

**SOAN 2111/2112 Classical Sociological Theory**  
**University of Guelph**  
**College of Social and Applied Human Sciences**  
**Department of Sociology and Anthropology**  
**Fall 2024/Winter 2025**

**Land Acknowledgement**

*The University of Guelph resides on the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. The institution's campuses resided within the Dish with One Spoon Treaty. I recognize the land this institution is situated on is home to many past, present, and future First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.*

**Instructor Information**

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Office Location: MCKN 646

Office Hours: Mondays 10:30 AM to 11:00 PM

**Course Information**

Course Location: MACN (MacNaughton Building) 113

Course Time: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 9:30 to 10:20 AM

Prerequisites: 1 of ANTH\*1150, SOC\*1100, SOC\*1500 - Must be completed prior to taking this course.

**Teaching Assistant Information**

Name:

Email:

**Course Description**

The relevance of sociological theory is illustrated through its application to a range of contemporary social problems. As with all theoretical perspectives, we must carefully consider its key contributions and the social context in which it emerged. Understanding a theoretical perspective as a product of its time allows for a critical assessment of the role of power in the construction of knowledge and ideological thought. While some of the central tenets of many classical theories were articulated centuries ago and others more recently, the parallels between these works and our contemporary moment further underscore the importance of sociological theory.

This course introduces students to classical sociological theory, exploring the contributions of various theorists from the Enlightenment to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Throughout the course, we will explore how these approaches offered new insights for understanding society and its structural components. We will further explore the contributions of early theorists and contextualize their works within the broader frameworks of the shift towards liberal democracy, the emergence of the scientific method, and the Industrial Revolution (among other major historical eras and events). This course blends sociological theory and multimedia components to discuss the ongoing relevance of classical theory to our contemporary moment.

### **Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will develop an understanding of the central tenets of various theoretical perspectives in what is considered the classical school of sociological theory.
  - a. Understand the social context in which these theoretical perspectives emerged and how this may have shaped knowledge production and ideological thought.
  - b. Students will develop the capacity to incorporate several theoretical perspectives to explain contemporary social problems. This learning outcome is premised on contributing to the theoretical training of students at the undergraduate level.
  - c. Identify major theorists, like Marx, Durkheim, and Weber, and distinguish between their key theoretical contributions.
  - d. Engage with the broader significance of the course content, emphasizing how classical theory may further improve our understanding of the social world.
2. Course deliverables seek to improve student skills, particularly in essay writing, knowledge and understanding, application, critical thinking, argumentation, and evidence synthesis.
  - a. Demonstrate how effectively articulate their main arguments in research essays while incorporating existing research.
  - b. Engage in critical discussion with peers to highlight how theoretical concepts can be used to explain certain issues in the study of sociological theory.
  - c. Understand how to effectively format their essays for writing at the university level, relying on incorporating peer-reviewed research.
  - d. Demonstrate the capacity to think critically through completing writing assignments and deliverables. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key course concepts by completing assigned work.