Course Description:

In this seminar we consider some of the central issues in contemporary sociological theory by critically examining a number of recent programmatic statements representing contending schools of thought. Students are expected to have basic background knowledge of classical and modern sociological theory and the issues they deal with. If you think your background is insufficient, you are strongly encouraged to read a basic introductory sociological theory textbook before the term begins or during the first weeks of the term.

Readings:

All books assigned should be available in the McGill Bookstore as well as on reserve in the McLennan library. The articles can be found on the MyCourses site for this course.

Books:


Routledge.

**Articles:**


**Course Plan:**


- *Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> Archer. *Being Human*, Introduction and Part I (pp. 1-117)

- *Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> Archer. *Being Human* II, Parts II, III and IV (pp. 121-319) and Loyal and Barnes, “Agency as a Red Herring”

- *Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> Harding, *Objectivity and Diversity*

- Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> Harding, *Objectivity and Diversity* II

- *Oct. 13<sup>th</sup> Reed. *Interpretation and Social Knowledge*

- Oct. 20<sup>th</sup> Reed. *Interpretation and Social Knowledge* II; **paper outline due**


- Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup> Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* II

- *Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> Hammersley, *Methodological Concepts*

- Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> Hammersley, *Methodological Concepts* II

- Nov. 24<sup>th</sup> Term paper presentations

- Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> Term paper presentations

**Requirements and Assessment:**

For the days marked by an asterisk, students will hand in a brief (no more than 3 pp.) review of the reading assignment for that day. *These reviews are due the previous day (i.e., Thursdays) at 5:00pm, by email.* The reviews together account for 25% of your final grade. Second, you will be writing a term paper on a topic to be decided in consultation with me. On October 20<sup>th</sup> you will hand in a brief outline of the planned paper with a preliminary bibliography which will be treated
as part of (i.e., graded with) the term paper. The topic need not be highly theoretical but you will be expected to address some analytical issue or problem and apply the methods of critical analysis (questioning logical consistency, underlying assumptions, and so on) used in the course on the literature that you will be reviewing. The last sessions of the course will be devoted to your oral term paper presentations. The final version of your term paper will be due on the last day of the term. It will contribute 50% to your final grade.

The remaining 25% of your grade will be determined by your participation in the seminar. You will be expected to come prepared to bring your own questions and insights to each meeting of the seminar and I will regularly call on each student to give his/her comments. Depending on the size of the class once or twice during the semester you will be a discussion leader. This means that you will initiate the discussion of the week’s readings. This should be a short introduction of 5 to 8 minutes at most in which you will comment on the reading and raise questions to be discussed rather than summarize the reading.

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

**Remise des travaux en français**
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).

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.

**Plagiarism**
French version:
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/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/)).

English version:
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/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/) for more information).