

ARTS1870

Rethinking the Social

Term One // 2021

Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

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School Contact Information

School of Social Sciences

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Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary of the Course

This course is an introduction to sociological and anthropological perspectives on the nature of the social. You will consider questions such as: What is the social? What is the relation between the individual and society? How is the social lived and experienced? How do we understand the everyday? You will examine the social as idea, concept and experience through themes such as biography and selfhood, identity and difference, power and freedom, nature and culture, and state and nation. On completion of the course, you will have a general understanding of the key concepts underpinning sociological and anthropological perspectives on the study of social life. The course will provide many opportunities to reflect on the relevance of these themes for other disciplines of study.

Course Learning Outcomes

- 1. Explain key issues in debates about the category of the social in sociology and anthropology.
- 2. Distinguish between different conceptions of the social in sociology and anthropology.
- 3. Apply sociological perspectives to lived experience.
- 4. Use skills associated with scholarly inquiry including those related to critical analysis, argument and written expression.

Teaching Strategies

Rationale:

This course is based on the following principles:

- 1. To create an intellectually stimulating space for students that rewards active engagement with challenging concepts
- 2. To read primary texts without the use of secondary sources, commentaries or digested summaries.
- 3. To foster dialogue in and out of class between students, and with their teachers in order to create a community of learners
- 4. To read generously
- 5. To create a cooperative learning environment
- 6. To encourage student responsibility to the broader academic community

Teaching Strategies:

This course will consist of a two-hour lecture and one-hour tutorial.

Lectures: The lectures will combine the techniques of a traditional lecture with the interaction and dialogue typically associated with tutorials. Students are encouraged to participate actively in lectures by questioning and commenting on the course material. Lectures will rely on textual commentary, film and visual imagery to explicate the concepts found in the readings.

Tutorials: Tutorials will be used to organise small groups to establish a collaborative working environment where students can learn from one another. Small groups will be organised in the first

tutorial in Week 2 or 3.

Reading Questions: Reading questions will be available on-line to assist students. They will give students a point of reference for discussion in the tutorial.

Assessment

Attendance Policy

In this course you are expected to attend at least 80% of classes. Roll will be taken in tutorials.

Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Due Date	Student Learning Outcomes Assessed
Workbook	60%	8 March (Weeks 2 & 3); 26 April (Weeks 4 to 10)	1, 2, 3
Essay	40%	30/04/2021 11:59 PM	2, 3, 4

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Workbook

Length: Approximately 400-500 words per week

Details:

Students will prepare written entries of 1-2 pages on the assigned readings. Their work will be submitted and assessed periodically through the term.

Feedback: Written comments and graded against a criteria sheet.

Additional details:

You will submit your workbook entries for Weeks 2 and 3 on 8 March 2021 for graded feedback.

You will submit entries for Weeks 4, 5, 7, and 8 on 26 April 2021 for graded feedback.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 2: Essay

Length: 1000 words

Details:

Students will write an essay (1000 words) that identifies 1-2 critical learning moments they experienced in the course. These experiences will be discussed explicitly in relation to course content in order to demonstrate an understanding of key concepts.

Additional details:

The essay is due on 30 April 2021 at 11:59 p.m.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Attendance Requirements

Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and review lecture recordings.

Course Schedule

View class timetable

Timetable

Date	Туре	Content
Week 1: 15 February - 19 February		Introduction (February 16) This class will introduce the course, identify some of its main questions and themes. We will discuss the course aims and its organisation. We are social creatures, but what in fact does this mean? And 'who', or indeed 'what', makes up this 'we'? These are two basic questions that will form the building blocks of our discussion over the next few weeks. We will begin by identifying, and challenging some pre-conceived ideas about the social and society in order to determine what 'we' might need to develop an understanding of social life.
	Tutorial	Week 1 Lecture and Reading Content Tutorials begin this week. Today, you will meet your tutor and classmates. We will introduce each other, and address your questions about the workbook. We will also discuss attendance requirements and other administrative details.
	Homework	Prepare your before-class workbook entry in advance of Week 2's Lecture. Please read the excerpt from <i>The Sociological Imagination</i> by C. Wright Mills. What are the basic problems that Mills identifies that confront individuals in their everyday lives? For Mills, what is the challenge and the promise of sociology for helping to address these problems? In other words, what can sociology offer? Write your reflections in your workbook.
	Reading	(For Online Activity) Mitchell Duneier (1999) 'When you gotta go' Pp. 173-187 in Sidewalk. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux.
	Online Activity	There are two aspects to this online activity: 1) Please read the following which can be found in

