

**Sociology 251 H1S**  
**CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY**

Winter 2023  
Day and Time of Class:  
Tuesday 6.10-9.00pm

Instructor: Dr. Sarath Chandrasekere  
Office: Sociology dept room 225e  
Office Hours: Wednesday. 9.30-11.00 am (By  
appointment)

Email: [sara.chandrasekere@utoronto.ca](mailto:sara.chandrasekere@utoronto.ca)  
Location: SS 2118

Teaching Assistants: TBA

**Course Outline**

**Course Description**

Sociology 251 H1S addresses historical developments in sociological theory from the early 20th century up to the present. This is the basic timeframe for contemporary sociological theory. We will begin the course with an overview of contemporary theoretical ideas in sociology and get an idea of how these ideas relate to the work of classical sociologists. We will then analyze several theoretical perspectives as well as the ideas of some theorists who are connected with these perspectives.

**Course Learning Objectives**

This course has several objectives. By the end of the course, you will:

- Evaluate and discuss a number of approaches central to contemporary sociological theory.
- Identify and assess key theoretical concepts and arguments.
- Write critically and analytically about contemporary theory
- comprehend and draw how contemporary theoretical ideas in sociology build on classical ideas and can help us to understand events or circumstances in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Prerequisites**

**The prerequisite to take soc 251 H1S is soc 201. Students without the prerequisite can be removed at any time discovered, and without notice.**

**Course Format**

There will be one three-hour lecture per week (6.10-9.00pm) on Tuesdays, each week.

**Course Evaluation Components**

The course requirements, and the weights attached to them in the calculation of your final grade, are as follows:

| <b>Type</b>             | <b>Due dates</b>  | <b>Weight</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| First Reflection Piece  | January 31, 2023  | 15%           |
| Term Paper              | March 21, 2023    | 25%           |
| First in-class test     | February 28, 2023 | 20%           |
| Second Reflection Piece | March 28, 2023    | 15%           |
| Take-Home exam          | March 14, 2023    | 25%           |

#### Grading description

##### **Reflection Pieces**

Twice during the term, students will have to answer a reflection question based on the readings. (Worth 15% each, 1 page single-spaced).

##### **Term Paper**

Students will be required to write an application paper (worth 25%, 3-4 pages, single spaced). In your paper, you must forward an argument relative to a key idea or concept covered in a course reading and support it with evidence based on a contemporary case, event, or phenomenon. More detailed guidelines will be provided on Quercus.

##### **Tests and take-Home Exam**

There will be one in-class test end of February 2023. This will take the form of a multiple-choice test. Take home exam will be given in March 2023 with 14 days for you to write and submit answers. You will be required to provide research essay type answers. More details about these requirements will be given in class. For specific deadlines, please refer to the course schedule.

#### **REQUIRED READINGS**

You will need one textbook for the course, and it is available for purchase through the Campus Store. The textbook is: Ritzer George and Jeffrey Stepinsky. 2019. *Contemporary Sociological Theory and its Classical Roots*. 5e. Los Angeles. Sage Publication. Additional readings will be made available on Quercus.

##### **Handing in assignments**

All assignments must be submitted electronically via Quercus.

##### **Deadlines**

The assignments are due online via Quercus by 18:00 EST (6:00 p.m. EST) for the stated date. Please refer to the due dates stated on page 1 of the Syllabus and the Course Schedule.

##### **Late tests and assignments**

If a student misses a test or submit assignments later for medical reasons, the student must contact me (not the TA) within 2 days of the missed test or assignment. For other reasons, such as family emergencies or personal reasons, they must have the college registrar email me.

Ouriginal

Sometimes, 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 term that applies to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovations 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.

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

### **Accommodation: Religious Observances**

Please review the site put up by the provost's office. <https://www.vicereprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/policies-guidelines/accommodation-religious/>

### **Student Responsibilities and Expectations**

#### Email Policy

I will respond to your email within two business days (48 hours, except weekends and holidays). In an email exchange, you must use your official University of Toronto email. Please also include the course code (e.g., SOC251) 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.

### **Grade Appeals**

The instructor and teaching assistants do their best to mark work fairly, consistently, and accurately. Nevertheless, one of us may unintentionally err in our marking duties. For basic mathematical errors, simply alert the TA of the error. In the case of more substantive appeals, you must wait at least 24

hours after receiving your mark. If you wish to appeal, please submit a thorough written explanation to your instructor of why you think your mark should be altered. If your appeal is deemed appropriate, the entirety of your test/assignment will be re-graded. Please note that upon re-grade your mark may go down, stay the same, or go up. You have 7 days after receiving a mark to appeal it.

### **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.

#### **Course Schedule Readings:**

All additional course readings will be available on the course website. Students are solely responsible for University of Toronto Policy on Accommodation for Missed Academic Term Work

### **Course Schedule**

The course schedule below identifies the course topics, the *approximate* dates when the topics will be addressed, and the required readings for the topics. We may progress a little faster or a little slower than the dates below indicate. You will be given reasonable notice if more significant changes must be made to the course schedule (e.g., dropping a topic because we have run out of time). Please note that the chapter numbers below are from the table of contents of the original textbook.

| <b>Date and Time</b>                   | <b>Topics to Be Covered</b>   | <b>Relevant Material</b> | <b>Notes/Comments</b> |
|--|---|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| January 10:<br>Tuesday<br>6.10-9.00 pm | Introductions, course outline,<br>course learning outcomes<br>AND defining Contemporary<br>Theory | Instructor’s material    |                       |

|                   |  |                       |   |
|-------------------|--|-----------------------|---|
| Jan. 17-24        | Structural Functionalism,<br>Conflict Theory and Systems<br>Theory                             | Chapter 4<br>Textbook |   |
| Jan 31-Feb 07     | Neo-Marxian Theory, Civilizing<br>Process, The Colonization and<br>Juggernaut of Modernity     | Chapter 5             | Reflection Piece 1:<br>due: January 31  |
| Feb. 14           | Symbolic Interactionism,<br>Ethnomethodology, Exchange<br>Theory and Rational Choice<br>Theory | Chapter 6             |   |
| <b>Feb. 20-24</b> | <b>Mid-Term Recess</b>   | <b>No Classes</b>     |   |
| Feb. 28-Mar.7     | More Integrated Exchange<br>Theory, Structuration Theory,<br>Habitus                           | Chapter 7             | First In-Class test:<br>February 28<br>Take-Home Exam to<br>be released March 7 |
| Mar. 14-21        | Contemporary Feminist<br>Theory  | Chapter 8             | Take-Home Exam due<br>March 14<br>Term Paper due.<br>March 21                   |
| Mar. 28<br>Apr. 4 | Postmodern Grand Theories<br>Globalization Theory  | Chapter 10 and 11     | Reflection Piece 2<br>due. March 28   |