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C O U R S E   O U T L I N E

SCS730 Social Theories for Practice: Power, Oppression and the 'Good Society'

School: School of Law and Society

2022 | Semester 1

UniSC Sunshine Coast	BLENDED LEARNING	Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Please go to usc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

We live in a power-divided and divisive world. Critical social theory seeks not only to expose these power relations but provokes thinking about practices to change them; to bring about social justice and human freedom. This course provides an advanced introduction to critical social theory. It charts the 'classical' attempts to formulate a universal and synthetic critical theory, and more recent forms of situated, partial and reflexive theories. Accordingly, this course introduces you to some of the most significant thinkers and perspectives in both classical and contemporary critical theory.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Learning materials – A variety of materials will be presented for 1 hour per week (online) for students to complete in own time.	1hr	Orientation week	13 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – On campus tutorial	2hrs	Week 2	11 times
Seminar – An All-of-Cohort on-campus, course seminar shall be provided in Week 1 and Week 7	2hrs	Week 1	2 times

1.3. Course Topics

- What is social theory?; and theorising for practice?
- Understanding Power, Exposing Oppression and Promoting the 'Good Society'
- Capitalism and Class Oppression
- Oppression as Normative Breakdown or Bureauctratic Rationality?
- Power, Oppression and the 'Other' (Sexism, Racism and Colonialism)
- Critical Theory: Contesting Hegemony and our Irrational Rationality
- Complexity and Living Systems
- Structuralism and Poststructuralism
- Contesting the Reproduction of Inequality and Oppression
- Contemporary Feminisms
- Technology and the Good Life
- Theorising Social Alternatives

2. What level is this course?

700 Level (Specialised)

Demonstrating a specialised body of knowledge and set of skills for professional practice or further learning. Advanced application of knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...	GRADUATE QUALITIES MAPPING Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...	PROFESSIONAL STANDARD MAPPING * Australian Association of Social Workers
1 Identify and discuss major perspectives in critical social theory on the nature of power, oppression and what makes a 'good society'.	Knowledgeable	4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4
2 Evaluate and employ critical social theories to make sense of substantive social problems and inform possible solutions.	Empowered	4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 5, 5.2, 5.4, 6.3
3 Examine recent developments in social theory and apply these understandings to how they can contribute to transforming society in a more just, participatory and sustainable direction.	Creative and critical thinker Sustainability-focussed	3, 3.1, 4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 5, 5.2, 5.4

* Competencies by Professional Body

CODE	COMPETENCY
AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS	
3	Culturally responsive and inclusive practice
3.1	Work inclusively and respectfully with cultural difference and diversity
4	Knowledge for practice
4.1	Understand higher level systemic influences on people with respect to area of practice
4.2	Understand and articulate social work and other relevant theories and concepts
4.3	Understand the role of research and evaluation in obtaining and generating new knowledge for practice
4.4	Understand and articulate how and when theories, knowledge bases and knowledge sources inform practice

CODE	COMPETENCY
5	Applying knowledge to practice
5.2	Work collaboratively
5.4	Apply critical and reflective thinking to practice
6.3	Work with others in a team environment

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the UniSC Glossary of terms for definitions of "pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites".

5.1. Pre-requisites

Enrolled in any postgraduate program

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Not applicable

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

The in-class activities commencing in Week 3 will entail early feedback on your comprehension of the learning materials in this course.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Quiz/zes	Individual	20%	N/A	Throughout teaching period (refer to Format)	To be Negotiated
All	2	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece	Group	40%	1500 words equivalent	Week 6	In Class
All	3	Essay	Individual	40%	2000 words	Week 13	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check

All - Assessment Task 1: Social Theory Portfolio and Quiz

GOAL:	This task is linked to ongoing engagement with the course learning materials in various activities for which you will receive formative, peer and teacher, feedback in-class from the beginning of the course. The main summative component shall consist of a quiz to test your knowledge of key terms in theorising power, oppression and emancipatory practices for creating a better society.
PRODUCT:	Quiz/zes
FORMAT:	This assessment shall consist of - Participation in tutorials learning activities - Peer feedback and collaboration - A summative Social theory concept evaluation (quiz) in Week 12 For more details see Canvas Task 3 Folder.

CRITERIA:	**No.**		**Learning Outcome assessed**
	1	Identification of critical theoretical terms employed in the analysis of power, oppression and emancipatory social alternatives	①
	2	Application of social theories- discussion in tutorials and learning activities.	②
	3	Communication and understanding of key terms in critical social theory	① ③

GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving

All - Assessment Task 2: Social issue in the media

GOAL:	One of the main purposes of social theory is to help us make sense of particular social issues by placing them in a broader context of understanding. This understanding is generally critical of popular 'common-sense' stereotypes or 'dominant constructions' because it exposes underlying social processes and assumptions that may not be evident to those affected by the issue. This exercise encourages you to use some aspects of classical social theory to develop a more critical understanding of a social issue that can be found in the popular media and how that issue might be addressed.
PRODUCT:	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece
FORMAT:	Academic Assignment -- Group Task (4 people Max)

PowerPoint (or similar digital format) Poster (containing text and illustrative images + an academic reference list). Each PowerPoint Poster should normally contain 1 cover/title slide (with all participants names and student numbers clearly identified on it), 8-10 slides for the actual presentation of the analysis of a social issue using the selected theory, and a final single slide for your reference list. So, normally the entire presentation should be no more than 12 slides in total.

