

**St. Francis Xavier University**  
Department of Sociology

Sociology 301.10  
Fall 2020

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Nicholson Tower Rm 617

**Classical Social Theory**

Sociology continues to be influenced by the work of a particular group of social theorists. The questions they raised about the nature and ethos of our collective coexistence, as well as the way each went about investigating the answers, continues to influence the theoretical framework within which much of sociology is presently pursued. This course will provide an overview of the historical context from which Sociology emerged as a discipline, committed as it was (and is still) to examining and confronting the troubling consequences of society's turn towards the modern era, with particular emphasis on the parallel developments of industrialization and capitalism.

The aim of this course is not to provide exhaustive coverage of the whole range of social thinkers who influenced the development of the field. Rather, we will focus on the works of 4 key theorists whose writings have contributed in important and lasting ways to the establishment of Sociology's primary theoretical directions. They are, Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Max Weber and Georg Simmel. We will examine in particular how each viewed the social world they were a part of and deeply concerned about. In addition, the course will explore and develop how each of these perspectives implicitly recommends a particular understanding of what it means to live a socially responsible life. The main objective throughout, is to promote the capacity for critical social awareness through the practices of writing, active reading and interpreting of the main ideas and theoretical commitments in each case.

**Texts**

There is one required text for this course:

***Capitalism and Classical Sociological Theory*** (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.) by John Bratton & David Denham (Toronto: UTP, 2019).

This book will be available at the university bookstore, as well as many on-line book outlets. It will be supplemented by additional readings from key theoretical works by each of the theorists and will be made available via the course Moodle site. The books these additional readings will be taken from are as follows:

Karl Marx, *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Edited by T. B. Bottomore (Norton, 1972).

Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*. Edited with an introduction by Steven Lukes, translated by W. D. Halls (The Free Press, 1982).

Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Edited and translated by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (Oxford, 1958).

Georg Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. Edited and translated by Kurt H. Wolf (The Free Press, 1964).

## Evaluation

The course work will consist of a series of written exercises and assignments aimed at systematically developing a theoretically critical approach to the material covered in class. The exercises will be worth an increasing amount as the course progresses, as indicated below. There will also be an assessment for class participation. Note that the final exam in this course is a take-home exam.

1 <sup>st</sup> written assignment.....	25%
2 <sup>nd</sup> written assignment.....	30%
Final exam.....	35%
Participation and Exercises.....	10%

## Class Format

The course will be taught on line, and it will proceed largely synchronously, in keeping with University policy. This means that we will all be meeting on line together at set times which correspond to the times listed for this course in the university timetable. For this course that is on Mondays from 12:45 until approximately 2:00 pm and on Wednesdays from 11:15 until approximately 12:30. All times are Atlantic so you will need to account for this if you are in a different time zone. The class format and the speed at which the material is covered will be open for revision as the course develops, depending on the class' progress and facility with the material. However, the aim will always be to pursue the work within the context of open discussions and exercises, in addition to lectures and presentations. Please 'enter' the virtual classroom by clicking on "Online Classroom" link on the course Moodle page at the start of class. Just below this link are a series of notes and tutorials to help you navigate the process. If you have any difficulties in this regard, be sure to let me know.

**Please Note:** Virtual attendance is important for this course, as the in-class discussion is designed to enhance the appreciation of the text and reading material and is essential to the spirit of the course objectives. However, attendance is considered a prerequisite for, and not the substance of, the class participation component of the course. If, for technical reasons you are unable to virtually attend for any length of time, please let me know and we can attempt to find a remedy.

## Office Hours

My office is in Nicholson Tower, Room 617, however this year office hours will be held virtually, meaning I may not physically be in the office during these times. The virtual office hours are:

Tuesday	3:00 to 5:00
Thursday	2:00 to 4:00

There will be times when I am unable to be in the virtual office during the posted office hours due to committee and department meetings or unforeseen circumstances. If this happens, please send an email message and I will get back to you as soon as I can. Other times can be arranged by appointment if you are unable to make those listed. Contact me through e-mail to arrange a meeting or to ask any questions.

E-mail: <dlynes@stfx.ca>  
Phone: 902 867-3802

### **Additional Notes and Reminders**

Everyone learns more effectively in a respectful, safe and equitable learning environment, free from discrimination and harassment. I invite you to work with me to create a classroom space that fosters and promotes values of human dignity, equity, non-discrimination and respect for diversity". Please feel free to contact the Human Rights and Equity Advisor Megan Fogarty if you have questions or concerns about equity in any class or in the StFX Community in general. Megan can be contacted by email at [mfogarty@stfx.ca](mailto:mfogarty@stfx.ca) or by telephone at 902-867-5306.

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[http://www.sites.stfx.ca/registrars\\_office/academic\\_integrity](http://www.sites.stfx.ca/registrars_office/academic_integrity). Please read this over.

### **Reading and Assignment Schedule**

**Note:** Page references listed below refer to: *Capitalism and Social Theory*, by Bratton et.al. The additional primary source readings will be available via the course Moodle site.

#### **Readings**

September 14 – 16: Modernity and Social Theory, p. 23 – 43.

September 21 – 23: Textbook: European Enlightenment and Early Social Thought p. 45 – 72.

September 28 – 30: Karl Marx: Philosophy p. 71 – 93

October 5 – 7: Karl Marx: Theory of History p. 95 – 123

Primary Source Reading: "Wage Labour and Capital"

October 14: Karl Marx: Economics of Capitalism p. 125 – 147;  
**1<sup>st</sup> Assignment Issued**

October 19 – 21: Emile Durkheim: Division of Labour 149 – 170;  
**1<sup>st</sup> Assignment Due Friday October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020 (by midnight)**

October 26 – 28: Emile Durkheim: The Rules p. 171 – 192

Primary Source Reading: *The Rules of Sociological Method* (from p 50)

November 2 – 4: Emile Durkheim: Primary Source: “What is a Social Fact?”

November 9: Max Weber: Social Classes and Legitimate Domination p. 255 – 274.  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Assignment: Issued**

November 16 – 18 : Max Weber: Primary Source: “Science as a Vocation”  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Assignment Due Friday November 20<sup>th</sup> 2020 (by midnight)**

November 23 – 25: Georg Simmel: Primary Source: “ The Social and the Individual Level”

November 30: Georg Simmel: Primary Source: “The Metropolis and Mental Life”  
Conclusion.

### **Assignments:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Assignment: Issued October 14<sup>rd</sup>, Due Friday October 23<sup>th</sup> 2020 (Submitted to the Moodle Site by Midnight)**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Assignment: Issued November 9<sup>th</sup>, Due Friday, November 20<sup>th</sup> , 2020 (Submitted to the Moodle Site by Midnight)**

**Final Exam. Issued the last day of class. Due TBA**

**Note:** Due to the time constrains of the course and the number of assignments, no assignments will be accepted beyond the day after the Due date, and only then with permission (exceptions for dire emergencies only).