**Instructor:** Dr. Jennifer Elrick (jennifer.elrick@mcgill.ca)  
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 14:30-16:00 (10-minute slots can be booked on Calendly. Link to be provided on MyCourses. Registration closes 24 hours prior to the start of office hours)  
**TAs:** TBC. Contact details will be announced on MyCourses during the first week of classes.

**Course Description and Goals**  
This course provides an overview of core themes in social theory. What is social theory? There are many answers. For the purpose of this course, it is any effort to explain the nature of the social world and how it works. The core themes explored in the course, in reference to classical and contemporary theorists, are: inequality and power; strategic action; values and social structures; and social construction.

This course is designed to provide a “scaffolding” for understanding linkages between “sociological theory” as a general exercise and social theories examined in subfield courses on gender, race/ethnicity, organizations, political sociology, urban life, etc. Because social theory is inseparable from the practice of research, we may also consider linkages between each core theme and research design and methods.

**Remote Delivery Format**  
In Winter 2021, SOCI 330 will be offered via remote delivery. This means that we will not be meeting in person during class time or office hours. It will be possible to acquire course content, engage fellow students over course content (e.g. via Perusall), and complete all evaluation components remotely. Short lectures will be posted to MyCourses by the class meeting time on Tuesday each week (14:35) to aid asynchronous learning; asynchronous reading assignments must be completed by Wednesdays; and the course will meet synchronously on Thursdays to discuss the week’s course content. The live session will not be recorded. The pedagogical value of a live discussion lies in the exchange of ideas during in-depth discussions, not in the passive consumption of these discussions. The instructor kindly asks students to have their cameras on during the seminars to create a more personal exchange. Students who are able to participate in the synchronous sessions are encouraged to do so for the sake of their own learning experience, as they will help deepen understanding of course content and provide an opportunity to ask questions. Students who are residing in a time zone that makes seminar participation impractical are asked to inform the instructor of their situation via e-mail by January 5th so that alternate arrangements for communication can be explored.
Notice Regarding Recorded Lectures
Recorded lectures are for students’ use during the course and may not be distributed to individuals not enrolled in the class without explicit written permission of the instructor. The instructor retains full copyright over materials generated for the course. Lectures are not fully scripted but recordings of the instructor speaking extemporaneously, as during a normal lecture. As minor mistakes can be made while speaking extemporaneously, students are advised against creating verbatim transcripts of the lectures for use in assessments. The lectures offer a guide to understanding required readings but are not substitutes for doing the readings and developing one’s own thoughts.

Course Communication during Remote Delivery:
Remote delivery does not mean constant availability. The instructor and TAs reserve the right to work only during normal business hours: Monday to Friday, 9:00 to 17:00. The instructor will respond to e-mails only during these times, usually within 24 hours of receiving a message. All students are responsible for checking their McGill e-mail and MyCourses on a regular basis for course-related announcements. If you have logistical questions about the class, please post them on the discussion board on MyCourses. Before you post a question, be sure to review the discussion board to make sure it has not already been answered. The instructor and TAs will monitor the board once a day, Monday-Friday, and reply as necessary. If you e-mail the instructor or TAs with a course-related question, it will be copied onto the discussion board and answered there: no separate reply will be sent via e-mail.

Required Course Materials
All of the required readings for this course are available electronically and will be uploaded by the instructor to the Perusall software platform each week. Students who wish to access the material in advance outside of the Perusall platform will find PDF versions of chapters from print books in a folder on MyCourses. If a reading is not there, that is because it is a journal article or chapter from an eBook that can be retrieved by students directly from the McGill library site. If you do not know how to locate and retrieve journal articles or eBooks, please contact a librarian for assistance.

We will be relying on two books, both of which are available as eBooks from the McGill library. If you wish to own a print copy, an independent bookstore close to McGill campus will be carrying some stock and can offer both home delivery and curbside pick-up. Please visit Paragraphe Bookstore, 2220 McGill College Avenue (https://paragraphbooks.com/collections/textbooks).

**Evaluation Overview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Component</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>% of final grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading engagement (using Perusall)</td>
<td>Wednesdays throughout starting Week 4</td>
<td>24% (8 x 3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term assignment #1</td>
<td>February 5th</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term assignment #2</td>
<td>March 12th</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam (take-home with 72-hour window of availability)</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
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**Evaluation Component Details & Accommodation**

1) *Reading Engagement via Perusall (8 x 3% = 24% of final grade)*

In order to maximize student engagement with the course material, students will be asked to annotate each week’s required readings using the Perusall software platform. This is a browser-based reading tool that allows participants to annotate texts with questions and comments, and to respond to each other’s annotations. All required readings for the course will be uploaded to the platform by the instructor. We will begin using Perusall in Week 4 of the class, after the add/drop period has ended. Essentially, this evaluation component gives you grades for work that you are expected to do anyway in the course.

Students are asked to review the following information about Perusall before our first synchronous class so that outstanding questions can be clarified: [https://support.perusall.com/hc/en-us/categories/360002173133-Students](https://support.perusall.com/hc/en-us/categories/360002173133-Students).

