

DEREE COLLEGE SYLLABUS FOR: SO 4461 CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY		3/0/3
(Updated: Fall 2024)		UK LEVEL: L6 UK CREDITS: 15
PREREQUISITES:	SO 1000 Introduction to Sociology SO 3260 Classical Sociological Theory plus 2 additional courses in sociology	
CATALOG DESCRIPTION:	The development of sociological theory in Europe and the United States since Parsons. Functionalism and systems theory. Critical Theory. Feminist Social Theory. Interactionism and Ethnomethodology. Post-modernity. Current developments	
RATIONALE:	As a continuation of SO 3260 <i>Classical Sociological Theory</i> , this course covers major theoretical trends in sociology since the 1920s. It seeks to familiarize sociology students with the various schools of thought, a knowledge of which is an indispensable resource for grasping the ongoing development of concepts in sociology. Offering a wide theoretical background, the course contributes to refining students' theoretical capabilities and makes them aware of the diversity of contemporary sociological theories. Since theories are interwoven with social change, an important dimension that emerges is the need to reconstruct sociology's theoretical categories in order to achieve greater adequacy in explanation.	
LEARNING OUTCOMES:	<i>As a result of taking this course, the student should be able to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build detailed knowledge of the main theoretical schools of thought in sociology, from Parsons' attempt at a general theory of society to current debates. • Critically evaluate meta-theoretical problems, which still shape sociological theory, like the "action-structure" dualism. • Interpret advanced texts in contemporary sociological theory. • Discuss current theoretical and normative trends and their relevance for the legacy of contemporary sociological theory. 	
METHOD OF TEACHING AND LEARNING:	In congruence with the teaching and learning strategy of the college, the following tools are used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures and class discussions. • Homework assignments. • Office hours held by the instructor to provide further assistance to students. • Use of library facilities for further study and preparation for the exams • Use of the Blackboard course management platform to further support communication, by posting lecture notes, assignment instruction, timely announcements, formative quizzes and online submission of assignments. 	

ASSESSMENT:	<p>Summative:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="641 185 1441 654"> <tr> <td data-bbox="641 185 1251 331">1st assessment: In-class Mid-term examination (short unseen text interpretation/informative/critical response; 1,700 +/-10% words)</td><td data-bbox="1251 185 1441 331">40</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="641 331 1251 616">Final assessment: (3,500 +/-10% words) – summative [For the term paper to receive a grade, timely submission and approval of all the preparatory work is required (e.g., topic proposal, progress report, annotated bibliography, draft). Failure to submit the preparatory material in a timely manner will result in an FA grade in this assessment]</td><td data-bbox="1251 331 1441 616">60</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="641 616 1251 654"></td><td data-bbox="1251 616 1441 654"></td></tr> </table> <p>Formative:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="641 725 1441 799"> <tr> <td data-bbox="641 725 1251 763">Interpretive in class exercises on selected texts</td><td data-bbox="1251 725 1441 763">0</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="641 763 1251 799"></td><td data-bbox="1251 763 1441 799"></td></tr> </table> <p>The formative interpretive exercises aims to prepare students for the summative assessments. The 1st assessment tests Learning Outcomes 1, 3, 4 The Final assessment tests Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4</p> <p><i>The final grade for this module will be determined by averaging all summative assessment grades, based on the predetermined weights for each assessment. If students pass the comprehensive assessment that tests all Learning Outcomes for this module and the average grade for the module is 40 or higher, students are not required to resit any failed assessments.</i></p>	1 st assessment: In-class Mid-term examination (short unseen text interpretation/informative/critical response; 1,700 +/-10% words)	40	Final assessment: (3,500 +/-10% words) – summative [For the term paper to receive a grade, timely submission and approval of all the preparatory work is required (e.g., topic proposal, progress report, annotated bibliography, draft). Failure to submit the preparatory material in a timely manner will result in an FA grade in this assessment]	60			Interpretive in class exercises on selected texts	0		
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Interpretive in class exercises on selected texts	0										
INDICATIVE READING:	<p>Required material:</p> <p>1.Joas, H. and Knöbl, W (2009), <i>Social Theory: Twenty Introductory Lectures</i>, Cambridge: Cambridge.</p> <p>On Reserve Status in the JSB Library (required): (chapters will be assigned by the lecturer in order to complement the main source with a view to sharpen interpretive skills on primary sources)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bourdieu, P. (1984), <i>Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste</i>. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 2. Buroway, M (2005), 'For Public Sociology', <i>American Sociological Review</i>, 70: 2-28. 3. Foucault, M ([1976] 1984), <i>The History of Sexuality, Vol. I</i>, London: Penguin Books. 4. Giddens, A (1987), <i>Social Theory and Modern Sociology</i>, Cambridge: Polity Press. 5. Goffman, E, ([1974, <i>Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience</i>. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 										

