HSPS Part IIB Soc 6
Advanced Social Theory
2023-24
Course Organiser: Dr Filipe Carreira da Silva

Aims and objectives

This course offers students the opportunity to pursue their interests in contemporary social theory at an advanced level. The course encourages students to use social theory in order to think creatively, constructively and critically about the ways in which the social and political world is changing today. The course takes for granted an intermediate level of knowledge of classical and contemporary social theory; students are expected to develop and extend their knowledge of key thinkers by reading their work in greater depth. However, the course itself is organized around *problems and issues*, not around thinkers and texts. The emphasis is on encouraging students to practice social theory by thinking theoretically about particular problems and issues. The course seeks to bring social theory alive by getting students to draw on the resources of social theory in order to understand the world of the 21st century and how it is changing.

Course aims:

- To enable students to pursue their interests in social theory at an advanced level.
- To enable students to read a selection of theoretical texts in detail.
- To encourage students to use social theory to analyse particular aspects or characteristics of contemporary societies.
- To encourage students to think creatively, constructively and critically about how the social and political world is changing today.

Course organization

The course is organised in terms of discrete modules – i.e., clusters of lectures or seminars. Each module consists of around four hours of lectures or seminar-based teaching, often scheduled as two two-hour sessions. The modules are focused on particular problems or themes and are taught by leading practitioners of social theory today. The content of the modules will vary from year to year, depending on the availability of members of staff. In 2023-24 the modules listed below will be offered:

Michaelmas 2023

Professor Véronique Mottier, 'Reparatory Justice' (weeks 2-6)
Dr Filipe Carreira da Silva, 'Rethinking Populism' (weeks 3-4)
Dr Michelle Westerlaken, 'Thinking With More-than-Human Entities' (weeks 7-8)

Lent 2023
Professor Patrick Baert, 'Existence Theory and Contemporary Culture' (weeks 3-4)
Dr Nomisha Kurien, '"The robot will see you now": The Ethics of Technological Care' (weeks 5-6)
Professor Julian Go, 'Decolonial Social Thought' (weeks 7-8)

Easter 2024
Dr Filipe Carreira da Silva, Revision Session

Course format

We will hold lectures and seminars in person. The usual lecture format will include an in-person presentation of approximately 1 hour in length, and 1 hour of in-person course discussion and related activities. All sessions will include slides and/or related material for each lecture on the VLE. Course materials are only to be used by the cohort of students enrolled in this course and only for the current academic year (2023-24). These materials may not be shared more widely.

Supervision

Supervision will be provided either by the individuals teaching the modules or by other supervisors who have agreed to supervise for this paper. One or two contacts are given for each module and they will either do the supervision or help arrange it. Each student is to pick 3 modules to have supervisions on. If students or Directors of Studies encounter difficulties they should contact the Course Organiser.

Revision

A one-hour revision class is scheduled at the beginning of Easter Term.

Assessment

The course will be assessed by means of an examination paper with three questions. All exam scripts will be submitted through Turnitin to ensure texts do not contain plagiarised material.

Brief description of modules and reading lists

MICHAELMAS TERM 2023

1. Reparatory Justice - Professor Véronique Mottier

This module focuses on reparatory justice and its limits. We shall explore attempts at practical implementation of this theoretical concept in different settings, raising issues of oppositional storytelling, acknowledgement, memorialisation, compensation, reconciliation and transitional justice. In the first session, we shall approach reparatory justice from the angle of victims of institutional abuse, identifying resistance and activist tactics through case studies of the treatment of Travellers. Taking the example of the Yenish (Traveller) ethnic minority, we shall start with examining the effects of racial and eugenic theories on the reproductive rights of this group in the Swiss context. The reproductive bodies of Yenish women became a privileged target of policies of forced child placements and coerced sterilisations that aimed to destroy Traveller culture between the 1920s and 1970s. Victims of these cumulative repressions of reproductive rights have since made claims for recognition and compensation which have been only partly successful. Against this backdrop, we shall ask: how can the powerless make their voices heard? We will examine the activist repertoire that 'victim-activists' have used to push their political claims, from personal storytelling to collective action, and reflect upon the difficulties of campaigns for reparative justice for those whose voices continue to be marginalised within the nation.

