

**GRADUATE PROGRAM IN SOCIOLOGY**  
**Course Offerings, 2024-2025**  
**Course Descriptions**

**SUMMER 2024**

**SOCI 6090 3.0A - Selected Topics in Empirical Methods: Historical Methods**

Course Instructor: Radhika Mongia

Historical methods are a central component of sociological inquiry. This course has two main aims. First, through an analysis of course readings, it will explore epistemological and ontological questions of how historical methods are deployed to furnish evidence in advancing arguments. Second, the course will address practical questions of what is entailed in historical research and how to employ these methods in research design and analysis. (This aspect of the course will include a visit to the Archives of Ontario.) In addition, the course will consider how oral history is related to interviewing methods, that are frequently used in sociological inquiry.

**FALL/WINTER 2023/2024**

**SOCI 5901 3.0A – Key Debates in Sociological Theory (SOCI MA students only)**

Course Instructor: TBD

This course deals with the development of sociological theory from the major foundational thinkers of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, through recent approaches informed by a variety of critical perspectives. Much of classical sociological theory was focussed upon growing awareness of society, as such, being the subject of profound change.

Difference of opinion and profound debate have been characteristic of sociological theory and have widely been recognized as contributing to its development. The first part of the course will focus on the principal concepts, texts and debates of the classical era of sociology. A wide range of thinkers helped establish the context for, built upon the insights of, filled the gaps between, and discerned alternatives to, the often-conflicting ideas of the recognized giants of classical social theory (among others Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim and Max Weber).

The second part of the course will focus on the contributions and controversies that have followed from broad recognition of sociology as a distinct intellectual discipline, coupled with recurrent efforts to shed light on its most basic theoretical underpinnings. These additions to the corpus of classical sociological theory have extended its critical range and multiplied its analytical power and complexity.

A primary goal of this course is to illuminate the role of critical analysis in the expansion and deepening of social knowledge, insisting upon the need for every sociologist to become

informed by confronting ideas in debate and, then, to arrive at a personal position through a critical evaluation of alternatives.

### **SOCI 5995 3.0A – MA Seminar (SOCI MA students only)**

Course Instructor: Kathy Bischooping

Based on a cohort-model, this course provides a supportive environment that allows MA students to rapidly accrue sociological reading, writing, and revising skills. The curriculum moves students through the initial research/writing stages to completion of the RRP/thesis proposal.

### **SOCI 6001 3.0A – Doctoral Seminar I (SOCI PhD students only)**

Course Instructor: Elaine Coburn

The overall objectives of this workshop-based course are: (i) the development of professional skills for the academic and non-academic labour market; (ii) to facilitate timely progress through the program; and (iii) to contribute to the development of a research culture in the cohort and beyond.

### **SOCI 6002 3.0A – Doctoral Seminar II (SOCI PhD students only)**

Course Instructor: Elaine Coburn

The objectives of this workshop-based course are: (i) the development of professional skills for the academic and non-academic labour markets; (ii) to facilitate academic progress after completion of the comprehensive exams; and (iii) to contribute to the development of a research culture in the cohort.

Pre-requisite: Completion of SOCI 6001 3.0: Doctoral Seminar 1, and registration in the second year of the Sociology PhD program.

### **SOCI 6060 3.0M – Qualitative Methods**

Course Instructor: Sylvia Bawa

Methodology is foundational to knowledge production and the key to assessing the validity of existing knowledge and truth claims. Your question determines the type of methodology and methodological tools you'll use to collect, synthesize, and analyse data for your research project. This course will focus on discussing and doing qualitative methodology. Students will get an opportunity to think through qualitative methods as they apply to your various research projects. Some of the methods we will discuss are interviews, focus group discussions, ethnography, observation, and critical discourse analysis.

The questions we can ask about the world are enabled, and other questions disabled, by the frame that orders the questioning. *When we are busy arguing about the questions that appear within a certain frame, the frame itself becomes invisible; we become enframed in it.* (Ferguson, 1993, p.8, my emphasis)

### **SOCI 6090 3.0A – Selected Topics in Empirical Methods: Narrative Analysis Strategies**

Course Instructor: Kathy Bischooping

In this course, we examine a wide range of strategies for analyzing narratives and narration -- or, if you like, stories and story-telling. A first group of these, coming from the intersection of humanities and the social sciences, focuses on interpreting how meanings are conveyed by the finer details of how stories are told. A second group of strategies concentrates on the interplay of storytellers and listeners, for example, in reflexive analysis of the role of the researcher in co-producing interview narratives, or in studying how mass media audiences receive narratives. A third group of strategies is informed by broad questions about the past and its relation to the present, about structure and agency in the life course, about the self, and about how discourses and narratives connect. Throughout the course, strategies are located in relation to ontology and epistemology, and in relation to their wider applicability to non-narrative data.