Please complete the following steps to create an account and access the reading interface:

- Go to https://app.perusall.com/accounts/register and create an account
- Verify your email address
- Click on “Create or enroll in course” and “I am a student”
- Enter the course code: [TBC on MyCourses]
- Enter your McGill student ID number

In annotating the texts, concentrate on identifying the following:

- What is the central claim/purpose of the article?
- What are the central concepts/terms used in the argument?
• How do these central concepts/terms relate to ones from other readings in the course?
• What evidence does the author offer to support their central claim? Is the connection between the claim and the evidence offered for it convincing? How does this evidence widen or limit the scope of the author's claim?
• Are there any assumptions underpinning the argument that are central for supporting the author's claim? Do you think these assumptions plausible? Are they likely to hold in a range of contexts and/or for a range of subjects?

**Due Dates:** Students must read and finish annotating the readings for each Thursday’s class by 18:00 EST the day before (Wednesday) in order to receive credit for the week’s readings. Please do not leave this work until the last minute; technical glitches immediately before the deadline will not be considered grounds for accommodation. Additionally, these annotations are meant to facilitate asynchronous exchanges, and this cannot happen if everyone waits until the last minute to make their entries.

**Grading:** Your reading engagement will be graded for completeness and quality automatically by Persusall. Details on grading will be discussed on the first day of class. Your engagement with readings will be assessed in 8 out of 9 weeks from Weeks 4 to 13 (except Week 5). Each week’s score will be weighted as 3% of your final grade. Perusall evaluates the quality of your best seven annotations per assignment and awards a grade of 1, 2, or 3. In order to achieve full marks, you must make at least seven annotations; it is better to make more so that the highest quality ones become part of the grade.

**Accommodation:** All students have six full days between the weekly seminar and the date/time by which readings for the following seminar must be completed. This allows everyone to work flexibly and at their own pace. Since reading engagement is evaluated in 8 out of 9 weeks from Week 4 to 13 (except Week 5), you have one “week off” (in addition to Weeks 1, 2, 3, 5 and 14). In other words, there are a total of six weeks for which you do not have to engage with the readings on Perusall. Please give very careful consideration as to when you would like to make use of your “week off”. It may be tempting to take a break early on, but I strongly recommend that you save this opportunity to cover unexpected circumstances like illness or other deadlines later in the semester. There will be no further accommodation for any reason; additional missed weeks will receive a grade of ‘0.’

2) **Mid-term Assignments # 1 (16% of final grade) & #2 (25% of final grade)**

Details will be given in class and on MyCourses closer to the dates. Mid-term assignment #1 will cover material from Weeks 1-4. Mid-term assignment #2 will focus on material from Weeks 5-8 but may require students to draw on material from Weeks 1-4 as well.

**Due Dates, Late Penalty & Accommodation:** The mid-term assignments are due on February 5th and March 12th, at 23:59 EST. They will be distributed one week in advance of those deadlines. All students have seven full days to complete each assignment. Since they should
not take more than approximately 3 hours to complete, if the student is up to date on course readings and lectures, this allows everyone to work flexibly and at their own pace. There will be no further accommodation for any reason. A late penalty of 5% per day will apply for up to one week past the deadline. After that, assignments will not be accepted for grading and will receive a mark of ‘0.’

3) Final Exam (35% of final grade)

The final exam will cover material from Weeks 1-13, potentially emphasizing Weeks 9-13. More details will be made available closer to the date. It will be a take home exam with a window of availability of 72 hours. The due date of the exam will be during the final exam period, as determined by the Exams Office.

Course Outline (Subject to change at the discretion of the instructor)

Week 1 (January 9th) – Introduction: What is theory?
- This Thursday session is asynchronous. Lecture(s) will be posted on MyCourses by 14:35 on Thursday, January 9th.
- Critical reading PDF (MyCourses)
- Rojas Chapter 1

Theme 1: Power & Inequality

Week 2 (January 12th & 14th) – Marxist Theory
- Marx & Engels (in Lemert): Estranged Labour (p. 29-33); Camera Obscura (p. 33-34); Capital and the Fetishism of Commodities (p. 46-48); Labour-power and Capital (p. 48-52)
- Marx & Engels: Manifesto of the Communist Party (MyCourses)

Week 3 – (January 19th & 21st) – Weberian theory
- Weber (in Lemert): Bureaucratic machine (p. 86-90); What is politics? (p. 90-91); Types of legitimate domination (p.92-94); Class, status, party (p. 94-101)
- Note: Add/drop ends January 22nd

Week 4 – (January 26th & 28th) – Racial inequality (Perusall by January 27th)
- DuBois – Double consciousness (Lemert p. 131-134); The racial wage (Lemert p. 191-193)
- King – Power of nonviolent action (Lemert p. 273-275)
- Fanon – Decolonizing (Lemert p. 283-286)
- Collins – Black feminist thought (Lemert. 413-421)
- Note: Mid-term assignment #1 will be posted on MyCourses on Friday, January 29th

Week 5 - (February 2nd & 4th) No new material. Extended office hours in lieu of class on Thursday
- Mid-term assignment #1 DUE Friday, February 5th, 23:59

