

Course: Themes in Contemporary Social Theory (SOC 335 LEC A1)
Fall 2015

Time and location: Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00-3:20 pm Tory 1-91

Pre-requisite: SOC 212 or consent of the instructor. Not open to students with credit in SOC 332, 333, or 334.

Instructor: Dr. Gregory Bowden gbowden@ualberta.ca

Office hours and location: TBA

If you are unable to meet during office hours, please speak with me and I will make an alternate time available.

The fastest way to contact me is via e-mail. All e-mail communication must be through your University of Alberta e-mail address.

Required text / readings: Calhoun, C. J., Gerteis, J., Moody, J., Pfaff, S., & Virk, I. (Eds.). (2012). *Contemporary sociological theory* (3rd ed.). Chichester, West Sussex; Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons.

The course will largely follow the textbook, as it provides both a broad and coherent account of contemporary theory; this will be complemented with in-class materials provided by the instructor.

The below readings are from this textbook. They are arranged in groups according to which we will read them throughout the semester – see the Lecture Schedule below.

- Group A Introduction. In *Contemporary sociological theory* (pp. 1–24)
Introduction to Part I. In *Contemporary sociological theory* (pp. 27–34)
Schutz, A. *The phenomenology of the social world*. (pp. 35–45)
Goffman, E. *The presentation of self in everyday life*. (pp. 46–61)
Blumer, H. *Symbolic interactionism*. (pp. 62–74)
- Group B Introduction to Part IV. In *Contemporary sociological theory* (pp. 223–228)
Mills, C. W. *The power elite*. (pp. 229–236)
Gramsci, A. *On hegemony*. (pp. 237–250)
- Group C Introduction to Part V. In *Contemporary sociological theory* (pp. 289–294)
Foucault, M. *Truth and power*. (pp. 305–313)
Foucault, M. *Discipline and punish*. (pp. 314–321)
- Group D Introduction to Part VII. In *Contemporary sociological theory* (pp. 389–397)
Smith, D. E. *The conceptual practices of power*. (pp. 398–406)
Collins, P. H. *Black feminist epistemology*. (pp. 407–416)
Fanon, F. *Black skin, white masks*. (pp. 417–425)
- Group E Introduction to Part IX. In *Contemporary sociological theory* (pp. 493–498)
Elias, N. *The social constraint towards self-constraint*. (pp. 499–509)

Giddens, A. *The consequences of modernity*. (pp. 531–545)

Latour, B. *We have never been modern*. (pp. 546–559)

Group F Introduction to Part X. In *Contemporary sociological theory* (pp. 563–568)

Wallerstein, I. *The modern world-system in crisis*. (pp. 587–599)

Course objectives:

This course is an opportunity for students:

1. to advance their understanding of, and skills related to, contemporary sociological theory
 - a. to grasp the major characteristics which have come to distinguish contemporary sociological theories
 - b. to place these theories in historical and contemporary context
 - c. to evaluate the merits and uses of these theories
2. to obtain direction and experience in reading, discussing, and understanding this material
3. to prepare themselves for further study in sociology generally and sociological theory specifically

General content:

This course examines the major intellectual trends which make up contemporary sociological theory. The implications of these trends and their historical context will receive focus. This is pursued through the reading and discussion of some distinctive original texts; complemented by, and elaborated upon in, course lectures.

Evaluation:

The specifics of these forms of evaluation will be discussed in class and supplemented with a handout, to be available online.

Evaluation structure:

In-class participation	5%	
Written participation	15%	1) September 28 2) October 21 3) November 20
Take-home midterm	25%	October 28
Term paper	30%	November 30
Take-home final exam	25%	December 21

In-class participation

Participation in class is an important component of this course. Participation includes attending and being prepared for class. There will be group discussion throughout the semester and participation marks will be allocated based on participation in group discussion.

Written participation

The course has an assigned textbook. Students will be required to write reflections on specified readings – one from **Group A**, one from **Group B or C**, and one from **Group D or E**; student's choice. The instructor will collect and review these reflections throughout the semester. The goal is to provide experience in writing and thinking clearly about this material, and for the

instructor to gauge student progress, rather than eliciting correct answers. These are due on the dates indicated above and below. Please see **Written participation sample** below for some direction on this; I will also discuss expectations in class. Each piece of written participation is worth 5% (15% total).

