

SOCS2200: Social Analysis: Theorising Social Problems

Online

Semester 1 - 2024



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

The School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Sciences is committed to providing an inclusive environment in which all cultures are accorded respect and all students and staff are expected to act with honesty, fairness, trustworthiness and accountability in dealings with others. The School recognises and respects the unique histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their unbroken relationship with the lands and the waters of Australia over millennia, and the validity of Aboriginal ways of knowing. We are dedicated to reconciliation and to offering opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to access and succeed in higher education.

OVERVIEW

Course Description	In this course students examine key topics and perspectives in the social sciences and apply these concepts to contemporary social problems and trends. The course covers theory and contemporary research on: class, culture and inequality; institutions and social control; concepts of identity including classed and gendered identities; the nature of embodied experience; globalisation and social change; the relationship between science and society; and other topics to be developed in collaboration with students.
Academic Progress Requirements	Nil
Assumed Knowledge	40 units of study at 1000 level.
Contact Hours	Online Lectorial 2 hour(s) per Week for 12 Weeks starting Week 1
Unit Weighting	10
Workload	Students are required to spend on average 120-140 hours of effort (contact and non-contact) including assessments per 10 unit course.

COURSE OUTLINE

www.newcastle.edu.au

CRICOS Provider 00109J

CONTACTS

Course Coordinator	Online Dr Mitchell Taylor Mitchell.Taylor@newcastle.edu.au Consultation: Available on request - please email for an appointment (in-person or virtual).
School Office	School of Humanities Creative Industries and Social Sciences Social Sciences Building Callaghan HCISS@newcastle.edu.au +61 4985 4500

SYLLABUS

Course Content	Topics in this course may include: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Concepts of 'late modernity' examining globalisation, identity and social change.2. The relationship between social inequalities and culture, including distinctions between, popular / high culture and consumption patterns in food, music and other areas.3. The impact of institutional ideas on identities, including the role of expert ideas in the creation of identities and the practice of social control.4. A focus on the body, including how society shapes the sensations and tactile experiences of social life.5. A practical exploration of how sociological concepts apply to important social problems such as social inequality, unemployment, health and wellbeing, changing social and intimate relationships.
Course Learning Outcomes	On successful completion of this course, students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Identify and describe a range of social theories and research relevant to the Social Sciences.2. Compare and contrast social theories informed by the relevant literature.3. Apply the insights of social theory to professional practice in the Social Sciences.4. Demonstrate effective communication of social theories at an intermediate level.
Course Materials	There is no textbook for the course. Weekly readings will be made available online via the Canvas course website.

SCHEDULE

Week	Week Begins	Topic	Reading	Assessment Due
Module 1: Introducing Social Theory and Bourdieu				
1	26 Feb	Introduction to the course and to contemporary social theory	1. Matthewman, S. (2007). Pleasure and play. In S. Matthewman, C. L. West-Newman, & B. Curtis (Eds.), <i>Being sociological</i> (pp. 6–24). Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire.	
2	4 Mar	Introduction to Bourdieu: field and habitus	1. Webb, J. Cultural Fields and the Habitus. p. 21-45 in Webb, Chirato and Danaher (eds) <i>Understanding Bourdieu</i> .	
3	11 Mar	Bourdieu: symbolic capital and power	1. Reay, D., Crozier, G. & Claydon, J. (2009) “‘Strangers in Paradise’? Working-class Students in Elite Universities’, <i>Sociology</i> 43(6): 1103-1121. 2. Pini, B., MacDonald, P. & Mayes, R. (2011) ‘Class Contestations and Australia’s Resource Boom: The Emergence of the Cashed Up Bogan’. <i>Sociology</i> 46(1): 142-158.	
Module 2: Foucault, Feminism and the Body				
4	18 Mar	Foucault: power, biopower, and sexuality.	1. Excerpt from Foucault, M. <i>The History of Sexuality</i> Volume 1, p. 1-13 “We Other Victorians”	Quiz 1 (covers weeks 1-3) Opens: Mon 18/3, 9am Closes: Sun 24/3, 11:59pm
5	25 Mar	Foucault: discourse, power, and surveillance	1. Schirato, T., Danaher, G., & Webb, J. (2012). Subjectivity and technologies of the self. In <i>Understanding Foucault: a critical introduction</i> (pp. 166–203). Sydney, N.S.W, Allen & Unwin	
6	1 Apr	Butler, feminism, and the body.	1. Bartky, S. (1997) ‘Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power’, in D.Tietjens Meyers (ed) <i>Feminist Social Thought: A Reader</i> . New York: Routledge, pp. 92-111.	
Module 3: Late Modernity, the Risk Society, and Reflexivity				
7	8 Apr	Globalization, modernity, and risk.	1. Beck, U. (2006) ‘Living in a World Risk Society’, <i>Economy and Society</i> , 35(3): 329- 345.	Quiz 2 (covers weeks 4-6) Opens: Mon 8/4, 9am Closes: Sun 14/4 11:59pm
Mid-Semester Recess				
Mid-Semester Recess				

