

Selected Topics in Social Theory

Sociology and Anthropology 850

Section: G100

Term: 2012 Spring

Instructor: Dr. Dany Lacombe

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Discussion Topics: This course examines the dialectic between history, structure and agency through the lens of contemporary social theories. We will do an in-depth reading of Michel Foucault's work on the prison and sexuality to investigate how the objectifying and subjectifying strategies of power he analyzes radically transform modern notions of truth, knowledge, power, resistance, individuality, freedom, etc. We will study how feminism responded to the theoretical challenges of structuralism and post-structuralism. If, as de Beauvoir indicated, woman is not born, but she becomes, then how are we to understand her submission/liberation? Drawing on the theories of Judith Butler and Pierre Bourdieu, we will question just how performative or unconscious our genders are. We will explore Bourdieu's reflexive sociology, particularly his concepts of habitus and the field. We will also draw on the American sociological tradition of social construction (dramaturgy, symbolic interactionism, labeling) as well as Ian Hacking's theory of dynamic nominalism to explore the construction of social problems and the making-up of people. The contemporary social theories we will review in this class will help us shed light on current social anxieties over drugs, the child, prisons, female sexuality and drunk-driving amongst other things.

Grading: Participation: 10%

2 Oral Presentations (lesson plans) @ 10% each: 20%

2 Oral Responses: @ 10% each: 20%

4 short reports @ 10% each: 40% (two of those reports will be based on your presentations)

Weekly summaries: 10%

Students must attend all the seminars, come to every class well prepared, participate actively and constructively in the discussion, give two presentations on two separate weeks readings, provide two responses to a student's presentation, write 4 short reports (for a total of 26 pages) on the readings and submit weekly summaries of the readings. Any participant who is consistently late or absent will be asked to leave the seminar.

Grading and Academic Honesty:

All assignments in this course must be completed for a final grade to be assigned. The Department of Sociology and Anthropology follows SFU policy in relation to grading practices, grade appeals (Policy T 20.01) and academic honesty and misconduct procedures (S10.01-S10.04). It is the responsibility of students to inform themselves of the content of these policies available on the SFU website: <http://www.sfu.ca/policies/teaching/index.htm>

Required Texts: None

Recommended Texts: None

Materials/Supplies: None

Prerequisite/Corequisite: SA 849 or permission of instructor.

Notes:

This outline is derived from a course outline repository database that was maintained by SFU Student Services and the University's IT Services Department. The database was retired in 2014 and the data migrated to SFU Archives in 2015.