

Gaziantep University
Department of Sociology

Year 3 Students
2024-2025

Spring Term

SOC304 Contemporary Sociological Theory I

Module Outline

Lecturer-Convenor: Dr. Ayşegül Yıldırım, ayild002@gold.ac.uk,
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Module Description

This module seeks to examine theories which help us clarify the conditions which followed the remarkable effects of modernity, as sometimes called the post-modern condition. Following the classical theorists in their endeavour to make sense of the fundamental changes brought about by the modern, rational, and industrialised societies, we will look into contemporary theorists in their effort to clarify and analyse the complexities of a social condition which has now evolved into a full-blown and globalised extractive capitalism. We will observe that the responses to such a state of affairs reflect indeed the complexity of the contemporary questions which replaces aspirations for a meta-narrative on humanity with more partial, eclectic, linguistic explanations while remaining radical, diverse, and inclusive.

Upon successful completion of this module, students will achieve the following learning objectives:

- Describe and discuss the key concepts of contemporary theories such as hyper-reality, sign, text, meta-narrative, disciplinary societies, etc.
- Understand the ways in which these theories respond to issues of modernity,
- Understand the fundamental links between late capitalism and approaches to contemporary culture,
- Illustrate these theories through interpreting the current state of politics, economics, culture, arts, education, etc.

Readings

Weekly readings are compulsory and will be noted below. Students are required to complete the key readings before their corresponding lecture.

How to access these materials will be made clear during the lectures.

Reading list:

Kivisto, P, 2021. *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*. Sixth ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

Each week you will read one or two chapter(s) from this book as key reading (with a few exceptions).

Course requirements

You are expected to engage with **both the key readings and lecture notes** in your assessments for this module. ***Weekly readings are required to be done before the class*** and will be noted below.

Attendance is compulsory. Those who are unable to attend any lecture due to unforeseen circumstances should notify me in the first instance using above e-mail address (preferably the first one as it is monitored more often). Mass absences leading to cancellation of the class is a waste of time and detrimental for your learning.

Please ensure I have your up-to-date e-mail address as all essential correspondence are being conducted via e-mail.

Assessment is **40% mid-term exam, 60% final exam.**

Plagiarism and use of AI-written texts are not to be tolerated.

Grammar and structure issues decrease the readability of your work and can lead to significant reduction in your marks. If your overarching argument is not clearly stated in your work, it is not possible for me to assess your submission properly. *I am here to help by guiding you in the right direction. However, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to improve on grammar with extra effort to catch up with the pace of the modules.*

If you are in doubt about any aspect of the course, please **e-mail** me and I will respond during the working hours (9am-5pm). Alternatively, you can visit in-person during the **office hours**. You are also welcome to visit before or after the classes about your inquiries, depending on my availability.

Weekly Summary¹

¹ For reference only. May be subject to change during term time.

BLOCK I

WEEK 1 – Introduction and overview

No reading set for this week. Students are required to review the module outline.

WEEK 2 – Constructive criticisms I

Key Readings: Chapter 61: The Reflexivity of Modernity by Anthony Giddens in Kivisto, P, 2021. Social Theory: Roots and Branches. Sixth ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 63: On Living in a Liquid Modern World by Zygmunt Bauman in Kivisto, P, 2021. Social Theory: Roots and Branches. Sixth ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

WEEK 3 – Constructive criticisms II

Key Reading: Chapter 59: Shame and Repugnance by Norbert Elias in Kivisto (2021).

WEEK 4 – The (Late) Spirit of Capitalism

Key Reading: Chapter 71: The Spirit of Capitalism, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello in Kivisto (2021).

WEEK 5 – The ‘Non-Modern’ Condition

Key Reading: Chapter 62: Redistribution, Bruno Latour in Kivisto (2021).

WEEK 6 – The Post-Modern Condition

Key Reading: Chapter 64: The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, Jean-François Lyotard in Kivisto (2021).

WEEK 7 – Assessment advice

No reading set for this week. Students may catch up with other readings.

WEEK 8 – MID-TERMS - No Lecture.

BLOCK II

WEEK 1 – Structuralism

Key Reading: Chapter 67: Structures and Habitus, Pierre Bourdieu in Kivisto (2021).

WEEK 2 – Technologies of the Self

Key Reading: Chapter 2 in: Foucault M. Martin L. H. Gutman H. & Hutton P. H. (1988).
Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault. University of Massachusetts Press.

WEEK 3 – Disciplinary Societies

Key Reading: Chapter 70: Panopticism, Michel Foucault in Kivisto (2021).

WEEK 4 – Societies of Control

Key Reading: Postscript on the Societies of Control by Gilles Deleuze (1990)

WEEK 5 – Signs and Simulacra

Key Reading: Chapter 68: Advertising, Jean Baudrillard in Kivisto (2021).

WEEK 6 – Hegemony in a Globalised World

Key Reading: Chapter 73: The Three Instances of Hegemony in the History of the Capitalist World-Economy, Immanuel Wallerstein in Kivisto (2021).

Chapter 74: The Cosmopolitan Condition: Why Methodological Nationalism Fails, Ulrich Beck in Kivisto (2021).

WEEK 7 – Assessment advice.

No reading set for this week. Students may catch up with their readings.

WEEK 8 - FINALS - No Lecture.