Week 6 – (February 9th & 11th) – Gender, Sexuality & Inequality (Persusall by February 10th)
- Rojas Chapter 2
- Addams – The Settlement as a Factor in the Labour Market (Lemert p. 56-57)
- Woolf – A Room of One’s Own (Lemert p. 207-209)
- De Beauvoir – Woman as other (Lemert p. 268-270)
- Smith – Knowing Society from within (Lemert p. 305-308)

Theme 2: Strategic Action

Week 7 – (February 16th & 18th) – Rational Choice & Utilitarianism (Perusall by February 17th)
- John Stuart Mill (Lemert p. 54-55)

Week 8 – (February 23rd & 25th) – Sociological Rational Choice (Perusall by February 24th)
- Rojas Chapter 3

Reading Week (March 1st to 5th) – NO CLASS
- Note: Mid-term assignment #2 will be posted on MyCourses on Friday, March 5th

Theme 3: Values & Structures

Week 9 – (March 9th 11th) – Durkheim (Perusall by March 10th)
- Durkheim (Lemert) – Mechanic and Organic Solidarity (p. 59-62); Anomie and the Modern Division of Labour (p. 62-63); Sociology and Social Facts (p. 63-65); Suicide and Modernity (p. 65-71); The Cultural Logic of Collective Representations (p. 75-80)
- Note: Mid-term assignment #2 DUE Friday, March 12th, 23:59 EST

Week 10 – (March 16th & 18th) – Simmel (Perusall by March 17th)
  - “Subjective Culture” (p. 227-234)
  - “Group Expansion and the Development of Individuality” (p. 251-293)
  - “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (p. 324-339)
- TBD: “The Conflict in Modern Culture” (p. 375-393) OR “On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture” (p. 27-46 in The Conflict in Modern Culture and Other Essays)

Week 11 – (March 23rd & 25th) – The Iron Cage & Beyond (Perusall by March 24th)
- Rojas Chapter 4

Theme 4: Social Construction

Week 12 – (March 30th & April 1st) – Social Construction: Social Action & The Self (Perusall by March 31st)
- Mead - The Self, the I, and the Me (Lemert p. 168-172)
- Merton – Social Structure and Anomie (Lemert p. 181-190)
- Goffman – The Presentation of Self (Lemert p. 264-265)
- Garfinkel – Reflexive Properties of Practical Sociology (Lemert p. 330-333)

Week 13 – (April 6th & 8th) – Social Construction: The Group (Persuall by April 7th)
- Rojas Chapter 5
- Collins – Interaction Ritual Chains (Lemert p. 384-387)
- Berger & Luckmann – Society as a Human Product (Lemert p. 301-305) OR ALTERNATE READING
- Baudrillard – Simulacra and Simulations: Disneyland (Lemert p. 365-369)

Week 14 – (April 13th) – Wrap-Up and Q&A
- No readings. This Tuesday meeting will take place synchronously via Zoom

The Fine Print

Land Acknowledgment:
McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.

Tentative nature of the syllabus:
This syllabus is my best guess at how the semester will unfold. The instructor reserves the right to change the course content outlined in the syllabus at any point during the semester. Any changes to readings will be announced at least one class in advance. Students are responsible for keeping up with any changes.
Language of Evaluation

“In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.”
(approved by Senate on 21 January 2009 – see also the section in this document on Assignments and evaluation.)

“Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue).”

Academic Integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). (approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

“L’université McGill attache une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l’on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l’étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).”

Use of Software to Protect Academic Integrity

Work submitted for evaluation as part of this course may be checked with text matching software within MyCourses.

Policy Concerning the Rights of Students with Disabilities

If you need any accommodation please contact the Office for Students with Disabilities (http://www.mcgill.ca/osd/ 398-6009). You may also contact me directly. I will make every reasonable effort to accommodate you.

Copyright

Instructor generated course materials (e.g. Power Point slides, handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, recordings, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures. Recording and distributing recordings of lectures and seminars is prohibited unless the instructor gives written consent.

Course Changes in Extraordinary Circumstances

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

Grade appeals

Instructors and teaching assistants take the marking of assignments and exams very seriously, and we work diligently to be fair, consistent, and accurate. Nonetheless, mistakes
and oversights occasionally happen. If you believe that to be the case, you must adhere to the following rules:

- If it is a mathematical error simply alert the TA.
- In the case of more substantive appeals, you must:
  - Wait at least 24 hours after receiving your mark;
  - Carefully re-read your paper/assignment/test, all guidelines and marking schemes, and the grader’s comments.
  - Within 10 working days after results are available, submit to the instructor a one-page explanation of why you think your grade should be changed. Please note statements such as “Because I worked very hard on this” and “I need a higher grade to apply to law school” are not compelling.
  - Make an appointment to meet with the instructor during office hours, at which time the instructor will give you a decision on the appeal and explain the outcome. After that, students are entitled to a re-read or re-assessment by a professor not teaching the course should they request it.
  - Please note that upon re-grade your mark may go down, stay the same, or go up.