The second session will examine reparative justice from the angle of (potential) institutional transformation through legacies of enslavement inquiries. Many British educational institutions including Oxbridge Colleges were historically intertwined with imperial and colonial networks of trade and industry. For example, they helped to train and recruit personnel for colonial industries and administration, benefitted from donations derived from the slave trade, or contributed to racial science which served to justify colonial rule. These entanglements have also left deep traces on the material environment of some educational spaces, from the funding of historic buildings to statues and memorials. We will discuss examples of recent legacies of enslavement inquiries to, firstly, reflect upon the scope for institutional change in elite institutions in the UK; secondly, we will analyse the repertoire of tactics used by 'backlash activists' *against* (potential) acknowledgement, critical memorialisation and reparation.

Overall, the lectures in this module will primarily focus on examples taken from Switzerland, the UK and Australia but students are encouraged to pick case studies from different contexts or on different topics of reparative justice for their essays. Students need to be aware that this module covers topics which may be triggering for some individuals, given its focus on responses to institutional violence including sexual and racial abuse.

Session 1 – 18 October, 4-6pm

Required Reading

Gerodetti, N. 2016. Whose Reparation Claims Count? Gender, History and (In)justice, *Australian Feminist Law Journal*, 42:1, 97-118.

Mottier, V. 2008. Eugenics, Politics and the State: Social Democracy and the Swiss 'Gardening State', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Science*, pp. 363-269.

Recommended Reading

Alexander, J. 2012. *Trauma: A Social Theory*, "Chapter 1. Cultural Trauma: A Social Theory". Cambridge, Polity Press, pp.345-360.

Bakiner, O. 2015. One truth among others? Truth commissions' struggle for truth and memory. Memory Studies, 8(3), 345-360.

Gill, A. 1998. *Orphans of the Empire*. "Chapter 5: Boys to be farmers – the Fairbridge Scheme" & "Chapter 8: Wild Women - Female Child Migrants." Sydney, Random House, pp.158-188, 244-290.

Plummer, K. 2019. *Narrative Power*. "Chapter 1: Narratives of Suffering: Six Stories in Search of a Better World." Cambridge, Polity Press, pp.3-18.

Session 2 – 15 November, 4-6pm
Required Reading

Biko, A. (2021) Reparative justice: the final stage of decolonisation. *Punishment and Society,* pp. 613-630.

CARICOM (2014) "Ten point plan for reparatory justice." https://caricom.org/caricom-ten-point-plan-for-reparatory-justice/

Recommended Reading

Coombes, A.E. 1994. "Material Culture at the Crossroads of Knowledge", in *Reinventing Africa. Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination*. New Haven, Yale University Press.

Hall, C. (2014) "Reconfiguring race: the stories the slave-owners told", in Hall, C. et al. (eds.) *Legacies of British Slave-Ownership. Colonial slavery and the formation of Victorian Britain,* Cambridge, C.U.P.

Pettigrew, W. A. 2013. *Freedom's Debt. The Royal African Company and the Politics of the Atlantic Slave Trade 1672-1752*, "Epilogue: Confused Commemorations," Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, pp. 211-218.

Tamala, Sylvia 2020. *Decolonisation and Afro-Feminism*, "Chapter 1: Of Counter-Narratives". Daraja Press, pp.1-9.

Essay questions

1. Is reparative justice gendered?
2. What is 'reparation'?
3. What is the role of 'truth-seeking' in processes of reparative justice?

Supervision
Contact Vangelis Georgas at eg440@cam.ac.uk

2. Introduction: Rethinking Populism – Dr Filipe Carreira da Silva

Especially after the 2008 financial crisis, the term 'populism' has become one of the buzzwords of our time. Journalists, politicians, pundits and scholars alike have come to apply the term to a vast array of phenomena across the political spectrum: from anti-establishment political movements on both left and right (Greece's Syriza, Spain's Podemos, Italy's Five Stars, the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street movements in the United States), through political leaders (e.g., Erdogan in Turkey, and Orban in Hungary) and candidates (e.g., Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders in the US), to parties and currents within parties

challenging the traditional political mainstream from the inside (e.g., the National Front in France). Yet, amongst socio-political concepts, populism has pride of place as one of the most contentious, being variously characterized as ideology, logic, discursive frame, strategy/organization, a mode of political practice, or, for those privileging its performative aspects, political style.