Format of exams

The exams are take-home exams. They will include both short-answer questions of roughly half a page each, and a longer essay question, of 2-3 pages. The questions for the midterm exam will be provided to students a week prior to the exam date. The questions for the final exam will be given out on the last day of class.

The specifics of these, as well as sample questions to give students an idea of the nature of these questions, will be discussed in class and made available electronically at the start of the semester.

Format of term paper

This course asks you to produce a term paper of roughly 3000 words. It will be based primarily on the readings for the course. The specifics of this will be discussed in class and made available electronically at the start of the semester.

Deferred exams:

Students who miss the midterm exam must contact the instructor to apply for an excused absence, within two working days of the missed exam, or as soon as the student is able to, in regards to the circumstance. Excused absences are not automatic and are at the discretion of the instructor. Supporting documentation may be requested. The following are examples of unacceptable reasons to miss an exam, such as vacations, weddings and travel plans.

In the event of an excused absence, a deferred exam will be arranged. If possible, the student must arrange this with the instructor before the exam, by e-mailing the instructor at the e-mail address above.

Students who miss the **final exam** must apply to their home faculty for an exam deferral within two working days of the missed exam, or as soon as the student is able to, in regards to the circumstance. Instructors cannot grant final exam deferrals.

A deferred final examination will not be approved if a student (a) has not been in regular attendance where attendance and/or participation are required, and/or, (b) excluding the final exam, has completed less than half of the assigned work, as stated in §23.3(2)c of the Calendar.

Late assignments:

Generally, written work is not accepted after the indicated submission date. In events where there are reasonable extenuating circumstances, similar to those required for an excused absence from an exam, then an assignment's due date can be deferred at the instructor's discretion.

Evaluative material:

Students will be given access to past or present evaluative course material online and in addition it will be discussed in class.

Grading:

The official University grading system will be implemented on absolute

measures - the raw score for the forms of evaluation above will be converted into a percentage score based on the weight of the final exam. The cumulative percentage score will be converted into a final grade:

Percentage	Letter Grade	Description
90-100	A+	Excellent
86-89	A	Excellent
82-85	A-	Excellent
78-81	B+	Good
74-77	B	Good
70-73	B-	Good
66-69	C+	Satisfactory
62-65	C	Satisfactory
58-61	C-	Satisfactory
54-57	D+	Poor
50-53	D	Minimal Pass
0-49	F	Failure

Policy: Policy about course outlines can be found in §23.4(2) of the University Calendar.

Academic integrity: The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

For further information about Academic Integrity and to access the Academic Integrity Handbook for students, visit the Office of Student Judicial Affairs website at <http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/en/Students.aspx>.

Recording of lectures: Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the [content author\(s\)](#).

Class schedule:

Class 1 Sep 2 Wed A Introduction

NO CLASS Sep 7 Mon A

Class 2 Sep 9 Wed A [Foundations](#)

Class 3 Sep 14 Mon A

Class 4 Sep 16 Wed A

Class 5 Sep 21 Mon A

Class 6 Sep 23 Wed A

Class 7 Sep 28 Mon B Power Written participation 1 is due

Class 8 Sep 30 Wed B

Class 9 Oct 5 Mon B

Class 10 Oct 7 Wed B

NO CLASS Oct 12 Mon C Foucault

Class 11 Oct 14 Wed C

Class 12 Oct 19 Mon C

Class 13 Oct 21 Wed C Written participation 2 is due

Class 14 Oct 26 Mon D Difference

Class 15 Oct 28 Wed D Take-home midterm is due (A+B)

Class 16 Nov 2 Mon D

Class 17 Nov 4 Wed D

NO CLASS Nov 9 Mon E

NO CLASS Nov 11 Wed E

Class 18 Nov 16 Mon E [Modernity](#)

Class 19 Nov 18 Wed E

Class 20 Nov 23 Mon E Written participation 3 is due

Class 21 Nov 25 Wed E

Class 22 Nov 30 Mon F World-systems Term paper is due

Class 23 Dec 2 Wed F

Class 24 Dec 7 Mon F

Written participation guide

The point of this exercise is for you to practice your writing, thinking and comprehension, and to receive feedback on those skills.

You are asked to write a short reflective piece on a selected entry from the course textbook. It should be around 500 words in length and should be double-spaced.

