Sociology 335 Contemporary Social Theory

Winter 2019 B1

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30-4:50PM TB38
Course Instructor: Dr. Sourayan Mookerjea
1-058 Tory Bldg. email: sourayan@ualberta.ca
Office Hours: By appointment
Prerequisite: SOC212 or by my permission

Decolonizing Social Theory: Crises and The Intermedia Commons

This course introduces the major problematics of contemporary social theorizing:

Decolonizing social theory through a critique of eurocentrism (ie. the colonizer’s model of the world) underpinning both contemporary interlocking oppressions and the history of sociology itself;

Theorizing the convergence of socio-ecological crises;

Theorizing the crises of globalization and financialization;

Theorizing the commons.

In doing so, this course examines closely the strategy of theorizing through contradictions and explores how contemporary intermedia theory and the praxis of common-being and common wealth regeneration responds to these issues.

The format of the course includes lectures, discussion based seminars, substantial course readings and writing requirements, as well as engaged participation in our in-class theory workshop after reading week.
**Course Objectives**

Students will learn about the main issues at stake in decolonizing social theory: How does eurocentrism (ie. the colonizer’s model of the world) mediate interlocking oppressions, inequality and the return of fascism on the world stage? How does eurocentrism undermine sociological critical inquiry? Why is decolonizing social theory important for cultural studies critique (ie. feminist theory, critical race theory, queer theory, disability studies etc.) and social justice politics?

How can we deconstruct the colonial/enlightenment society vs. nature opposition and why is doing so important for theorizing the proliferation of socio-ecological crises as well as the crises of globalization and financialization? How can theorizing through social contradictions help us here?

How can an intermedia theory of common-being help us write connected histories of contemporary crises? How can intermedia research-creation enable us to theorize social contradictions?

**Course Requirements**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Work</th>
<th>Relative Weights</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-class, short essay format mid term exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermedia Research Creation Project</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take-home Final Assignment</td>
<td>30%</td>
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On February 14th, 2019
Due on April 4th, 2019
Due on April 9th, 2019
Due April, 25th 2019

Note that in the evaluation scheme presented above, numerical figures represent percent relative values of each piece of course work; these figures are NOT marks.
For more information and guidelines regarding the mid-term exam, the course term paper and the take home final assignment see the course e-class website.

**Evaluation & Grading**

As you know, the University of Alberta, Faculty of Arts uses a letter grade system. Over the semester I will evaluate your work by assigning letter grades to each requirement you complete. Along with verbal feedback, letter grade evaluations will give you a clear idea of the level of your performance in the course, individually or as a group member per requirement. After I have evaluated all of your course work, including your final exam paper, I will submit a letter grade from the scale described below based on my judgement of your overall level of performance considered in itself and compared with the work of other students past and present, using the relative weights of each requirement described above.

Your final grade will therefore be determined by whether your work over the term can be characterized overall as either:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>GPV</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>Excellent: original, exceptional</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>outstanding in all respects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent: distinctly outstanding</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Excellent: careful, thorough and</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>insightful work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Good: insightful work in most respects</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good: very good, solid work</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Good: good work in most respects</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Satisfactory: good work in some respects</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Satisfactory: satisfactory work</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C-  Satisfactory: satisfactory but significant flaws  1.7

D+  Poor: Substantial incomprehension of course material  1.3
D   Minimal Pass                          1.0

F   Fail                                 0

**Course Readings**

See course bibliography and schedule on e-class.

**Course Policies**

Academic Responsibility: Enrolment in this course means that you hereby agree to conduct yourself according to the following statement on academic responsibility:

Students’ academic responsibility consists of the following:

(i) Preparedness.
(ii) Respect for the learning needs and processes of others.
(iii) In debate and discussion, criticisms and commentary are to be directed at ideas and arguments, not persons.
(iv) That you accept the contributions of others in a generous spirit, understanding them to be directed at ideas and arguments, not your person.
(v) That you are always responsible for what you say and this responsibility goes beyond merely expressing your opinion to include a generous contribution to the creation of a positive environment for learning for everyone in the class.

Late Work: Late exam papers, assignments and project work will be penalized. Students will be eligible for a grace period of three days
extension provided that you request an extension from me at least one day in advance of the due date. After the grace period, your evaluation will be marked down one evaluation rank per late day at my discretion. No course work will be accepted beyond two weeks past the last day of classes. If you are ill and are unable to complete your work by the due date, you must contact me immediately and at most within 3 days after the due date.

Plagiarism and Fraud: Plagiarism, cheating and fraud (including misrepresentation of reasons for missed exams and assignments) will be considered a serious violation of academic responsibility and can result in expulsion from the university. I will strive to protect the integrity and value of your work from being undermined by cases of plagiarism. If you are unsure of how to appropriately cite the ideas, work, arguments of others in an academic context, please ask me for assistance.

Re-evaluation of submitted course work The following conditions apply for students requesting that their course work be re-evaluated. (1) You must present an argument explaining why your work should be re-evaluated. (2) You must make your request for re-evaluation within one week of having your work returned or marks posted.

Missed Term Work

If you miss the midterm or other course requirements due to illness, it is your responsibility to convince me reasonably that this is an excusable absence, and provide me with one of the following documents within two working days of the scheduled exam or course requirement:

For medical illnesses, students can present one of the following:

"University of Alberta Medical Statement" signed by a doctor
"Request for Excused Absence or Deferral of Term Work"
(for Faculty of Arts students)
"Statutory Declaration" (for students in Faculties other than Arts, to be obtained from home Faculty or the Office of the Registrar)

For other acceptable absences, provide documentation appropriate to the situation. For example:

For a death in the family - a copy of the death certificate
For a car accident - a copy of the accident report
For other serious afflictions - consult with Instructor or Department about appropriate documents

**Registered?**

Make sure you are correctly and accurately registered in the courses you are taking by checking beartracks. I am not given up-to-date student registration information until it is too late.

**University Services for Students**

"Students who require accommodations in this course due to a disability affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning, or mental or physical health are advised to discuss their needs with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) located in 1-80 Students’ Union Building, 492-3381 (phone) or 492-7269 (TTY)."
Required Official University Policy Notices

1. Note the University's policy on missed exams:

23.5.6 Absence from Exams

(see Attendance section of the University Calendar)

"Excused absence for a missed exam is not automatic and is granted at the discretion of the instructor (in the case of term exams) or the student's Faculty (in the case of final exams).

Instructors and Faculties are not required to grant excused absences for unacceptable reasons that include, but are not limited to personal events such as vacations, weddings, or travel arrangements. When a student is absent from a term or final exam without acceptable excuse, a final grade will be computed using a raw score of zero for the exam missed. Any student who applies for or obtains an excused absence by making false statements will be liable under the Code of Student Behaviour."

2. Re: Plagiarism, once more:

"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."

"Don't Do It" sheet at http://tinyurl.com/cheating-plagiarism

"Don't Cheat” sheet at www.governance.ualberta.ca/StudentAppeals/DontCheatSheet.aspx.

3. "Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as apart of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course 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).”

4. “Policy about course outlines can be found in Course Requirements, Evaluation Procedures and Grading of the University Calendar.”