In this module, I take one step back, and call this labelling into question. What unites and disunites the above-mentioned phenomena? Does the 'populist' theoretical/ conceptual framework help us make sense and explain these phenomena, or, on the contrary, does such a framework inhibit our understanding of what these phenomena are and what they are about? Do the different understandings of populism itself, both conceptually and methodologically allow for significantly different levels of understanding and scientific analysis of the phenomena in question? In the first session, I discuss the rise of 'populist politics' in Europe and in the United States and examine different conceptualizations of 'populism' and their operationalization for the purpose of analysis. In the second session, I consider how populism has characteristics of utopian thinking: populist leaders use highly moralized images of the past to castigate the present and promise the eminent advent of a new future.

Session 1 – 25 October, 4-6pm
Required Reading
Laclau, E. 2005. *On Populist Reason*. London: Verso.
Silva, F.C. and M.B. Vieira. 2018. "Populism as Logic of Political Action", *European Journal of Social Theory*. (https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431018762540)
Silva, F.C. and J. Rogenhofer. 2023. "Populist Things. A Study in the Materiality of Ideas", *Sociological Compass*. (https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.13066)

Recommended Reading
Abst, K. and S. Rummens. 2007. "Populism versus Democracy." *Political Studies* 55: 405-424.
Arditi, B. 2008. *Politics on the Edges of Liberalism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Canovan, M. 2002. "Taking Politics to the People: Populism as the Ideology of Democracy", in Y. Mény and Y. Surel (eds.), *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*. New York: Palgrave, pp. 25–44.
Mudde, C. and C.R. Kaltwasser. 2015. "Populism", in M. Freeden et al. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 493-512.
Rooduijn, M. 2019. "State of the Field: How to Study Populism and Adjacent Topics? A Plea for both More and Less Focus." *European Journal of Political Research* 58, no. 1: 362-372. (https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12314)
Wejnert, B. and D. Woods, 2014. *The Many Faces of Populism: Current Perspectives* (especially chapters 2, 3). Emerald Publishing.

Session 2 – 1 November, 4-6pm
Required Reading
Canovan, M. 1999. "Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy". *Political Studies* 43: 2-16.
Silva, F.C. and M.B. Vieira. 2018. "Populism and the Politics of Redemption", *Thesis Eleven*.

Recommended Reading
Engels, F. 2015. *The Politics of Resentment*. University Park: Penn State University Press. Esp. Chap. 3.

Mihai, M. 2016. *Negative Emotions and Transitional Justice*. New York: Columbia
　　University Press. Esp. Chap. 2.
Muller, J.-W. 2016. *What is Populism?* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
Wegner, P.E. 1993. "On Zamyatin's We: A Critical Map of Utopia's 'Possible Worlds'."
　　Utopian Studies 4, no. 2: 94-116.

Essay questions
　　　1. What factors led to the rise of populism in recent years?
　　　2. Is populism an ideology?
　　　3. "The utopia of the Populists was in the past, not the future." (Hofstadter) Discuss.

Supervision
Contact Sebastian Raza-Mejia at slr75@cam.ac.uk

3. Thinking With More-than-Human Entities – Dr Michelle Westerlaken
This module aims to bring our understanding of social theory into the realms of thinking with
more-than-human entities. Anna Tsing writes on the importance of cultivating "the arts of
noticing" (Tsing 2015), and Haraway's slogan advocates for a "Staying with the Trouble"
(Haraway 2016). But what could this mean in a more-than-human world? How can the
inclusion of more-than-human entities in social theory rework social collectives? In the first
session we will introduce and challenge the notion of the more-than-human by unpacking this
term, discussing alternatives from Indigenous scholarship, and questioning if we are even
human individuals ourselves. By attending to more-than-human entanglements, and bringing
in different examples, we will investigate a social theory that is more inclusive of the
relations that other entities propose.

To further question the notion of more-than-human entanglements, the second session
focuses on how more-than-human social theory may have different implications across
marginalized groups and Indigenous worldviews. Here we will look at scholarship from
fields like Critical Animal Studies, disability studies, and black feminist thought that focus on
the inclusion of more-than-human entities in social theory.

