



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES

Te Kura Mahinga Tangata

**Sociology and Social Policy**

**SOSC 211**

**Interpreting Society**

20 POINTS

TRIMESTER 2 2014

**Trimester dates:** 14 July to 16 November 2014

**Teaching dates:** 14 July to 17 October 2014

**Mid-trimester break:** 25 August to 7 September 2014

**Study week:** 20–24 October 2014

**Examination/Assessment Period:** 24 October to 15 November 2014

Note: students who enrol in courses with examinations must be able to attend an examination at the University at any time during the scheduled examination period.

**Withdrawal dates:** Refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds). If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats).

## **Class times and locations**

Lectures: Monday 11:00 pm – 12:50 pm Hunter LT119

Tutorials: These are beginning third week of trimester; times and venues to be announced.

## **Names and contact details**

Course Coordinator: Dr Chamsy el-Ojeili  
Level 10, Murphy Building, MY 1016  
Tel: 04 463 6740  
Email: [chamsy.el-ojeili@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:chamsy.el-ojeili@vuw.ac.nz)  
Office hours: TBA

## **Communication of additional information**

Other additional information related to SOSC 211 will be communicated via Blackboard or email. You will automatically receive all Blackboard announcements as an email sent to your @myvuw.ac.nz email address. If you are not going to use this Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

## **Prescription**

This course introduces students to major sociological theories. Emphasis is on understanding theoretical ideas and how they relate to the construction and analysis of social issues.

## **Course content**

SOSC 211 examines the major shifts in social theory from the classical period to today. Beginning with the origins of social theory and the foundational analyses of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, the course then moves to cover a range of major sociological theories – structural functionalism, symbolic interaction, Marxism, post-structuralism, actor-network theory, globalization theory, and more. The course also aims to encourage students to understand these theories in their context and against one another, and to move towards critical evaluation of the major currents of sociological thought in their assessment work. An outline of lectures, along with recommended readings is available on Blackboard.

## **Course learning objectives (CLOs)**

Students who pass this course should be able to

1. display their grasp of a number of the major sociological approaches to the study of the social world, and to show that they can begin thinking about applying these to analysis of substantive issues in contemporary society
2. draw together and consolidate their knowledge of the substantive content of the course.

## **Teaching format**

Teaching consists of one two-hour lecture per week, as well as tutorials. Tutorials will begin in the third week of trimester. These tutorials are compulsory, and students need to attend at least 6 out of 9 as part of mandatory course requirements. More information will be given in lectures about tutorial times and rooms.

## Mandatory course requirements

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

1. Submit essay one and essay two
2. Sit the exam.
3. Attend at least 6 out of 9 tutorials.

## Workload

The expectations are that students will work 10 hours per point, therefore a 20-point course equates to 200 hours over the trimester. This includes scheduled contact time, individual or group study, and work on assessment tasks.

The approximate workload for study towards essays and the exam is 40 hours each.

## Assessment

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	Essay One (2500 words)	25%	1,2	22 Aug 2014
2	Essay Two (2500 words)	25%	1,2	26 Sep 2014
3	Exam (two hours long)	50%	1,2	24 Oct to 15 Nov 2014

### Essay 1 2500 words

**Weighting 25%**

#### Due: Friday 22 Aug 2014

1. There is no consensus among classical sociologists about approaching this thing 'society'. Discuss, drawing on at least two theorists.
2. Discuss the major features and major criticisms of structural functionalism.
3. Contrast and compare different approaches to society within structural functionalism and structuration theory.
4. Micro-sociology consists of discussion of trivialities and amounts to nothing more than subjectivism. Discuss.
5. Discuss the major features of, and debates around, the Marxist approach to society.
6. Describe the major features and major criticisms of structuralism as an approach to the social world.
7. Discuss the distinctive way in which Foucault approaches the social.
8. Create your own essay topic, in consultation with the lecturer.

### Essay 2 2500 words

**Weighting 25%**

#### Due: Friday 26 September 2014

1. Describe Giddens's structuration theory and some of the major criticisms made of it.
2. Bourdieu successfully transcends the structure-agency debate. Critically discuss.
3. Discuss the major features of the movement from structuralism to post-structuralism.
4. The "global" should be our preferred starting point in sociological analysis. Discuss.
5. Discuss the challenges presented to sociological theory by the post-modern turn.
6. Discuss the major challenges presented to social theory by feminist thought.
7. Create your own essay topic, in consultation with the lecturer.

## Marking Guide

Please refer to Marking Guide the end of the course outline.