Each member of the group must contribute to a short (5 minute per group) oral reflective statement on how this application of critical theory enabled a new understanding of the social issue and how its oppressive aspects might be addressed. All members must equally contribute towards the production of the poster - some time will be given in tutorial to plan and manage this project. However, the bulk of the work will be completed out of class time.

Only one member for each group needs to upload this submission on behalf of the group onto Canvas provided that all group participants names and student numbers are clearly identified on the PowerPoint cover page.

It is an expectation that the groups will consult at least six scholarly sources in constructing the presentation (in addition to media sources), which should be evident in the referencing on the slides or the reference list at the end. In the normal course of events each group shall be awarded a collective grade. However, in the event of a dispute over the extent of a team member's contributions, your tutor can make a determination on the basis of individual written contributions to award different grades to each team member according to their contribution.

Please avoid quoting directly from the sociological dictionary, as this is a thinking exercise requiring research. |

CRITERIA:	**No.**		**Learning Outcome assessed**
	1	Identification of research on a contemporary social issue presented in the media.	① ②
	2	Explanation of relevant concepts from the work of a classical social theorist for critical-analytical purposes.	②
	3	Application of social theory.	②
	4	Creative engagement with social theory to provide a broader and more critical understanding of a social issue than what is normally found in the media (engaging and insightful oral reflection).	① ②
	5	Use of social theory to pose alternative policies or practices for addressing the problem	③
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Collaboration, Problem solving		

All - Assessment Task 3: Major essay

GOAL:	You will write an advanced critical and comparative analysis of two, selected social theorists' ideas in order to make sense of a major conceptual issue in understanding contemporary society.
PRODUCT:	Essay
FORMAT:	You will write an advanced critical and comparative analysis of two, selected social theorists' ideas in order to make sense of a major conceptual issue (eg the nature of power, the basis of knowledge, oppression/emancipation, sustainability, social change) in understanding contemporary society. It is an expectation that students will consult at least eight scholarly sources in the construction of this essay. Additional details regarding the major essay will be placed on Canvas.

CRITERIA:	**No.**		**Learning Outcome assessed**
	1	Knowledgeable - demonstrate an advanced and accurate knowledge of the relevant concepts and theories of two (depending on choice of essay question) social thinkers for understanding a major problem of our times.	①
	2	Critical and comparative analysis- demonstrate advanced critical and comparative skills in the use of social theory in understanding and challenging dominant conceptions of contemporary social problems.	②
	3	Logical and compelling argument - based on your comparative analysis of the two theories, addressing the main concern of your chosen essay question/problem.	③
	4	Creativity - in discussing how critical social theory can elucidate major conceptual issues (such as power, knowledge, inequality, domination, emancipation or difference) to inform praxis for a more just, participatory and sustainable direction.	②
	5	Academic conventions – grammar and referencing.	③

GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving

7.   Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8.   What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1.   Prescribed text(s) or course reader

Please note that you need to have regular access to the resource(s) listed below. Resources may be required or recommended.

REQUIRED?	AUTHOR	YEAR	TITLE	EDITION	PUBLISHER
Required	Steven Seidman	2017	Contested Knowledge	6	John Wiley & Sons
Recommended	Mel Gray,Stephen Webb	2013	Social Work Theories and Methods	2nd	SAGE
Required	Thorpe, C	2017	Social Theory for Social Work: Ideas and applications	n/a	Taylor and Francis

8.2.   Specific requirements

Nil

9.   How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the online induction training for students, and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%
The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale
You have not failed an assessment task in the course due to academic misconduct.

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submission of assessment tasks may be penalised at the following maximum rate:
- 5% (of the assessment task's identified value) per day for the first two days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task.
- 10% (of the assessment task's identified value) for the third day - 20% (of the assessment task's identified value) for the fourth day and subsequent days up to and including seven days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task.
- A result of zero is awarded for an assessment task submitted after seven days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task. Weekdays and weekends are included in the calculation of days late. To request an extension you must contact your course coordinator to negotiate an outcome.

10.4. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: 07 5430 1168 or using the SafeZone app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone 07 5456 3864 or email safe@usc.edu.au.

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call 07 5430 1226 or email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au.

10.5. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the Learning Advisers web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or studentcentral@usc.edu.au.

10.6. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to Student Hub, email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 1226.

10.7. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, AccessAbility Services can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to Student Hub, email AccessAbility@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 2890.

10.8. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching

10.9. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The Student Charter sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.10. General Enquiries

In person:

- **UniSC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **UniSC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **UniSC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **UniSC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **UniSC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **UniSC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

Tel: +61 7 5430 2890

Email: studentcentral@usc.edu.au