Session 1: Posthumanism and More-Than-Human Entanglements, 22 November
Required Reading
Bird-Rose, Deborah. (2017). Shimmer: When all you love is being trashed. In *Arts of Living
　　on a Damaged Planet: Stories from the Anthropocene*, Tsing, A., Swanson, H., Gan,
　　E. and Bubandt, N. (Eds.), University of Minnesota Press, pp. G51-G63.
Kimmerer, Robin Wall. (2020). The honorable harvest. In *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous
　　wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants,* Penguin Books, pp. 175-
　　201.
Kaishian, Patricia. and Djoulakian, Hasmik (2020). The Science Underground: Mycology as
　　a Queer Discipline, *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience, 6(2), 1 – 26.*

Recommended Reading
Despret, Vinciane, and Meuret, Michel. (2016). Cosmoecological sheep and the arts of living
　　on a damaged planet. *Environmental Humanities*, 8(1), pp. 24–36.
Gilbert, Scott. F. (2017). Holobiont by birth: Multilineage individuals as the concretion
　　of cooperative processes. In *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Stories from the
　　Anthropocene*, Tsing, A.L., Bubant, N., Gan, E. and Swanson, H.A. (Eds.), Island
　　Press, pp. M73-M89.

Haraway, Donna, J. (2016). Tentacular Thinking: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene. In *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Duke University Press, pp. 30-57.

Howe, Cymene and Pandian, Anand. (2019). Anthropocene Unseen: A Lexicon, Punctum Books, available at https://punctumbooks.com/titles/anthropocene-unseen-a-lexicon/

Ingold, Tim. (2011). Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description. Routledge.

Kohn, E. (2013). *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human*. University of California Press.

Sepie, Amba, J. (2017). More than stories, more than myths: Animal/human/nature(s) in traditional ecological worldviews, *Humanities, 6*(78), pp. 1-31.

Tsing, Anna. L. (2015). *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*, Princeton University Press.

Zylinska, Joanna. (2012). Bioethics otherwise, or, how to live with machines, humans, and other animals. In *Telemorphosis: Theory in the Era of Climate Change*, Cohen, T. (Ed.), Open Humanities Press, pp. 203-225.

Session 2: More-than-human? Less than Human?, 29 November
Required Reading

Giraud, Eva, H. (2019). Introduction. In *What Comes After Entanglement?*, Duke University Press, 1–20.

Sundberg, Juanita. (2014). Decolonizing posthumanist geographies. *Cultural Geographies*, *21*(1), 33–47.

Weisberg, Zipporah. (2009). The broken promises of monsters: Haraway, animals and the humanist legacy, *Journal for Critical Animal Studies, 7*(2), pp. 22-62.

Recommended Reading

Jackson, Zakiyyah I. (2020). On Becoming Human: An Introduction. In *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiblack World*, NYU Press, pp. 1-44.

Meijer, Eva. (2019). *When Animals Speak: Towards an Interspecies Democracy.* New York University Press.

Murphy, Michelle. (2017). Alterlife and decolonial chemical relations, *Cultural Anthropology, 32*(4), pp. 494-503.

Puig de la Bellacasa, Maria. (2017). *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds,* University of Minnesota Press.

Taylor, S. (2017). *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation*. The New Press.

Tsing, Anna. (2017). The buck, the bull, and the dream of the stag: Some unexpected weeds of the Anthropocene, *Suomen Antropologi, 42*(1), 3–21.

Tsing, Anna, Deger, Jennifer, Keleman Saxena, Alder, and Zhou, Feifei (Eds.). *Feral Atlas: The More-than-Human Anthropocene*, Stanford University Press, 2020, available open-access at https://feralatlas.supdigital.org/index?text=feral-atlas-and-the-more-than-human-anthropocene&ttype=essay&cd=true

Van Dooren, Thom, Eben Kirksey and Ursula Münster. (2016). Multispecies studies: Cultivating arts of attentiveness, *Environmental Humanities, 8*(1), pp. 1-23.

Essay questions
1. What could it mean to *think-with* more-than-human entities in sociology?
2. How can more-than-human approaches to sociology offer different understandings of the Anthropocene?
3. How does the focus on more-than-human entanglements risk reproducing social inequalities for both human- and multispecies communities?

Supervision
Contact Dr. Michelle Westerlaken at mw833@cam.ac.uk

LENT TERM 2023

4. Existence theory – Professor Patrick Baert

We introduce the main tenets of existence theory as a proposal for a new sociological perspective, and we show how this theory can be used to highlight distinctive features of late modernity and some of the inequalities involved in society today. Underlying the theory is the assumption that (a) people organise themselves around the pursuit of a set of key existential milestones, (b) these milestones are often being pursued in a certain sequence, sometimes with the help of others, and (c) these milestones have a structuring effect on society. We pay particular attention to the extent to which, more recently, individualisation, technologies and inequalities have altered the pursuit of existential milestones.

