



**Sociology 2271b (570)
Survey of Contemporary Theory
Fall/ Winter 2025-2026**

Instructor: A. Ning
Email: aning@uwo.ca

Course Information

Calendar Description:

Continuities in Sociological thinking will be stressed by building upon the insights of the discipline's founding thinkers, while simultaneously exposing students to the rich variety that characterizes contemporary theorizing. Among other approaches, structural functionalism, symbolic interactionism, Marxism, critical theory, feminist theory, and post-modernism will be discussed.

Antirequisite(s): [Sociology 2240E](#), [Sociology 2263A/B](#).

Prerequisite(s): [Sociology 2270A/B](#).

Extra Information: 3 lecture hours.

Course Weight: 0.50
Breadth: Category A
Subject Code: SOCIOLOG

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.



Survey of Contemporary Theory
Sociology 2271B (570)
Winter 2025-2026

Professor: Dr. Ana Ning

E-mail: aning@uwo.ca

Office Hours: Mondays, 1:00-2:00 pm or by appointment, in-person or virtual

This course will discuss new ways of thinking about contemporary theory as historically constructed and embedded in political, social and cultural contexts. Departing from the structural functionalist model of society in the early part of the 20th century, we will explore some of the main bodies of contemporary sociological theory that examine different dimensions of human life and activities.

With this in mind, our lectures and discussions will engage in a dialogue that explores the ways in which sociologists have contributed to the understanding of how human social relations are organized, how everyday experience is given meaning, and how processes of socio-cultural, economic and political change unfold at local and global levels.

The ultimate goal of the course is to encourage students to use disciplinary perspectives to establish their own analysis of the world around them, so they can appreciate the practical value of the subjects they are studying in illuminating their environment directly or indirectly.

Format: Lectures, readings, videos, seminar presentations and discussions.

Evaluation: Short Quiz: 15% (**February 2, 2026**)
In-Class Mid-term Exam: 30% (**March 16, 2026**)
Final Exam: 30% (**Official Examination Period**)
Group Facilitation and Discussion: 15% (**See Brightspace course site**)
Attendance and Participation: 10% (**See Brightspace course site**)

Required Readings: Selected **scholarly chapters and articles** available in course's Brightspace site under "Course Readings" (**No Cost**)

Academic Integrity:

Within this course, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools [such as Chat GPT] is not permitted for written work submitted for evaluation as this constitutes a form of academic plagiarism. It is expected that you will submit work that is truly your own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial). Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software such as Turnitin that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

NB: Please refer to our **BRIGHTSPACE course site** for details regarding course assessments, expectations and policies.

Course Learning Outcomes

This course introduces and/or reinforces key sociological skills, namely, the ability to:

1. Demonstrate a holistic understanding of societal and cultural processes.
2. Situate past and present social issues both at local and global levels.
3. Identify, contrast, and compare theoretical positions in sociology, recognizing the provisional status of knowledge.
4. Distinguish and build connections between schools of thought.
5. Employ a decolonizing lens to social issues.
6. Demonstrate creative, analytical, and critical thinking skills.
7. Advocate for equity, diversity, inclusivity, and different ways of being, doing and knowing beyond Western systems of thought.
8. Identify and explain the role of power and social inequities in shaping people's lives.
9. Design and develop persuasive arguments.
10. Write using academic language and argumentation.
11. Demonstrate self-awareness and appropriate interpersonal skills.
12. Demonstrate capacity to work independently and collaboratively in groups.
13. Link theory to practice, applying sociological skills and knowledge to real life situations.
14. Engage in problem-based and inquiry-based learning to propose meaningful changes/solutions to pressing issues within diverse communities.