		your reading pack (available from the UNSW bookshop or online via Moodle): Mitchell Duneier (1999) 'When you gotta go' Pp. 173-187 in <i>Sidewalk</i> . New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux; 2) Complete the online activity on the Moodle site.
Week 2: 22 February - 26 February	Lecture	C. Wright Mills (1916-1962) was an American sociologist. His book <i>The Sociological Imagination</i> is a classic text in sociological thinking. It is one of those rare books that can stand up to contemporary scrutiny. It also has the honour of being the first reading of choice for introduction to sociology courses across the English-speaking world. (And this course is no exception!) It serves as a provocation to sociological thinkers to return to what 'matters' in the study of social life. It introduces a perspective, namely a 'sociological imagination', to analyse the complex relations between individual and society, private troubles and public issues.
	Reading	C. Wright Mills (2000[1959]) 'The Promise' Pp. 3-15 in <i>The Sociological Imagination</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press.
	Tutorial	Tutorial - Week 2 Lecture and Reading Content We will address any administrative questions you might have. We will discuss the lecture and the readings, and in so doing, we will try to build on themes from this week and last week.
	Online Activity	See Moodle for details.
	Homework	After tutorial this week, complete your after-class workbook entry to conclude Week 2.
		After your tutorial, take some time to reflect on what you've learned from C. Wright Mills and Mitchell Duneier. Does Mills' perspective stand up under your scrutiny? How does he help us to reflect on the nature of the 'social'? Does Duneier give you some examples of the relationship between 'private troubles' and 'public issues'? Return to your workbook, and re-read your previous entry. Reflect on your entry, and add any new insights. Avoid deleting your previous work if you find that you disagree with what you have already written.

		evolve as your thinking does.
		Prepare your before-class workbook entry in advance of Week 3's Lecture.
		You might consider how Durkheim's understanding of the 'social' differs from 'psychological' or 'biological' understandings of the social? How does he define or understand the study of sociology? Is it 'philosophical' or 'scientific' in its approach? Reflect on these questions, and write your reflections in your workbook. You might also try to make some connections (and identify possible sources of disagreement) between Durkheim, Duneier and Mills if you can.
Week 3: 1 March - 5	Lecture	Social Facts and Social Bonds (March 2)
March	Reading	Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) is widely considered to be one of the key founders of the discipline of Sociology. He inaugurated the first official chair in Sociology at the Sorbonne in Paris, France. One of his contributions to the discipline of Sociology is a robust defence of society as a 'reality sui generis' which is a society that is a reality unto itself. This means that society cannot be reduced to another element or part such as the individual. We will read the first chapter of Durkheim's The Rules of Sociological Method which was written in 1895. Here, Durkheim presents an argument about the nature of the social, one that grounds his perspective on the scope and content of sociology as a discipline.
		Fact?' Pp. 50-59 in <i>Durkheim: The Rules of the Sociological Method</i> . New York: The Free Press.
	Tutorial	Week 3 Lecture and Reading Content
		We will address any administrative questions you might have. We will discuss the lecture and the readings, and in so doing, we will try to build on themes from this week and last week.
	Homework	After tutorial this week, complete your after-class workbook entry to conclude Week 3.
		After your tutorial, reflect on what you've learned about Durkheim's conception of the social. You might use this opportunity to clarify your