Suggestions for writing -

You could:

- Focus on a specific concept, or phrase which strikes you as important or consequential
- Summarize the text
- Relate something in the text to a contemporary event (on the news, for example). However, keep the text central, not the contemporary event.
- Ask a question of the text.
 - “Why does the author say X? Later on he says . . . which seems to contradict this, so . . .”
 - “Why does the author use the example of animals/technology/sports? This example seems useful because . . .”

Avoid:

- Not addressing the text substantively (picking a quote at random, not discussing the content of the text at all, raising too many issues).
- Copying the phrasing or structure of the examples provided here and below
- Impressionistic analysis (‘I liked it’ or ‘I didn’t like it’, ‘It was wordy’)
- Using the text to talk about something unrelated (personal interests/opinions)
- Picking a big quote to pad your word count (in such a case, reprint the passage and write your response to it)
- Writing too little or too much ($\pm 20\%$ off of the recommended word count suggests a misunderstanding of the exercise or too much / too little effort)
- Poor grammar, spelling, punctuation
- Writing in an unclear way, without direction or focus

Sample written participation

Foucault, M. (2003). Technologies of the self. In P. Rabinow & N. Rose (Eds.), *The essential Foucault: Selections from the essential works of Foucault, 1954-1984* (pp. 145-169). New York London: The New Press.

This essay is called ‘Technologies of the self’. I expected that the essay would discuss contemporary forms of technology, or what we commonly mean by technology: telecommunications, electronics, or biological enhancement. Foucault, however, is focusing on ways of living that Stoic philosophers took up in classical antiquity, and in the early Christian era, which is peculiar. A dictionary search shows that ‘technology’ has its roots in the Greek words for skill/art (*techne*) and for speaking/reading (*logos*). In this light, it makes sense that Foucault would call this essay ‘technologies of the self’ because he is talking about the art of self-governance, or the skillful exercise of reason on one’s self. However, it still seems to be a strange use of the word - given the discussion of religious salvation and aesthetic relationships to the self, wouldn’t he use the phrase ‘art of the self’? Perhaps by using an unexpected word he is able to prevent us from assuming too much about what he is talking about, and forcing us to reconsider those assumptions. If I were to take up his work further, I would do so in a contemporary, rather than a historical context, and ask if current groups, religious or otherwise, fit this concept of ‘technology’. It seems efforts to produce successful Olympic athletes fit this category, because those athletes put many hours into training the self. Furthermore, their efforts are based in art and skill, and the extensive development of an ascetic relationship to such a self.

Furthermore, Foucault says he has been studying “The different ways in our culture that humans develop knowledge about themselves: economics, biology, psychiatry, medicine, and penology” (146). He goes on to account for these different methods of obtaining knowledge. However, I wonder why he suggests that these constitute different ways of developing knowledge about ourselves, rather than similar ways of developing knowledge about particular aspects of ourselves. That is to say, they might be very similar methodologically (employing the same approaches, and a reliance on testing or quantification, for example), but they talk about different objects. Nonetheless, shortly thereafter he does give an indication that they are similar, not necessarily in method but in another way. While they are ways of obtaining knowledge, they are also ways of governing actions or modifying particular behaviors. Some forms of governance rely on economic knowledge (people as rational actors), some forms rely on medical and biological knowledge (immunization campaigns), and some rely on prison studies (reform or retribution). Different ways of knowing ourselves, then, may translate into different strategies of organizing human behavior. This suggests that inquiry, even detached or value-free inquiry, cannot prevent itself from being used for social and political ends. Furthermore, those social and political ends may pre-exist the forms of inquiry, and appeals to value-freedom are a rationalization after the fact.



Don't do it!



Honesty is always the best policy

The academic community depends on academic honesty. The Faculty of Arts has a zero tolerance policy when it comes to plagiarism and cheating. In the past 3 years, despite warnings such as this handout, over 350 students were charged by the Faculty of Arts alone under the *Code of Student Behaviour*. A common sanction for Academic Offences is a **Grade of F8** in the course and possibly a **suspension** of at least one term! Don't jeopardize your academic career by cheating.