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SYLLABUS – LECTURE SCHEDULE

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SECTION I - SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY FROM MIDCENTURY

- Jan. 5 **Introduction and Overview of the Course**
 Read: Course Outline
- Jan. 12 **Structural Functionalism: The Grand Theory of Talcott Parsons**
 Read: **Appelrouth and Edles** (2007): Chapter 7: Structural Functionalism, Systems Theory, and Conflict Theory in **Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era**, Thousand Oaks, USA: Pine Forge Press (pp. 21-37).
Seminars A & B

- Jan. 19 **Structural Functionalism: The Middle-Range Theory or Robert K. Merton**
 Read: **Ritzer and Stepnisky** (2014): Chapter 7: Robert Merton's Structural Functionalism to Methodological and Logical Criticisms, in **Sociological Theory, 9th Edition**, New York, USA, McGraw-Hill (pp. 253-261).
Seminars A & B
- Jan. 26 **Conflict and Critique: Marxism in the Interwar Period (A. Gramsci, The Frankfurt School)**
 Read: **Joseph** (2005): Introduction in **Social Theory: A Reader**, Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press (pp. 63-68);
Agger (2013): The Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School in **Critical Social Theories, Third Edition**, Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press (pp. 78-93).
Seminar A
- Feb. 2 **SHORT QUIZ**
Seminar B
- Feb. 9 **Conflict and Critique: Postwar Marxist Perspectives (C. Wright Mills, I. Wallerstein)**
 Read: **Delaney** (2014): C. Wright Mills (1916-1962) to The Sociological Imagination in **Classical and Contemporary Social Theory: Investigation and Application**, New York, USA: Pearson Education Inc. (pp. 224-229);
Allan (2006): The Essential Wallerstein to Building your Theory Toolbox in **Contemporary Social Theory and Sociological Theory: Visualizing Social Worlds**, Thousand Oaks, USA: Pine Forge Press (pp. 193-211).
Seminar A
- Feb. 16 **No CLASS: Winter Reading Week**

SECTION II - INTERACTIONAISM AND PRAGMATISM

- Feb. 23 **Symbolic Interactionism (G. Cooley, G. H. Mead, E. Goffman)**
 Read: **Ritzer and Stepnisky** (2014): Chapter 9: Symbolic Interactionism in **Sociological Theory, 9th Edition**, New York, USA, McGraw-Hill (pp. 332-364).
Seminar B

SECTION III- SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER RELATIONSHIP AND IDENTITY

- Mar. 2 **Contemporary Feminist Theory (K. Crenshaw, P.H. Collins)**
 Read: **Carastathis** (2014): The Concept of Intersectionality in Feminist Theory in *Philosophy Compass* 9/5: 304–314, 10.1111/phc3.12129

Video: [Kimberlé Crenshaw - Intersectionality](#)
Seminar A

Mar. 9 **Cultural Constructions of Gender and Sexuality (G. Herdt, J. Boddy)**

Read: **Lips** (2020): *Masculinity and Femininity: Myths and Stereotypes in Sex and Gender*. An Introduction, 7th Edition. Illinois: Waveland Press (Pp. 3-24).

Film: *Intersexion*

Seminar B

Mar. 16 **In-Class Midterm Exam**

SECTION IV – GLOBALIZATION AND POSTMODERNITY

Mar. 23 **Globalization: (A. Appadurai, A. Giddens)**

Read: **Ritzer and Stepnisky** (2014): Chapter 15: Globalization Theory in **Sociological Theory, 9th Edition**, New York, USA, McGraw-Hill (pp. 571-601).

Seminar A

Mar. 30 **Poststructuralist and Postmodern Social Theory (M. Foucault, F. Jameson)**

Read: **Delaney** (2014): Postmodern Theory: Chapter 15 in **Classical and Contemporary Social Theory: Investigation and Application**, New York, USA: Pearson Education Inc. (pp. 382-410).

Seminar B

Apr. 6 **Wrap-up and Final Exam Review**

N.B. Final Exam during Official Examination Period

N.B. Course syllabus is subject to changes at the instructor's discretion.

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf.

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

For further information, please see:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King’s University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King’s University College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King’s University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

GBSV Support:

King’s is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western’s Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with your instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.