



COLLEGE OF SOCIAL AND APPLIED HUMAN SCIENCES
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

SOC 6070 Sociological Theory

Fall 2019

Prof. Mervyn Horgan

Course Outline

This seminar develops and deepens your familiarity with diverse modes of theorizing in sociology. We will survey some foundational concepts in social theory, and examine ways that contemporary theorists both build upon and depart from the classics. Throughout the course we will use a range of tensions in sociological theory as touchstones, including but not limited to: macro and micro; structure and agency; voluntarism and determinism; materialism and idealism; epistemology and ontology; understanding and explaining. Familiarity with a wide range of theories and concepts will strengthen your own research by providing you with a flexible set of tools that can be used to approach and analyze—and maybe even understand or explain—a near limitless range of social phenomena.

The trick to developing a lively theoretical imagination is in finding connections between what appears at first glance to be unrelated, so, if some readings seem unrelated to your specific research interests, then your task is to use them to think about your interests in new ways (or, even better, to develop more wide and varied interests).

Since this is a graduate level seminar, familiarity with some basic social theory is assumed. If you feel that you do not have an understanding of some foundational ideas in social theory, then please feel free to ask me about additional readings to help you find your feet and/or stay apace. By reading a lot, writing a lot, and participating a lot, we will learn a lot.

Evaluation may include: weekly writing assignments, participation, class presentation, proposal and final paper.

Course texts: all course readings will be made available through the library course reserves system (ARES) or through links to freely available online material.

***Please note that this outline is for information purposes only and may change at the Professor's discretion. The final and full syllabus will be distributed in our first seminar ***