Reading

Baert, P, Morgan, M. and R. Ushiyama. 2024. Existence theory and contemporary culture. In: *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Existentialism*, eds. K. Aho et al. London: Routledge. (forthcoming)
Special issue on 'Existence theory: a proposal for a theory of social behaviour', *Journal of Classical Sociology* 22 1, February.
Baert, P, Morgan, M. and R. Ushiyama. 2022. Introduction to the special issue. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 22 1, February, pp 3-6.
Baert, P, Morgan, M. and R. Ushiyama. 2022. Existence theory: Outline for a theory of social behaviour. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 22 1, February, pp. 7-29.
Inglis, D. 2022. Existentialising existence theory and expanded the existential milestones. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 22 1, February, pp. 30-48.
Susen, A. 2022. Critical remarks on existence theory: between existentialism and phenomenology. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 22 1, February, pp. 49-84.
Wagner-Pacifici, R. 2022. At the intersection of existence, events, and milestones: a response to 'existence theory. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 22 1, February, pp. 85-89.
Turner, B.S. 2022. Vulnerability and existence theory in catastrophic times. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 22 1, February, pp. 90-94.
Outhwaite, W. 2022. Existence as a predicament. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 22 1, February, pp. 95-99.
Kemple, T. 2022. Milestones and cornerstones: queering the life course. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 22 1, February, pp. 100-106.
Baert, P, Morgan, M. and R. Ushiyama. 2022. Existence theory revisited: a reply to our critics. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 22 1, February, 107-116.

Essay questions:

1. How do existential milestones help structure social life?
2. How does inequality come into play with regard to the pursuit of existential milestones?

Supervision

Contact Sebastian Raza-Mejia at slr75@cam.ac.uk

5. Cultural trauma and politics

We study the intersection between politics and culture by exploring how various groups invoke cultural trauma and how this phenomenon has distinct political implications. We introduce key concepts surrounding cultural sociology and the theory of cultural trauma (e.g. carrier groups, narratives, performances, etc.) and then explore specific examples, which include the Holocaust, slavery and colonisation, and the Nanjing massacre.

Reading

Alexander, Jeffrey, et. al. (eds.) 2004. *Cultural Trauma and Cultural Identity*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
Baert, Patrick. 2015. *The Existentialist Moment; The Rise of Sartre as a Public Intellectual.* Cambridge: Polity Press.
Eyerman, Ron. 2001. *Cultural Trauma; Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Eyerman, Ron. 2012. Cultural trauma: emotion and narration. In: *The Oxford Handbook of Cultural Sociology*, eds. Jeffrey Alexander, Ronald Jacobs and Philip Smith, pp. 232-256.
Eyerman, Ron. 2015. *Is this America? Katrina as Cultural Trauma*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
Demertzis, Nicolas, and Ron Eyerman. 2019. Covid-19 as cultural trauma. *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 8 (3), pp. 428-450.
Schwartz, Barry. 2012. Rethinking conflict and collective memory. In: *The Oxford Handbook of Cultural Sociology*, eds. Jeffrey Alexander, Ronald Jacobs and Philip Smith, pp. 529-563.
Gao, Rui. 2015. The paradoxes of solidarity: cultural trauma and collective identity in Mao's China. *Chinese Journal of Sociology* 1(1), pp. 108-135.
Gao, Rui, and Jeffrey Alexander. 2012. Remembrance of things past: cultural trauma, the 'Nanking' massacre, and Chinese identity. In: *The Oxford Handbook of Cultural Sociology*, eds. Jeffrey Alexander, Ronald Jacobs and Philip Smith, pp. 583-610.
Stratton, Jon. 2019. The language of leaving: Brexit, the second world war and cultural trauma. *Journal of cultural research*. 23 (3), pp. 225-2551.
Woods, Eric Taylor. 2019. Cultural trauma: Ron Eyerman and the founding of a new paradigm. *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 7 (2), pp. 260-274.
Zhukova, Ekatherina. 2022. How cultural traumas occur on social media: the case of the Ukranian famine. 1932-1933. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*.35, pp. 1-25.

