

Professor George Steinmetz, University of Michigan  
**“Rethinking Postcolonial Sociology:  
Canons, Decolonization, and Close Reading”**



**Description:** The debate on intellectual “decolonization” and canons has finally reached sociology, but sociology has failed to devise an approach to these questions that takes advantage of its own analytic resources, and it has misunderstood postcolonial theory. A postcolonial sociology should combine research on social, intellectual, and biographical contexts, analysis of intellectual fields, and close reading. This approach will be illustrated with examples from several classical sociologists and their relations to European colonialism. I conclude with an argument against Canons and Indexes in Sociology.

**George Steinmetz** is Charles Tilly Professor of Sociology at the University of Michigan. He has been a tenured professor at the University of Chicago and the New School, and a Visiting Professor at the Institute for Advanced Study. He is currently completing the second volume of *The Colonial Origins of Modern Social Thought* (Princeton University Press) on the 20<sup>th</sup> century British Empire and its sociologists.

**Thursday**  
**January 22, 2026**  
12:30-1:50pm

**Parke 222**  
1870 Sheridan Road  
Evanston, IL 60208

**For Zoom info  
please contact:**

[sociol@northwestern.edu](mailto:sociol@northwestern.edu)