

Sociology 103: Contemporary Social Theory (Fall 2021)  
Tuesdays, 4-7 pm, 258 Dwinelle  
John Lie, 486 Social Sciences Building, [johnlie@berkeley.edu](mailto:johnlie@berkeley.edu)  
Office Hours: Thursdays 2:30-4 pm, and by appointment

In the year 2021, the world remains in the grip of the Covid-19 crisis. Yet there is a much more devastating disaster on the horizon: the global climate crisis. Some of its consequences are apparent already, including fire and flooding (and the proliferation of pandemics). This course will consider these two crises – and disasters in general – from the standpoint of knowledge and action. Put differently, how aware are we about looming disasters, how do we assess them, and what do we do about them. That is, the course is about knowledge, risk, and action (or ignorance, denial, and inaction).

### Requirements

Participation (20%)  
Examination (40%)  
Final project (40%)

### Schedule

31 August: Introduction

7 September: Pandemics Past

Alex de Waal, New Pandemics, Old Politics, 2021, chaps.1-3

14 September: The Covid-19 Crisis

de Waal, chap.6

21 September: The Global Climate Crisis

David Wallace-Wells, The Uninhabitable Earth, 2019

28 September: Knowledge and Science

Bruno Latour, We Have Never Been Modern, 1991, chaps.1-2

<https://www.google.com/search?q=bruno+latour+we+have+never+been+modern+pdf&oq=bruno+latour&aqs=chrome.0.69i59l2j69i57j0l2j69i60l3.11344j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

5 October: Knowledge and Relevance

Immanuel Wallerstein et al., Open the Social Sciences, chaps.3-4

[http://pages.ucsd.edu/~rfrank/class\\_web/ES-200A/Week%201/Gulbenkian.pdf](http://pages.ucsd.edu/~rfrank/class_web/ES-200A/Week%201/Gulbenkian.pdf)

12 October: Understanding Risk

Frank H. Knight, Risk, Uncertainty and Profit, 1921, chaps.6-7

[https://cdn.mises.org/Risk,%20Uncertainty,%20and%20Profit\\_4.pdf](https://cdn.mises.org/Risk,%20Uncertainty,%20and%20Profit_4.pdf)

19 October: Risk and Disaster

Judith N. Shklar, The Faces of Injustice, 1990

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5vm3gp>

26 October: Understanding Action

Max Weber, Economy and Society, 1968 (orig. 1922), chap.1

[https://books.google.co.jp/books?hl=ja&lr=lang\\_ja|lang\\_en&id=MIL0ksrhgrYC&oi=fnd&pg=PR1&dq=max+weber+economy+and+society+pdf&ots=oAGxDld9sM&sig=G9vsve2QRQgEcT8tZszvjxmqTI#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.co.jp/books?hl=ja&lr=lang_ja|lang_en&id=MIL0ksrhgrYC&oi=fnd&pg=PR1&dq=max+weber+economy+and+society+pdf&ots=oAGxDld9sM&sig=G9vsve2QRQgEcT8tZszvjxmqTI#v=onepage&q&f=false)

2 November: Living the Present, Anticipating the Future

Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, 1954 (orig. 1922), chap.3

[https://openlibrary.org/books/OL17967775M/Ideology\\_and\\_utopia](https://openlibrary.org/books/OL17967775M/Ideology_and_utopia)

9 November: Conclusion

**16 November: EXAMINATION**

**23 November: Thanksgiving Holiday**

**30 November: PRESENTATION**

**3 December: PROJECT DUE**