### **SOCI 6112 6.0A - Quantitative Methods**

Course Instructors: Ann Kim (fall); Cary Wu (winter)

This course offers a comprehensive exploration of quantitative methods applied in the social sciences, with a particular focus on the analysis of survey data and the concept that models serve as representations of patterns within data. A key objective is for students to learn how to apply appropriate statistical tests to data in response to a social research question. The first term of the course deals with the basics of univariate and bivariate analyses including topics of descriptive statistics, significance tests, and measures of association. Moving into the second term, we will conduct a thorough review of descriptive and inferential statistics, followed by an in-depth examination of the essentials of linear regression. This includes aspects such as estimation, interpretation, hypothesis testing, model assumptions, and model fit. We will review several tools for diagnosing violations of statistical assumptions and what to do when things go wrong, including dealing with outliers, collinearity, and weights. Finally, we will explore extensions of the linear regression model such as generalized linear models.

### **SOCI 6180 3.0A – Sex and Gender in Social Theory**

Course Instructor: Sheila Cavanagh

This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the critical study of sex and gender in social theory. Using a biopolitical, queer and psychoanalytic perspective, students will be exposed to multiple themes, debates, and perspectives in the field. Focus will be placed upon feminist theory, psychoanalysis, queer theory, bio-politics, transgender studies, Indigenous studies, critical race theory, and postcolonial theory. Although the field is vast, the course is intended to familiarize students with new currents in sex and gender theorizing relevant to sociology. Students will be required to participate regularly in class discussions, to give a presentation on one set of readings, and to write a final paper. Emphasis will be placed on engaging new and diverse theorizations of sex and gender that demand careful study of assigned course readings.

### **SOCI 6200 3.0A – Contemporary Topics in Social Theory: Introduction to Critical Realism**

Course Instructor: Philip Walsh

This course examines the key theories associated with Critical Realism, understood as a general paradigm for the social sciences, but with particular relevance for sociology. While critical realism dates back to the 1980s, where its core commitments were first laid out by the philosopher of science, Roy Bhaskar, it has only come to prominence in the North American context quite recently. While there is much that unites critical realists, including an emphasis on social ontology, a rejection of methodological individualism, a substantive theory of reflexive personhood and an intrinsic human emancipatory orientation, there are also many areas of internal dispute and unresolved problems. This course will cover some of the essential critical realist writings, examine articles from the flagship journal, the Journal of Critical Realism and apply the critical realist approach to a range of empirical questions.

### **SOCI 6200 3.0M – Contemporary Topics in Social Theory: Theory on Fascism**

Course Instructor: Hyun Ok Park

The crisis of liberalism and capitalism has made fascism an urgent inquiry once again. Many ongoing discussions attend to the historicity of fascism, comparing its previous and current forms in different places. To offer critical theoretical perspectives on today's forms and symptoms, this seminar focuses on reading three theoretical paradigms: Fascism as a political form of capitalism (Marx, Gramsci, Poulantzas, Badiou, and other contemporary theorists); liberalism and its crisis as origins of fascism (Foucault, Schmitt, Nancy Fraser, and others); and totalitarianism and everyday mass culture (Arendt, Frankfurt School, and others). This theoretical engagement with fascism is an opportunity to delve into critical theories on capital, subjectivity, and politics.

### **SOCI 6535 3.0M – Transnational Sexualities**

Course Instructor: Amar Wahab

Please contact Professor Amar Wahab at [awahab@yorku.ca](mailto:awahab@yorku.ca).

### **SOCI 6542 3.0M – Violence, Identity and Subjectivity**

Course Instructor: Laura Kwak

This course addresses how violence shapes and has been shaped by institutional, legal, economic, and representational structures in modern societies. By drawing from critical perspectives in sociology, feminist, queer, and critical race studies, this interdisciplinary course engages with theories, intellectual concerns, and historical and contemporary debates in the study of an expansive conceptualization of violence. That is, we will engage with course materials that consider state violence upheld through liberal tenets such as the rule of law (policing, incarceration, military interventions), economic violence (dispossession, exploitation, imperial plunder), epistemic and representational violence, as well as violence as revolutionary and anti-colonial strategy. The seminar emphasizes a critical analysis of social processes, subjectivities, identities, institutions, and systems of representation that shape and are shaped

by racialized, gendered, capitalist, and other normative discourses and ideologies. For instance, we will consider this curious juncture wherein explicit racial violence has intensified while the language of diversity, inclusion, equity, and decolonization has become ubiquitous. By developing a rigorous understanding of the role of violence in modern societies, we can also strive to develop a critical race and feminist analysis to sustain political anti-violence projects.

### **SOCI 6614 3.0M – Migration and Transnationalisms**

Course Instructor: Guida Man

Contemporary migration in an era of globalization, neoliberalism, and transnationalism has undergone dynamic transformations. The emergence of transnational communities whereby transmigrants maintain their everyday activities, relationships, networks, and identities in their home countries as well as engaging in their places of settlement has transformed the meaning of migration, citizenship, families, national borders, and international politics. It has also spawned theoretical and methodological questions, as well as policy challenges at the local, national, and transnational levels. This course provides a forum for seminar participants to critically examine and analyze theoretical and empirical research studies employing various approaches from multiple disciplines, with attention to the dynamics between structure and agency. Recent debates and literature on theories and methodologies, policies, and practices of contemporary migration and the concomitant forms of transnationalisms will be examined, with a focus on how institutionalized policies and practices based on gender, race, class, and citizenship and their intersectionalities impact differently located members of society. The ways how transmigrants as actors utilize their agencies will also be explored. In particular, special attention will be paid to literature focusing on issues raised by BIPOC scholars and activists. Assigned readings and seminar discussions will focus around some core topics, and will entail interrogating theoretical perspectives on transnational migration. Social, economic, political, and cultural processes of transnational migration will be examined by exploring topics such as transnational networks, diasporic capital, political participation, social reproduction, transnational labour, the second generation, cross-border marriages, and transnational mobility.