Essay questions

1. Do horrific events naturally become cultural traumas?
2. In what sense is the process of cultural trauma political?

Supervision

Contact Sebastian Raza-Mejia at slr75@cam.ac.uk

5. "The robot will see you now": The ethics of technological care – Dr. Nomisha Kurian

Rapid advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI) compel sociological attention to questions of human welfare. Drawing on feminist care theory, we will take social robots as our case study. Social robots perhaps come closest to the "walk-and-talk" robots immortalised in cinema. As one of the fastest-growing areas of AI, the social robot market is projected to reach $17.2 billion by 2028. Designed to interact with humans and to look, sound and feel trustworthy and appealing, social robots have already been used as companions to vulnerable populations, such as elderly people, children with disabilities, and dementia patients. Some countries such as Japan have officially committed to prioritising them to support ageing populations and shrinking resources for eldercare.

We will examine the ethical implications of a future where AI-led care becomes more prevalent. Students will make up their own minds about pressing sociological debates around the devaluation of care, changing labour markets, human rights, techno-solutionism, and the blurring boundaries between humans and machines.

Session 1:

We will explore the feminist ethic of care, examining the affective and relational dimensions of social justice. While analysing the implications of technology for affective and social relations, we will introduce ourselves to a variety of AI models, from Paro, a therapeutic robot baby harp seal for patients of hospitals and nursing homes, to Hug, designed to assist care workers in lifting elderly people.

Required reading
Lynch, K., Kalaitzake, M., & Crean, M. (2021). Care and affective relations: Social justice and sociology. The Sociological Review, 69(1), 53-71.
Sevenhuijsen, S. (2003). The place of care: The relevance of the feminist ethic of care for social policy. Feminist theory, 4(2), 179-197.
Pols, J., & Moser, I. (2009). Cold technologies versus warm care? On affective and social relations with and through care technologies. Alter, 3(2), 159-178.

Recommended reading
Lynch, K. (2021). Care and capitalism: why affective equality matters for social justice. John Wiley & Sons.
Hankivsky, O. (2004). Social policy and the ethic of care. UBC Press.
Fisher, B. & Tronto, J. (1990). Toward a Feminist Theory of Care. In E. Abel & M. Nelson (Eds.). Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives. Albany, NY: SUNY Press
Tronto, J. C. (1993). Moral boundaries: a political argument for an ethic of care. New York: Routledge.
Lynch, K., & Walsh, J. (2016). Love, care and solidarity: What is and is not commodifiable. In Lynch, K., Baker, J., Lyons, M., Feeley, M., Hanlon, N., Walsh, J., & Cantillon, S. (Eds). Affective equality: Love, care and injustice. Springer, 35-53.

Session 2:

In this session, we will delve into the ethical issues raised by AI-led care. Students will have the opportunity to explore and form their own perspectives on critical sociological debates

surrounding the devaluation of care, the shifting dynamics of labour markets, human rights considerations, the impact of techno-solutionism, and the complex interplay between humans and machines. We will navigate the multifaceted implications of AI-led care and its far-reaching consequences for individuals, societies, and our understanding of what it means to provide and receive care in an increasingly technologically mediated world.

Required reading:
Whitby, B. (2011). Do You Want a Robot Lover? The Ethics of Caring Technologies. Robot ethics: The ethical and social implications of robotics, 233.
Henschel, A., Laban, G., & Cross, E. S. (2021). What makes a robot social? a review of social robots from science fiction to a home or hospital near you. Current Robotics Reports, 2, 9-19.
Sharkey, N., & Sharkey, A. (2010). The crying shame of robot nannies: an ethical appraisal. Interaction Studies, 11(2), 161-190.

