so on.

Please Note: Spring Reading Week Runs from February 15 to February 23. No classes during the week of February 17-21.

Weekly Organizer:

| Class/Topic | Date | Description | Assignments and/or Readings Due |
|---------------|-------------|--|---|
| Week 1 | January 7-9 | Introduction to contemporary social theory and beginning of Structural Functionalism | Ch. 1 in RTZ; Ch. 4 in RTZ pp. 77-92 |
| Week 2 | Jan. 14-16 | Structural Functionalism - Continued | “The Subsystems of Society” in PK, pp. 205-210; Ch. 4 in RTZ pp. 93-99 |
| Week 3 | Jan. 21-23 | Symbolic Interactionism | Ch. 3 in RTZ pp. 61-68; |

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| | | | Ch. 6 in RTZ pp. 151-155 |
| Week 4 | Jan. 28-30 | Symbolic Interactionism - Continued | Ch. 6 in RTZ pp. 155-167; “Performances” in PK pp. 257-262 |
| Week 5 | Feb. 4-6 | Ethnomethodology | Ch. 6 in RTZ pp. 168-173; “Studies of the Routine Grounds of Everyday Activities” in PK pp. 276-279 |
| Week 6 | February 11 | MID=TERM EXAM | |
| Week 7 | Feb. 18-20 | SPRING READING WEEK | NO READINGS. NO CLASSES |
| Week 8 | Feb. 25-27 | Critical Theories | Ch. 5 in RTZ, pp. 117-126; “One Dimensional Man” in PK pp. 439-444 |
| Week 9 | Mar. 3-5 | Globalization Theories | Ch. 11 in RTZ |
| Week 10 | Mar. 10-12 | Feminist Theories | Ch. 8 in RTZ |
| Week 11 | Mar. 17-19 | Feminist Theories - Continued | “Doing Gender” in PK, pp. 328-335; “Toward an Afrocentric Feminist Epistemology” in PK pp. 350-359 |
| Week 12 | Mar. 24-26 | Post-Modernism; Foucault | Ch. 10 in RTZ pp. 291-307 |
| Week 13 | Mar. 31-Apr. 2 | Foucault- Continued; Wrap Up | “Panopticism” in PK pp. 508-513 |

1. POLICY REGARDING ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

The complete policy regarding [Accommodation for Illness - Undergraduate Students](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12) can be found at http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12.

Students who have long-term or chronic medical conditions which may impede their ability to complete academic responsibilities should seek Academic Accommodation through Student Accessibility Services (http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?PolicyCategoryID=1&Command=showCategory&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_10).

Personal commitments (e.g., vacation flight bookings, work schedule) which conflict with a scheduled test, exam or course requirement are **not** grounds for academic accommodation.

Students who experience an illness or extenuating circumstance sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes:

1. Submitting a **Self-Reported Absence** form provided that the conditions for submission are met;
2. For medical absences, submitting a **Student Medical Certificate (SMC)** signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner;
3. For non-medical absences, submitting **appropriate documentation** (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to their Academic Advisor. Students are encouraged to contact their Academic Advisor to clarify what documentation is acceptable.

Requests for Academic Consideration Using the Self-Reported Absence Portal

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance of 48 hours or less that is sufficiently severe to render them unable to meet academic requirements should self-declare using the online Self-Reported Absence portal. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities within 48 hours. Note that the excused absence includes all courses and academic requirements within the up to 48 hours, it is not intended to provide an excused absence from a single course while students fulfill their academic responsibilities in other courses during that time.

The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances:

1. Students will be allowed **a maximum of two self-reported absences** between September and April and one self-reported absence between May and August;
2. The duration of the absence will be for a maximum of 48 hours from the time the Self-Reported Absence form is completed through the online portal, or from 8:30 am the following morning if the form is submitted after 4:30 pm;
3. The excused absence will terminate prior to the end of the 48 hour period if the student undertakes significant academic responsibilities (writes a test, submits a paper) during that time;
4. Self-reported absences will **not** be allowed for scheduled final examinations; midterm examinations scheduled during the December examination period; or for final lab examinations scheduled during the final week of term;
5. Self-report absences may **not** be used for assessments worth more than 30% of any course;
6. Any absences in excess of 48 hours will require students to present a Student Medical Certificate (SMC), or appropriate documentation;
7. Students **must** communicate with their instructors **no later than 24** hours after the end of the period covered by the Self-Reported Absence form to clarify how they will fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed during the absence.

Request for Academic Consideration for a Medical Absence

When a student requests academic accommodation (e.g., extension of a deadline, a makeup exam) for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course, it is the responsibility of the student to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. All such requests for academic accommodation **must** be made through an Academic Advisor and include supporting documentation.

Academic accommodation for illness will be granted only if the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete their academic responsibilities. Minor ailments typically treated by over-the-counter medications will not normally be accommodated.

The following conditions apply for students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds:

1. Students must submit their Student Medical Certificate (SMC) along with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested no later than two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities. An SMC can be downloaded from http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf ;
2. In cases where there might be an extended absence or serious issue, students should submit their documentation promptly and consult their Academic Advisor for advice during their recovery period;
3. Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, scheduled tests or examinations, and other academic requirements;
4. Students **must** communicate with their instructors **no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by the SMC to clarify how they will fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed during the absence;
5. Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office/Academic Advisor in consultation with the course instructor(s). Academic accommodation may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements, arranging Special Exams (make-ups), re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawal without academic penalty.

The [full policy on requesting accommodation due to illness](#) can be viewed at:

http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12

2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS

If you feel that you have a medical or personal challenge that is interfering with your work, contact your instructor and Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis. Retroactive requests for academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds are not normally considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines; please refer to the [Registrar's website](#), <http://brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar-services/> or the list of official sessional dates in the Academic Calendar (<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm?SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=>).

You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. *Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP eligibility and/or Entrance Scholarship eligibility.*

3. ABSENCES

Short Absences: If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

Extended Absences: If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work, and arrange academic accommodations if appropriate and warranted.

It is important to note that the Academic Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory

(http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=5&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_68).

4. SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence at:

http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_20.

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Students are advised to consult the section on Scholastic Discipline for Undergraduate Students in the Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Academic Dean's Office, or the Registrar. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" is not accepted as an excuse.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence (including plagiarism) include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Computer-marked Tests/exams:

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating. Software currently in use to score computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams performs a similarity review as part of standard exam analysis.

5. PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS

All appeals of a grade must be directed first to the course instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal is to be sent to the School Chair. If the response of the Chair is considered unsatisfactory to the student, they may then submit a written appeal to the Office of the Dean. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Dean, they may appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA), if there are sufficient grounds for the appeal and if the matter falls within the jurisdiction of the SRBA. For information on academic appeals consult your Academic Advisor or see the Student Academic Appeals – Undergraduate in the Academic Calendar

http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_14.

Note that final course marks are not official until the Academic Dean has reviewed and signed the final grade report for the course. If course marks deviate from acceptable and appropriate standards, the Academic Dean may require grades to be adjusted to align them with accepted grading practices.

6. PREREQUISITES

Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from the Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisite(s).

7. SUPPORT

Support Services

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar-services/> . Students can access supports through Brescia's Student Life Centre (<http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/student-life/>) and Learning Skills Services at Western (<https://www.uwo.ca/sdc/learning/>)

Mental Health and Wellness

Students may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to your learning, such as increased anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, feeling down or lost, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. Services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can obtain information about how to obtain help for yourself or others through **Mental Health & Wellness at Brescia** (<http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/mental-health-wellness/>) and **Health and Wellness at Western**, http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html.

Sexual Violence

All members of the Brescia University College community have a right to work and study in an environment that is free from any form of sexual violence. Brescia University College recognizes that the prevention of, and response to, Sexual Violence is of particular importance in the university environment. Sexual Violence is strictly prohibited and unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Brescia is committed to preventing Sexual Violence and creating a safe space for anyone in the Brescia community who has experienced Sexual Violence.

If you or someone you know has experienced any form of Sexual Violence, you may access resources at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/sexual-violence/>.

Portions of this document were taken from the Academic Calendar, the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy and the Academic Handbook of Senate Regulations. This document is a summary of relevant regulations and does not supersede the academic policies and regulations of the Senate of the University of Western Ontario.
