# Social Theories And Education In A Global Context (Seminar)

EFOP 3301 - 1100 (31531)

# Spring Term 2022

# Maureen W. McClure, MEd, MA, MBA, PhD

# Education Foundations, Organization and Policy

# School of Education

mmcclure@pitt.edu

We 6:00PM-8:40PM

5201 Wesley W Posvar Hall

and online

01/10/2022 - 04/30/2022

Because of omicron covid-19, we will be online at least until January 26, 2022

# OFFICE HOURS: To be determined together, will include a heads up and other times by appointment

**COURSE GOALS**

You will be learning at least three things.

* First, you are sharping your own ‘intellectual stance’ so you can better communicate/advocate your positions with others
* Second, you are learning to better speak out of other social theories, including ones with which you disagree
* Third, you are learning to better ‘translate’ from one theory to another

# What can this course do for you

One of SCAE’s strengths, is learning how framing complex problems can be very helpful…or not. As a professional, they can help you manage multiple, often conflicted perspectives, an essential skill in a globalizing world. These perspectives are not only needed for relationships with others in today’s world, but also affect both the different perspectives we have inherited from the past and the legacies we are passing on to the future. Social theories in education are fundamentally about meaning. How do people construct meaning in the world so that it makes sense to them? How do we negotiate the contested meanings that inevitably arise?

Ultimately, this course is about you, situating yourself in an increasingly global context, driven by technology, a more interdependent economy, and seen by many different actors from many different points of view. A few of these points of view may be derived from strong theoretical and metaphorical frameworks that, learning about them, can be very useful. For example, thinking about work as a merit-based tournament, will result in valuing knowledge and skills that may differ from thinking about work as also deeply interdependent and collaborative chains. Tournaments compete for the top position in a hierarchy. In an interdependent model, the loss of one small part of a supply chain could ruin that economy for many people.

As a consequence, this course will encourage you to explore the impact of these multi-layered, often conflicting points of view on your past, current and future professional life.

Most importantly, it can help you develop an ‘intellectual stance.’ This means you will be better able to articulate your positions relative to communicating research and policy. This means identifying the social theories that underlie your position, questioning them and addressing the contradictions that arise. Why is this important? Policy, for example, is not only a technical position. It is a question of values. What do you do when you need to work with others who may share your basic values, but interpret them in different ways? And what if they don’t share your values at all? What if they are also in charge? This course won’t tell you *what* to think. This is your job. This course shows you how others made sense of their complex worlds, and what they have learned, both recently and in the past.

**COURSE COMMUNICATIONS**

I will respond to emails Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. I will do my best to respond to all emails within several business days. Though weekends may be the time when many of you focus on class work, you cannot count on me responding to inquiries, so please give some thought to questions you might have before then. Also, please check your email and your spam filters regularly.

**Grading**

* A or redo – if an assignment is weak, I will encourage you to redo it, so you have time to be more successful
* 5 points each week x 5 assignments +5 points for class participation = 30 points each week
* 30 points x 15 possible classes = 450 points
* You are encouraged to help each other do well, as long as each person’s own work is visible
* Deadlines – If you try hard to meet the weekly deadlines within the month, I can be flexible – Emergencies? Just let me know.

# Assignments

The purpose of the assignments is to first help you discover and then better describe your own current meaning-making. Second is to help you better describe the meaning-making of others, especially with those with whom you disagree. Third, is to help you better communicate at the intersections of your own thinking and with those with whom you agree, those with whom you disagree, and with those you don’t know.

One of the primary ways to strengthen your knowledge and skills is learning how to better frame your communications. And one of the primary ways to communicate is through the stories we tell each other. You will need stories and narratives that help you advocate for what you think is important to a broader audience, drawing first on the strengths of your own positions, and then keeping in view how others may argue differently.

To this end this course’s assignments focus on knowledge and skills that can help build your communications experience in today’s world.

**There is no final project separate from your other assignments. Instead, your weekly assignments should help you build your knowledge and skills, so you can pull them all together at the end of the course.**

**Every week there are 5 short assignments. They can help you learn how different theoretical points of view can powerfully affect communications and their consequences**

1. **Summary of readings (up to 100 words) – 5 points**
	1. It is important to be able to clearly summarize the Inglis readings and then, where it makes senses, to include other materials located in the Modules
	2. They can serve as a foundation for argument development
	3. They can also serve as the basis for the authors’ portrayal and use of social theories
2. **Reflection (up to 100 words) – 5 points**
	1. How do the readings and related course activity influence your thinking (or not)?
	2. You can express your position relative to that of the authors
	3. You can analyze problems of bias (yours and/or the authors)
	4. You can project what you think may be the consequences of these biases
3. **Link Review (up to 50 words) – 5 points**
	1. **Contribute a link to a video, article or other material that helps you make sense of the topic for the week.** We might be able to create a peer-based annotated bibliography for the course that you can take with you.
4. **Comment– 5 points**
	1. Please make a helpful comment on someone else’s link review.
5. **Application – Story Swap – 5 points**
	1. Please share an experience where you found someone having difficulty communicating with others because they didn’t share the same social theory.
	2. Can you tell the story and not make it identifiable?
	3. If you don’t have one, can you borrow one?
	4. If none are available, please email me.
6. **Class participation – 5 points**

**TEXTS**

***To buy or rent- Online materials available***

You can share, pick up used copies, rent, kindle, whatever, as long as you can have access to the text. In addition, if you are interested, I can put out a call to former students.