## Exam

**Weighting: 50%**

**Due:** 24 October – 15 November 2014

Duration: the final exam is two hours long.

More details regarding date and structure of exam will follow closer to the scheduled date, available after mid-trimester break.

## Submission and return of work

Assignments must be placed in the assignment box on Level 9, Murphy Building, to the side of the lifts. The Assignment Box is cleared at 4pm on the due date, all work is date-stamped, its receipt recorded, and then handed on to the appropriate markers. Every effort will be made to return marked assignments within two-weeks of the due date. Marked assignments not collected in lectures or tutorials can be collected at the Murphy 9<sup>th</sup> floor reception desk, between **2.00 and 4.00 pm only** from Monday to Friday

## Extensions and penalties

### Extensions

Assignments are due on the dates stated. If for some serious reason you don't think you can get an essay in on time, see your supervisor **prior** to the due date and discuss the problem. Extensions of time are not permitted except for illness, or bereavements.

### Penalties

Late submissions for student assignments in all Sociology and Social Policy undergraduate courses are subject to a penalty. The exact deduction will be calculated on the basis of one half mark per day late for each 10 marks, i.e. 1 mark will be deducted each day for an assignment worth 20% of the total course mark.

Note: assessment work will not be accepted for marking more than 7 days after the due date or 7 days after an approved extension date. Work must still, however, be submitted to meet the mandatory course requirements.

**You are advised to always keep a copy of any work you submit for assessment.**

## Set text

The course text is Harrington, A. (ed.) *Modern Social Theory* (Oxford University Press). It will be available from Vic Books.

Students are able to order textbooks and student notes online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz) or can email [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz)

## Recommended reading

The following texts are useful works in the field of social theory:

Allen, K.	<i>The Social Lens</i>
Allen, K.	<i>Contemporary Social and Sociological Theory</i>
Calhoun, C. et al (eds)	<i>Contemporary Sociological Theory; Sage Handbook of Sociology</i>
Callinicos, A.	<i>Social Theory: A Historical Introduction</i>
Clark, S.	<i>From Enlightenment to Risk: Social Theory and Contemporary Society</i>
Collins, R.	<i>The Three Traditions, and others</i>
Collins, R & Makowsky, M.	<i>The Discovery of Society</i>
Craib, I.	<i>Classical Social Theory; Modern Social Theory</i>

Crow, G.	<i>Art of Sociological Argument</i>
Elliott, A.	<i>Contemporary Social Theory: An Introduction</i>
Elliott, A. & Ray, L. (eds)	<i>Key Contemporary Social Theorists</i>
Frisby, D. & Sayer, D.	<i>Society</i>
Garner, R. (ed.)	<i>Social Theory (Two Volumes)</i>
Hughes, J. <i>et al</i>	<i>Understanding Classical Sociology</i>
Hamilton, P. & Thompson, K. (ed)	<i>The Uses of Sociology</i>
Joseph, J.	<i>Marxism and Social Theory</i>
Latour, B.	<i>Reassembling the Social</i>
Layder, D.	<i>Understanding Social Theory</i>
Lemert, C. (ed)	<i>Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classical Readings</i>
McLennan, G.	<i>Story of Sociology</i>
Mennell, S.	<i>Sociological Theory: Uses and Unities</i>
O'Donnell, M.	<i>Classical and Contemporary Sociology</i>
Outhwaite, W.	<i>The Future of Society</i>
Ray, L.	<i>Theorizing Classical Sociology</i>
Ritzer, G.	<i>Sociological Theory</i>
Ritzer, G. (ed)	<i>Encyclopaedia of Social Theory</i>
Ritzer, G. & Smart, B. (eds)	<i>Handbook of Social Theory; see others</i>
Ritzer, G. and Stepnisky, J (eds)	<i>Major Social Theorists, Vols I and II</i>
Roberts. B.	<i>Micro Social Theory</i>
Scott, J.	<i>Social Theory</i>
Scott, J. (ed)	<i>Fifty Key Sociologists</i>
Seidman, S.	<i>Contested Knowledge: Social Theory in the Postmodern Era</i>
Stones, R. (ed)	<i>Key Sociological Thinkers</i>
Swingewood, A.	<i>A Short History of Sociological Thought</i>
Sydie, R.A.	<i>Natural Women, Cultured Men: A Feminist Perspective on Sociological Theory</i>
Tucker, K.	<i>Classical Social Theory</i>
Turner, B. (ed)	<i>Blackwell Companion to Social Theory</i>
Urry, J.	<i>Sociology Beyond Societies; Mobilities</i>

## Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:
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## Student feedback

Enhancements made to this course, based on the feedback of previous students, will be covered during the course.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at

[www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\\_display.php](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php).

## Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism)
- Aegrotats: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats)

- Academic Progress: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress) (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates)
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: [www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin)
- Grades: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades)
- Resolving academic issues: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications)
- Special passes: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications)
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy)
- Student support: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support)
- Students with disabilities: [www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/disability](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability)
- Student Charter: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter)
- Student Contract: [www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract)
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Turnitin: [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin)
- University structure: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure)
- Victoria graduate profile: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile)
- VUWSA: [www.vuwsa.org.nz](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz)

## School Contact Information

Head of School: Dr Allison Kirkman, MY1013

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International Student Liaison: Dr Hal Levine MY1023

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School of Social and Cultural Studies: [www.victoria.ac.nz/sacs](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/sacs)

## Marking Guide

<b>Description &amp; Coverage of Essay Topic</b>	<b>Excellent</b> (Range: A+ to A; 85-100): Concise and thorough description of key themes; synthesizes across readings where appropriate.	<b>Very Good</b> (Range: A- to B; 70-84): Concise and thorough description of key themes; occasional synthesis across readings.	<b>Satisfactory</b> (Range: B- to C-; 50-69): Adequate description of key themes; misses opportunities for synthesis across readings.	<b>Unsatisfactory</b> (Range: D to E; 0-49): Insufficient description of key themes; not an appropriate topic for the assigned essay; no synthesis across readings.
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Excellent</b> (Range: A+ to A; 85-100): Clear outline of essay including a thesis statement and organisational sentences; follows organisational plan through to the end of the essay.	<b>Very Good</b> (Range: A- to B; 70-84): Clear outline of essay including a thesis statement and organisational sentence; carries the majority of the organisation through to the end of the essay.	<b>Satisfactory</b> (Range: B- to C-; 50-69): An outline of the essay including a thesis statement and organisational sentences are present, but demonstrates difficulty pulling the organisation through to the end of the essay.	<b>Unsatisfactory</b> (Range: D to E; 0-49): Inadequate organization of ideas and arguments.
<b>Expression &amp; Argumentation</b>	<b>Excellent</b> (Range: A+ to A; 85-100): Makes an argument clearly supported by appropriate evidence.	<b>Very Good</b> (Range: A- to B; 70-84): Makes an argument and attempts to support with evidence.	<b>Satisfactory</b> (Range: B- to C-; 50-69): The argument is not clear <b>OR</b> the argument is not supported adequately with evidence.	<b>Unsatisfactory</b> (Range: D to E; 0-49): No argument made <b>AND</b> where assertions made are not supported with evidence.
<b>Insight &amp; Interpretation</b>	<b>Excellent</b> (Range: A+ to A; 85-100): Logical interpretation or application of themes in context of real world examples or theoretical frameworks/course concepts and readings.	<b>Very Good</b> (Range: A- to B; 70-84): Logical interpretation or application of themes, but not adequately discussed in context of real world examples or theoretical frameworks/course concepts and readings.	<b>Satisfactory</b> (Range: B- to C-; 50-69): Logical interpretation or application of themes, but not discussed in context of real world examples or theoretical frameworks/course concepts and readings.	<b>Unsatisfactory</b> (Range: D to E; 0-49): Insufficient interpretation or application of themes; <b>AND</b> fails to set the essay in context of examples or theoretical frameworks/ concepts and readings.
<b>Style</b>	<b>Excellent</b> (Range: A+ to A; 85-100): Clear and accurate writing; error free.	<b>Very Good</b> (Range: A- to B; 70-84): Minor writing problems that do not interfere with comprehension of the essay; minor typographical, spelling, and punctuation errors.	<b>Satisfactory</b> (Range: B- to C-; 50-69): Writing problems that distract from comprehension of the essay; minor typographical, spelling, and punctuation errors.	<b>Unsatisfactory</b> (Range: D to E; 0-49): Writing problems inhibit comprehension of the essay; significant typographical, spelling, and punctuation errors.
<b>Bibliography &amp; Referencing</b>	<b>Excellent</b> (Range: A+ to A; 85-100): Contains proper and consistent citation and a complete bibliography.	<b>Very Good</b> (Range: A- to B; 70-84): Contains proper citation and a complete bibliography; some consistency errors.	<b>Satisfactory</b> (Range: B- to C-; 50-69): Contains references to authors, but not proper citations. Complete bibliography; some errors in consistency and format.	<b>Unsatisfactory</b> (Range: D to E; 0-49): No references are used and no bibliography is included.