Recommended reading:
Wright, J. (Ed.). *Robots Won't Save Japan.* Cornell University Press.
Wright, J. (2018). Tactile care, mechanical Hugs: Japanese caregivers and robotic lifting devices. Asian Anthropology, 17(1), 24-39
Fosch-Villaronga, E., & Albo-Canals, J. (2019). "I'll take care of you," said the robot. *Paladyn, Journal of Behavioral Robotics,* 10(1), 77-93.
Kurian, N. (2023). My robot friend: the appeal of AI as children's companions is clear, but what about the darker ethical issues? *Sociological Review.*
Kurian, N. (2023) Toddlers and Robots? The Ethics of Supporting Young Children with Disabilities with AI Companions and the Implications for Children's Rights. International Journal of Human Rights Education, 7(1).
Frennert, S., & Östlund, B. (2014). Seven matters of concern of social robots and older people. International Journal of Social Robotics, 6, 299-310.
Nørskov, M. (2017). Social robots: boundaries, potential, challenges. Taylor & Francis.
van Wynsberghe, A. (2022). Social robots and the risks to reciprocity. *AI & SOCIETY, 37*(2), 479-485.
Sætra, H. S. (2020). The foundations of a policy for the use of social robots in care. Technology in society, 63, 101383.
Misselhorn, C., Pompe, U., & Stapleton, M. (2013). Ethical considerations regarding the use of social robots in the fourth age. GeroPsych.
McStay, A. (2020). Emotional AI, soft biometrics and the surveillance of emotional life: An unusual consensus on privacy. Big Data & Society, 7(1), 2053951720904386
Boris, E. (2010). Intimate labours: Cultures, technologies, and the politics of care. Stanford University Press.
Pols, J. (2012). Care at a distance: on the closeness of technology. Amsterdam University Press.
Fiske, A., Henningsen, P., & Buyx, A. (2019). Your robot therapist will see you now: ethical implications of embodied artificial intelligence in psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy. Journal of medical Internet research, 21(5), e13216.
Sharkey, A., & Sharkey, N. (2021). We need to talk about deception in social robotics!. Ethics and Information Technology, 23, 309-316.

Essay questions
    1. Sociologist Judy Wajcman writes, "We may be suckers for the wide eyes and endearing giggles of affective robots, but to advocate the use of robots for empathetic care (..)

mistakes the appearance of care with real empathy." To what extent do you agree or disagree?

      2. Discuss the ethical implications of care mediated, driven by, or otherwise negotiated through technology.

      3. What might be the broader social and cultural consequences of relying on social robots for caregiving?

Supervisions
Contact Nomisha Kurian at nck28@cam.ac.uk

6. Decolonizing Social Theory – Professor Julian Go

In the mid-twentieth century, anticolonial movements and intellectuals generated wide-ranging critiques of imperialism and colonialism that influenced what later became known as "postcolonial theory" (and variants, such as "decolonial" thought). This module explores the relevance of this postcolonial/decolonial critique for social theory. It also discusses attempts to reconstruct social theory in a more postcolonial or decolonized form. What does the history of social theory tell us about its current form? What are the biases in social (and sociological) theory that imperialism bequeathed? How do they connect with racist and Eurocentric thought? And how can we overcome these biases if we can at all? How might we decolonize social theory?

In the first session, we will discuss key components of the postcolonial critique, addressing how social knowledge has been shaped by empire. Drawing upon a sociology of knowledge and standpoint theory, we will discuss how conventional social theory often embeds a racialized, Eurocentric and colonial standpoint and the history that has generated this condition. We will also explore the various implications of this standpoint, discussing the limits of social theory that does not absorb the postcolonial critique. We will consider the extent to which social theory, and hence sociology, embeds racist, Eurocentric, and pro-imperial thinking.

Session 1:
Required Reading
Seidman, Steven. 2013. "The Colonial Unconscious of Classical Sociology." *Political Power and Social Theory* 24: 35-54.
Connell, Raewyn. 2006. "Northern Theory: the Political Geography of General Social Theory." *Theory and Society* 35(2):237-64.
Go, Julian. 2020. "Race, Empire and Epistemic Exclusion: Or the Structures of Sociological Thought." *Sociological Theory* 38(2): 79-100.
Go, Julian. 2016. *Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory*, pp. 1-17, 75-102. New York: Oxford University Press.

Recommended Reading
Alatas, Syed Farid. 2003. "Academic Dependency and the Global Division of Labor in the Social Sciences." *Current sociology* 51(6):599-613.
Anderson, Kevin B. 2010. *Marx at the Margins*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Bhambra, Gurminder. 2007. *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination*. Houndmills: Palgrave-MacMillan.

Bhambra, Gurminder K., and John Holmwood. 2021. *Colonialism and modern social theory*. Cambridge ; Medford, MA: Polity.

Boatcâ, Manuela. 2013. "From the Standpoint of Germanism: A Postcolonial Critique of Weber's Theory of Race and Ethnicity." *Political Power and Social Theory* 24:55-80.

Connell, R.W. 1997. "Why is Classical Theory Classical?" *American Journal of Sociology* 102(6):1511-57.

