



# SOCI329

## Contemporary Social Theory

S1 Day 2017

*Dept of Sociology*

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Pauline Johnson

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Credit points

3

Prerequisites

39cp at 100 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit introduces students to key themes and theorists in contemporary socio-political theory. It clusters theories in terms of their reflections upon significant problem complexes that confront us today. How, for example, might we respond to the proposition that sociological theory is mired in 'eurocentric thinking' that blinds it to a multiplicity of modernities? How do various theories diagnose and respond to the reshaping of civil society and politics in the context of the winding back of post-war compromises between democratic states and markets? How too have major social theories responded to the challenge of elaborating an adequate conception of individuality and subjective life? Organised as a seminar series, the unit will draw from the work of the following: Michel Foucault, Jurgen Habermas, Axel Honneth, Giorgio Agamben, Wendy Brown, Raewyn Connell, Johann Arna.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

A familiarity with contemporary sociological concepts as they are applied to key social problems.

An understanding of a range of theoretical perspectives on social life

Reading, summarising and applying key concepts in Sociology in order to understand contemporary societies

Practicing how to think sociologically.

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Participation</u>	15%	No	week 13
<u>Comparative Essay</u>	45%	No	Week 14
<u>Journal</u>	40%	No	week 7 and week 13

### Participation

Due: **week 13**

Weighting: **15%**

Attendance, demonstrated reading each week, active participation in class discussion

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### Comparative Essay

Due: **Week 14**

Weighting: **45%**

1. **A comparative, argumentative essay based upon any two of the key texts covered in the unit**

#### *Task description.*

- Choose any two of the key texts in the unit from two different authors.
- Identify why you have chosen these particular works and why you want to compare them.
- Identify the main issue(s) under contention. Does the comparison help to illuminate each of these rival positions? What is the common ground through which the contrasting diagnoses appear?
- Outline the main arguments and explain how it is developed in each text.

- Do you agree more with one or the other of your chosen texts? Explain why.
- You will need to flesh out your essay by demonstrating further, wide reading across the unit material.

We will be identifying possible pairs as we proceed through the unit. *Word length* 2,500 – 3,000 words *value* 45%

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## Journal

Due: **week 7 and week 13**

Weighting: **40%**

1. A **journal** summarising the main points of each key reading. 400 words per week (600 if there is more than one key reading) **value 40 %**

### ***Task description.***

- Reconstruct the key theme or argument in each of the set readings
- You may do some commentary on its adequacy /plausibility but *only if there is space after your reconstruction of the key argument*

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## Delivery and Resources

A weekly lecture/ seminar format

## Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy [http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic\\_honesty/policy.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html)

Assessment Policy [http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy\\_2016.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html)

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint\\_management/procedure.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html)

Disruption to Studies Policy (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption\\_studies/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html)

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

## Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: [https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student\\_conduct/](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/)

## Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au).

## Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

## Learning Skills

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://mq.edu.au/learningskills)) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)

- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

## Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

## Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

## IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/offices\\_and\\_units/information\\_technology/help/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/).

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

## Graduate Capabilities

### Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- A familiarity with contemporary sociological concepts as they are applied to key social problems.
- An understanding of a range of theoretical perspectives on social life
- Reading, summarising and applying key concepts in Sociology in order to understand contemporary societies
- Practicing how to think sociologically.

### Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Comparative Essay
- Journal

### Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to

handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### **Learning outcomes**

- A familiarity with contemporary sociological concepts as they are applied to key social problems.
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- Participation
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- Journal

## **Commitment to Continuous Learning**

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### **Learning outcomes**

- A familiarity with contemporary sociological concepts as they are applied to key social problems.
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### **Assessment tasks**

- Participation
- Comparative Essay
- Journal

## Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

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## Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

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## Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Comparative Essay
- Journal

## Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

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## Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Comparative Essay
- Journal

## Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- A familiarity with contemporary sociological concepts as they are applied to key social problems.
- An understanding of a range of theoretical perspectives on social life
- Reading, summarising and applying key concepts in Sociology in order to understand

contemporary societies

- Practicing how to think sociologically.

## Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Comparative Essay
- Journal

## Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- A familiarity with contemporary sociological concepts as they are applied to key social problems.
- An understanding of a range of theoretical perspectives on social life
- Reading, summarising and applying key concepts in Sociology in order to understand contemporary societies
- Practicing how to think sociologically.

## Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Comparative Essay
- Journal

## Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- A familiarity with contemporary sociological concepts as they are applied to key social problems.

- An understanding of a range of theoretical perspectives on social life
- Reading, summarising and applying key concepts in Sociology in order to understand contemporary societies
- Practicing how to think sociologically.

## **Assessment tasks**

- Participation
- Comparative Essay
- Journal