



**Sociology 2271b (571)
Survey of Contemporary Theory
Fall/ Winter 2025-2026**

Instructor: A. Piekosz
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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
SOC 2271B (571)
Winter 2026

Professor: Dr. Agata Piękosz
Email: apiekos2@uwo.ca
Office Hours: Zoom (by appointment)

Course Description: Sociological theory provides a toolkit of ideas that allows us to apply and expand our sociological imagination. As students will learn, there is never one overarching paradigm that is able to fully explain all social complexity. The most interesting thing about theory is that it is varied. When theory is applied to social life, it allows for a more nuanced interpretation of the complexity of all things 'social'. In this course we touch upon some of the leading contemporary theories in sociology. Moving from levels of analysis to a more rigorous understanding of structure/agency, and objectivity/subjectivity, the course is designed to guide students through various sociological positions and critiques. Overall, we continue to be interested in how to sharpen our 'sociological imagination'.

Learning Goals Outcomes:

1. Engage self and others in ongoing reflection of taken-for-granted assumptions of human experiences through developing a growth mind-set that fosters perseverance towards challenging tasks
2. Communicate sociological analyses in relevant formats, including written, oral, visual, and/or digital, using appropriate theoretical, scholarly, and/or empirical sources
3. Demonstrate an ability to identify the various components of complex social issues
4. Evaluate the legitimacy of data sources and situate data within theoretical perspectives
5. Interrogate common-sense assumptions about local and global narratives of the social world and identify the connections between personal and societal issues

Lectures are designed to guide you through the concepts and logic of some of the dominant contemporary theories or 'theoretical schools' of thought in sociology. The tutorials are designed to review the central themes and to prepare you for engaging critically with the material. The tests and exams are designed to test your knowledge and encourage you to think critically about the theories independently.

Reading (Required): Sociological Theory 9th Edition by Ritzer and Stepnisky

*Only the second part of this text is required *see library for reference

Evaluation: a) three tests total: two in-class tests and one exam during the final exam period
b) attendance and participation

To Do	Deadline	% Of Grade
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In Class Test #1	February 6, 2026	30%
In Class Test #2	March 13, 2026	30%
Final Exam	Final Exam Period	30%
Attendance & Participation	Lecture & Tutorial	10%

**Drop deadlines.xxxx*

Mid-Term Test & Final Exam: The two (2) in-class tests and one (1) final exam for this course are each worth 30% of your grade (for a total 90% of your grade). Both in-class tests and the final exam are structured in the same way. The tests/exam are not cumulative; however, it is important to consider how some theories build from previous theoretical claims. The in-class tests & final exam will consist of *multiple choice, true & false*.

Multiple Choice and True and False questions: All tests/exam are based on material from the textbook and lecture material. It is always good practice to a) to read in advance; b) attend lectures and tutorials; and c) be prepared that textbook and lecture material will be covered on the in-class tests and final exam.

Participation: Participation is calculated based on the attendance in lecture ('question of the day') and at tutorial sessions. Marks are awarded for being present and taking an active part in discussions and in (independent & group) weekly tasks. In total, participation is worth 10% of the final grade.

'Question of the Day': Each week, the professor posts a 'question of the day' after each lecture. The answer must reflect the content of each lecture. Students are required to answer **at least 5** questions on the OWL portal (students choice). Questions are posted at the end of each lecture and must be submitted no later than the end of the lecture day (answers will not be accepted after 11:55pm).

Tutorials & "Key Terms List": Students are required to attend at least two tutorials before every test/exam. During the tutorials we review key terms and content from lecture that might have been unclear. Students will be provided with a list of 'key terms' at the end of each lecture. These 'key terms' will re-appear on the tests and exams. Students are encouraged to raise questions about the material during the tutorial.

LECTURE SCHEDULE & READING LIST

Week	Date	Topics & Readings
WK1	Jan. 9	<u>Introduction</u> <i>What is 'modern' about 'modern' theory?</i> <u>Micro / Macro: Meso?</u> *R.Read: Ritzer Chapter 6: A Historical Sketch: From the 'Chicago School' Onwards
WK2	Jan. 16	<u>Structural Functionalism / Conflict Theory</u>

		*R.Read Ritzer: Chapter 7 (pg. 237-261) *R.Read Ritzer: Chapter 7 (pg. 266-277)
WK3	Jan. 23	<u>Varieties of Neo-Marxian Theory</u> *R.Read Ritzer: Chapter 8
WK4	Jan. 30	<u>Feminist Theory - Macro & Micro</u> *R.Read: Ritzer Chapter 12 (pg. 440-485) *R.Read: Ritzer Chapter 17 (pg. 652-653)
WK5	Feb.6	In-Class Test 30% [4chapters, 4 lectures]
WK6	Feb.13	<u>Symbolic Interaction</u> *R.Read: Ritzer Chapter 9
WK7	Feb.16-20	<i>Reading Week</i>
WK8	Feb.27	<u>Ethnomethodology: Sociology of Everyday Life</u> *R.Read: Ritzer Chapter 10
WK9	Mar.6	<u>Structure / Agency</u> *R.Read: Ritzer Chapter 13: Integrative Sociological Theory
WK10	Mar.13	In-Class Test 30% [3chapters, 3lectures]
WK11	Mar.20	<u>Contemporary Modern / Post-Modern Theory</u> *R.Read: Ritzer Chapter 14
WK12	Mar.27	<u>Structuralism / Post-Structuralism/ Post-Modern Theory</u> *R.Read: Ritzer Chapter 16
WK13	April.6	<u>Globalization / Migration / Culture</u> *R.Read: Ritzer Chapter 15 (pg.571-600) *R.Read: Ritzer Chapter 17 (pg.642-647) <i>Final Review & Wrap Up</i>
	April	Final Exam 30% [3lectures, 3chapters]: <i>See Exam Schedule</i>

Communication: I encourage you to ask questions during class and in advance of upcoming tests or exams. Of course, you will find a lot of information about the organization of the course in the syllabus.

I am happy to discuss any substantive questions you might have in person or over email. When it comes to more detailed help, the best time to chat is in person during my office hours. I do my best to respond as quickly as I can to your questions and concerns.

Deadlines & Missed Tests: You are required to attend all the scheduled in-class tests and the final exam during the exam period. Requests for accommodations must be made well *in advance* of the due date. It is important to *follow King's policy* on all late or missed deadlines. Please make sure that you are aware of your options when it comes to special accommodations. Requests may be granted if there are legitimate medical or compassionate grounds only. In these cases, documentation must be submitted (*see Policy on Accommodation below)

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.