		understanding of what he means by a 'social fact' and 'society' more generally. You might consider, and just as an example, whether he employs a 'sociological imagination' in his work. Return to your workbook, and re-read your previous entry. Reflect, and add any new insights – with respect to Mills, Duneier and/or to Durkheim. Remember, please do not delete your previous work. Just date your new entries to keep your previous entry separate from your new insights.
		Prepare your before-class workbook entry in advance of Week 4's Lecture.
		How does Garfinkel understand the 'social'? Is the social something that is external to the individual as Durkheim would argue? Or, does Garfinkel have a different understanding of the social? What kinds of breaching experiments does Garfinkel discuss? Can you think of an example where you have experienced a breach in your expectations of everyday conduct? Is your example indicative of a broader social pattern? You might also try to connect these observations with what you've learned from Durkheim, Mills and Duneier.
Week 4: 8 March - 12 March	Lecture	Moral Conduct and Everyday Life (March 9)
	Reading	Harold Garfinkel (1917-2011) was an American Sociologist based at the University of California. He sought to investigate the common understandings of everyday life. He maintained that our everyday activities create a moral order through informal rules of conduct. In other words, he claims that social life is created moment by moment through gestures, actions, and cues that are socially accepted. For example, a simple 'thumbs up' is a gesture that can convey meaning such as 'great job' or 'I'm in' or 'I need a ride'. Garfinkel is interested in the way that these sorts of activities reflect a shared moral sense of the world. Garfinkel was famous for conducting 'breaching experiments' where participants intentionally disrupt the seamless interactions of everyday life to shed light on the taken for granted aspects of social life. Harold Garfinkel (1967) 'Studies of the Routine Grounds of Everyday Activities' Pp. 35-53 in
		Studies in Ethnomethodology. Cambridge: Polity Press.
	Tutorial	Week 4 Lecture and Reading Content

		We will address any administrative questions you might have. We will discuss the lecture and the readings, and in so doing, we will try to build on themes from this week and last week.
	Homework	After tutorial this week, complete your after-class workbook entry to conclude Week 4.
		After your tutorial, reflect on what you've learned about Garfinkel's approach to understanding the taken for granted meanings of everyday life. You might use this opportunity to clarify what he means by 'rule-governed activities' and other concepts that you find interesting. You might consider whether he employs a 'sociological imagination' in his work. Return to your workbook, and re-read your previous entry. Reflect, and add any new insights, and remember to keep adding to your existing entries (in other words, do not delete them). Simply date your new thoughts and reflections.
		Prepare your before-class workbook entry in advance of Week 5's Lecture.
		According to Goffman, by what means do we seek to manage or control the impression that others have of us? What are the stakes of this kind of 'image management'? In other words, why is it so important for us each to control how others perceive us?
Week 5: 15 March - 19 March	Lecture	The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (March 16)
		Erving Goffman (1922-1982) was born in a small town of approximately 800 people in Western Canada. He completed his graduate work at the University of Chicago, and became one of the most widely read Sociologists in North America. His book <i>The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life</i> considers how each of us try to manage or control the impression that others form of us. Our decisions about how we show ourselves to others, and what we share with others, depend on context and familiarity, as well as feelings of security and risk of embarrassment.
	Reading	Erving Goffman (1956) The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. New York: Anchor Books, Excerpts.
	Tutorial	Week 5 Lecture and Reading Content We will address any administrative questions you

		might have. We will discuss the lecture and the readings, and in so doing, we will try to build on themes from this week and last week.
	Homework	After tutorial this week, complete your after-class workbook entry to conclude Week 5.
		Reflect on what you have learned from Goffman. Identify recurring themes, and reflect on how the concepts are beginning to build on one another from week to week. Return to your workbook, and re-read your previous entry. Add any new insights, and be sure to date your new thoughts and reflections.
		Prepare your before-class workbook entry in advance of Week 7's Lecture.
		Read Mauss's article, and try to think about your body as reflecting social 'techniques' – in other words, what are some socially constructed ways that you do things? Try to think of as many different examples as you can. Now, you might consider whether your examples conform to Mauss's principles – if so, how? If not, can you elaborate? You might also return to Durkheim's reading 'What is a Social Fact?' and consider whether you can detect any resonances between Durkheim and Mauss? You might also consider whether Mauss adds something to Goffman's analysis (or not!).
Week 6: 22 March - 26 March	Online Activity	Flexibility Week! There are no scheduled lectures or tutorials this week.
		In lieu of lecture/tutorial, please complete this online activity. See Moodle for details.
Week 7: 29 March - 2 April	Lecture	Social Techniques of the Body (March 30)
		Marcel Mauss (1872-1950) was a French academic who has contributed significantly to the fields of Sociology and Anthropology. He worked closely with Emile Durkheim, and was in fact, Durkheim's nephew. The article 'Techniques of the Body' was originally delivered as a lecture in 1934 at a regular meeting of the French Psychology Society. In it, Mauss begins with a concrete example of bodily experience – walking and swimming – to demonstrate how these embodied 'ways of doing things' are socially and culturally constructed. In other words, he argues that each society has its own habits about the ways to run,