There are no excuses! Here are some **ethical choices** if you run into difficulty:

- 1) Talk to your Professor.
- 2) Take a reduced grade, even a zero; these are better than an F8 and a suspension.
- 3) Don't procrastinate: start assignments immediately; you will normally have to juggle other assignments and cannot count on enough time if you delay.
- 4) Reduce your course load to what *you* can manage given *your* personal non-academic circumstances.
- 5) Talk to Student Counselling (2nd floor SUB).

Student Counselling Academic Support Centre
2-600 SUB 2-703 SUB
PH 780-492-5205 PH 780-492-2682

The Consequences are serious!

- Your **GPA is lowered** substantially if you receive an F8 on your transcript. This grade is averaged into your GPA and may lead to your being **required to withdraw** if your GPA falls below Satisfactory Standing (2.0).
- You might **lose your scholarship or admission** (or future chances of admission) into other programs such as Graduate Studies, Law, Business, Education, or Medicine.
- Suspension can **set back or prevent graduation**.
- **Resentment of your fellow students** – honest students don't want to see their grades diminished by those who cheat on exams and plagiarize written work.

Here are some examples of the most common academic offences reported:

Plagiarism:

- Using any text/words, phrases, ideas or images from books (including encyclopedias), articles– **including the Internet**– without proper citation.
- **Paraphrasing** without providing proper citation also constitutes plagiarism. **ASK**, if you're in doubt!
- Copying (in whole or in part) answers, essays, assignments or lab reports from another student.
- Submitting an essay, assignment or report that was (in whole or in part) submitted in another course.

Cheating:

- Use or possession of unauthorized materials (notes, textbook, cheat-sheet, cell phone) during an exam.
- Copying or simply looking at another student's answers during an exam **or** allowing another student to see your answers during an exam.
- Unacceptable levels of external compositional or editorial assistance by a paid or unpaid tutor. If you are unsure of what would be acceptable, **ASK!**

Misrepresentation of Facts:

- Making up data, sources or page numbers for reports, assignments or essays.
- Changing answers on a corrected exam and re-submitting it for a mark increase.
- Exaggerating/ faking illness to support assignment or exam extensions. Remember, deferred exams are granted for **incapacitating** illnesses.

Familiarize yourself with the following web resources:

- [Office of Student Judicial Affairs](#)¹
- [Code of Student Behaviour](#)
- [Student OmbudService](#)



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Formatting updated by Prof. Bowden 14 / 05 / 2015

¹ Updated by Prof. Bowden 14 / 05 / 2015

NOTICE TO INSTRUCTORS REGARDING PLAGIARISM, CHEATING, MISREPRESENTATION OF FACTS AND PARTICIPATION IN AN OFFENCE

The U of A considers plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts and participation in an offence to be serious academic offences. Plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts and participation in an offence can be avoided if students are told what these offences are and if possible sanctions are made clear at the outset. Instructors should understand that the principles embodied in the *Code* are essential to our academic purpose. For this reason, instructors will be fully supported by Departments, Faculties and the University in their endeavours to rightfully discover and pursue cases of academic dishonesty in accordance with the *Code*.

At the beginning of each term, we ask you to review with your students the definitions of plagiarism and cheating. We are now also asking you to review with your students the definition of Misrepresentation of Facts and Participation in an Offence. Your co-operation and assistance in this matter are much appreciated.

30.3.2(1) Plagiarism

No Student shall submit the words, ideas, images or data of another person as the Student's own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study.

30.3.2(2) Cheating

30.3.2(2)a No Student shall in the course of an examination or other similar activity, obtain or attempt to obtain information from another Student or other unauthorized source, give or attempt to give information to another Student, or use, attempt to use or possess for the purposes of use any unauthorized material.

30.3.2(2)b No Student shall represent or attempt to represent him or herself as another or have or attempt to have himself or herself represented by another in the taking of an examination, preparation of a paper or other similar activity. See also misrepresentation in 30.3.6(4).

30.3.2(2)c No Student shall represent another's substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as the Student's own work.

30.3.2(2)d No Student shall submit in any course or program of study, without the written approval of the course Instructor, all or a substantial portion of any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project, assignment, presentation or poster for which credit has previously been obtained by the Student or which has been or is being submitted by the Student in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.

30.3.2(2)e No Student shall submit in any course or program of study any academic writing, essay, thesis, report, project, assignment, presentation or poster containing a statement of fact known by the Student to be false or a reference to a source the Student knows to contain fabricated claims (unless acknowledged by the Student), or a fabricated reference to a source.

