

SOC401 Contemporary Sociological Theories

Level: 4

Credit Units: 5 Credit Units

Language: ENGLISH

Presentation Pattern: EVERY JULY

Synopsis:

Contemporary Sociological Theories builds upon the foundations laid by classical social theory and maps out the field of contemporary social theory. Beyond surveying the ideas and perspectives that major social theorists have developed in response to the transformation of contemporary society, the course focuses on key contribution that have influenced the development of sociology in recent decades. The approaches to be examined include structural-functionalism, interpretive sociology, critical theory, contemporary feminist theory, poststructuralism, postmodernism, globalization theories and contemporary theoretical syntheses of structural and interpretive approaches. In exploring the nature and status of these theories, the epistemological legacies of positivism, interpretivism and discourse are critically reviewed in the light of the advent of postindustrial, postmodern and post-Cold War era in the late twentieth century and the early twenty-first century. As a way of linking the various contemporary theoretical contributions, this course will also consider the theme of “agency” and “structure”. How and to what extent does society shape the lives of human beings – and vice versa? Finally, this course is mounted for Honours students with a classical sociological background.

Topics:

- Introduction to Contemporary Sociological Theory; Structural-functionalism
- Interpretive Sociology: Phenomenology, Symbolic Interactionism and Dramaturgy
- Critical Theory: The Frankfurt School
- Contemporary Feminist Theory; Post-structuralism and postmodernism
- Contemporary Theoretical Syntheses: The Works of Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens
- The Global Society: Theories of Globalization

Textbooks:

Appelrouth, Scott and Edles, Laura Desfor: Classical and Contemporary Sociological Theory 1st US, Sage Pine Forge Press
ISBN-13: 9780761927938

Learning Outcome:

- Critique the core ideas and concepts of the major theorists/traditions in contemporary sociological theory
- Construct the key traditions/standpoints relevant to contemporary sociological theory
- Compose a picture of the various ontological and epistemological positions taken in contemporary sociological theory
- Assess the various classical theoretical influences in the works of major contemporary social theorists
- Evaluate the central concerns of agency and structure in the theorizing of social phenomena in sociology
- Analyze contemporary social phenomena using the various contemporary theoretical positions
- Analyze large scale structural and/or micro processes of social institutions/actors and practices
- Discuss original theoretical works
- Compare the merits and limitations of different contemporary theoretical approaches
- Prepare an argument, to include the ways in which sociologists incorporate and acknowledge the ideas of other writers
- Develop a theoretical insight and critical analysis of large scale structural and/or micro processes of social institutions/actors and practices

Assessment Strategies (Evening Class):

Components	Description	Weightage Allocation (%)
Overall Continuous Assessment	TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT 1	25
	TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT 2	25
Overall Examinable Components	Written Exam	50
Total		100