### **SOCI 6684 3.0M – Critical Social Policy Analysis**

Course Instructor: Eric Mykhalovskiy

This course invites students to explore the contribution that sociology and related disciplines make to our understanding of social policy. We will orient to social policy broadly. That means thinking about social policy not only as a matter of state action concerned with redistribution and social welfare, but also as efforts on the part of multiple non-state actors to intervene in and project future visions of social, economic, and political life. We will explore scholarly work aimed at the critique of policy texts as well as work that explores the complex relations that shape how policy is formulated and responded to by varied audiences. We will place a premium on critical and engaged traditions of thought including those concerned with forms of structural inequality based in race, class, gender, sexual orientation and other intersecting relations. Among the selected topics we may explore are: settler colonialism, culture and land

policy; the impact of populism on social policy; policy, expertise, and trust in science; feminist anti-carceral policy; and by-laws and urban governance.

### **SOCI 6675 3.0A – Political Sociology**

Course Instructor: Andy Dawson

Political sociology is the study of the relationship between politics and society. At its core, political sociology analyzes the nature of power within society and how power is distributed and legitimated. The seminar draws upon both classical and contemporary works in the field and is divided into two sections. In the first section, we explore six major topic areas within political sociology: 1) states; 2) nationalism; 3) power; 4) legitimacy and polarization; 5) populism; and 6) democracy/democratic decline. The second section focuses on in-depth analyses of three recent critically acclaimed research monographs within political sociology.

### **SOCI 6745 3.0M – Asian Studies: Critical Perspectives**

Course Instructor: Joan Judge

This course asks “what is Asia?” How was it formed and defined historically, and how is it represented and understood today? Its purpose is fundamentally epistemological: a consideration of how we think about Asia. It questions how knowledge of, and from, Asia has

contributed to theories in the humanities and social sciences, and how Asia has been and could be further developed as a method of research.

### **SOCI 6760 3.0A – Race and Ethnicity**

Course Instructor: Johanne Jean-Pierre

This graduate course will engage with contemporary sociological scholarship of race, racialization, and ethnicity. Drawing from national and global perspectives of racial formation, racialization, racism, and persistent racial inequality across micro, meso, and macro systems, this course will present scholarship that delineates the context-dependent social construction of race and ethnicity and their implications across different life domains. This course encourages in-depth analysis of key theories, definitions, and concepts while highlighting methodological considerations to design anti-racist and transformative research. Close attention will be paid to understand various forms of racism such as individual and interpersonal racism, systemic racism, color-blind racism, laissez-faire racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, anti-Asian racism, and anti-Black racism. At the end of this course, students will have the ability to mobilize the scholarship of race and ethnicity to recognize, to analyze, and address overt and subtle manifestations of discrimination and racism.

### **SOCI 6831 3.0A – Health and Illness**

Course Instructor: Eric Mykhalovskiy

This course uses health, illness, and health care as points of departure for exploring sociological questions about human suffering and embodiment, identity formation, expertise

and professionalization, the organization and consequences of structural inequalities, the exercise of power, and the relationship between discourse and action. We will take a “critical” approach to our exploration of health, illness, and health care. Among other things that means: encouraging a reflexive relationship to scholarship and its object; challenging established ways of knowing, including those that prevail within the academy; committing to decolonizing knowledge and practice; and recognizing the potential for health scholarship to contribute to projects of social justice and progressive social transformation.

We will pay close attention to how sociological research on health is organized by key concepts, approaches to problem formulation, styles of critique, and strategies for empirical research. We will examine how that scholarship has been informed, but also challenged, by interdisciplinary perspectives including medical anthropology, feminist political economy perspectives, critical race theory, governmentality perspectives, and Indigenous health research, among others.

The course will cover a range of substantive areas within the sociology of health and illness and students will be invited to contribute suggestions to the syllabus. Among the topics we will examine are: early research on medicalization and its critique by scholars working on biomedicalization; Foucauldian research on risk, health and subjectivity; research on biological and therapeutic citizenship; novel contributions to scholarship on the social, economic, political and environmental determinants of health; research on health and intersectionality; and new contributions to the sociology of public health including work on viral politics, infectious disease, drug use, and the medico-legal borderland.

Students will be encouraged to develop their research interests through the course and will give at least one oral presentation and complete required written assignments, including one major paper.

### **SOCI 6893 3.0M – Colonialism, Race and the Law**

Course Instructor: Jay Ramasubramanyam

Please contact Professor Ramasubramanyam at [jayram@yorku.ca](mailto:jayram@yorku.ca).