8	29 Apr	Detraditionalization, reflexivity, and risk.	1. Giddens, A. (1991) 'Introduction' in <i>Modernity and Self-Identity</i> . Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 1-9.	Essay due Fri 3/5, 11:59pm
9	6 May	Late modernity: empirical examples and critical perspectives.	1. Threadgold, S. and Nilan, P. (2009) 'Reflexivity of Contemporary Youth, Risk and Cultural Capital', <i>Current Sociology</i> , 57(1): 47-68	
Module 4: Southern Theory and Ontological Critique				
10	13 May	Assemblages and Networks in the social sciences.	1. Latour (2005). Introduction: how to resume the task of tracing associations. In <i>Reassembling the Social</i> pp 1-20	Quiz 3 (covers weeks 7-9) Opens: Mon 13/5, 9am Closes: Sun 19/5, 11:59pm
11	20 May	Southern theory as a critique of sociology.	1. Excerpt from Connell, RW. (2007) <i>Southern Theory: Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science</i> , Sydney: Allen & Unwin, pp. 3-25	
12	27 May	Public sociology and conclusion to course	1. Burawoy, M. (2005). For Public Sociology. <i>American Sociological Review</i> , 70, 1, 4-28	
13	3 Jun	<i>No content this week</i>		Quiz 4 (covers weeks 10-12) Opens: Mon 3/6, 9am Closes: Sun 9/6, 11:59pm
Examination Period				Podcast due Fri 14/6, 11:59pm.

ASSESSMENTS

This course has 3 assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail in the sections below.

Assessment Name	Due Date	Involvement	Weighting	Learning Outcomes
1 Online quizzes (40%)	Quiz 1 (covers weeks 1-3) Opens: Mon 18 th March, 9am. Closes: Sun 24 th March, 11:59pm. Quiz 2 (covers weeks 4-6) Opens: Mon 8 th April, 9am Closes: Sun 14 th April, 11:59pm. Quiz 3 (covers weeks 7-9): Opens: Mon 13 th May 9am. Closes: Sun 19 th May, 11:59pm. Quiz 4 (covers weeks 10-12) Opens: Mon 3 rd June, 9am, Closes: Sun 9 th June, 11:59pm.	Individual	40% (4x10%)	1
2 Essay (30%)	Fri 3 rd May, 11:59pm	Individual	30%	2, 4
3 Podcast (30%)	Fri 14 th June, 11:59pm.	Individual	30%	3, 4

Late Submissions

The mark for an assessment item submitted after the designated time on the due date, without an approved extension of time, will be reduced by 10% of the possible maximum mark for that assessment item for each day or part day that the assessment item is late. Note: this applies equally to week and weekend days.

Assessment 1 - Online quizzes

Assessment Type	Quiz
Description	There will be four multiple-choice quizzes throughout the semester. These quizzes run for one week, opening on Monday (9am) and closing on Sunday (11:59pm). You can do the quiz any time during this period; however once you start the quiz you will only have 30 minutes to complete it. The quiz questions are drawn from the readings and the Futurelearn content.
Weighting	40% (4x10%)
Length	10 questions per quiz, 30 minutes of time
Due Date	Quiz 1 (covers weeks 1-3): Opens: 18/3, 9am. Closes: 24/3, 11:59pm. Quiz 2 (covers weeks 4-6): Opens: 8/4, 9am. Closes: 14/4, 11:59pm. Quiz 3 (covers weeks 7-9): Opens: 13/5 9am. Closes: 19/5, 11:59pm. Quiz 4 (covers weeks 10-12): Opens: 3/6, 9am, Closes: 9/6, 11:59pm
Submission Method	Online
Return Method	Online
Feedback Provided	Online

Assessment 2 - Essay

Assessment Type	Essay
Description	This critical essay will provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the sociological theories explored in the first half of the course. The essay will require you to demonstrate your knowledge of key concepts from Foucault's and Bourdieu's theoretical frameworks and apply them to a real world example.

Choose one of the following questions, and write 2000 words in response to the question. Read the question carefully and address each part. You will need to do further research in order to provide a strong response to these questions. This can take the form of research studies that use these theories, or research about the theories themselves. You should start with the relevant course readings and the suggestions for further reading. As part of your research it is expected that you will engage with some references written by the theorist you writing about (Bourdieu or Foucault).

