Course description
This course takes a position of grounded empiricism as a means to access and create Contemporary Social Theory. By engaging in this course students are asked to suspend judgement about what one thinks they may pose in terms of knowing. Instead, by refocusing on an empirical world as understood by the expanding capacity of sensing tools, cameras, microphones, datasets, etc, we will simultaneously give a nod to previous contemporary theories and engage with the phenomenal world with ‘new eyes.’

Course objectives
By the end of the term, you should be able to develop theoretical concepts from empirical matter. In order to get to that lofty goal you will also acquire familiarity with select contemporary theories. As a core component of the course you will be asked to reflect critically on various kinds of sociological analysis. You will be challenged to develop your skills in conversation and writing.

Course content
In this course we will consider a narrow selection of writings from the last 50 years. Instead of focusing on particular theorists as one might expect in a course labeled contemporary social theory, we will traverse the broader landscape in order to gain a supportive foundation for understanding theory. The point is to ground ourselves so that we can be as omnivorous as possible when it comes time to feed on available delicacies.

Skills
Students will practice, reading, evaluating, and applying perspective to narrative, argument, and logic. In addition, we will practice synthesizing and rendering the abstract intelligible. In simple terms, students will learn practical skills associated with analysis and synthesis of conceptually rich writings. Useful if a boss asks you to ‘read this pile and give me a summary.’

Textbook and Exam Resources
Readings will be distributed electronically in on eclass/moodle.

Class activities
Class activities will involve lectures and discussions.
Assignments/Grade Distribution

Thoughtful, creative, critical, questions, and commentary in class 

20%

Paper Proposal Thursday July 19 30% (Proposal will be returned to you on July 24)
Paper Complete Thursday August 2 (You will bring a paper copy and exchange it)
Bring reviewed paper Tuesday August 7 (Your paper will be returned to you, with comments)
Final Paper Thursday August 16 50%

(Details will be explained in class).

Course evaluation

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90-94</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>75-79</td>
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<td>70-74</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>66-69</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>62-65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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Late Papers: Please endeavour to hand in assignments on time. Should you need an extension for a valid reason, be prepared to present documentation to support your case. In order to complete the course you need to complete all course components. Late papers without prior arrangements will be deducted at a rate of -10%/day.

Contacting the instructor: You may contact me using the email address listed above. I aim to respond to all emails within one business day (no weekends or holidays). You are encouraged to send me an email to request an appointment to meet with me.

Recording lectures and taking photos and videos: You are NOT allowed to record the lecture (video or sound) and you are NOT allowed to take pictures of my slides, myself, or your classmates.

Readings

1. Tuesday July 10
2. Thursday July 12
3. Tuesday July 17
4. Thursday July 19
5. Tuesday July 24
6. Thursday July 26
7. Tuesday July 31
8. Thursday August 2
9. Tuesday August 7
10. Thursday August 9
11. Tuesday August 14

3. Swedberg 2016. Can you visualize theory?
Policies and Procedure

“Policy about course outlines” can be found in Course Requirements, Evaluation Procedures and Grading of the University Calendar.

Academic honesty: “The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

Learning and working environment
• Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
• If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the student ombud service: (http://www.ombuds.service.ualberta.ca/). Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures can be found in the GFC Policy Manual, available at http://gfcpolicymanual.ualberta.ca/.

“Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).”

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:
Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult Attendance of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result. Students with an excused absence from an exam will be given an opportunity to make up the exam.

Acceptable documentation for the purposes of an extra consideration.

• “University of Alberta Medical Statement” signed by a doctor (this cannot be required, but must be accepted if provided in lieu of other documents). http://www.registrarsoffice.ualberta.ca/en/Online-Services/~/media/registrar/Forms/2010_Medical_Statement.pdf
• "Medical Declaration Form for Students" (for Faculty of Arts students, can also be obtained in the Sociology Office)
• "Statutory Declaration" (for students in Faculties other than Arts, to be obtained from the Office of the Registrar)

For other acceptable absences, such as domestic afflictions or religious convictions, the student should submit appropriate documentation. This could include the following:
• For a death in the family – a copy of the death certificate
• For a religious conflict – a letter from the church or pastor
• For a car accident – a copy of the accident report

Student Accessibility Services
If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with SAS, contact their office immediately (1-800 SUB; Email ssdsrec@ualberta.ca; Email; phone 780-492-3381; WEB www.ssds.ualberta.ca ).