**Required:**

Inglis, D. with Thorpe, C. (2019). A*n invitation to social theory*. (2nd ed.). Polity Press.

This is not an easy read, so rather than focusing on many multiple readings, we will spend more time on each chapter. Module links can help. Most Module links that I put up are optional. You are encouraged to you’re your own. Looking forward to peer-reviewed links.

**Recommended:**

Jacobs, A.J. (2018). *Thanks a thousand: A gratitude journey*. TED Books. Simon & Schuster. ( A lot of free related videos are available on YouTube. Will be familiar to some who already have the book. This shifts a bit from pyramid to chain economies. Very important because it may reframe what it means to be essential – demonstrates issues of interdependence in trade – education and a chain economy. This time the gratitude trail will be more formalized to show education, globalization and the political economy.)

**Other materials in Modules on Canvas.**

**MONTHLY TOPICS**

***The monthly topics are still in draft form until I hear more about this class’s interests***

* ***January – Meaning – How can social theories help us better understand what is essential?***
* Development and framing: Social Theories can help us make sense of the wickedly complex conditions around us
* Development and mapping: Social Theories help us negotiate multiple differences in a globalizing world: Gratitude trails (six degrees) and chain economies
* **Readings for January – Inglis, Ch. Intro – 4 plus Canvas work**

***February – Complexities – How can social theories help us address wicked problems?***

* What are wicked problems in education?
* What methods are available to us to describe and predict under complex and uncertain conditions?
* What do different theories show us and not show us? The great “What’s not there?” question
* **Readings for February – Inglis, Ch. 5 – 8 plus Canvas work**

***March – Speaking out***

* How can you clearly communicate with someone acting out of a different framework, based in a different social theory?
* How can multiple social theories help you bridge differences?
* How can social theories, framing analysis and mapping help you better advocate your position?
* **Readings for March – Inglis, Ch. 9 – 11 plus Canvas work (only three chapters)**

***April – Pulling it all together***

* You face a community with many different points of view. How do you balance human/civil rights-based, needs-based planning with return on investment (ROI)-based planning?
* How can your improved vocabulary and theory framing help clarify your position relative to others?
* **Readings for April – Inglis, Ch. 12 – 13 plus Canvas work (only two chapters)**

***Chart 1. (WEIDMAN)***

***Classical Social Theories:*** A solid, albeit brief introduction to a very complicated topic.

Contrasting Assumptions Underlying the Structural-Functional, Marxist-Conflict, and Interpretivist Theories of Society \*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Theories/Society*** | ***Structural-Functional*** | ***Marxist-Conflict*** | ***Interpretivist*** |
| Nature of Society | Stable (Equilibrium) | Changing (Conflict) | Fluid |
| Nature of Elements in Society | Integrative | Disintegrative (Dialectical Basis) | Contingent (Meanings Made by Individuals) |
| Function of Elements in Society | System Maintenance | System Modification | System Enhancement |
| Basis of Social Structure | Consensus (Values/ Norms) | Coercion | Shared Patterns of Meaning |
| Type of Change | Evolutionary (Incremental) | Revolutionary | Negotiated |

**Sources:** Dahrendorf, Ralf. (1959). *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press (pp. 161-162).

 Feinberg, Walter & Soltis, Jonas F. (1992). *School and Society*. 2nd Edition. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.

\*Prepared by John C. Weidman, Emeritus Professor of Higher and International Development Education, University of Pittsburgh

**Additional Resources**

**SOE Policies and Forms**

<https://www.education.pitt.edu/CurrentStudents/PoliciesandForms.aspx>

**Academic Calendar**

https://www.registrar.pitt.edu/calendars

**Education Library Guide**

<https://pitt.libguides.com/?b=s> See this Hillman Library [customized libguide](https://pitt.libguides.com/education), a gateway to resources for education students and faculty,

### **Academic Integrity**

### Students in this course will be expected to comply with the [University of Pittsburgh’s Policy on Academic Integrity](https://www.provost.pitt.edu/info/ai1.html). Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

To learn more about Academic Integrity, visit the [Academic Integrity Guide](http://pitt.libguides.com/academicintegrity/) for an overview of the topic. For hands- on practice, complete the [Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism tutorial](http://pitt.libguides.com/academicintegrity/plagiarism).

