SO245-15 Modern Social Theory

22/23

Department
> Sociology

Level
> Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader
> Nicholas Gane

Credit value
> 15

Module duration
> 10 weeks

Assessment
> 100% coursework

Study location
> University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

The main purpose of this core module is to show how social theory can be applied to the study of real-life social and political problems that exist in the present. The module opens by considering what theory is and why it is important, and then uses a range of theoretical resources to address contemporary developments, questions, and topics.. The module builds on first year modules by introducing students to work by key figures in social theory from the late-20th Century through to the present. The module involves close textual study of key texts by these and other thinkers, and students are encouraged a). to consider the underlying politics of these texts; and b). to reflect on the value of these writings for understanding the world in which we live today.

Module aims

To develop advanced skills in critical thinking, sociological imagination and awareness.

To provide students with an overview of key perspectives in twentieth century social theory, situating theoretical traditions in relation to each other and providing a firm foundation for further study in social and political theory.

To equip students with advanced skills to critique contemporary power relations.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Week 1 – What is Social Theory and Why Do We Need It?
Week 2 - Michel Foucault I: Ordoliberalism
Week 3 - Michel Foucault II: Human Capital
Week 4 - Bringing Foucault into the Present: Wendy Brown
Week 5 - Indebted Subjects
Week 7 - Stigma and the 'Spoiling' of Identity: Erving Goffman
Week 8 - The Politics of Stigma: Race and Racism
Week 9 – Social Class I: Anthony Giddens, The Third Way, and Stuart Hall
Week 10 - Social Class II: The Politics of Classification

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Advanced skills in critical thinking about modern power and cultural analysis.
- Advanced skills in essay writing.
- Awareness of and ability to discuss classic and contemporary debates in social theory concerning the nature of power.
- Awareness of and ability to discuss contemporary issues in class power.
- In depth understanding and critical analysis of a specific topic in the sociology/social theory of class power.

Indicative reading list

Adorno, Theodor W. The culture industry: Selected essays on mass culture. Routledge, 2005.
Bhattacharyya, Gargi, 2018. Rethinking racial capitalism: Questions of reproduction and survival. Rowman & Littlefield International.
Blencowe, Claire. 2012 Biopolitical Experience: Foucault, Power & Positive Critique Palgrave.
Blencowe, Claire. 2018 'Foucault & Political Sociology' in Ouithwate & Turner Sage Handbook in Political Sociology Sage, UK.
Césaire, Aimé. Discourse on colonialism. NYU Press, 2001
Davis, Angela Y. Women, race, & class. Vintage, 2011.
Federici, Silvia. Feminism and the Politics of the Commons. na, 2011.
Foucault, M. 1977 Discipline & Punish: The birth of the prison, London: Penguin.
Foucault, M. and Trombadori, D., 1991. Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori. Semiotext(e).
Foucault, M. (2008). The Birth of Biopolitics. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
Gilroy, Paul. 1987. There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack. Routledge, UK.
Hall, Stuart 1980 'Race Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance' in UNESCO 1980.
Hall, Stuart. "The rediscovery of 'ideology': Return of the repressed in media studies." Culture, society and the media. Routledge, 2005. 61-95.

Hall, S. (2011) 'The Neo-Liberal Revolution', Cultural Studies, 25, 6, pp.705-28.

Hall, S., Massey, D. and Rustin, M. (eds.) (2015). After Neoliberalism? London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Harvey, David. The new imperialism. OUP Oxford, 2003.

Klein, Naomi. The shock doctrine: The rise of disaster capitalism. Macmillan, 2007.

Mies, Maria. Patriarchy and accumulation on a world scale: Women in the international division of labour. Zed Books Ltd., 2014.

Omura, Keiichi., Jun Otsuki, Grant., Satsuka, Shiho., Morita, Atsuro. 2018 The World Multiple

Osborne, Thomas. 2013 The structure of modern cultural theory. Manchester University Press, 2013.

Robinson, Cedric J. Black Marxism: The making of the Black radical tradition. Univ of North Carolina Press, 2000.

Roy, Arundhati. Capitalism: A ghost story. Haymarket Books, 2014.

Tyler, I. (2013). Revolting Subjects. London, UK: Zed Books.

Tyler, I. (2020). Stigma. London: Zed Books.

Virdee, S. (2014). Racism, Class and the Racialized Outsider. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Virdee, S. (2018). 'Racialized Capitalism: An Account of its Contested Origins and Consolidation'. Sociological Review, 67, 1, pp.3-27.

Young, Robert Postcolonialism: an historical introduction Blackwell.

International

The module introduces the tradition of social theory which is an international movement of thought. Care is taken in the design of the module to make the module relevant to international student body . This is the case in terms of selecting examples - where an effort is made to match with students' internationally diverse interests, and also in terms of the traditions of thought.

Subject specific skills

- knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of social theory, and of the way in which those principles have developed

- knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in sociology and social theory and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in sociology and social research

- use a range of established social theory techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis

- effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences and deploy key techniques of social theory analysis effectively

Transferable skills

- ability to apply underlying concepts and principles of sociological-relational thinking, and critical social analysis outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where

appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context .

- an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge.

- have an enhanced capacity to undertake independent research, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations.

- attain the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making, in particular being better able to think critically about power relations at play in all social processes including knowledge production.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Private study	132 hours (88%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

132 hours private study will be spent reading and writing for the seminars and assessment.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

Assessment group A2

Assessment component	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessed Essay	100%		Yes (extension)

Assessed essay. Questions set by the module convenor.

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

Written comments and verbal feedback on formative written exercise. Verbal feedback on students' ideas, arguments and developing analyses during seminars. Written feedback on summative assessments.

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 2 of USOA-L301 BA in Sociology
- Year 2 of UCEA-Y205 Undergraduate Social Studies (Full-time)
- Year 2 of USOA-L314 Undergraduate Sociology and Criminology

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 2 of ULAA-ML34 BA in Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree)
- Year 3 of UAS2-LM4A Undergraduate Health & Social Policy (2+2)
- Year 2 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology
- Year 2 of UHIA-VL15 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with a term in Venice)
- Year 2 of ULAA-ML33 Undergraduate Law and Sociology
- Year 2 of UPOA-ML13 Undergraduate Politics and Sociology
- Year 2 of UIPA-L3L8 Undergraduate Sociology and Global Sustainable Development

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of USOA-L301 BA in Sociology

This module is Core option list A for:

- Year 3 of USX2-Y202 Undergraduate Social Studies [2 + 2]

This module is Core option list B for:

- UPDA-Y201 Undergraduate Social Studies (Part-time)
  - Year 1 of Y201 Social Studies
  - Year 2 of Y201 Social Studies
  - Year 3 of Y201 Social Studies
  - Year 4 of Y201 Social Studies
  - Year 5 of Y201 Social Studies
  - Year 6 of Y201 Social Studies
  - Year 7 of Y201 Social Studies
  - Year 8 of Y201 Social Studies
  - Year 9 of Y201 Social Studies

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 2 of ULAA-ML33 Undergraduate Law and Sociology

This module is Option list B for:

- USOA-L301 BA in Sociology
  - Year 2 of L305 Sociology with Specialism in Cultural Studies
  - Year 2 of L303 Sociology with Specialism in Gender Studies
- Year 2 of UPOA-ML13 Undergraduate Politics and Sociology

This module is Option list G for:

- Year 2 of UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics