



SOCX222

Theories of Modernity

S1 OUA 2018

Dept of Sociology

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Disclaimer

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Lecturer

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Tutor

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Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Modernity is characterised by a number of specific developments such as: democracy, capitalism, industrialism, nationalism, individualism and bureaucratisation. These are partly antagonistic, partly complementary tendencies. In this unit we will be examining these diverse trends through the prism of a range of classical theories of modern society. We will consider from among the following: Marx, Nietzsche, Weber, Durkheim, Mead, the Frankfurt School and Foucault. None of these has the key but we suggest that all remain a vital source of illumination into tendencies and potentials of the contemporary world. All enrolment queries should be directed to Open Universities Australia (OUA): see www.open.edu.au

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.open.edu.au/student-admin-and-support/key-dates/>

Learning Outcomes

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

- learn how to think sociologically
- learn how to apply those concepts in everyday life
- develop writing, research and analytical skills
- read and write critically
- learn to communicate your own ideas simply and directly

General Assessment Information

Prerequisite: 12cp

- You are recommended to have completed SOCX111 Australian and Global Societies (previously SGY111) and SOCX120 Sociology of Everyday Life (previously SGY120) or have equivalent knowledge before starting this unit.

Successful Completion of the Course

- All assessment tasks must be attempted and an overall minimum pass mark of 50% must be achieved in order to successfully complete this course.

REQUIRED Referencing Style for this Unit

- Department of Sociology Referencing style. Guidelines available at: http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/faculties_and_departments/faculty_of_arts/departments_of_sociology/current_students/undergraduate/useful_links/sociology_reference_guide/

Formatting required

Font: Times New Roman or Palatino Linotype Font size: 12 Line spacing: min 1.5 Margins: Left: 3cm; Right: 3cm; Top: 2.5cm; Bottom: 2.5cm

Assignment submission

- This unit uses a combination of submission methods. Please check the individual assignment in the Assessments and Guides section of the course to find out which method that particular assignment uses.
- [Turnitin Submission Procedure](#)
- [iLearn Assignment Upload Procedure](#)

Late Submission Penalty

*Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted **per day** for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests. Contact your tutor for advice if you find yourself in difficulties.*

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Participation: Journal & Forum</u>	20%	No	Weekly

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Written Exercise 1</u>	20%	No	Friday Week 5
<u>Written Exercise 2</u>	30%	No	Friday Week 9
<u>Written Exercise 3</u>	30%	No	Friday Week 13

Participation: Journal & Forum

Due: **Weekly**

Weighting: **20%**

a. Participation in **weekly** discussions using weekly online forums (10%)

- Students must contribute something to this assessment task to pass the course.
- A minimum of **8 weeks** of discussion is required to achieve a pass in this component of the assessment

b. keeping of a **weekly** journal/blog via a weekly personal blog (to be completed **5pm Friday of week 13** (10%))

- The journal/blog should contain: a *brief* summary of the *argument* being offered in **each** reading; a note of key *concepts*; any questions that you think of; any reflections on the material/argument that you have; any connections with contemporary issues/modernity you see. Your response should demonstrate a consistent effort to engage with the material throughout the course. You need to write about a page and a half to fulfill these requirements. Your entry should be in your own words. Referencing is not essential but you should keep track of anything you draw on. Only the tutor will be able to view your journal.

There will be a pre-census review of your progress in these tasks conducted on Monday of Week 4.

IMPORTANT NOTE: if you expect to have significant difficulty in meeting the requirements of this assessment task because of limited access to the internet or other major disruptions or disability, please contact the tutor at the **beginning** of the course or as soon as you become aware of the problem so that alternative arrangements for this task can be discussed. This will require documentation/disclosure of the circumstances.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- learn how to think sociologically
- learn how to apply those concepts in everyday life
- develop writing, research and analytical skills

- learn to communicate your own ideas simply and directly

Written Exercise 1

Due: **Friday Week 5**

Weighting: **20%**

A fully referenced formal essay response of 600 words to one (1) of the discussion questions from Weeks 1-4.

The objective is to encourage you to learn how to engage in a deep and focused reading of a theoretical text. **You will need to demonstrate a clear and deep appreciation of the text as a whole by placing your answer to the chosen question in the context of an interpretation of the author's central purposes and themes.** Each exercise must also include reference to the relevance at least one of the Key Themes of Modernity outlined in lecture 1.

Note: You are not being asked for a summary of a theorist's work or a research essay: you are being asked to engage with a particular issue or claim raised by the required text and work out and *explain* a specific idea about modern societies as developed in the relevant reading and to reflect on it. You should only use the suggested additional reading material if it is necessary for clarity.

See **Assessments and Guides** for further information and guidelines on formatting, essay writing, **required** referencing style and submission.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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Written Exercise 2

Due: **Friday Week 9**

Weighting: **30%**

A fully referenced formal essay response of 600 words to one (1) of the discussion questions from Weeks 5-8.

The objective is to encourage you to learn how to engage in a deep and focused reading of a theoretical text. **You will need to demonstrate a clear and deep appreciation of the text as a whole by placing your answer to the chosen question in the context of an interpretation of the author's central purposes and themes.** Each exercise must also include reference to the relevance at least one of the Key Themes of Modernity outlined in lecture 1. In addition, this essay *must include a comparison between two of the theorists in the unit.* It thus requires greater effort and depth than for Written Exercise 1, and demonstrate that you have taken into account

any recommendations in the feedback from that Exercise.

Remember: You are not being asked for a summary of a theorist's work or a research essay: you are being asked to engage with a particular issue or claim raised by the required text and work out and *explain* a specific idea about modern societies as developed in the relevant reading and to reflect on it. You should only use the suggested additional reading material if it is necessary for clarity.

See **Assessments and Guides** for further information and guidelines on formatting, essay writing, **required** referencing style and submission.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- learn how to think sociologically
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Written Exercise 3

Due: **Friday Week 13**

Weighting: **30%**

A fully referenced formal essay response of 600 words to one (1) of the discussion questions from Weeks 9-12.

The objective is to encourage you to learn how to engage in a deep and focused reading of a theoretical text. **You will need to demonstrate a clear and deep appreciation of the text as a whole by placing your answer to the chosen question in the context of an interpretation of the author's central purposes and themes.** There must also be reference to the relevance at least one of the Key Themes of Modernity outlined in lecture 1, *and include a comparison between two of the theorists in the unit.* Your essay should also demonstrate that you have taken into account any recommendations in the feedback from the previous Exercise.

Remember: You are not being asked for a summary of a theorist's work or a research essay: you are being asked to engage with a particular issue or claim raised by the required text and work out and *explain* a specific idea about modern societies as developed in the relevant reading and to reflect on it. You should only use the suggested additional reading material if it is necessary for clarity.

See **Assessments and Guides** for further information and guidelines on formatting, essay writing, **required** referencing style and submission.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- learn how to think sociologically
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- learn to communicate your own ideas simply and directly

Delivery and Resources

Unit webpage and technology used and required

Online units can be accessed at: <http://ilearn.mq.edu.au/>

PC and Internet access are required. Basic computer skills (e.g. internet browsing) and skills in word processing are also a requirement.

Please contact teaching staff for any further, more specific requirements.

Weekly Readings

You will find these listed under **Assessments and Guides** as well as in each week in your online unit in iLearn. Required readings and most recommended readings can be located under the unit code in Unit Readings in the Macquarie University Library. A direct link to the course's Unit Readings folder is provided in the unit. Some material is available via a direct URL link in the course.

Unit Schedule

Week 1	Modernity and Sociology Sociology emerged in the 19th century in response to a felt need for making sense of the crisis character of modern societies. This unit will chart some of the discipline's most enduring attempts to discover the organizing imperatives that propel modern development. It considers the changing shape of such investigations and discusses an emerging conviction that fragmented and complex modern societies defy attempts to grasp the character of modernity as a whole. This is partly a story, then, of the self-transformation of the sociological enterprise.
Week 2	Alexis De Tocqueville (1805-1859) French aristocrat, Alexis de Tocqueville travelled to the United States of America and was both immensely impressed by and deeply fearful for the new world he saw taking shape. Modern societies were to be the birthplace of a new liberty that was joined to the principle of equality. This could be a world peopled by isolated, weak and fearful individuals or it might be one in which, recognizing their mutual dependencies, individuals joined together in a newly voluntary fashion to claim to build self-determined futures. Tocqueville's hopes and fears can still help to guide us in thinking about our cultural choices. He neglected, though, what was to be a powerful force in shaping modern life: a capitalist economy.
Week 3	Karl Marx (1818-1883) Marx's perspective on capitalist society describes an essentially contradictory social system. Whilst Marx perceived an antagonistic relation between capital and labour as the fundamental structural contradiction of bourgeois society, he was still prepared to acknowledge the historically progressive character of modernity.
Week 4	Karl Marx (continued) We turn our attention to Marx's reflections on the distinctive 'scientific' character of his diagnosis of modern society. We look at some of the problematic features of this analysis, at the ongoing 'crisis' of Marxism, and raise the question of its continuing legacy.

<p>Week 5</p>	<p>Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)</p> <p>Like Marx, Nietzsche was a radical critic of modernity but in his sights were fundamentally different aspects and value structures of modern society. Together with Marx, Nietzsche saw that modern society was characterised by divisions and antagonisms (divisions he described in moral rather than in structural terms). At the centre of Nietzsche's critique of modernity lies his assault on the principle of democracy - the 'leveling' spirit of the modern age.</p>
<p>Week 6</p>	<p>Max Weber (1864-1920)</p> <p>Together with Emile Durkheim, Weber has been described as 'father' to academic sociology. Weber was particularly faced with the problems of consolidation of bourgeois society in the second half of the 19th century and the rapid industrialisation and modernisation of Germany. The central theme in his diagnosis of modern social life is the problem of 'rationalisation'. In this lecture we look at the general features of characterisation of the 'iron cage' of modernity. We refer to his account of the process of bureaucratisation and outline his views on the specific forms of domination and legitimation that characterise modern society.</p>
<p>Week 7</p>	<p>Max Weber (Continued)</p> <p>In this lecture we continue to explore some of the sociological concepts and approaches that Max Weber coined for sociology and how they help us understand late modern societies. The focus here will be on examples of rationalisation, value spheres and social action that leave us in a situation where what seems rational in one way can appear irrational in another way. We consider how Weber seeks to identify a type of personality whose characteristics can be seen as emblematic of the 'spirit of capitalism.' The 'type' is a methodological construct produced not by averaging out the typical features of real empirical individuals but as a composite or device for sociologists as an aid to interpretation. We then look at contemporary work ethics and how they have changed since Weber wrote <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i>.</p> <p>MID-SEMESTER BREAK</p>
<p>Week 8</p>	<p>Émile Durkheim</p> <p>The fundamental problem that shaped Durkheim's reaction to modern society concerned the nature of social solidarity. He was convinced that the course of historical development had generated a contemporary crisis in social solidarity that was evidenced by the atomisation, alienation and fragmentation of existing bourgeois society. Durkheim contended that this was a pathological condition for which he coined the term <i>anomie</i>.</p>
<p>Week 9</p>	<p>Émile Durkheim (Continued)</p> <p>Despite their manifold differences, religions, Durkheim tells us, have a common core. Each determines the boundaries between the profane and the sacred. Durkheim is interested in the deeply social character of religion. He thinks that its sociological investigation can reveal important insights into how modern solidarities are forged.</p>
<p>Week 10</p>	<p>The Frankfurt School</p> <p>The Marxist-oriented Institute for Social Research was established at Frankfurt University in 1923. This institute (which migrated to the U.S.A. in the 30s) formed the centre of a group of social researchers highly critical of and bleakly pessimistic about the future of late 20th century societies in all their different formations. The critique of the 'administered society' developed by, in particular, T.W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, is the main theme of this lecture. We introduce the pessimistic Frankfurt School's diagnosis of modernity as the 'totally administered society' and we consider some critiques of this bleak outlook on the future.</p>
<p>Week 11</p>	<p>Michel Foucault</p> <p>In this lecture we consider the main shape of Foucault's highly influential diagnosis on the 'carceral' character of modernity. Foucault goes much further than Weber or even Horkheimer and Adorno in his critique of modernity. They could still uphold the ideal of the autonomous modern individual as a potential ally in the struggle against the increasingly rationalised, administered totalitarian society. Foucault can, by contrast, see in this ideal only another shape of oppression.</p> <p>In this lecture we examine some of the objections that have been directed at Foucault's diagnosis of the carceral society and we trace some of the ways in which he has attempted to respond.</p>

Week 12	Agnes Heller and Ferenc Feher Agnes Heller has described her analysis of modernity as a diagnosis of the 'dissatisfied society.' Her perspective attempts to discover in the dynamics of the dissatisfied society both dangers that threaten the survival of democratising motivations and the grounds also upon which these motivations might be radicalised and renewed.
Week 13	Conclusion In this final lecture we will try to work out, on the basis of the course material from the various weeks, what we can say about modernity and modern societies. Where do we go from here? What are the lasting issues and themes? What can we take forward from the range of theories we have looked at?

Policies and Procedures

Late Submission - applies unless otherwise stated elsewhere in the unit guide

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

Extension Request

[Special Consideration Policy and Procedure \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration)

The University recognises that students may experience events or conditions that adversely affect their academic performance. If you experience serious and unavoidable difficulties at exam time or when assessment tasks are due, you can consider applying for Special Consideration.

You need to show that the circumstances:

1. were serious, unexpected and unavoidable
2. were beyond your control
3. caused substantial disruption to your academic work
4. substantially interfered with your otherwise satisfactory fulfilment of the unit requirements
5. lasted at least three consecutive days or a total of 5 days within the teaching period and prevented completion of an assessment task scheduled for a specific date.

If you feel that your studies have been impacted submit an application as follows:

1. Visit [Ask MQ](#) and use your OneID to log in
2. Fill in your relevant details
3. Attach supporting documents by clicking 'Add a reply', click 'Browse' and navigating to the files you want to attach, then click 'Submit Form' to send your notification and supporting documents
4. Please keep copies of your original documents, as they may be requested in the future as part of the assessment process

Outcome

Once your submission is assessed, an appropriate outcome will be organised.

OUA Specific Policies and Procedures

Withdrawal from a unit after the census date

You can withdraw from your subjects prior to [the census date](#) (last day to withdraw). If you successfully withdraw before the census date, you won't need to apply for Special Circumstances. If you find yourself unable to withdraw from your subjects before the census date - you might be able to [apply for Special Circumstances](#). If you're eligible, we can refund your fees and overturn your fail grade.

If you're studying Single Subjects using FEE-HELP or paying up front, you can [apply online](#).

If you're studying a degree using HECS-HELP, you'll need to [apply directly to Macquarie University](#).

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/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.

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) 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

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit 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 outcome

- learn how to apply those concepts in everyday life

Assessment tasks

- Participation: Journal & Forum
- Written Exercise 1
- Written Exercise 2
- Written Exercise 3

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 outcome

- read and write critically

Assessment tasks

- Participation: Journal & Forum
- Written Exercise 1
- Written Exercise 2
- Written Exercise 3

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

- develop writing, research and analytical skills
- learn to communicate your own ideas simply and directly

Assessment tasks

- Participation: Journal & Forum
- Written Exercise 1
- Written Exercise 2
- Written Exercise 3

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:

Learning outcomes

- learn how to think sociologically
- read and write critically

Assessment tasks

- Participation: Journal & Forum
- Written Exercise 1
- Written Exercise 2
- Written Exercise 3

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:

Learning outcomes

- learn how to think sociologically
- develop writing, research and analytical skills
- read and write critically

Assessment tasks

- Participation: Journal & Forum
- Written Exercise 1
- Written Exercise 2
- Written Exercise 3

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:

Learning outcomes

- learn how to apply those concepts in everyday life
- develop writing, research and analytical skills

Assessment tasks

- Participation: Journal & Forum
- Written Exercise 1
- Written Exercise 2
- Written Exercise 3

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

- learn how to think sociologically

- develop writing, research and analytical skills
- read and write critically
- learn to communicate your own ideas simply and directly

Assessment tasks

- Participation: Journal & Forum
- Written Exercise 1
- Written Exercise 2
- Written Exercise 3

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 outcome

- learn how to apply those concepts in everyday life

Assessment tasks

- Participation: Journal & Forum
- Written Exercise 1
- Written Exercise 2
- Written Exercise 3