

University of Toronto- St. George Campus
SOC201H1F - LEC5101
Summer 2025
CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY
Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:10pm - 8:00pm

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Steven Hayle

Email address: steven.hayle@mail.utoronto.ca

Lecture location: Online Using the U OF T Zoom Platform

Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:00pm – 5:00pm

Course Website: Quercus

Course Description

Introduction to the history, nature, and role of sociological theory, through an examination of the works of key classical theorists such as Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Georg Simmel, and others. Restricted to sociology majors and specialists.

Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisite: SOC100H1+ SOC150H1

Exclusion: SOC203H1, SOC231H5, SOCB42H3

Distribution Requirement: Social Science

Breadth Requirement: Society and its Institutions (3)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Sociology would be lost without theory! That's the blunt truth. Even with the most sophisticated methodological techniques and the impressive empirical studies, without theory, we would be unable to make sense of the findings. Modern sociological theories including structural functionalism, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and field theory are powerful tools for studying a wide array of social phenomena such as crime, families, social networks, mental health, culture, immigration, politics, law, and education. And these are the theories that students will encounter and work with in their upper year sociology courses. But in order to utilize even the most contemporary and cutting-edge sociological theories we have to

understand their foundations, and in particular their roots within the writings of the original founders of sociology. And the better we understand the classical works from which modern sociological theory is derived, the more effective we can be when working with it. Hence, this course introduces students to the theoretical writings of the “founders” of sociology: Alexis de Toqueville, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and Georg Simmel.

Rather than drawing on a textbook, in this course we will read primary texts written by the classical thinkers listed above. We will critically scrutinise the assumptions, concepts and arguments found within these classic texts, and place them within the historical context in which these thinkers lived and worked. We will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of theories by comparing and contrasting them, thereby paying attention to their inconsistencies and blind spots. The goal of this task will be to gain familiarity and comfort with classical theory texts, but also, and more importantly, to hone our skills in critically analysing sophisticated theoretical arguments.

Secondly, in this course we will cover the key concepts introduced by sociology’s founders. We will question how they are related to each other, as well as consider their role in the development of contemporary sociological theories which are relevant today. We will also explore how these classical concepts and theories can be useful for making sense of the increasingly globalised social world within which we live in today. The objective of this exercise will be to provide students with a toolkit for work in upper year sociology courses, as well professional work outside of academia which requires analysis of social phenomena, and in particular, social problems.

Emile Durkheim recognized that all sociology is comparative and wrote that: “Comparative sociology is not a special branch of sociology; it is sociology itself”. This is because in order to analyse and explain social phenomena we need to be able to compare and contrast them with each other. Otherwise, we will not be able to separate the *unique* characteristics of social institutions and processes from their more general features. All of the founders of sociology, including Durkheim, were aware of this and consequently engaged in extensive comparative work. As such, one of the primary goals of this course will be to critically evaluate the contributions that these theorists have provided to current comparative analysis and methodology. Students will walk away from this course with a solid understanding of how comparative analysis is rooted in classical sociological theory.

Textbook

Students are not expected to purchase a textbook for this course. All readings will be made available online through the course website on Portal. Assigned readings will include a mixture of the following: excerpts from deviance and social control textbooks; peer reviewed journal articles; and non-academic documents.

EVALUATION SCHEME

Comparative Analysis Through the Lens of Classical Theory Position Paper- Due Thursday, May 22nd, 2025 at the beginning of class [30%]

Students will select ONE primary work written by a classical theorist NOT covered in the course and provide a critical analysis of the primary work and the contributions that it makes to comparative analysis. In the assignment, students will be expected to formulate a strong and convincing thesis. Detailed assignment instructions will be provided on the first day of class. **The late penalty is a 1% per day reduction off your final course grade.**

International Current Events Paper - Due Thursday, June 12th at the beginning of class [30%]

Students will select a current specific event taking place outside of Canada, or an event that has significant international dimensions to it. They will analyse this event drawing on one of the above conceptual frameworks. Specifically, they will explore the work of one classical thinker which they believe can be used to analyse their current event. Students will be expected to formulate a strong and convincing thesis. Detailed assignment instructions will be provided on the first day of class. **The late penalty is a 1% per day reduction off your final course grade.**

Final Examination- Scheduled by the Registrar's Office [40%]

The final examination will be ONLINE and CUMULATIVE and will cover material from BOTH lectures and readings introduced throughout the entire course. Students will be expected to demonstrate a mastery of ALL course content, themes, theories, and concepts. The examination will consist entirely of written questions.

Evaluation Components and Grading Policies

MAKEUP ASSIGNMENTS AND DEADLINE EXTENSION

The late penalty for assignments is a 1% deduction off the final course grade per each day that it is late.

Students who miss a paper deadline will receive a mark of zero for that paper or test unless the reason is a circumstance beyond their control. Within three days of missing a paper deadline or test, students must send the instructor a request for consideration. Students must document their request with one of the following:

- Absence declaration via ACORN (can only be used once during the semester)
- U of T Verification of Illness or Injury Form
- College Registrar's letter (e.g., in case of personal/family crisis or emergency)
- Letter of Academic Accommodation from Accessibility Services

Students who miss the test or are late in submitting an assignment for other reasons, such as family or other personal reasons, should request their College Registrar to email the instructor.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Including references to sources that you did not use.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including:
 - working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work;
 - having someone rewrite or add material to your work while "editing".
- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission.