		swim, walk, talk and eat. He uses this observation to identify different principles for analysing the social 'techniques' of the body from one culture or society to the next.
	Reading	Marcel Mauss (1973 [1935]) 'Techniques of the Body' <i>Economy and Society</i> , 2(1):70-88 (Excerpts)
	Tutorial	Week 7 Lecture and Reading Content
		We will address any administrative questions you might have. We will discuss the lecture and the readings, and in so doing, we will try to build on themes from this week and last week.
	Homework	After tutorial this week, complete your after-class workbook entry to conclude Week 7.
		Reflect on what you've learned about Mauss's techniques of the body. Return to your previous entries and try to make connections between these thinkers and the work of the other thinkers we have studied. Add any new insights to your entry for this week and to your other entries, and be sure to date them.
		Prepare your before-class workbook entry in advance of Week 8's Lecture.
		Read the excerpts from Douglas' <i>Purity and Danger</i> . How does the presence of 'dirt' reveal something significant about social values? And, from there, what internal feelings does the presence of dirt inspire? Are these feelings different from those associated with cleanliness? Record your observations in your workbook. You might also try to make some connections between Douglas's observations and the thinkers from last week if you can.
Week 8: 5 April - 9 April	Lecture	Purity and Danger (April 6)
		Mary Douglas (1921-2007) was a Cultural Anthropologist who followed in the intellectual tradition established by Durkheim. Her book <i>Purity and Danger</i> is a classic study of how the concept of 'dirt' is socially constructed. She examines how ideas about 'hygiene' are related to notions of order and disorder; and consequently, she explores how beliefs about what is considered to be 'clean' and 'unclean' uphold moral values. For Douglas, dirt is

	Reading Tutorial	not a random phenomenon. It reveals a set of 'ordered' relations' at the same time that its very existence reflects a contravention of that order. Mary Douglas (1966) Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo. London: Routledge, Excerpts. Week 8 Lecture and Reading Content
		We will address any administrative questions you might have. We will discuss the lecture and the readings, and in so doing, we will try to build on themes from this week and last week.
	Homework	After tutorial this week, complete your after-class workbook entry to conclude Week 8.
		Reflect on what you've learned from our discussion of the social construction of 'dirt and cleanliness'. Return to your previous entries and try to make connections between Douglas's ideas and Durkheim's notion of the sacred. Add any new insights to your entry for this week and to your other entries, and be sure to date them.
Week 9: 12 April - 16 April	Lecture	Georg Simmel (1858-1918) was a German Sociologist who worked on the margins of the German Academy. By all accounts he was an outstanding lecturer, and was considered to be quite a showman. His lectures became important cultural events in his native Berlin, but even so, he was never able to secure the title of Professor. He was eventually given an Honorary title. Despite working at a remove from academic life, and maybe because of it, Simmel wrote on many interesting and unorthodox sociological topics: love, gratitude, secrecy, money and strangeness. This week, we consider an excerpt from <i>The Philosophy of Money</i> which was originally published in 1900. His discussion highlights the relationships between value and effort, as well as the tension between sacrifice and desire. In this way, he poses important questions about what we value and why, and whether love, food, and honour are capable of being exchanged, and indeed sacrificed.
	Reading	Georg Simmel (1971) 'Exchange' Pp. 43-69 in <i>On Individuality and Social Forms: Selected Writings</i> (ed. Donald N. Levine). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
	Tutorial	Week 9 Lecture and Reading Content