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Bourdieu argues that symbolic power is a key mechanism by which social inequalities are maintained. Explain this argument, including a discussion of the concepts of 'field', 'capital', and 'habitus'. Your explanation should also include a real-world example, drawn from the academic literature.
2. Foucault argues that modern forms of power do not just operate through 'repression', but through 'production' as well. Explain this argument, including a discussion of the concepts of 'discourse', 'power', and 'subjectivity'. Your explanation should include a real-world example, drawn from the academic literature.

Further information about the essay, including criteria, will be available on Canvas.

Weighting	30%
Length	2000 words (+/- 10%). The reference list is not included in the word count.
Referencing System	Harvard or APA
Due Date	Fri 3 rd May, 11:59pm
Submission Method	Online. The essay will go through Turnitin.
Assessment Criteria	A rubric is available on Canvas
Return Method	Online
Feedback Provided	Online

Assessment 3 - Podcast

Assessment Type	Podcast
Description	In this task you will be making a 'podcast' (i.e. a recorded oral presentation), targeted to a public audience. In this podcast you will introduce a real-world issue or social problem, and explain how sociological theories can help us to understand this issue. You will also be asked to suggest some 'public sociology' style interventions that we might undertake in order to

address the issue, using theoretical insights.

For this podcast you need to choose ONE theorist or theoretical idea discussed in the course, OTHER than Foucault or Bourdieu. For example you may chose Butler, Latour, Bartky, Beck, or something like 'individualization theory' or 'southern theory'.

You must also choose ONE contemporary social issue, debate, or problem. Here you have free choice: focus on something that interests you, and that feels relevant to the theorist's ideas. Your task is to apply the insights of your chosen theorist/theory to your chosen social issue. Further information about the podcast, including criteria, will be available on Canvas.

Weighting	30%
Length	7 minutes (+/- 1 minute)
Referencing System	References do not need to be submitted for this task.
Due Date	Fri 14 th June, 11:59pm.
Submission Method	Online. Only an audio file is to be submitted.
Assessment Criteria	A rubric is available on Canvas
Return Method	Online
Feedback Provided	Online

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Grading Scheme

This course is graded as follows:

Range of Marks	Grade	Description
85-100	High Distinction (HD)	Outstanding standard indicating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an outstanding level of academic achievement; mastery of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
75-84	Distinction (D)	Excellent standard indicating a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a very high level of academic ability; sound development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
65-74	Credit (C)	Good standard indicating a high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a high level of academic achievement; reasonable development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
50-64	Pass (P)	Satisfactory standard indicating an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an adequate level of academic achievement; satisfactory development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
0-49	Fail (FF)	Failure to satisfactorily achieve learning outcomes. If all compulsory course components are not completed the mark will be zero. A fail grade may also be awarded following disciplinary action.

*Skills are those identified for the purposes of assessment task(s).

Communication Methods

Communication methods used in this course include:

- Email: Students will receive communications via their student email account.

Course Evaluation

Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the University for the purposes of identifying areas of excellence and potential improvement.

Oral Interviews (Vivas)

As part of the evaluation process of any assessment item in this course an oral examination (viva) may be conducted. The purpose of the oral examination is to verify the authorship of the material submitted in response to the assessment task. The oral examination will be

conducted in accordance with the principles set out in the [Oral Examination \(viva\) Procedure](#). In cases where the oral examination reveals the assessment item may not be the student's own work the case will be dealt with under the [Student Conduct Rule](#).

Academic Misconduct

All students are required to meet the academic integrity standards of the University. These standards reinforce the importance of integrity and honesty in an academic environment. Academic Integrity policies apply to all students of the University in all modes of study and in all locations. For the Student Academic Integrity Policy, refer to <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=35>.

Adverse Circumstances

The University acknowledges the right of students to seek consideration for the impact of allowable adverse circumstances that may affect their performance in assessment item(s). Applications for special consideration due to adverse circumstances will be made using the online Adverse Circumstances system where:

1. the assessment item is a major assessment item; or
2. the assessment item is a minor assessment item and the Course Co-ordinator has specified in the Course Outline that students may apply the online Adverse Circumstances system;
3. you are requesting a change of placement; or
4. the course has a compulsory attendance requirement.

Before applying you must refer to the Adverse Circumstance Affecting Assessment Items Procedure available at:

<https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=236>

Important Policy Information

The Help button in the Canvas Navigation menu contains helpful information for using the Learning Management System. Students should familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures at

<https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-students/respect-at-uni/policies-and-procedures> that support a safe and respectful environment at the University.

This course outline was approved by the Head of School. No alteration of this course outline is permitted without Head of School approval. If a change is approved, students will be notified and an amended course outline will be provided in the same manner as the original.

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