6. Habermas, J. ([1962] 1992), *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
7. Harding, S. (1987) (ed.), *Feminism and Methodology*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
8. Mouzelis, N. (2008), *Modern and Postmodern Social Theory. Bridging the Divide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
9. Parsons, T (1966), *Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
10. Parsons, T (1969). *Politics and Social Structure*. New York: The Free Press.
11. Turner, S. (ed.) (1997), *Social Theory and Sociology: The Classics and Beyond*. Wiley-Blackwell.
12. Susen, S. (2020), *Sociology in the Twentieth-First Century: Key Trends, Debates and Challenges*. Basingstoke, Houndmills: Palgrave.

Recommended Material:

1. Archer, M (2009) *Being Human: The Problem of Agency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Bhabra, G (2007) *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
3. Elias, N. (1978), *What is Sociology?* New York: Columbia University Press.
4. Gangas, S. (2020) *Sociological Theory and the Capability Approach*. London: Routledge.
5. Gouldner, A. (1970), *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*. New York: Avon Books.
6. Held, D. (1980), *Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
7. Heritage, J. (1984), *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology*, Polity: Cambridge.
8. Homlwood, J. (2007), "'Only connect...': the challenge of Globalization for the social science", *21st Century Society*, 2(1):79-93.
9. Holmwood, J. (2013), 'Public Reasoning Without Sociology: Amartya Sen's Theory of Justice', *Sociology* 47(6): 1171-1186.
10. Johnson, P. (2014), 'Sociology and the Critique of Neoliberalism: Reflection on Peter Wagner and Axel Honneth', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 17: 516-533.
11. Layder, D. (1994), *Understanding Social Theory*. London: Sage.
12. Meštrović, S. (1998), *Anthony Giddens. The Last Modernist*. London and New York: Routledge.
13. Ritzer, G. (2008), *Modern Sociological Theory*, New York: McGraw-Hill (International Edition).
14. Sztompka, P. (1986), *Robert K. Merton: An Intellectual Profile*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan.
15. Touraine, A. (2007), "Sociology after Sociology", *European Journal of Social Theory*, 10(2): 184-193.
16. Waters, M. (1994), *Modern Sociological Theory*, London: Sage.

	Other sources, including journal and newspapers' articles, research papers etc. recommended by the instructor throughout the semester.
INDICATIVE MATERIAL: (e.g. audiovisual, digital material, etc.)	REQUIRED MATERIAL: N/A RECOMMENDED MATERIAL: N/A
COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS:	Verbal and written skills using academic / professional English.
SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS:	MS Office and Blackboard CMS Enter any additional s/w requirements.
WWW RESOURCES:	Useful specialized journals include: <i>Sociological Theory</i> http://www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=0735-2751 <i>European Journal of Social Theory</i> http://www.est.sagepub.com <i>Journal of Classical Sociology</i> http://www.jcs.sagepub.com https://globalsocialtheory.org/topics/what-is-postcolonial-sociology/
INDICATIVE CONTENT:	1.What is theory? 2.The classical attempt at synthesis: Talcott Parsons 3.Interpretive approaches (1): symbolic interactionism 4.Interpretive approaches (2): ethnomethodology 5.Conflict sociology and conflict theory 6.Habermas and critical theory 7.Niklas Luhmann's radicalization of functionalism 8.Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration and the new British sociology of power 9.Structuralism and poststructuralism 10.Between structuralism and theory of practice: The cultural sociology of Pierre Bourdieu 11.Feminist social theories 12.A crisis of modernity? New diagnoses (Ulrich Beck, Zygmunt Bauman, Robert Bellah, and the debate between liberals and Communitarians)

	<p>13.Neo-pragmatism</p> <p>14.On 'public sociology' and its critics</p> <p>15. Postcolonialism, modernity and social theory</p> <p>16. Sociological theory and the capability approach</p> <p>17.How things stand</p> <p><i>*adapted from the chapter outline of Joas, H. and Knöbl, W., Social Theory: Twenty Introductory Lectures, Cambridge: Cambridge, 2009.</i></p>
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