		We will address any administrative questions you might have. We will discuss the lecture and the readings, and in so doing, we will try to build on themes from this week and last week.
Week 10: 19 April - 23 April	Lecture	CONCLUSION: Humans & Non-Humans (April 20)
		Jim Johnson is the pseudonym adopted by Bruno Latour (b. 1947) who is a French Sociologist. This article considers the sociality of non-humans, and is a provocative challenge to a mainstream sociology that focuses almost entirely on human sociality. The non-human in question is an 'automatic door closer' – and in his discussion, Johnson/Latour explores some of the ways that humans and non-humans are implicated in intrinsically social relationships. Latour adopts the pseudonym as a response to a request made by the Editors of the American journal <i>Social Problems</i> that he remove locations and place names in the article because – in his words – 'no American sociologist is willing to read things that refer to specific places and times which are not American' (Johnson 1988:304). [And who says sociologists and anthropologists don't have a sense of humor?]
	Reading	Jim Johnson [a.k.a. Bruno Latour] (1988) "Mixing Humans and Nonhumans Together: The Sociology of a Door-Closer" <i>Social Problems</i> 35(3): 298-310 (Excerpts).
	Tutorial	Week 10 Lecture and Reading Content We will discuss lecture themes and the reading for Week 10.

Resources

Prescribed Resources

Print copies of the weekly assigned readings have been compiled into an 'ARTS1870 Study Kit' which is available for purchase at the UNSW Bookshop. Electronic copies of the readings are also available on the ARTS1870 Moodle page: http://moodle.telt.unsw.edu.au

Recommended Resources

Course Evaluation and Development

Student feedback will be gathered through myExperience surveys, and you will be given opportunities throughout the semester to give informal feedback. This course received excellent feedback from last year's cohort of students in 2020 (despite the abrupt shift to online lectures and tutorials midway through the term). I have committed to the following;

- 1. Content I have modified the content in order to privilege depth rather than breadth given the pressures of the trimester system.
- 2. Announcements I will upload video segments to Moodle in order to address issues related to assessment and course business. This will give us more time in lectures to discuss course content.
- 3. Class Activities I will continue to think of new and exciting classroom activities and experiments for online and F2F delivery.

I very much appreciate this feedback, and look forward to implementing these suggestions in 2021. Best wishes for the coming term!

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au . Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally, assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, it will be stated on your course's Moodle site with alternative submission details.

For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

Copying: using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This also applies to images, art and design projects, as well as presentations where someone presents another's ideas or words without credit.

Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and/or progression of ideas of the original, and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.

Collusion: working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student before the due date, or for the purpose of them plagiarising at any time, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.

Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.

Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

Correct referencing practices:

- Paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing and time management
- Appropriate use of and attribution for a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre (http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/). Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

UNSW Library also has the ELISE tool available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW but it can also be a great refresher during your study.

Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- better manage your time

- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community
- locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Some of these areas will be familiar to you, others will be new. Gaining a solid understanding of all the related aspects of ELISE will help you make the most of your studies at UNSW. http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/elise/aboutelise

Academic Information

For essential student information relating to:

- requests for extension;
- late submissions guidelines;
- review of marks;
- UNSW Health and Safety policies;
- examination procedures;
- special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- student equity and disability;
- and other essential academic information, see

https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/

Image Credit

Image: Door next to flowers in the pots. Vantačići near Malinska on the island of Krk in Croatia.

Date: 19 June 2014

Source: Wikimedia Commons (Accessed 13 January 2020)

URL:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Haustuere in Vanta%C4%8Di%C4%87i bei Malinska auf der Insel Krk mit Blumen.jpg

Author: <u>Usien</u>

CRICOS

CRICOS Provider Code: 00098G

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Bedegal people who are the traditional custodians of the lands on which UNSW Kensington campus is located.