

## SOC196H1S

## Thinking Through the Sociological Canon

University of Toronto  
Class hours: Tuesdays, 12:10-2pm  
Location: LM123

**Instructor:** Cinthya Guzman

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**Office Hours:** By appointment using Quercus Calendar

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**Statement of Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge this sacred land on which the University of Toronto operates. It has been a site of human activity for 15,000 years. This land is the territory of the Huron Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. The territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, on this territory. [*Council of Aboriginal Initiatives, 2014*]

**Course Description**

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Every year, students take courses on the theoretical foundations of sociology. Though they may not know it, they are participating in a process of disciplinary reproduction: core authors, texts, and ideas are defined as reference points for sociological debates. The boundaries of what does – and does not – count as sociological questions are set and disciplinary fault-lines are subtly formed, and sometimes contested. In this seminar, we will explore the history of sociological thought and review both empirical and theoretical literature of the canon formation. In doing so, we will explore the structures, dynamics, and relationships of sociological theory, examining its patterns, variations, sources, and trends. Students will present their final paper in class.

**Prerequisite:** None

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**Learning Objectives**

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The course is organized in a way that encourages students to build and develop skills focused around collaborative learning, critical reading, writing, and the formation of arguments. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Evaluate and the classical canon of sociological theory.
2. Identify and assess key classical theoretical concepts and arguments.
3. Write analytically and critically about classical sociological theory.
4. Make and support an academic argument through use of evidence.

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### Evaluation Components

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Type	Due Dates	Weight
Journal Entries	ongoing	10%
Attendance and Participation	ongoing	10%
Critical Reflection 1	Mar 7	15%
Critical Reflection 2	Mar 28	15%
Revising the Canon Final Research Paper	April 4	25%
Beyond The Canon Presentations	Apr 4	25%

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### Grading Descriptions

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#### 1. Journal Entries: Worth 10%

Students will be asked to write weekly journal entries to our online discussion board briefly outlines the readings and provides 2 discussion questions. The entries must be 300 words.

#### 2. Attendance and Participation: Worth 10%

Participation grades will be based on two weighted components: attendance and active participation in class discussions. Students are expected to participate regularly and demonstrate an active and critical engagement of course materials.

Class attendance is mandatory. An absence declaration is required to justify an absence. Since this is a seminar course, students are expected to attend the two classes each week and participate in class discussions.

#### 3. Critical Reflection 1 & 2

*2-3 pages, (excluding references) in 12-point font, double-spaced.*

Students are to submit 2 critical reflections throughout the term on the set dates listed in the syllabus.

More information will be provided on Quercus.

#### 4. Revising the Canon Final Research Paper: Worth 25%

*2-3 pages, (excluding references) in 12-point font, double-spaced.*

Students will research a classical thinker that they will like to include in the canon of sociological theory. They will provide a biography of the thinker and a summary of their main theoretical ideas and their implications.

More information will be provided on Quercus.

### **5. Beyond the Canon Presentation: Worth 25%**

Students will present the classical thinker they would like to include in the canon. Students can make a 10-minute YouTube video or a PowerPoint Presentation

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

### **Late and Missed Test Policies**

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**Handing in assignments:** All assignments must be submitted to the instructor electronically via Quercus. The instructor and TA will NOT accept electronic copies of assignments via email.

**Deadlines:** The assignments are due by class time (12:10 p.m.). Please refer to the Due Date stated on page 2 of the Syllabus. Late work will not be accepted without proper documentation (the Declaration of Absence on ACORN). If you miss a test or a paper deadline, do not contact the instructor or a TA unless you have followed the steps described here. In case of illness, you must supply a completed the Declaration of Absence on ACORN. If you are registered with Accessibility Services, your counselor will need to send an email message on your behalf (a one-week extension being the norm).

**Absence Declaration:** The University is temporarily suspending the need for a doctor's note or medical certificate for any absence from academic participation. Please use the Absence Declaration tool on ACORN found in the Profile and Settings menu to formally declare an absence from academic participation in the University. The tool is to be used if you require consideration for missed academic work based on the procedures specific to your faculty or campus. In addition to this declaration, you are responsible for contacting me to request the academic consideration you are seeking. You will be notified by the University if this policy changes.

**Late Assignments:** Late term papers without a valid excuse will be deducted 5% per day, including weekends and holidays. We will not be accepting work submitted over a week late. Late discussion posts will not be accepted.

**Missed Assessments:** Students who do not submit the test on time will receive a mark of zero for that test unless reasons beyond their control prevent them from taking it. If you expect any delays in your submission due to illness, students must give the instructor a written request for special consideration, accompanied by proper documentation from your college registrar or through the Absence Declaration tool on ACORN, which explains why the assessment was submitted late. We will not be accepting work submitted over a week late.

**Grade Appeals:** The instructor and teaching assistant take the marking of assignments and tests very seriously, and will work diligently to be fair, consistent, and accurate. Nonetheless, mistakes and oversights occasionally happen. If you believe that to be the case, you must adhere to the following rules: If it is a mathematical error simply alert the instructor of the error.

