

**St. Francis Xavier University**  
**Department of Sociology**

**Sociology 201: Traditions in Social Thought**

**Winter Semester, 2014-15**

Dr. John Phyne  
Annex 110A

*Class Times:* Monday: 11:15 AM to 12:30 PM; Thursday: 12:45 PM to 2:05 PM

*Office Hours:* Monday: 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM; Thursday: 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM; Friday:  
10:00 AM to 11:30 AM or by appointment.

*Phone:* 867-2313

*E-mail:* [jphyne@stfx.ca](mailto:jphyne@stfx.ca)

**E-mail Policy:** Please restrict your e-mails to necessary communications. This includes: extended absences from class (more than one week) and family emergencies. I refuse to use e-mail to cover lectures from missed classes. My office hours or the phone should be used to cover materials pertaining to the course. Also, **NO LAPTOPS** are to be used in the class. Refer to my information and communications technology policy guidelines on p. 4 of this syllabus.

**Course Outline:** This course introduces students to the major perspectives in sociological thought. Social theory poses the questions that sociologists use in investigating social reality. These questions are the ‘why’ behind ‘what’ occurs in a society. In posing questions, sociologists move beyond description to analysis. If you master the theoretical insights in this course, you should do well in your other sociology courses. All sociological material whether is focuses on ‘capitalism’, ‘social inequality’, ‘gender differences’, ‘rule-breaking and rule-making’, ‘racism’, ‘urbanization’, ‘global development’, or any other topic, is informed by theoretical questions. *The objective of this course is to get you to think theoretically in asking questions about social reality; it is not based upon the delivery of easy answers.*

The course begins with an overview of the rise of sociological analysis in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This is a discussion of the impact of the ‘triple revolution’ (scientific, political and industrial) on the rise of the ‘social’ as an object of investigation. This is followed by an assessment of the role of levels of analysis (macro and micro) and explanation (positivist and interpretative) in social theory. The levels of analysis and explanation will be used to situate the diversity of social theory that you will be exposed to in this course (**one week**).

The course will proceed with an overview and discussion of some of the major theoretical traditions in sociology. These include: functionalism (**two weeks**), political economy (**three weeks**), interaction and identity (**one week**), gender, race and class (**two weeks**), post-modernism (**two weeks**) and late modernity (**two weeks**). I will provide an introduction and assessment of each of these approaches as well as coverage of most of the assigned readings in class. However, ALL readings are required. The failure to read the assigned materials will be reflected in your grade.

## Textbook

Peter Kivisto, ed. *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, Fifth Edition, 2013.

**Evaluation:** There will be two examinations (15 and 30 marks each) and one paper (20 per cent) within the term. The final examination is worth 35 per cent of your final grade.

**Examination One:** Monday, February 2 – 15 marks.

**Examination Two:** Thursday, March 5 – 30 marks.

**Term Paper:** Due in class (not under my door after class), Monday, March 16– 20 marks. The guidelines will be placed in Moodle and covered in class on Thursday, January 15.

**Required Readings (all readings are from Kivisto (2013)). Read the articles in the order in which these are listed.**

### **1. Sociology and Social Theory (one week)**

No assigned readings

### **2. Functionalism (2 weeks).**

#### Emile Durkheim

“What is a Social Fact?” Pp. 44-49.

“On Mechanical and Organic Solidarity.” pp. 39-43.

“Anomic Suicide.” Pp. 50-56.

### **3. Political Economy (3 weeks)**

#### Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

“The German Ideology.” Pp. 11-14.

“Manifesto of the Communist Party.” Pp. 15-22.

#### Max Weber

“ ‘Objectivity’ in Social Science and Social Policy.” Pp. 68-73.

“The Spirit of Capitalism.” Pp. 74-84.

“The Sociology of Charismatic Authority.” Pp. 91-97.

“Class, Status and Party.” Pp. 98-103.

### **4. Interaction and Identity (one week)**

#### Georg Simmel

“The Metropolis and Mental Life.” Pp. 116-124.

“The Stranger.” Pp. 125-128.

George Herbert Mead

“The Fusion of the ‘I’ and ‘Me’ in Social Activities.” Pp. 190-194.

Herbert Blumer

“Society as Symbolic Interaction.” Pp. 250-256.

**5. Gender, Race and Class (three classes)**

Harriet Martineau

“On Marriage.” Pp. 136-140.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman

“The Dependence of Women.” Pp. 151-154.

Jane Addams

“Utilization of Women in City Government.” Pp. 159-164.

W. E. B. DuBois

“The Conservation of the Races.” Pp. 146-150.

Michael Omi and Howard Winant

“The Theoretical Status of the Concept of Race.” Pp. 380-389.

Patricia Hill Collins

“Toward an Afrocentric Feminist Epistemology.” Pp. 350-359.

**6. Post-Modernism (two classes)**

Jean-François Lyotard

“The Postmodern Condition; A Report on Knowledge.” Pp. 522-531.

Michel Foucault

“Panopticism.” Pp. 508-513.

**7. Theories of Late Modernity (two classes)**

Zygmunt Bauman

“On Living in a Liquid Modern World.” Pp. 514-521.

Anthony Giddens

“The Reflexivity of Modernity.” Pp. 474-477.

Ulrich Beck

“The Cosmopolitan Condition: Why Methodological Nationalism Fails.” Pp. 539-544.

## Technology and this Course

1. **E-mail:** Please restrict your e-mails to necessary communications. This includes: extended absences from class (more than one week) and family emergencies. I refuse to use e-mail to cover lectures from missed classes. My office hours or the phone should be used to cover materials pertaining to the course. Unnecessary e-mails will remain unanswered.
2. **Cell phones:** Please turn off all cell phones before the commencement of class. If you need to have your cell phone turned on, please let me know as soon as possible.
3. **Use of laptops for taking notes:** No laptops are to be used in the class.
4. **No audiotaping or videotaping of lectures:** Under no circumstances are my lectures to be audiotaped or videotaped. If you require assistance in the taking of notes, I suggest that you seek the assistance of the Counseling Centre (867-2281).