Go, Julian. 2013. "Sociology's Imperial Unconscious: the Emergence of American Sociology in the Context of Empire." Pp. 83-105 in *Sociology and Empire*, edited by George Steinmetz. Durham: Duke University Press.

Jung, Moon-Kie. 2009. "The Racial Unconcious of Assimilation Theory." *Du Bois Review* 2:375-95.

Kurasawa, Fuyuki. 2013. "The Durkheimian School and Colonialism: Exploring the Constitutive Paradox." Pp. 188-209 in *Sociology and Empire*, edited by George Steinmetz. Durham: Duke University Press.

Mignolo, Walter de. 2010. "Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and Decolonial Freedom. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 26(7–8), 159–181.

Said, Edward. 1978. *Orientalism*, pp. 1-28, 31-49, 53-68, 76-81, 86-87, 92-110, 149-157, 201-209, 221-225, 284-296, 320-328.

Quijano Aníbal. 2000. "Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America." *International Sociology* 15(2): 215-232.

Wylie, Alison. 2003. "Why Standpoint Matters." Pp. 26-48 in *Science and Other Cultures*, edited by Robert Figueroa and Sandra Harding. New York: Routledge.

Session 2:

In the second part, we will discuss the possibility of social theorizing that takes the postcolonial critique seriously and strives to overcome its imperialistic inheritance. We will discuss some of the different ways in which intellectuals have sought to craft alternative sociological imaginations. We will also discuss the promises and pitfalls of these approaches.

Required Reading

Connell, Raewyn. 2018. "Decolonizing Sociology." *Contemporary Sociology* 47(4):399-407.

Go, Julian. 2023. "Thinking against empire: Anticolonial thought as social theory." *British Journal of Sociology* 74(3): 279-293.

Meghji, Ali. 2021. *Decolonizing Sociology*, ch. 2 "Beyond Intellectual Imperialism: Indigenous and Autonomous Sociologies" (pp. 63-92) and ch. 3 "Walking While Asking Questions" (pp. 95-128). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Jung, Moon-Kie. 2019. "The Enslaved, the Worker, and Du Bois's Black Reconstruction: Toward an Underdiscipline of Antisociology." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 5(2):157-68.

Recommended Reading

Akiwowo, Akinsola. 1999. "Indigenous Sociologies: Extending the Scope of the Argument." *International Sociology* 14(2):115-138

Alatas, Syed Farid. 2006. *Alternative Discourses in Asian Social Science: Responses to Eurocentrism*. New Delhi/Thousand Oaks/London: Sage Publications.

Alatas, Syed Farid, and Vineeta Sinha. 2017. *Sociological Theory Beyond the Canon*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bhambra, Gurminder. 2014. *Connected Sociologies*. London: Bloomsbury

Go, Julian. 2016. *Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Go, Julian. 2016. "Global Sociology, Turning South: Perspectival Realism and the Southern Standpoint." *Sociologica: Italian Journal of Sociology* 10(2):1-42.

Go, Julian. 2023. "Anticolonial thought, the sociological imagination, and social science: A reply to critics." *British Journal of Sociology* 74(3): 345-359.

Gutiérrez Rodríguez, Encarnación , Manuela Boatcâ, and Sérgio Costa (Eds.). 2010. *Decolonizing European Sociology: Transdisciplinary Approaches*. Burlington/Surrey: Ashgate.

Hill Collins, Patricia. 2000. "Black Feminist Epistemology" pp. 251-271 in Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought.* New York: Routledge.

Itzigsohn, José, and Karida Brown. 2020. *The Sociology of W.E.B. Du Bois*. New York: New York University Press.

Patel, Sujata. 2010. "Sociology's 'Other': the Debates on European Universals." Pp. 70-89 in *Historical Developments and Theoretical Approaches in Sociology Volume II*, edited by Charles Crothers. Oxford: Eolss Publishers.

Sousa Santos, Boaventura de. 2014. *Epistemologies of the South*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

Essay Questions

     1. What are the main limitations or biases of classical/conventional social theory and how are they related or not to imperialism?

     2. What are the ways in which social theory might be decolonized, and what are the promises or limitations of these approaches?

     3. What does a postcolonial/decolonial critique of knowledge offer us and what does it overlook?

Supervisions

Contact Sebastian Raza-Mejia at slr75@cam.ac.uk