



# Sociology (SOCI) 347

## Contemporary Social Theory for the 21st Century: the Age of Indeterminacy (Revision 1)

**Delivery mode:** [Individualized study](#)  with [eText](#) 

**Credits:** 3

**Areas of study:** Arts or Social Science

**Prerequisites:** None. [SOCI 335](#) or [SOCI 337](#) is strongly recommended.

**Precluded:** None

**Challenge:** SOCI 347 has a challenge for credit option.

**Faculty:** [Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) 

**Status:** Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

## Overview

Sociology 347 has been designed for students who have already taken introductory courses in sociology and who are, therefore, familiar with the basic concepts, theories, and methods of the discipline.

This course provides a review of social theories that have transitioned from the late-twentieth century into the opening decades of the twenty-first century. Many of the current social theories of the twenty-first century are attempting to steer a difficult course between the grand theories and metanarratives of earlier modernism, and the relativism, pluralism, and linguistic reductionism of postmodernism. Social theory in the twenty-first century is characterized by its pluralism, reflexivity, interdisciplinarity, and by its globalism. Unlike past sociological theory, which was always closely identified with European national traditions, contemporary social theory has become more global in its scope and less Eurocentric. More than ever before, social theory has increasingly become a borderless intellectual project.

Today, contemporary social theory now allows us to view the world from diverse standpoints, including feminist and LGBTQ standpoints, Afrocentric and Indigenous standpoints, as well as intersectionality theories, all of which provide frameworks for the expression and representation of formerly marginalized and excluded minority perspectives, experiences, identities, and discourses. Poststructuralism also allows us to detect and deconstruct the androcentric, ethnocentric, and heteronormative biases, as well as the absences and silences, in our supposedly “objective” or “neutral” narratives and discourses.

The underlying premise—and the promise—of this course is that social theory has the power to provide us with the intellectual and emotional tools for a more informed observation, analysis, and empathic understanding of our private lives and of public issues. Social theory can teach us that there are multiple channels for viewing, and multiple languages for speaking about, our social world(s) and our own life experiences. In the words of the old African proverb, “Until lions have their own historians, tales of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.” In this respect, the study of contemporary social theory has an important

role to play in the cultivation of an informed and enlightened citizenry. The chance to explore and experiment with diverse theoretical perspectives offers a challenge to dogmatism and intolerance, and an opportunity to learn from difference and diversity. In a word, the value of social theory may be seen in how it can enhance our social literacy by deepening our understanding of the world around us, and by empowering us to become practical theorists in our own lives.

## Outline

- **Part I: Theory**
  - Unit 1: Theory and Modernity
- **Part II: History**
  - Unit 2: History
- **Part III: Critical Modernity**
  - Unit 3: Critical Theory
- **Part IV: Reflexive Modernity**
  - Unit 4: Structuration Theory
- **Part V: Beyond Modernity—The Post-Theories**
  - Unit 5: Post-Structuralism
  - Unit 6: Postmodernism
  - Unit 7: Postcolonialism
  - Unit 8: Post-Marxism
  - Unit 9: Late Modernity
  - Unit 10: Feminist Theory, Standpoint Theory, and Queer Theory
  - Unit 11: Globalization
- Epilogue

## Evaluation

To **receive credit** [↗](#) Sociology 347, you must achieve a grade of 60 percent or better on the final examination and an overall course composite grade of at least **C- (60 percent)** [📄](#). Should you obtain less than the required grade on the final examination, or if you wish to attempt to increase your overall grade, you may write a supplemental final examination. A passing grade of 60 percent is also required for the supplemental examination.

Activity	Weight
Assignment 1	20%
Assignment 2	20%
Assignment 3	20%
Online Quiz	10%
Final Exam	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

The **final examination** for this course must be taken online with an AU-approved exam invigilator at an approved invigilation centre. It is your responsibility to ensure your chosen invigilation centre can accommodate online exams. For a list of invigilators who can accommodate online exams, visit the [Exam Invigilation Network](#) [↗](#).

To learn more about assignments and examinations, please refer to Athabasca University's [online Calendar](#) [↗](#).

## Materials

Bauman, Z. (2007). *Liquid times: Living in an age of uncertainty*.

Cambridge, UK: Polity.  (eText)

Elliott, A. (2014). *Contemporary social theory: An introduction* (2nd ed.).

London: Routledge.  (eBook)

## eText

Registration in this course includes an electronic textbook. For more information on [electronic textbooks](#) , please refer to our [eText Initiative site](#) .

## Online materials

All other course materials are available online.

## Challenge for credit

### Overview

The Challenge for credit process allows you to demonstrate that you have acquired a command of the general subject matter, knowledge, intellectual and/or other skills that would normally be found in a university-level course.

Full information about [Challenge for credit](#)  can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar.

### Evaluation

To [receive credit](#)  for the SOCI 347 challenge registration, you must achieve a grade of at least **C- (60 percent)**  on the challenge examination. The two parts of the exam must be written on the same day.



[Challenge for credit course registration form](#)

## Important links

- › [Questions about our Program](#) 
- › [Academic advising](#) 
- › [Program planning](#) 
- › [Request assistance](#) 
- › [Support services](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

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