

SOCI 309 - Contemporary Social Theorizing

Fall 2024

Instructor: Dr. Steve Garlick

sgarlick@uvic.ca

Course Description¹:

Social theorizing aims both to explain the world that we live in, and to think beyond the given towards a different world. It is a creative activity that is concerned with generating new ideas that can be starting points for sociological research. Theorizing is concerned with producing and taking up perspectives that allow us to ask, and to try to answer, questions concerning some of the most crucial issues in our lives.

This course builds on classical social theorizing (SOCI 210) and focuses on important theorists and concepts that emerged during the latter part of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century. We will trace the influence of classical theorists on the work of those who came after them, as well as examining innovations specific to more recent social theories. We will consider how different social theories emerged as responses to specific historical conditions. This is not, however, a course on the history of social theory; rather, we will be primarily concerned with the contemporary relevance of the theories covered, and with how they can assist us in developing our own capacities to theorize.

Topics Covered will include:

Critical theory; structuralism; micro-sociological theory; colonialism & postcolonial theory; feminist theory; poststructuralism; power; subjectivity; freedom; bodies; symbolic violence; globalization; Indigenous theorizing; and new materialisms.

Course Objectives:

The course has several main objectives: (1) to gain a broad understanding of the trajectory of social theory over the latter half of the twentieth century and in recent decades; (2) to become familiar with important concepts and debates that inform social theorizing today; and (3) to gain experience in *theorizing* (i.e., creating and using theoretical concepts to produce new insights into contemporary social phenomena). It is important to learn the work of influential social theorists, but the coursework that students will undertake is designed primarily to develop their abilities to theorize for themselves. This will include a final paper in which students will engage in extended theorizing of their own.

¹ This outline is only intended to give an overall sense of the course. A detailed course outline will be made available before the first day of class. Only that outline is to be considered official.

Course Pre-requisites:

SOCI 210 – Classical Social Theorizing

Course Readings:

All course readings will be made available via our Brightspace site.

Mode of Delivery:

This is an in-person class. We will occasionally utilize asynchronous online learning activities, but almost all class sessions will be delivered in-person and students are expected to attend. Class sessions will involve substantial discussion-based portions and will not be recorded.