30.3.6(4) Misrepresentation of Facts

No Student shall misrepresent pertinent facts to any member of the University community for the purpose of obtaining academic or other advantage. This includes such acts as the failure to provide pertinent information on an application for admission or the altering of an educational document/transcript.

30.3.6(5) Participation in an Offence

No Student shall counsel or encourage or knowingly aid or assist, directly or indirectly, another person in the commission of any offence under this Code.

<p>Procedures for Instructors Regarding Plagiarism, Cheating, Misrepresentation of Facts and Participation in an Offence</p> <p>The following procedures are drawn from the <i>Code of Student Behaviour</i> as approved by GFC and the Board of Governors. The guidelines summarize what instructors <u>must do</u> when they have reason to believe that a student has plagiarized, cheated, misrepresented facts or participated in an offence. If you have questions about these guidelines, or about the policies, please talk with the senior administrator in your Faculty responsible for dealing with student discipline—usually an Associate Dean – or the Appeals and Compliance Officer (Appeals Coordinator), University Governance (2-2655).</p> <p>30.5.4 Procedures for Instructors in Cases Respecting Inappropriate Academic Behaviour</p> <p>30.5.4(1) When an Instructor believes that a Student may have committed an Inappropriate Academic Behaviour Offence [30.3.2] or that there has been Misrepresentation of Facts [30.3.6(4)] or Participation in an Offence [30.3.6(5)] in cases respecting Inappropriate Academic Behaviour in the course that he or she instructs, the Instructor will meet with the Student. Before such a meeting, the Instructor shall inform the Student of the purpose of the meeting. In the event that the Student refuses or fails to meet with the Instructor within a reasonable period of time specified by the Instructor, the Instructor shall, taking into account the available information, decide whether a report to the Dean is warranted.</p> <p>30.5.4(2) If the Instructor believes there has been a violation of the Code, the Instructor shall, as soon as possible after the event occurred, report that violation to the Dean and provide a written statement of the details of the case. The instructor may also include a recommendation for sanction.</p>	<p>Possible Sanctions</p> <p>One or more of the following sanctions given in 30.4.3 (2) and (3) of the Code are commonly used for plagiarism, cheating, participation in an offence, and misrepresentation of facts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30.4.3(2) a.i a mark reduction or a mark of 0 on any term work or examination for reason of Inappropriate Academic Behaviour 30.4.3(2) a.ii Reduction of a grade in a course 30.4.3(2) a.iii a grade of F for a course 30.4.3(2) a.iv a remark on a transcript of 8 (or 9 for failing graduate student grades), indicating Inappropriate Academic Behaviour, in addition to 30.4.3(2)a.i, 30.4.3(2)a.ii or 30.4.3(2)a.iii 30.4.3(3) b Expulsion 30.4.3(3) c Suspension <p>The following sanctions may be used in rare cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30.4.3(3) e Suspension of a Degree already awarded 30.4.3(3) f Rescission of a Degree already awarded <p>30.6.1 Initiation of an Appeal</p> <p>30.6.1(1) When a Student has been found to have committed an offence under the Code of Student Behaviour or an Applicant is found to have committed an offence under the Code of Applicant Behaviour, whether or not that Student or Applicant has been given a sanction, the Student or Applicant may appeal that decision, except in the case of a decision of the Discipline Officer under 30.5.6(2)e.ii, which remains final and is not subject to appeal. In cases where a severe sanction has been recommended to the Discipline Officer, once the student receives the final decision of the Discipline Officer, the student can appeal the decisions of both Dean and the Discipline Officer at the same time. The written appeal must be presented to the Appeals Coordinator in University Governance within 15 Working Days of the deemed receipt of the decision by the Student or Applicant. The finding that an offence has been committed, the sanction imposed or both may form the basis of appeal. The written appeal must also state the full grounds of appeal and be signed by the Appellant. The appeal shall be heard by the UAB.</p>
<p>PROFESSOR STEVEN PENNEY CHAIR, CAMPUS LAW REVIEW COMMITTEE</p>	<p>DR CARL AMRHEIN PROVOST AND VICE-PRESIDENT (ACADEMIC)</p>

* The Campus Law Review Committee is a standing committee of General Faculties Council (GFC) responsible for the review of the *Code of Student Behaviour* and of student disciplinary procedures.