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else's answers • Letting someone else look at your answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor's notes.
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

To remind you of these expectations, and help you avoid accidental offences, I will ask you to include a signed Academic Integrity Checklist with every assignment. If you do not include the statement, your work will not be graded.

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the *Code*. The consequences for academic misconduct can be severe, including a failure in the course and a notation on your transcript. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, seek out additional information from me, or from other available campus resources like the [U of T Writing Website](#). If you are experiencing personal challenges that are having an impact on your academic work, please speak to me or seek the advice of your college registrar.

Academic Integrity Checklist

SOC201H1F

Dr. Steven Hayle

I, _____, affirm that this assignment represents entirely my own efforts.

I confirm that:

- I have acknowledged the use of another's ideas with accurate citations.
- If I used the words of another (e.g., author, instructor, information source), I have acknowledged this with quotation marks (or appropriate indentation) and proper citation.
- When paraphrasing the work of others, I put the idea into my own words and did not just change a few words or rearrange the sentence structure
- I have checked my work against my notes to be sure I have correctly referenced all direct quotes or borrowed ideas.
- My bibliography includes only the sources used to complete this assignment.
- This is the first time I have submitted this assignment (in whole or in part) for credit.
- Any proofreading by another was limited to indicating areas of concern which I then corrected myself.
- This is the final version of my assignment and not a draft.
- I have kept my work to myself and did not share answers/content with others, unless otherwise directed by my instructor.
- I understand the consequences of violating the University's academic integrity policies as outlined in the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*.

By signing this form I agree that the statements above are true.

If I do not agree with the statements above, I will not submit my assignment and will consult the course instructor immediately.

Student name: _____ Student #: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS TO

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to *Turnitin* for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the *Turnitin* reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. The terms that apply to the University's use of the *Turnitin* service are described on the *Turnitin* web site.

Assignments not submitted through *Turnitin* will receive a grade of zero (0 %) **unless a student instead provides, along with their assignment**, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own. The alternative (not submitting via *Turnitin*) is in place because, strictly speaking, using *Turnitin* is voluntary for students at the University of Toronto.

ACCESSIBILITY

If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

TENTATIVE LECTURE TOPICS AND READINGS

Please note that the lecture topics and readings are subject to change at any time throughout the semester. Advanced notice will be provided and changes will be reflected assignment and examination expectations. Any readings assigned that are not in the reader will be made available to you via Quercus.

Lecture One: Tuesday, May 6th, 2025 – Welcome to Classical Theory!

TOPICS: Introduction to the Course and the Major Sociological Paradigms.

READINGS: None

Lecture Two: Thursday, May 8th, 2025- Alexis de Tocqueville, The Visiting “Professor”

TOPICS: Alexis de Tocqueville on Aristocratic and Democratic Societies

READINGS: *Democracy in America* pgs. Pp. 561-580 (chapters 1 to 5 on social mores in aristocratic and democratic societies) and pp. 690-95 (on despotism in mass democracy).

Lecture Three: Tuesday, May 13th, 2025 – Karl Marx, The Philosopher

TOPIC: The Philosophical Writings of Karl Marx

READINGS: Excerpt from *The German Ideology*

Lecture Four: Thursday, May 15th, 2025- Karl Marx, The Economist

TOPIC: The Economic Writings of Karl Marx

READINGS: “The British Rule in India” and “The Future Results of British Rule in India”

Lecture Five: Tuesday, May 20th, 2025 – Karl Marx, The Communist

TOPIC: The Political Writings of Karl Marx

READINGS: Part I of *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (“Bourgeois and Proletarians”)

Lecture Six: Thursday, May 22nd, 2025 Max Weber, The Ghost Whisperer

TOPIC: Max Weber’s Response to Marx

READINGS: Excerpt from “Class, Status, Party”

TERM WORK DUE: Comparative Analysis Position Paper Due at the Beginning of Class

Lecture Seven: Tuesday, May 27th, 2025- Max Weber, The Historian

TOPIC: Max Weber's History of Capitalism

READINGS: None

Lecture Eight- Thursday, May 29th, 2025- Max Weber, The Methodologist

TOPIC: Max Weber's Advancements of the Sociological Enterprise

READINGS: Excerpt from "Politics as a Vocation"

Lecture Nine: Tuesday, June 3rd, 2025- Emile Durkheim, The First (The Structuralist)

TOPIC: Durkheim's Structuralism

READINGS: "Anomic Suicide" (from *Suicide*)

Lecture Ten: Thursday, June 5th, 2025- Emile Durkheim, The Second (The Constructionist)

TOPIC: Durkheim's Evolution

READINGS: Excerpt from *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*

Lecture Eleven: Tuesday, June 10th, 2025- Emile Durkheim, The Functionalist

TOPIC: Durkheim and the Division of Labour in Society

READINGS: None

Lecture Twelve: Thursday, June 12th, 2025- Georg Simmel, The Stranger

TOPIC: Simmel on Life in the City

READINGS: Introduction to "Superordination and Subordination" and "The Metropolis and Mental Life"

TERM WORK DUE: International Current Events Paper Due at the Beginning of Class