**Disability Services**

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and [Disability Resources and Services](https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/) (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, drsrecep@pitt.edu, (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

### **Accessibility**

### The Canvas LMS platform was built using the most modern HTML and CSS technologies, and is committed to W3C’s Web Accessibility Initiative and [Section 508](https://www.section508.gov/) guidelines. Specific details regarding individual [feature compliance](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-2061-accessibility-within-canvas) are documented and updated regularly.

### **Your Well-being Matters**

College/Graduate school can be an exciting and challenging time for students. Taking time to maintain your well-being and seek appropriate support can help you achieve your goals and lead a fulfilling life. It can be helpful to remember that we all benefit from assistance and guidance at times, and there are many resources available to support your well-being while you are at Pitt. You are encouraged to visit [Thrive@Pitt](https://DC770634-BBCF-4124-8102-47774A4CCA91/thrive.pitt.edu%22%20%5Co%20%22thrive.pitt.edu%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) to learn more about well-being and the many campus resources available to help you thrive.

If you or anyone you know experiences overwhelming academic stress, persistent difficult feelings and/or challenging life events, you are strongly encouraged to seek support. In addition to reaching out to friends and loved ones, consider connecting with a faculty member you trust for assistance connecting to helpful resources.

The [University Counseling Center](http://www.counseling.pitt.edu/) is also here for you. You can call 412-648-7930 at any time to connect with a clinician. If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal, please call the University Counseling Center at any time at 412-648-7930. You can also contact Resolve Crisis Network at 888-796-8226. If the situation is life threatening, call Pitt Police at 412-624-2121 or dial 911.

**Departmental Grievance Procedures**

The purpose of grievance procedures is to ensure the rights and responsibilities of faculty and students in their relationships with each other. When a student in ADMPS believes that a faculty member has not met his or her obligations (as an instructor or in another capacity) as described in the Academic Integrity Guidelines, the student should follow the procedure described in the Guidelines by (1) first trying to resolve the matter with the faculty member directly; (2) then, if needed, attempting to resolve the matter through conversations with the chair/associate chair of the department; (3) if needed, next talking to the associate dean of the school; and (4) if needed, filing a written statement of charges with the school-level academic integrity officer.

### **Statement on Classroom Recording**

### To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student’s own private use.

### **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

### The University of Pittsburgh does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation based on disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, marital status, familial status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or gender identity or other factors as stated in the University’s Title IX policy. The University is committed to taking prompt action to end a hostile environment that interferes with the University’s mission. For more information about policies, procedures, and practices, visit the [Civil Rights & Title IX Compliance web page](https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/civil-rights-title-ix-compliance).

I ask that everyone in the class strive to help ensure that other members of this class can learn in a supportive and respectful environment. If there are instances of the aforementioned issues, please contact the Title IX Coordinator, by calling 412-648-7860, or e-mailing titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu. Reports can also be [filed online](https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/civil-rights-title-ix-compliance/make-report/report-form). You may also choose to report this to a faculty/staff member; they are required to communicate this to the University’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion. If you wish to maintain complete confidentiality, you may also contact the University Counseling Center (412-648-7930).

**Health and Safety Statement**

During this pandemic, it is extremely important that you abide by the [public health regulations](https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Health-Department/Resources/COVID-19/COVID-19.aspx) , the University of Pittsburgh’s [health standards and guidelines](https://www.policy.pitt.edu/university-policies-and-procedures/covid-19-standards-and-guidelines), and [Pitt’s Health Rules](https://www.coronavirus.pitt.edu/healthy-community/pitts-health-rules). These rules have been developed to protect the health and safety of all of us.  Universal [face covering](https://www.coronavirus.pitt.edu/frequently-asked-questions-about-face-coverings) is required in all classrooms and in every building on campus, without exceptions, regardless of vaccination status. This means you must wear a face covering that properly covers your nose and mouth when you are in the classroom. If you do not comply, you will be asked to leave class.  It is your responsibility have the required face covering when entering a university building or classroom. For the most up-to-date information and guidance, please visit [coronavirus.pitt.edu](http://coronavirus.pitt.edu/) and check your Pitt email for updates before each class.

If you are required to isolate or quarantine, become sick, or are unable to come to class, contact me as soon as possible to discuss arrangements.

### **Gender Inclusive Language Statement**

Language is gender-inclusive and non-sexist when we use words that affirm and respect how people describe, express, and experience their gender.  Gender-inclusive/non-sexist language acknowledges people of all genders (for example, first year student versus freshman, chair versus chairman, humankind versus mankind, everyone versus ladies and gentlemen, etc.).  It also affirms non-binary gender identifications, and recognizes both gender identity and expression.  Identities including trans, intersex, and genderqueer reflect personal descriptions, expressions, and experiences.  Just as sexist language excludes women’s experiences, gendered language excludes the experiences of individuals whose identifies may not fit the gender binary, and/or who may not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth.  Students, faculty, and staff have the right to control their own identity and to be referred to by the name and pronouns with which they identify.  People also have the right to maintain their privacy regarding information they do not wish to share about their identities, including gender identity and pronouns.