## **Student Responsibilities and Expectations**

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### **Ouriginal**

Students will be required to submit their assignments to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

For some of your assignments, we will be using the software Ouriginal. It uses text matching technology as a method to uphold the University's high academic integrity standards to detect any potential plagiarism. Ouriginal is integrated into Quercus. For the assignments set up to use Ouriginal, the software will review your paper when you upload it to Quercus. To learn more about Ouriginal's privacy policy please review its [Privacy Policy](#).

Assignments not submitted through Ouriginal 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 submitted was truly their own.

### **Email Policy**

I will respond to your email within two business days (48 hours, except weekends and holidays). In an email exchanges, you must use your official University of Toronto email. Please also include the course code (SOC196) in the subject line and your full name and student number in your message. Please do not send a repeat email (e.g., "did you get my email?").

In general, please treat emails as you would any other professional communication. You should be respectful in the way you address the instructor and the TA. Email is most suitable for questions that are clear, concise, and easily answerable. If you need help on course material, I strongly encourage you to attend office hours or make an appointment. For all general inquiries, please refer to the course syllabus.

### **Help from your Teaching Assistant**

Your T.A. will hold scheduled office hours and respond to your emails. Please be judicious in your use of email. Use it only for questions that are brief and specific. Before sending a question by email, be sure to check the course outline to see if an answer is already available. Emails should not be seen as an alternative to doing the assigned reading or attending lectures. Expect to receive a response from your T.A. within two working days. For more in-depth discussions of the lectures, readings, tests and position papers, take advantage of your T.A.'s office hours.

### Academic Integrity

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.

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.

### Required Readings & Course Schedule

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**Required readings:** PDF copies of all the readings will be available on Quercus through our library services.

**Course Schedule:** Students are expected to complete all required readings prior to each online lecture.

*Note:* every attempt will be made to follow this schedule, but it is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Lecture 1 (January 10) Introduction to The Sociological Canon

*Readings:*

- <https://sethabrutyn.com/2019/09/20/the-pedagogical-dead-end-known-as-classical-sociological-theory/>

*Tasks:*

- Introduce yourselves on the Online Discussion Board.

## **PART I. DEFINING THE THEORETICAL BOUNDARIES OF SOCIOLOGY**

### Lecture 2 (January 17) The Need for Boundaries

*Readings:*

- Lamont, M., & Molnar, V. (2002). The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28(1), 167–195.

*Tasks:*

- Journal Entry Due

### Lecture 3 (January 24) What is a Canon?

*Readings:*

- Alexander J. (1987). “The Centrality of the Classics,” in Giddens Anthony and Jonathan Turner, eds, *Social Theory Today* (Stanford, Stanford University Press: 11–57).

*Tasks:*

- Journal Entry Due

### Lecture 4 (January 31) Constructing the “Sociological Eye’

*Readings:*

Collins, R. (1998). The Sociological Eye and Its Blinders. *Contemporary Sociology (Washington)*, 27(1), 2–7.

*Tasks:*

- Journal Entry Due
- Critical Reflection 1 Due

## **PART II. WHY DO WE HAVE A CANON? WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF IT?**

### Lecture 5 (February 7) Why do we have a canon?

*Readings:*

- Connell, R. W. (1997). Why Is Classical Theory Classical? *American Journal of Sociology*, 102(6), 1511–57.

*Tasks:*

- Journal Entry Due

### Lecture 6 (February 14) Implications of the Boundaries

*Readings:*

- Go, J. 2020. Race, Empire, and Epistemic Exclusion: Or the Structures of Sociological Thought. *Sociological Theory*, 38(2), 79–100.

*Tasks:*

- Journal Entry Due

## **Reading Week**

### Lecture 7 (February 28) Defenders of the Canon

*Readings:*

- Collins, R. (1997). A Sociological Guilt Trip: Comment on Connell. *American Journal of Sociology*, 102(6), 1558–64.

- Monzelis, N. (1997). *In Defence of the Sociological Canon: A Reply to David Parker*. *The Sociological Review*, 45(2), 244–53.

Tasks:

- Journal Entry Due
- Critical Reflection 2 Due

### **PART III: THEORETICAL TRAINING IN ITS CURRENT FORM**

#### **Lecture 8 (March 7) How is Theory Taught In Canada**

Readings:

- Guzman, C., & Silver, S. (2018). The Institution of Sociological Theory in Canada. *The Canadian Review of Sociology*, 55(1), 9–39.

Tasks:

- Journal Entry Due

#### **Week 9 (March 14) Canonical Themes**

Readings:

- Giddens, A. (1971). *Capitalism and modern social theory : an analysis of the writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber*. Cambridge University Press. Preface and Introduction.

Tasks:

- Journal Entry Due

#### **Week 10 (March 21) Neglected Themes**

Readings:

- Morris, A. (2017). *The scholar denied: WEB Du Bois and the birth of modern sociology*. University of California Press. Chapter 2.

Tasks:

- Journal Entry Due

#### **Week 11 (March 28) Neglected Themes**

Readings:

- Thomas, J. E., & Kukulian, A. (2018). “Why Don’t I Know About these Women?”: The Integration of Early Women Sociologists in Classical Theory Courses. In *Charlotte Perkins Gilman* (pp. 111-122). Routledge.

Tasks:

- Journal Entry Due

#### **Week 12 (April 4): Beyond the Canon Presentations**

Tasks:

- Revising the Canon Research Paper Due
- Beyond the Canon Presentations Due